IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155

Reading Passage 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-13, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 Reading Passage Learning color words below.

Learning color words

Young children struggle with color concepts, and the reason for this may have something to do with how we use the words that describe them.

{A} In the course of the first few years of their lives, children who are brought up in English-speaking homes successfully master the use of hundreds of words. Words for objects, actions, emotions, and many other aspects of the physical world quickly become part of their infant repertoire. For some reason, however, when it comes to learning color words, the same children perform very badly. At the age of four months, babies can distinguish between basic color categories.

Yet it turns out they do this in much the same way as blind children. “Blue” and “yellow” appear in older children’s expressive language in answer to questions such as “What color is this?”, but their mapping of objects to individual colors is haphazard and interchangeable. If shown a blue cup and asked about its color, typical two-year-olds seem as likely to come up with “red” as “blue.” Even after hundreds of training trials, children as old as four may still end up being unable to accurately sort objects by color.

{B} In an effort to work out why this is, cognitive scientists at Stanford University in California hypothesized that children’s incompetence at color-word learning may be directly linked to the way these words are used in English. While word order for color adjectives varies, they are used overwhelmingly in pre-nominal position (e.g. “blue cup”); in other words, the adjective comes before the noun it is describing. This is in contrast to post-nominal position (e.g. “The cup is blue”) where the adjective comes after the noun. It seems that the difficulty children have may not be caused by any unique property of color, or indeed, of the world. Rather, it may simply come down to the challenge of having to make predictions from color words to the objects they refer to, instead of being able to make predictions from the world of objects to the color words.

{C} To illustrate, the word “chair” has a meaning that applies to the somewhat varied set of entities in the world that people use for sitting on. Chairs have features, such as arms and legs and backs, that are combined to some degree in a systematic way; they turn up in a range of chairs of different shapes, sizes, and ages. It could be said that children learn to narrow down the set of cues that make up a chair and in this way they learn the concept associated with that word.

On the other hand, color words tend to be unique and not bound to other specific co-occurring features; there is nothing systematic about color words to help cue their meaning. In the speech that adults direct at children, color adjectives occur pre-nominally ("blue cup") around 70 percent of the time. This suggests that most of what children hear from adults will, in fact, be unhelpful in learning what color words refer to.

{D} To explore this idea further, the research team recruited 41 English children aged between 23 and 29 months and carried out a three- phase experiment. It consisted of a pre-test, followed by training in the use of color words, and finally a post-test that was identical to the pre-test. The pre- and post-test materials comprised six objects that were novel to the children. There were three examples of each object in each of three colors—red, yellow, and blue. The objects were presented on trays, and in both tests, the children were asked to pick out objects in response to requests in which the color word was either a prenominal ("Which is the red one?") or a post-nominal ("Which one is red?").

{E} In the training, the children were introduced to a "magic bucket" containing five sets of items familiar to 26-month-olds (balls, cups, crayons, glasses, and toy bears) in each of the three colors. The training was set up so that half the children were presented with the items one by one and heard them labelled with color words used pre-nominally ("This is a red crayon"), while the other half were introduced to the same items described with a post-nominal color word ("This crayon is red"). After the training, the children repeated the selection task on the unknown items in the post-test. To assess the quality of children's understanding of the color words, and the effect of each type of training, correct choices on items that were consistent across the pre- and post-tests were used to measure children's color knowledge.

{F} Individual analysis of pre-and post-test data, which confirmed parental vocabulary reports, showed the children had at least some knowledge of the three color words: they averaged two out of three correct choices in response to both pre-and post-nominal question types, which, it has been pointed out, is better than chance. When children's responses to the question types were assessed independently, performance was at its most consistent when children were both trained and tested on post-nominal adjectives, and worst when trained on pre-nominal adjectives and tested on post-nominal adjectives.

Only children who had been trained with post-nominal color-word presentation and then tested with post-nominal question types were significantly more accurate than chance. Comparing the pre-and post-test scores across each condition revealed a significant decline in performance when children were both pre-and post-tested with questions that placed the color words pre-nominally.

As predicted, when children are exposed to color adjectives in post-nominal position, they learn them rapidly (after just five training trials per color); when they are presented with them pre-nominally, as English overwhelmingly tends to do, children show no signs of learning.

Questions 1-4

The IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 Reading Passage has four sections A-D.

Choose the correct heading for each section from the list of headings below.

List of Headings

(i) A possible explanation

(ii) Why names of objects are unhelpful

(iii) Checking out the theory

(iv) A curious state of affairs

(v) The need to look at how words are formed

(vi) How age impacts on learning colours

(vii) Some unsurprising data

(1). Section A

(2). Section B

(3). Section C

(4). Section D

Questions 5-9

Complete the summary below.

*Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer*

The Hypothesis

Children learn many words quite quickly, but their ability to learn colour words takes longer than expected.

In fact, despite **5** ..... many four-year olds still struggle to arrange objects into colour categories.

Scientists have hypothesised that this is due to the **6** ..... of the adjectives in a phrase or sentence and the challenges this presents.

While objects consist of a number of **7** ……. that can be used to recognise other similar objects, the **8** ……. of a colour cannot be developed using the same approach. As a consequence, the way colour words tend to be used in English may be **9**……. to children.

Questions 10-13

Choose TWO letters, A-E.

Questions 10-11

Which TWO of the following statements about the experiment are true?

(A). The children were unfamiliar with the objects used in the pre- and post-test.

(B). The children had to place the pre- and post-test objects onto coloured trays.

(C). The training was conducted by dividing the children into two groups.

(D). Pre-nominal questions were used less frequently than post-nominal questions in the training.

(E). The researchers were looking for inconsistencies in children's knowledge ot word order.

Questions 12-13

Which TWO of the following outcomes are reported in the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 passage?

(A). Average results contradicted parental assessment of children's knowledge.

(B). Children who were post-tested using post-nominal adjectives performed well, regardless of the type of training.

(C). Greatest levels of improvement were achieved by children who were trained and post-tested using post-nominal adjectives.

(D). Some children performed less well in the post-test than in the pre-test.

(E). Some children were unable to accurately name any of the colours in the pre and post-tests.

Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14-26, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 Reading Passage Delivering the goods below.

Delivering the goods

The vast expansion in international trade owes much to a revolution in the business of moving freight

{A} International trade is growing at a startling pace. While the global economy has been expanding at a bit over 3% a year, the volume of trade has been rising at a compound annual rate of about twice that. Foreign products, from meat to machinery, play a more important role in almost every economy in the world, and foreign markets now tempt businesses that are never much worried about sales beyond their nation's borders.

{B} What lies behind this explosion in international commerce? The general worldwide decline in trade barriers, such as customs duties and import quotas, is surely one explanation. The economic opening of countries that have traditionally been minor players is another. But one force behind the import-export boom has passed all but unnoticed: the rapidly falling cost of getting goods to market. Theoretically, in the world of trade, shipping costs do not matter. Goods, once they have been made, are assumed to move instantly and at no cost from place to place. The real world, however, is full of frictions. Cheap labour may make Chinese clothing competitive in America, but if delays in shipment lie up working capital and cause winter coats to arrive in spring, trade may lose its advantages.

{C} At the turn of the 20th century, agriculture and manufacturing were the two most important sectors almost everywhere, accounting for about 70% of total output in Germany, Italy and France, and 40-50% in America, Britain and Japan. International commerce was therefore dominated by raw materials, such as wheat, wood and iron ore, or processed commodities, such as meat and steel. But these sorts of products are heavy and bulky and the cost of transporting them is relatively high.

{D} Countries still trade disproportionately with their geographic neighbours . Over time, however, world output has shifted into goods whose worth is unrelated to their size and weight. Today, it is finished manufactured products dominate the flow of trade, and, thanks to technological advances such as lightweight components, manufactured goods themselves have tended to become lighter and less bulky. As a result, less transportation is required for every dollar's worth of imports or exports.

{E} To see how this influences trade, consider the business of making disk drives for computers. Most of the world's disk-drive manufacturing is concentrated in South-east Asia. This is possible only because disk drives, while valuable, are small and light and so cost little to ship. Computer manufacturers in Japan or Texas will not face hugely bigger freight bills if they import drives from Singapore rather than purchasing them on the domestic market. Distance therefore poses no obstacle to the globalisation of the disk-drive industry.

{F} This is even more true of the fast-growing information industries. Films and compact discs cost little to transport, even by aeroplane. Computer software can be 'exported' without ever loading it

onto a ship, simply by transmitting it over telephone lines from one country to another, so freight rates and cargo-handling schedules become insignificant factors in deciding where to make the product. Businesses can locate based on other considerations, such as the availability of labour, while worrying less about the cost of delivering their output.

{G} Many countries' deregulation has helped to drive the process along. But, behind the scenes, a series of technological innovations known broadly as containerisation and intermodal transportation has led to swift productivity improvements in cargo-handling . Forty years ago, the process of exporting or importing involved a great many stages of handling, which risked portions of the shipment being damaged or stolen along the way. The invention of the container crane made it possible to load and unload containers without capsizing the ship and the adoption of standard container sizes allowed almost any box to be transported on any ship. By 1967, dual-purpose ships, carrying loose cargo in the hold* and containers on the deck, were giving way to all-container vessels that moved thousands of boxes at a time.

{H} The shipping container transformed ocean shipping into a highly efficient, intensely competitive business. But getting the cargo to and from the dock was a different story. National governments, by and large, kept a much firmer hand on truck and railroad tariffs than on charges for ocean freight. This started changing, however, in the mid-1970s, when America began to deregulate its transportation industry. First airlines, then road hauliers and railways, were freed from restrictions on what they could carry, where they could haul it and what price they could charge. Big productivity gains resulted. Between 1985 and 1996, for example, America's freight railways dramatically reduced their employment, trackage, and their fleets of locomotives - while increasing the amount of cargo they hauled. Europe's railways have also shown marked, albeit smaller, productivity improvements.

{I} In America the period of huge productivity gains in transportation may be almost over, but in most countries the process still has far to go. State ownership of railways and airlines, regulation of freight rates and toleration of anti-competitive practices, such as cargo-handling monopolies, all keep the cost of shipping unnecessarily high and deter international trade. Bringing these barriers down would help the world's economies grow even closer.

Questions 14-17

IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 Reading Passage 2 has nine paragraphs, A-I.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, A-1, in boxes 14-17 on your answer sheet.

(14) a suggestion for improving trade in the future

(15) the effects of the introduction of electronic delivery

(16) the similar cost involved in transporting a product from abroad or from a local supplier

(17) the weakening relationship between the value of goods and the cost of their delivery

Questions 18-22

Do the following statements agree with the information given in IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 Reading Passage 2?

In boxes 18-22 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	if the statement is True
FALSE	if the statement is false
NOT GIVEN	If the information is not given in the passage

(18) International trade is increasing at a greater rate than the world economy.

(19) Cheap labour guarantees effective trade conditions.

(20) Japan imports more meat and steel than France.

(21) Most countries continue to prefer to trade with nearby nations.

(22) Small computer components are manufactured in Germany.

Questions 23-26

Complete the summary using the list of words, A-K, below.

Write the correct letter, A-K, in boxes 23-26 on your answer sheet.

THE TRANSPORT REVOLUTION

Modern cargo-handling methods have had a significant effect on **23** ..... as the business of moving freight around the world becomes increasingly streamlined.

Manufacturers of computers, for instance, are able to import **24** ..... from overseas, rather than having to rely on a local supplier. The introduction of **25** ..... has meant that bulk cargo can be safely and efficiently moved over long distances. While international shipping is now efficient, there is still a need for governments to reduce **26** ..... in order to free up the domestic cargo sector.

(A) tariffs	**(E)** employees	**(I)** fares
(B) components	**(F)** insurance costs	**(J)** software
(C) container ships	**(G)** trade	**(K)** international standards
(D) output	**(H)** freight	

Reading Passage 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27-40, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 Reading Passage Is there more to video games than people realize? below.

Is there more to video games than people realize?

{A}. Many people who spend a lot of time playing video games insist that they have helped them in areas like confidence-building, presentation skills and debating. Yet this way of thinking about video games can be found almost nowhere within the mainstream media, which still tend to treat games as an odd mix of the slightly menacing and the alien. This lack of awareness has become increasingly inappropriate, as video games and the culture that surrounds them have become very big business indeed.

{B}. Recently, the British government released the Byron report into the effects of electronic media on children. Its conclusions set out a clear, rational basis for exploring the regulation of video games. The ensuing debate, however, has descended into the same old squabbling between partisan factions: the preachers of mental and moral decline, and the innovative game designers. In between are the gamers, busily buying and playing while nonsense is talked over their heads.

{C}. Susan Greenfield, a renowned neuroscientist, outlines her concerns in a new book. Every individual's mind is the product of a brain that has been personalized by the sum total of their experiences; with an increasing quantity of our experiences from very early childhood taking place 'on-screen' rather than in the world, there is potentially a profound shift in the way children's minds work. She suggests that the fast-paced, second-hand experiences created by video games and the Internet may inculcate a worldview that is less empathetic, more risk-taking and less contemplative than what we tend to think of as healthy.

{D}. Greenfield's prose is full of mixed metaphors and self-contradictions and is perhaps the worst enemy of her attempts to persuade. This is unfortunate, because however many technophiles may snort, she is articulating widely held fears that have a basis in fact. Unlike

even their immediate antecedents, the latest electronic media are at once domestic and work-related, their mobility blurring the boundaries between these spaces, and video games are at their forefront. A generational divide has opened that is in many ways more profound than the equivalent shifts associated with radio or television, more alienating for those unfamiliar with new' technologies, more absorbing for those who are. So how do our lawmakers regulate something that is too fluid to be fully comprehended or controlled?

{E}. Adam Martin, a lead programmer for an online games developer, says: 'Computer games teach and people don't even notice they're being taught.' But isn't the kind of learning that goes on in games rather narrow? 'A large part of the addictiveness of games does come from the fact that as you play you are mastering a set of challenges. But humanity's larger understanding of the world comes primarily through communication and experimentation, through answering the question "What if?' Games excel at teaching this too.'

{F}. Steven Johnson's thesis is not that electronic games constitute a great, popular art, but that the mean level of mass culture has been demanding steadily more intellectual engagement from consumers. Games, he points out, generate satisfaction via the complexity of their virtual worlds, not by their robotic predictability. Testing the nature and limits of the laws of such imaginary worlds has more in common with scientific methods than with a pointless addiction, while the complexity of the problems children encounter within games exceeds that of anything they might find at school.

{G}. Greenfield argues that there are ways of thinking that playing video games simply cannot teach. She has a point. We should never forget, for instance, the unique ability of books to engage and expand the human imagination, and to give us the means of more fully expressing our situations in the world. Intriguingly, the video games industry is now growing in ways that have more in common with an old- fashioned world of companionable pastimes than with a cyber future of lonely, isolated obsessives. Games in which friends and relations gather round a console to compete at activities are growing in popularity. The agenda is increasingly being set by the concerns of mainstream consumers – what they consider acceptable for their children, what they want to play at parties and across generations.

{H}. These trends embody a familiar but important truth: games are human products and lie within our control. This doesn't mean we yet control or understand them fully, but it should remind us that there is nothing inevitable or incomprehensible about them. No matter how deeply it may be felt, instinctive fear is an inappropriate response to a technology of any kind. So far, the dire predictions many traditionalists have made about the 'death' of old-fashioned narratives and imaginative thought at the hands of video games cannot be upheld. Television and cinema may be suffering, economically, at the hands of interactive media. But literacy standards have failed to decline. Young people still enjoy sport, going out and listening to music And most research – including a recent $1.5m study funded by the US government suggests that even pre-teens are not in the habit of blurring game worlds and real worlds.

{F}. The sheer pace and scale of the changes we face, however, leave little room for complacency. Richard Battle, a British writer and game researcher, says Times change: accept it; embrace it.' Just as, today, we have no living memories of a time before radio, we will soon live in a world in which no one living experienced growing up without computers. It is for this reason that we must try to examine what we stand to lose and gain before it is too late.

Questions 27-32

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 155 Reading Passage 3? In the boxes on your answer sheet, write

YES	if the statement agrees with the writer
NO	if the statement does not agree with the writer
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information about this in the passage

(27). Much media comment ignores the impact that video games can have on many people's lives.

(28). The publication of the Byron Report was followed by a worthwhile discussion between those for and against video games.

(29). Susan Greenfield's way of writing has become more complex over the years.

(30). It is likely that video games will take over the role of certain kinds of books in the future.

(31). More sociable games are being brought out to satisfy the demands of the buying public.

(32). Being afraid of technological advances is a justifiable reaction.

Questions 33-37

Choose the correct letter A, B, C or D. Write the correct letter A-D in boxes on your answer sheet.

Question 33. According to the writer, what view about video games does Susan Greenfield put forward in her new book?

(A). They are exposing a child to an adult view of the world too soon.

(B). Children become easily frightened by some of the situations in them.

(C). They are changing the way children's view of the world develops.

(D). Children don't learn from them because they are too repetitive.

Question 34. According to the writer, what problems are faced when regulating video games?

(A). The widespread and ever-changing use of games makes it difficult for lawmakers to control them.

(B). The appeal of the games to a younger generation isn't really understood by many lawmakers.

(C). The lawmakers try to apply the same rules to the games as they did to radio and television.

(D). Many lawmakers feel it is too late for the regulations to have much effect on the use of games.

Question 35. What main point does Adam Martin make about video games?

(A). People are learning how to avoid becoming addicted to them.

(B). They enable people to learn without being aware of it happening.

(C). They satisfy a need for people to compete with each other.

(D). People learn a narrow range of skills but they are still useful.

Question 36. Which of the following does Steven Johnson disagree with?

(A). the opinion that video games offer educational benefits to the user

(B). the attitude that video games are often labelled as predictable and undemanding

(C). the idea that children's logic is tested more by video games than at school

(D). the suggestion that video games can be compared to scientific procedures

Question 37. Which of the following is the most suitable subtitle for Reading Passage 3?

(A). A debate about the effects of video games on other forms of technology.

(B). An examination of the opinions of young people about video games.

(C). A discussion of whether attitudes towards video games are outdated.

(D). An analysis of the principles behind the historical development of video games.

Questions 38-40

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A-E, below.

Write the correct letter, A-E. on your answer sheet.

(38). There is little evidence for the traditionalists' prediction that ……

(39). A recent study by the US government found that ……

(40). Richard Battle suggests that it Is important for people to accept the fact that……

(A). young people have no problem separating their own lives from the ones they play on the screen.

(B). levels of reading ability will continue to drop significantly.

(C). new advances in technology have to be absorbed into our lives.

(D). games cannot provide preparation for the skills needed in real life.

(E). young people will continue to play video games despite warnings against doing so.