IELTS READING SKILLS

In order to understand a reading passage, you need to understand the context of a passage. You need to have a clue about the topic. When you pick up a paper to read, you scan the headlines and choose an article that interests you. The clues in the newspaper (headlines, graphics, and photos) catch your eye and give you a context.

A passage on the IELTS is given to you; you did not choose to read it. There are few clues. You do not know what it is about. It may or may not interest you. Yet in order to understand it, you need some clues to help you understand the passage. Without the clues, you will not understand it very well. To score welt on the IELTS, you should determine what you know and what you need to know.

When you look at a passage, you must make some predictions about the passage.

What is the passage about?
What is the main idea?
Who are the characters?
When are things taking place?
Where is it happening?
Why is it important?

You wanr to know who, what, when, where, and why.

In this section you will learn how the following can give you the answers to: *Who? What? When? Where?* and *Why?*
Using the first paragraph
Using the topic sentences Using specific details
Using the questions and answers

IELTS Reading Passage 1

Read the passage and answer the questions. Use your predicting skills. Note the type of questions:

Zulu Beadwork

The South African province of KwaZulu-Natal, more commonly referred to as the Zulu Kingdom, is named after the Zulu people who have inhabited the area since the late 1400s. KwaZulu translates to mean "Place of Heaven." "Natal" was the name the Portuguese explorers gave this region when they arrived in 1497. At that time, only a few Zulu clans occupied the area. By the late 1700s, the AmaZulu clan, meaning "People of Heaven," constituted a significant nation. Today the Zulu clan represents the largest ethnic group in South Africa, with at least 11 million people in the kingdom. The Zulu people are known around the world for their elaborate glass beadwork, which they wear not only in their traditional costumes but as part of their everyday apparel. It is possible to learn much about the culture of the Zulu clan through their beadwork.

The glass bead trade in the province of KwaZulu-Natal is believed to be a fairly recent industry. In 1824, an Englishman named Henry Francis Fynn brought glass beads to the region to sell to the African people. Though the British are not considered the first to introduce glass beads, they were a main source through which the Zulu people could access the merchandise they needed. Glass beads had already been manufactured by the Egyptians centuries earlier around the same time when glass was discovered. Some research points to the idea that Egyptians tried to fool South Africans with glass by passing it off as jewels similar in value to gold or ivory. Phoenician mariners brought cargoes of these beads to Africa along with other wares. Before the Europeans arrived, many Arab traders brought glass beads down to the southern countries via camelback. During colonization', the Europeans facilitated and monopolized the glass bead market, and the Zulu nation became even more closely tied to this art form.

The Zulu people were not fooled into believing that glass beads were precious stones but, rather, used the beads to establish certain codes and rituals in their society. In the African tradition, kings were known to wear beaded regalia so heavy that they required the help of attendants to get out of their thrones. Zulu beadwork is involved in every realm of society, from religion and politics to family and marriage. Among the Zulu women, the craft of beadwork is used as an educational tool as well as a source of recreation and fashion. Personal adornment items include jewelry, skirts, neckbands, and aprons. Besides clothing and accessories, there are many other beaded objects in the Zulu culture, such as bead-covered gourds, which are carried around by women who are having fertility problems. Most importantly, however, Zulu beadwork is a source of communication. In the Zulu tradition, beads are a part of the language with certain words and symbols that can be easily read. A finished product is considered by many artists and collectors to be extremely poetic.

The code behind Zulu beadwork is relatively basic and extremely resistant to change. A simple triangle is the geometric shape used in almost all beaded items. A triangle with the apex pointing downward signifies an unmarried man, while one with the tip pointing upward is worn by an unmarried woman. Married women wear items with two triangles that form a diamond shape, and married men signify their marital status with two triangles that form an hourglass shape. Colors are also significant, though

slightly more complicated since each color can have a negative and a positive meaning. Educated by their older sisters, young Zulu girls quickly learn how to send the appropriate messages to a courting male. Similarly, males learn how to interpret the messages and how to wear certain beads that express their interest in marriage. The codes of the beads are so strong that cultural analysts fear that the beadwork tradition could prevent the Zulu people from progressing technologically and economically. Socioeconomic data shows that the more a culture resists change the more risk there is in a value system falling apart. Though traditional beadwork still holds a serious place in Zulu culture, the decorative art form is often modified for tourists, with popular items such as the beaded fertility doll.

Matching

Questions 1-3

Match each definition in List A with the term it defines in List B.

Write the correct letter **A - E** in boxes **1 - 3** on your answer sheet. There are more terms than definitions, so you will not use them all.

List A	Definitions
1	It means Place of Heaven.
2	It is the Portuguese name for southern Africa.
3	It means People of Heaven.

List B	Terms
A	Phoenician
B	Phoenician
C	AmaZulu
D	Explorer
E	KwaZulu

Short-Answer Questions

Questions 4-6

Answer the questions below.
Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.
Write your answers is boxes 4-6 on your answer sheet.

4 Which country does the Zulu clan reside in?

5 When did the Portuguese arrive in KwaZulu-Natal?

6 How many members of the Zulu Kingdom are there?

True-False-Not Given Questions

Questions 7-11

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the passage?

In boxes 7-11 on your answer sheet, write
TRUE if the statement is true according to the passage
FALSE if the statement contradicts the passage
NOT GIVEN if there is no information about this in the passage

7 The British were the first people to sell glass beads in Africa.

8 Henry Frances Flynn made a lot of money selling glass beads to the Zulu people.

9 The Zulu people believed that glass beads were precious stones.

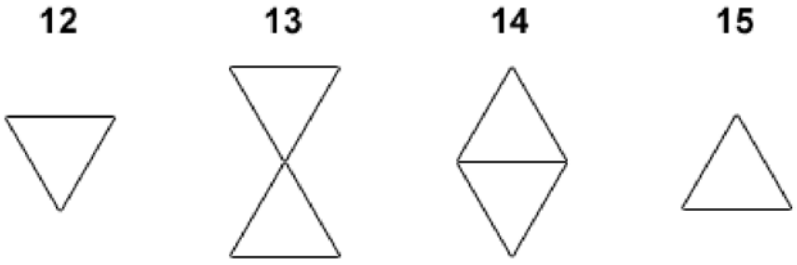
10 The Zulu people use glass beads in many aspects of their daily lives.

11 Zulu women believe that bead-covered gourds can help them have babies.

Labeling a Diagram

Label the diagram below. Choose one or two words from the reading passage for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 12-15 on your answer sheet.

Zulu Beadwork Code



Answer Key

1. (E) Paragraph 1 states: "KwaZulu translates to mean "Place of Heaven."

2. (B) Paragraph 1 states: ""Natal' was the name the Portuguese explorers gave this region when they arrived in 1497"

3. (C) Paragraph 1 states: "By the late 1700s, the AmaZulu clan, meaning "People of Heaven,' constituted a significant nation."

4. South Africa. The first sentence of Paragraph 1 states that KwaZulu-Natal is a South African province.

5. 1497. Paragraph 1 states: "Portuguese explorers ..: arrived in 1497."

6. 11 million. Midway through paragraph 1 the passage states: "Today the Zulu clan represents the largest ethnic group in South Africa, with at least 11 million people in the kingdom."

7. False. Paragraph 2 talks about how the Egyptians were the first to bring beads to the area, though the British later facilitated the trade.

8. Not Given. Paragraph 2 states that Henry Frances Flynn brought glass beads to the region, but it doesn't state anywhere that he earned a lot of money doing this.

9. False. Paragraph 3 states: "The Zulu people were not fooled into believing that glass beads were precious stones but, rather, used the beads to establish certain codes and rituals in their society."

10. True. Paragraphs 3 discusses how beads are used for adornment, education, recreation, and communication.

11. True. Paragraph 3 discusses how bead-covered gourds are carried around by women who are having fertility problems. "Fertility problems" means difficulty becoming and staying pregnant.

12. unmarried man. Paragraph 4 states: "A triangle with the apex pointing downward signifies an unmarried man.

13. married man. Paragraph 4 states that "married men signify their marital status with two triangles that form an hourglass shape."

14. married woman. Paragraph 4 states: "Married women wear items with twb triangles that form a diamond shape."

15. unmarried woman. Paragraph 4 states that a triangle "with the tip pointing upward is worn by an unmarried woman."

IELTS Reading Passage 2

Read the passage and answer the questions. Use your predicting skills. Note the type of questions.

Choosing Headings
Questions 1-5

the following reading passage has five sections **A-E**.

Choose the correct heading for each section from the list of headings on the next page.

Write the correct number i-viii in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet. There are more headings than sections, so you will not use them all.

1	Section **A**
2	Section **B**
3	Section **C**
4	Section **D**
5	Section **E**

i	Colorblindness' in different countries
ii	Diagnosing colorblindness
iii	What is colorblindness?
iv	Curing colorblindness
v	Unsolved myths
vi	Animals and colorblindness
vii	Developing the ability to see color
viii	Colorblindness and the sexes

Colorblindness

A Myths related to the causes and symptoms of "colorblindness" abound throughout the world. The term itself is misleading, since it is extremely rare for anyone to have a complete lack of color perception. By look ing into the myths related to color blindness, one can learn many facts about the structure and genetics o the human eye. It is a myth that colorblind people see the world as if it were a black and white movie. There are very few cases of complete colorblindness. Those who have a complete lack of color perception are referred to as monochromatics, and usually have a serious problem with their overall vision as well as an inability to see colors. The fact is that in most cases of colorblindness, there are only certain shades that a person cannot distinguish between. These people are said to be dichromatic. They may not be able to tell the difference between red and green, or orange and yellow. A person with normal color vision has what is called trichromatic vision. The difference between the three levels of color perception have to do with the cones in the human eye. A normal human eye has three cones located inside the retina: the red cone, the green cone, and the yellow cone. Each cone contains a specific pigment whose function is to absorb

the light of these colors and the combinations of them. People with trichromatic vision have all three cones in working order. When one of the three cones does not function properly, dichromatic vision occurs.

B Some people believe that only men can be colorblind. This is also a myth, though it is not completely untrue. In an average population, 8% of males exhibit some form of colorblindness, while only 0.5% of women do. While there may be some truth to the idea that more men have trouble matching their clothing than women, the reason that color vision deficiency is predominant in males has nothing to do with fashion. The fact is that the gene for color blindness is located on the X chromosome, which men only have one of. Females have two X chromosomes, and if one carries the defective gene, the other one naturally compensates. Therefore, the only way for a female to inherit colorblindness is for both of her X chromosomes to carry the defective gene. This is why the incidence of color deficiency is sometimes more prevalent in extremely small societies that have a limited gene pool.

C It is true that all babies are born colorblind. A baby's cones do not begin to differentiate between many different colors until he is approximately four months old. This is why many of the modern toys for very young babies consist of black and white patterns or primary colors, rather than traditional soft pastels. However, some current research points to the importance of developing an infant's color visual system. In 2004, Japanese researcher Yoichi Sugita of the Neuroscience Research Institute performed an experiment that would suggest that color vision deficiency isn't entirely genetic. In his experiment, he subjected a group of baby monkeys to monochromatic lighting for one year. He later compared their vision to normal monkey who had experienced the colorful world outdoors. It was found that the test monkeys were unable to perform the color-matching tasks that the normal monkeys could. Nevertheless, most cases of colorblindness are attributed to genetic factors that are present at birth.

D Part of the reason there are so many inconsistencies related to colorblindness, or "color vision deficiency" as it is called in the medical world, is that it is difficult to know exactly which colors each human can see. Children are taught from a very young age that an apple is red. Naming colors allows children to associate a certain shade with a certain name, regardless of a color vision deficiency. Someone who never takes a color test can go through life thinking that what they see as red is called green. Children are generally tested for colorblindness at about four years of age. The Ishihara Test is the most common, though it is highly criticized' because it requires that children have the ability to recognize numerals. In the Ishihara Test, a number made up of colored dots is hidden inside a series of dots of a different shade. Those with normal vision can distinguish the number from the background, while those with color vision deficiency will only see the dots.

E While many of the myths related to colorblindness have been busted by modern science, there are still a few remaining beliefs that require more research in order to be labeled as folklore. For example, there is a long-standing belief that colorblindness can aid military soldiers because it gives them the ability to see through camouflage. Another belief is that everyone becomes colorblind in an emergency situation. The basis of this idea is that a catastrophic event can overwhelm the brain, causing it to utilize only those receptors needed to perform vital tasks. In general, identifying color is not considered an essential task in a life or death situation.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Questions 6-8

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C, or D. Write your answers in boxes 6-8 on your Answer Sheet.

6 People who see color normally are called

A monochromatic.

B dichromatic.

C tichromatic.

D colorblind.

7 Children usually begin to see a variety of colors by the age of

A one month.

B four months.

C one year.

D four years.

8 Children who take the Ishihara Test must be able to

A distinguish letters.

B write their names.

C read numbers.

D name colors.

Completing a Summery

Questions 9-12

Complete the summary using words from the box below.

Write your answers in boxes 9-12 on your Answer Sheet There are more answers than spaces, so you will not use them all.

It is a common **9** ..... that only men suffer from colorblindness. On average **10** ..... than ten percent of men have this problem. Women have two **11** ..... For this reason it is **12** ..... for a woman to suffer from colorblindness.

myth	**a little less**
X chromosomes	**defective genes**
fact	**slightly more**
exactly	**less likely**
more probable	

.

Answer Key

Note: Alternative spellings:. colour blindness, colour, colourful

1. iii. What is Colorblindness? Paragraph A discusses what people think color blindness is, and what it really is. In the middle of the paragraph it states, The fact is that in most cases of colorblindness, there are only certain shades that a person cannot distinguish between. These people are said to be dichromatic."

2. viii. Colorblindness and the Sexes. Paragraph B discusses the fact that men are more prone to colorblindness than women, and states the genetic reasons why this is the case.

3. vii. Developing the Ability to See Color. Paragraph C discusses the fact that babies are alt born colorblind and that they do not develop the ability to see colors until they are a few months old. This paragraph also discusses the possibility that infants may require a colorful environment in order to develop proper color vision.

4. ii. diagnosing Colorblindness. Paragraph R discusses the reasons why colorblindness is difficult to diagnose. It also discusses the Ishihara Test, which distinguishes those who are colorblind from those who have normal color vision.

5. v. Unsolved Myths. Paragraph E mentions two beliefs about colorblindness that haven't been proven as myths: that colorblindness can aid military soldiers and that everyone is colorblind in an emergency.

6. (C) The second to the last sentence of Paragraph A states that: "People with trichromatic vision have all three cones in working order."

7. (B) The second sentence in Paragraph C states that: "A baby's cones do not begin to differentiate between many different colors until he is approximately four months old."

8. (C) Paragraph R states the main downfall of the Ishihara Test: "The Ishihara Test is the most common, though it is highly criticized because it requires that children have the ability to recognize numerals."

9. myth. Paragraph B introduces the idea that although color vision deficiency is predominant in males, it is still possible for females to be colorblind.

10. a little less. Paragraph B states: "In an average population, 8% of males exhibit some form of colorblindness.

11. X chromosomes. Paragraph B states: "Females have two X chromosomes."

12. less likely. Paragraph B explains that it is less likely for women to be colorblind, because if one of their X chromosomes "carries the defective gene, the other one naturally compensates." "Compensate" means to make up for another's weakness.

IELTS Reading Passage 3

Read the passage and answer the questions. Use your predicting skills. Note the type of questions.

Antarctic Penguins

Though penguins are assumed to be native to the South Pole, only four of the seventeen species have evolved the survival adaptations necessary to live and breed in the Antarctic year round. The physical features of the Adelie, Chinstrap, Gentoo, and Emperor penguins equip them to withstand the harshest living conditions in the world. Besides these four species, there are a number of others, including the yellow feathered Macaroni penguin and the King penguin that visit the Antarctic regularly but migrate to warmer waters to breed. Penguins that live in Antarctica year round have a thermoregulation system and a survival sense that allows them to live comfortably both on the ice and in the water.

In the dark days of winter, when the Antarctic sees virtually no sunlight, the penguins that remain on the ice sheet sleep most of the day. To retain heat, penguins huddle in communities of up to 6,000 of their own species. When it's time to create a nest, most penguins build up a pile of rocks on top of the ice to place their eggs. The Emperor penguin, however, doesn't bother with a nest at all. The female Emperor lays just one egg and gives it to the male to protect while she goes off for weeks to feed. The male balances the egg on top of his feet, covering it with a small fold of skin called a brood patch. In the huddle, the male penguins rotate regularly so that none of the penguins have to stay on the outside of the circle exposed to the wind and cold for long periods of time. When it's time to take a turn on the outer edge of the pack, the penguins tuck their feathers in and shiver. The movement provides enough warmth until they can head back into the inner core and rest in the warmth. In order to reduce the cold of the ice, penguins often put their weight on their heels and tails. Antarctic penguins also have complex nasal passages that prevent 80 percent of their heat from leaving the body. When the sun is out, the black dorsal plumage attracts its rays and penguins can stay warm enough to waddle or slide about alone.

Antarctic penguins spend about 75 percent of their lives in the water. A number of survival adaptations allow them to swim through water as cold as -2 degrees Celsius. In order to stay warm in these temperatures, penguins have to keep moving. Though penguins don't fly in the air, they are often said to fly through water. Instead of stopping each time they come up for air, they use a technique called "porpoising," in which they leap up for a quick breath while swiftly moving forward: Unlike most birds that have hollow bones for flight, penguins have evolved hard solid bones that keep them low in the water. Antarctic penguins also have unique feathers that work similarly to a waterproof diving suit. Tufts of down trap a layer of air within the feathers, preventing the water from penetrating the penguin's skin. The pres¬sure of a deep dive releases this air, and a penguin has to rearrange the feathers through a process called "preening." Penguins also have an amazing circulatory system, which in extremely cold waters diverts blood from the flippers and legs to the heart.

While the harsh climate of the Antarctic doesn't threaten the survival of Antarctic penguins, overheating can be a concern, and therefore, global warming is a threat to them. Temperate species have certain physical features such as fewer feathers and less blubber to keep them cool on a hot day. African penguins have bald patches on their legs and face where excess heat can be released. The blood vessels in the penguin's skin dilate when the body begins to overheat, and the heat rises to the surface of the body. Penguins who are built for cold winters of the Antarctic have other survival

techniques for a warm day, such as moving to shaded areas, or holding their fins out away from their bodies.

Classifying Information

Questions 1-5

Classify the following facts as applying to
A Antarctic penguins

B Temperature-area penguins
Write the appropriate letter, A or B, in boxes i-5 on your answer sheet.
1 stand in large groups to keep warm

2 spend about three quarters of its time in the water

3 have feathers that keep cold water away from its skin

4 have areas of skin without feathers

5 have less blubber.

Completing Sentences

Questions 6-9

Complete each of the following sentences with information from the reading passage. Write your answers in boxes 6-9 on your Answer Sheet. Write No MORE THAN THREE words for each answer.
6 Most penguins use ..... to build their nests.

7 While the male emperor penguin takes care of the egg, the female goes away to ..... .

8 A ..... is a piece of skin that the male emperor penguin uses to protect the egg.

9 Penguins protect their feet from the cold of the ice by standing on their .....

Choosing Answers from a List

Questions 10-13

The article mentions many facts about penguins.

Which four of the following features are things that enable them to survive in very cold water?

Write the appropriate letters **A-H** in boxes 10-13 on your Answer Sheet.

A They move through the water very quickly.

B They hold their flippers away from their bodies. C They choose shady areas.

C When necessary, their blood moves away from the flippers and toward the heart.

D They breathe while still moving.

E The blood vessels in their skin dilate.

F They waddle and slide.

G Their feathers hold in a layer of air near the skin.

Answer Key

1. (A) Paragraph 2 discusses how Antarctic penguins "huddle in communities" to keep warm.

2. (A) The first sentence of Paragraph 3 states: "Antarctic penguins spend about 75 percent of their lives in the water."

3. (B) Paragraph 3 discusses the unique feathers of Antarctic penguins that that work similarly to a waterproof diving suit: "Tufts of down trap a layer of air within the feathers, preventing the water from penetrating the penguin's skin."

4. (A) Paragraph 4 states: "Temperate species have certain physical features such as fewer feathers and less blubber to keep them cool on a hot day."

5. (B) Paragraph 4 discusses the bald patches of a temperate species called African penguins.

6. rocks. Paragraph 2 states: "When it's time to create a nest, most penguins build up a pile of rocks on top of the ice to place their eggs."

7. feed/eat. Paragraph 2 discusses the Emperor penguin's gender roles: "The female Emperor lays just one egg and gives it to the male to protect while she goes off for weeks to feed."

8. brood patch. Paragraph-2 explains how the male Emperor penguin takes care of the egg: "The male balances the egg on top of his feet, covering it with a small fold of skin called a brood patch."

9. heels and tails. Toward the end of paragraph 2 the text states: "In order to reduce the cold of the ice, penguins often put their weight on their heels and tails."

10. (A) Paragraph 3 states that penguins have to keep moving to stay warm. Their swimming is compared to flight.

11. (R)The last sentence in Paragraph 3 describes the penguin's circulatory system: "Penguins also have an amazing circulatory system, which in extremely cold waters diverts blood from the flippers and legs to the heart."

12. (E) Paragraph 3 describes "porpoising" which penguins do in order to be able to breathe without having to stop swimming.

13. (H) Paragraph 3 describes how feathers keep Antarctic penguins dry: "Tufts of down trap a layer of air within the feathers, preventing the water from penetrating the penguin's skin." Choice (B), (C), and (F) are incorrect because these are all of examples of how penguins stay cool.