

IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159

Reading Passage 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-13, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 Reading Passage Parasitic Worms' Efficacy below.

Parasitic Worms' Efficacy

{A} Parasitic worms, like hookworms, whipworms, pinworms and flukes that plague humans are enough to make most of us shudder, except John Turton. In the middle of 1970s, whilst working at the UK's Medical Research Council Laboratories in Surrey, he intentionally infected himself with hookworms in an attempt to alleviate his chronic hay fever. It worked. During two summer seasons whilst he held the parasites, his allergy diminished.

{B} In regions where parasitic worm infections are rife, when the remedy emerged, Turton's vital experiment came. In 1913 W. Herrick, a doctor from Columbia University in New York found a very different link between parasitic worms, or helminths, and allergies. Lab workers analysed the gut-dwelling roundworm *Ascaris* that often caused tenderness and swelling around the fingers and more severe asthma after longer exposure.

{C} Researchers have been trying to make sense of these contradicting findings since the 1970s in the hope of being able to use the power of parasites to help free people of their allergies, without making things worse. They know they are playing with fire. After all, helminths are responsible for some truly horrible diseases and cause great suffering around the world. However, as the effects of helminths on the human body become clearer, it looks like their healing powers may have potential benefits.

{D} Not surprisingly, no researchers have been willing to take the risk of deliberately infecting themselves as Turton had done. Instead, most studies are dependent on populations in countries where people are already infected. This research tends to emphasize three commonly diagnosed allergic conditions: asthma, eczema and hay fever. The results have been confusing, but now researchers are beginning to have a better understanding.

{E} For instance, a study conducted in Taiwan showed that people infected with *Enterobius vermicularis*, a pinworm that is one of the most common gut parasites in the world, were less likely to have hay fever than the rest of the general population. But the results from Ecuador show a different story. Hay fever was not more common in children living in urban areas than it was in children living in rural areas. The parasite was equally common in both groups, so the researchers concluded that something else must be responsible for the prevalence of hay fever.

{F} Knowing about eczema has proved difficult to interpret. For instance, a study in Uganda discovered that eczema was less common among babies whose mothers had been infected with helminths whilst being pregnant. But, another study this time in Ethiopia discovered that

children with *Trichuris* worms, and whipworms that infest the large intestine, were more likely to have eczema than uninfected children.

{G} Regarding asthma, Herrick's discovery that it can be started by contact with the *Ascaris* was confirmed in the 1970s. But, hookworms decreased the extremity of asthma in a group of Ethiopians and similar benefits have been seen in Brazilian asthma sufferers infected with the *Schistosoma Mansoni*, the flatworm responsible for schistosomiasis, which damages internal organs. What are we to make of all this? The outstanding link between allergies and parasites is the human immune system. Allergies are caused by an overactive immune response, and helminths have strategies to dampen down our immune response to stimulate their survival. After all, they have evolved alongside humans for several thousands of years.

{H} In people with no allergies, foreign material entering the body stimulates the release of cytokines, molecules that sound the alarm to get the attention of other immune cells. As immune cells set to attack the intruder, another set of molecules is released to prohibit the immune response from overreacting. One of the main molecules responsible for keeping reactions in check is interleukin-10, which inhibits the release of certain cytokines. People with allergies tend to have lower than normal levels of interleukin-10, so their immune responses frequently get out of hand. In contrast, people infected with helminths have above-average levels of the molecule, and research on schistosomiasis patients indicates that this is at least partially because of the worms that set free chemicals that trigger the production of interleukin-10 in their host.

Questions 1-8

IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 Reading Passage 1 has eight paragraphs, A-H.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, A-H, in boxes 1-8 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- (1) Lab workers' duties
- (2) Contrary results between surveys
- (3) A voluntary attempt against allergy
- (4) The same results between surveys
- (5) A powerful remedy for allergies
- (6) Understanding of immune responses
- (7) Critical connection between allergies and parasites
- (8) Three most common allergies

Questions 9-13

Do the following statements reflect the claims of the writer in IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 9-13 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

- (9) John Turton infected himself with hookworms by mistake.
- (10) Dr Herrick has found a different feature between worms and allergies.
- (11) Researchers have not known the healing potential of parasites since the 1970s.
- (12) Allergies have the same appearance as parasites.
- (13) People with allergies may have higher than ordinary levels of interleukin-10.

Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14-27, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 Reading Passage Allergy Testing below.

Allergy Testing

Allergic reactions are triggered by the contact, inhalation, or ingestion of a number of different allergens. Some of the most common allergens are made up of proteins found in plants, mold, food, venom, animal skin, and medication. Symptoms of allergic reactions range from mild irritation such as itching, wheezing, and coughing to life-threatening conditions related to the respiratory and gastrointestinal organs. Serious allergic reactions are more likely to result from food, drugs, and stinging insects. A person does not become allergic to a particular substance until after the first exposure. However, in some cases, even trace amounts of a substance, such as peanuts or seafood in a mother's breast milk, can cause an allergic reaction in a subsequent exposure.

A variety of allergy tests are available for determining specific substances that trigger allergic reactions in individuals. Allergists, also known as immunologists, are trained in selecting the types of tests that are both safe and appropriate, depending on the suspected allergies. By using allergen extracts, tiny amounts of commonly bothersome allergens (usually in the form of purified liquid drops), immunologists are often able to isolate which substances cause reactions in allergy sufferers.

One of the most common types of environmental allergy tests is the skin-prick test. This technique involves placing small drops of potential allergen onto the skin of the forearm about one to two inches apart. After the drops are placed on the arm, a needle is used to puncture the skin at the site of each drop. (Though the procedure is virtually painless, this test is often done on the upper back of children to prevent them from seeing the needle.) If an allergy is present, an allergic antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE) will activate a special cell called a mast cell. Mast cells release chemicals (also known as mediators) that cause itching and swelling. The most common mediator is histamine. Histamine is what causes the controlled hive known as a wheal and flare. The white wheal is the small raised surface, while the flare is the redness that spreads out from it. In an uncontrolled allergic reaction, wheals and flares can get much bigger and spread all over a person's body. Results from a skin test can usually be obtained within 20 to 30 minutes, while the reaction usually fades within a few hours.

Another test that is very similar to the skin-prick test is the intradermal allergy test. This involves placing the allergen sample under the skin with a syringe. The intradermal test involves more risk and is usually saved for use if the allergy persists even after a skin-prick test comes back negative. People who have experienced serious allergic reactions called anaphylactic reactions are not advised to have these types of tests. These allergy sufferers may be hypersensitive to even trace amounts of the allergens when they are introduced into the blood. Anaphylaxis is an allergic reaction that affects the whole body and is potentially life-threatening. Hives on the lips and throat can become severe enough to block air passage. Anaphylactic shock occurs when enough histamine is released to cause the blood vessels to dilate and release fluid into the tissues. This lowers blood volume and can result in heart failure.

A blood test can be performed to safely isolate over 400 different allergies, including dangerous food and environmental allergens. The Radio Allergo Sorbent Test (RAST) measures specific IgE antibodies using a blood sample. IgE is normally found in very small amounts in the blood; it is created as a defense mechanism when it senses an intruder. Separate tests are done for each potential allergen, and IgE results are graded from 0 to 6. For example, canine serum IgE will be high if a person has an allergy to dogs. The RAST is used if patients have pre-existing skin conditions or if patients cannot stop taking certain medications such as antidepressants or antihistamines for even a short period of time. (People must stop taking antihistamines several days prior to taking a skin allergy test because the medication can interfere with the results.) The RAST is a more expensive test that does not provide immediate results.

A number of other allergy tests are available, though many are considered unreliable according to The Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. Applied kinesiology is a test that analyzes the loss of muscle strength in the presence of potential allergens. Provocation and neutralization

testing involves injecting food allergens into the skin in different quantities, with the goal of determining the smallest dose needed to neutralize the symptoms. Sublingual provocation and neutralization is a similar test, except that the allergens are injected underneath the tongue. Cytotoxicity testing involves watching for the reaction of blood cells after placing allergens on a slide next to a person's blood samples.

After using a reliable testing method, the cause of an allergic reaction is often identified, and a physician is able to help a patient develop a treatment plan with the goal of controlling or eliminating the allergic symptoms. Those who are allergic to furry pets, pollen, and plants are prescribed mild medication or taught how to control their reactions with simple lifestyle changes, while those with food allergies learn to safely remove certain foods from their diets. Allergy sufferers who are prone to anaphylactic reactions are educated about life-saving techniques such as carrying the drug epinephrine and wearing medical alert bracelets. As soon as people understand their allergies, they can begin to experience an improved quality of life.

Questions 14-20

The IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 passage describes three different types of allergy tests. Which of the characteristics below belongs to which type of test? In boxes 14-20 on your Answer Sheet, write

- (A) if it is a characteristic of the skin-prick test.
- (B) if it is a characteristic of the intradermal test.
- (C) if it is a characteristic of the blood test.
- (14) A substance is inserted beneath the skin with a needle.
- (15) It is often done on a patient's back.
- (16) It is advisable for patients who have skin problems.
- (17) It is not advisable for patients who have had serious allergic reactions in the past.
- (18) It shows results within half an hour.
- (19) It can cause red and white bumps on the patient's skin.
- (20) It has a higher cost than other tests.

Questions 21-27

Complete the summary of the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 passage below. Choose your answers from the box below, and write them in boxes 21-27 on your Answer Sheet. There are more words than spaces so you will not use them all.

Mold	Smelling	Identify	Allergens
Avoiding	Medicines	Eating	Treat
Antihistamine	Anaphylaxis	Causes	Signs

Allergic reactions result from touching, breathing, or (21).....certain substances called (22)..... Coughing or itching are two possible (23).....of an allergic reaction. More serious allergic reactions may result from certain insect bites, foods, or (24).....A severe allergic reaction is known as (25).....It can result in loss of blood volume and heart failure. Doctors can use a variety of tests to (26).....the source of an allergy. Treatment may include taking medication or (27).....the substances that cause the allergic reaction.

Reading Passage 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 28-40, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 Reading Passage Team Building below.

Team Building

{A}. Particularly in times of economic downturn, efficiency is of supreme importance across all industry bases; whilst companies may be looking to cut their costs, many still invest in staff motivation, training and development programmes, having developed an understanding of just how crucial strong internal relationships can be for success.

{B}. Louise Edwards of HR Success says that one of the barriers she comes across time and time again is that corporate heads often seem to understand that 'team-building' is important but are not quite sure what it is or how to achieve it. In the terms of a sports club, she says, the team (i.e. what it is and how it is defined) is obvious and easy to identify. In contrast, she says, within a company – particularly a multi-layered, larger organisation, definitions may become more confused. Many define a business 'team' as the group of people who report to the same boss – a department, for example. However, according to Edwards, it is more productive to define a team as a group of people working towards a common goal. In training terms, therefore, this group could be members of a department with the same roles and responsibilities, such as a sales team with the common goal of selling or even the organisation as a whole, whose 'goal' in this case is the continued success of the organisation, their many different skills and roles all contributing to this in a number of ways.

{C}. Brenda Durham of Corporate Trouble-Shooters believes it inevitable that to some extent conflict will exist in a successful workplace since the necessary diversity of skills and personalities required for success will also inevitably lead to misunderstandings and disharmony from time to time. A cohesive unit that minimises friction, she believes, can, however, be developed in any organisation committed to investing in its people. Whilst the taking on of external expertise for staff training and team building programmes can be costly, a number of companies, particularly those with a robust human resources department, are undertaking the training themselves. Liaison Wizards, established in 2001 and headed by Jeff Blackshaw, offers free training and development advice to companies wishing to offer motivation seminars designed in house, in the belief that contextualised training is always more effective. The company's own business model is based upon generating revenue from advertising on their popular website – a great success, so far, having surpassed financial projections for each year it has been in operation to date.

{D}. Blackshaw likens the key to successful corporate team building to the tactics employed in a less formal sporting environment. He says that bonds, connections and empathy developed between members of a rugby team, for example, can also be developed within a department in the business world or even at the company level. He says that good teamwork is fostered by respect, encouragement, shared enthusiasm and a caring and supportive workplace. Trying to exploit or dictate to personnel is sure to lead to failure, Blackshaw says.

{E}. Brian Osbourne, Human Resources Director of Opmax Inc, believes that programmes developed in-house are inherently more likely to be of greater success than external offerings for two main reasons. Most importantly, he says, people are much easier to motivate if they themselves can be involved in designing and deciding activities – this level of consultation at the planning stage is much easier to achieve for an internal department than an external consultant. Of only slightly less importance, says Osbourne, training activities must be perceived by participants as providing outcomes geared towards developing the individuals' potential. Once again, programmes developed by people with an insight into the personalities and culture at hand can be more easily tailored to suit the distinctive needs of that particular audience.

{F}. According to Osbourne, one of the biggest barriers to successful staff training is the perception that activities are too game-focused, with no real objectives; many professionals, believing that such games are trite or patronising, are unable to appreciate the hidden benefits of building understanding and camaraderie within the group. If presented correctly, within the correct context and in conjunction with other, more staid approaches, Louise Edwards holds that games can be an enormous asset in staff training. In simple terms, Edwards defines the objectives of team building activities as a process, starting with the first stage – the clarification of the collective goals. This leads to the identification of the inhibitors preventing the achievement of those goals and the introduction of enablers which will assist in goal achievement. This is followed by stage four – the final stage, where outcomes are measured and from that point on are monitored to ensure that goals are achieved and continue to be achieved. In stages 2 and 3 (identifying barriers and introducing positive alternatives) Edwards believes that the use of humour goes a long way towards relationship building on a personal level through the development of empathy and removal of antipathy, ultimately fostering cooperation and support on a more formal level.

{G}. Alan Kidman, HR Manager of Tellam Industries agrees that the use of humour and games within a training context can go a long way towards helping an organisation achieve its goals. He

has recently designed a two-month-long in-house team building programme for senior management and will soon be delivering the first of a series of 8 workshops and activities. The goal of the project, he says, was to strengthen communication and support within the extremely diverse departments of the organisation. Heads of six departments, collectively responsible for over 200 staff members, are to be involved in the series of seminars. The programme, Kidman says, is experimental and if it proves to be a success is also intended for use in the organisation's branches overseas. Previously the organisation has taken a more formalised approach to staff development training relying on methods such as psychometric testing discussions, motivational conferences and formal appraisals. The new, and as yet untried, the approach will challenge participants in, by comparison, rather radical ways. One initiative, for example, requires the writing, organisation and delivery of a theatrical performance to which all staff members will be invited to view.

{H}. Team building and motivational approaches include a wide variety of methodologies, techniques, theories and tools. Experts generally agree that different options may succeed or fail to depend upon the culture of the organisation in which they are implemented. A fit with the personalities involved is crucial to success. Not only is the delivery of appropriate training sessions themselves important but professional and measurable follow up is also a must.

Questions 28-30

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 passage?

In boxes 28 -30 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

(28) Many companies are unsuccessful because they are dogmatic and take advantage of the staff.

(29) In-house, training is more successful primarily because employees feel more involved in the planning.

(30) The value of games as a training tool can be misunderstood.

Questions 31-35

Look at the following list of statements based on IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 159 Passage 3.

Match the statement with the correct person A-E.

You can use each letter more than once and write answers in boxes next to 31-35 on your answer sheets.

(A) Louise Edwards

(B) Brenda Durham

(C) Jeff Blackshaw

(D) Brian Osborne

(E) Alan Kidman

(31) Many companies will experience friction between staff.

(32) Training specifically tailored to a company is more efficient than generic training.

(33) Modern methods of training, although still only being piloted, can bring people from different perspectives together.

(34) Successful team relationships are formed in a positive work environment.

(35) A lack of clarity as to what the term 'team building' means.

Questions 36-40

Complete the summary **USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from Reading Passage 3 for each answer.

Team building can be considered to have (36) _____ clear stages. Initially, it is essential to be clear as to the (37) _____ of the entire team or company. Those barriers which are preventing the team from achieving these aims are identified as (38) _____, and are addressed by introducing enablers. Here the use of (38) _____ can be used to help build a cooperative relationship. Finally, success can be quantified and continually(40)_____.