

IELTS Academic Reading Practice Test 2

Original Britfluency Practice Paper

This is an original IELTS-style Academic Reading practice test, not an official IELTS paper. It contains three reading passages and 40 questions.

Instructions for students

You should spend **60 minutes** on this test.

There are **three reading passages** and **40 questions**.

Write your answers as you complete the test. In the real IELTS Reading test, there is **no extra transfer time**, so you must write your final answers within the 60 minutes.

Each correct answer receives **1 mark**.

Do **not** use a dictionary.

Reading Passage 1

The Quiet Revival of Repair Cafes

A In many towns, a familiar pattern has developed around broken household objects. A toaster stops working, a jacket zip breaks or a lamp refuses to switch on, and the item is thrown away because replacing it seems cheaper and easier than repairing it. In recent years, however, repair cafes have begun to challenge this habit. These are community events where volunteers help people mend everyday objects, usually for free or for a small donation. The idea is simple, but its appeal has grown because it connects environmental concerns with practical skills and social contact.

B The first repair cafes were closely associated with campaigns against waste. Modern consumer goods are often difficult to open, contain glued parts or require specialist tools. Even when a repair is technically possible, labour costs may make it uneconomic. Repair cafe organisers argue that this system encourages unnecessary disposal. By showing people that many faults are minor, they hope to extend the life of products and reduce the amount of material sent to landfill. A successful repair is satisfying, but even an unsuccessful attempt can teach the owner more about how an object works.

C A typical repair cafe is informal. Visitors bring broken items and sit with a volunteer while the problem is examined. The volunteer may replace a fuse, sew a seam, sharpen a knife or diagnose a fault in a small electrical device. Importantly, the visitor is usually encouraged to watch and participate rather than simply hand the item over. This educational element distinguishes repair cafes from ordinary repair shops. The aim is not to compete with local businesses, but to increase confidence and awareness, especially for repairs that are too small or inexpensive for commercial services.

D The movement also depends on a particular kind of volunteer knowledge. Many repairers are retired engineers, hobbyists, dressmakers or people who grew up in households where mending was normal. Their skills are valuable partly because they are becoming less common. Younger visitors may never have been taught how to change a plug, stitch fabric neatly or identify a loose connection. Repair cafes therefore act as informal spaces for passing knowledge between generations. The exchange is not always one-way: younger volunteers may be better at finding manuals online or identifying replacement parts.

E There are limits to what repair cafes can do. Volunteers normally avoid tasks that could be dangerous or legally problematic, such as major electrical work, gas appliances or repairs involving safety-critical

equipment. Some products are deliberately designed in ways that make repair difficult, and replacement parts may be unavailable. Organisers must also manage expectations. A repair cafe cannot promise that every item will be saved, and visitors may need to accept that some objects have reached the end of their useful life.

F Despite these limitations, repair cafes have become symbols of a broader change in attitudes. They suggest that ownership need not mean passive consumption followed by disposal. For local authorities, they can support waste-reduction targets; for residents, they offer a low-pressure way to learn practical skills; and for volunteers, they provide a meaningful social role. The strongest argument for repair cafes may not be that they fix every broken object, but that they make repair visible again.

Questions 1-6

Complete the notes below.

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

1. Repair cafes challenge the habit of replacing broken _____.
2. Organisers say the current system encourages unnecessary _____.
3. Visitors are usually encouraged to watch and _____ in the repair process.
4. Repair cafes should not be seen as ordinary _____.
5. Many useful repair skills are becoming less _____.
6. Some volunteers are good at finding manuals _____.

Questions 7-10

Classify the following activities according to whether repair cafe volunteers are likely to do them.

Write the correct letter, **A, B or C**.

A Usually suitable at a repair cafe **B** Normally avoided at a repair cafe **C** Not mentioned in the passage

7. replacing a fuse _____
8. repairing a gas appliance _____
9. sharpening a knife _____
10. repairing a mobile phone screen _____

Questions 11-13

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C or D**.

11. What does the writer say about unsuccessful repair attempts?
- A. They prove that repair cafes are ineffective.
 - B. They may still help owners understand their possessions.
 - C. They should be avoided by experienced volunteers.
 - D. They usually damage products permanently.

12. According to the passage, repair cafes help connect

- A. commercial repair companies with manufacturers.
- B. local authorities with international businesses.
- C. environmental aims with skills and social contact.
- D. schools with waste-management companies.

13. What is the writer's main conclusion about repair cafes?

- A. They are valuable because they make repair visible again.
- B. They should replace professional repair shops.
- C. They can repair almost every household object.
- D. They work best when visitors are not involved.

Reading Passage 2

When Rivers Are Given Their Space Back

A For much of the twentieth century, river management in industrialised countries followed a similar logic: rivers were straightened, embanked and controlled so that water could be moved quickly away from towns, roads and farmland. This approach seemed efficient, especially when the goal was to prevent local flooding or create land for development. Over time, however, its weaknesses became clearer. Fast-moving water can increase flood risk downstream, while concrete channels often damage habitats and disconnect rivers from the wetlands and floodplains that once absorbed seasonal flows.

B A different philosophy is now influencing river restoration. Instead of forcing rivers to behave like drainage canals, some engineers and ecologists are trying to give them more room. This can involve moving flood defences away from the riverbank, reconnecting old side channels or allowing water to spread across selected areas during periods of heavy rain. The approach is sometimes described as making space for water. It does not mean abandoning flood protection; rather, it changes the location and method of protection so that natural processes can do part of the work.

C One advantage of floodplain reconnection is that it can slow the movement of water through a catchment. When a river spills safely into a designated floodplain, the water is temporarily stored rather than rushed downstream. This can reduce peak flows, giving towns further along the river more time and lowering the pressure on walls and barriers. The effect depends on the size, shape and position of the restored area, so not every project produces the same level of flood reduction. Nevertheless, in suitable locations, floodplains can become useful components of a larger risk-management system.

D Ecological benefits can be equally significant. Wetlands created by periodic flooding provide feeding and breeding areas for birds, insects, amphibians and fish. Sediments carried by floodwater can enrich soils, while varied water depths create a mixture of habitats. Straight, uniform channels tend to support fewer species because they lack shelter and variation. A restored river may develop pools, gravel bars and vegetated margins, all of which increase biodiversity. For this reason, river restoration is often presented as both a flood-management strategy and a nature-recovery project.

E Farmers sometimes view these schemes with caution, especially when they involve productive land. Losing land to occasional flooding may reduce short-term income, and there may be concerns about access, drainage and compensation. Successful projects therefore require negotiation rather than simple instruction. In some cases, farmers receive payments for allowing land to flood at certain times. In others, less productive fields are converted into wetland while higher-value areas remain protected. Trust is important because restoration changes how land is used, not just how rivers are managed.

F Urban river restoration presents different challenges. In built-up areas, space is limited and land values are high. Removing concrete banks may be difficult when roads, houses or underground services are close to the water. However, even small changes can help. Planting riverside vegetation, creating stepped banks or opening short sections of buried streams can improve water quality and make urban areas more attractive. Such projects may not transform flood risk on their own, but they can reconnect residents with rivers that were previously hidden or treated as hazards.

G Critics point out that restoration is not a universal answer. Extreme rainfall can overwhelm both natural and engineered systems, especially as climate change increases the intensity of storms in some regions. Poorly designed schemes may move problems elsewhere or create conflict with land users. Monitoring is therefore essential. Hydrologists need to measure water levels, ecologists track species recovery, and local communities report practical problems that may not appear in technical models.

H The changing treatment of rivers reflects a wider shift in environmental planning. Rather than relying only on hard barriers and mechanical control, many authorities are beginning to combine engineering with

ecological thinking. This hybrid approach accepts that rivers are dynamic systems. They cannot be returned completely to a pre-industrial state, but they can be managed in ways that reduce risk while restoring some of their natural functions. The question is no longer whether rivers should be controlled or left alone, but how much freedom they can safely be given.

Questions 14-18

Reading Passage 2 has eight paragraphs, A-H.

Which paragraph contains the following information? Write the correct letter, **A-H**.

14. a warning that restored floodplains do not all reduce flooding equally _____
15. examples of small-scale river improvements in cities _____
16. the idea that farmers may be paid for changes in land use _____
17. a contrast between older river control and a newer approach _____
18. the need to collect evidence after restoration schemes begin _____

Questions 19-22

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

19. Older river control was designed to _____
20. Reconnected floodplains may reduce downstream pressure by _____
21. Restored rivers often support more wildlife because they _____
22. Urban river restoration is difficult where _____

- A. giving water temporary storage during heavy rain.
- B. moving water quickly away from developed areas.
- C. returning every river to its pre-industrial condition.
- D. creating more varied habitats than uniform channels.
- E. land may be expensive and physically crowded.
- F. removing the need for future monitoring.
- G. preventing all damage from extreme rainfall.

Questions 23-26

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

River restoration often requires more than technical planning. Farmers may worry about income, access, drainage and 23. _____. In some projects, lower-value fields are changed into 24. _____, while more valuable land remains protected. In cities, restoration can be difficult because there is limited 25. _____. Overall, many authorities are now using a hybrid approach which combines engineering with ecological 26. _____.

Reading Passage 3

The Value and Danger of Frictionless Convenience

A Digital services increasingly promise to remove friction from daily life. A meal can be ordered with a few taps, a subscription can renew automatically, and a video platform can begin playing the next episode before the viewer has made a decision. In business language, friction usually means any delay, effort or uncertainty that prevents a customer from completing an action. Removing it can make services easier and more inclusive, particularly for people with limited time, mobility or confidence online. Yet convenience is not always neutral. When decisions become effortless, people may make more of them without reflection.

B Designers often try to reduce friction because it improves completion rates. If a form is shorter, more people submit it. If payment details are stored, more people buy. If a transport app shows the quickest route instantly, fewer users abandon the task. In many cases, this is beneficial. Complicated processes can exclude people, and unnecessary steps waste attention. A well-designed hospital appointment system, for example, should not require patients to understand bureaucratic structures before they can get help.

C However, the same principles can be used to encourage behaviour that benefits companies more than users. One-click purchasing reduces the moment in which a customer might reconsider. Infinite scrolling removes the natural pause that once occurred when a page ended. Autoplay turns a single viewing choice into a sequence. These designs do not force anyone to continue, but they weaken the points at which people might stop. The result is a subtle shift from deliberate choice towards automatic continuation.

D Some economists describe this as a problem of present bias. People often give too much weight to immediate satisfaction and too little weight to future costs. Friction can sometimes protect long-term interests by creating a small space for reconsideration. A waiting period before a large financial transfer, a confirmation step before deleting data or a monthly reminder before a subscription renews may feel inconvenient, but each can prevent decisions that users later regret. In these cases, friction is not a design failure; it is a safeguard.

E The challenge is deciding which forms of friction are helpful and which are merely obstructive. Password systems illustrate the difficulty. Strong security is necessary, but excessive complexity can lead users to unsafe habits, such as reusing passwords or writing them down in obvious places. Similarly, privacy settings should give people control, but if the settings are scattered across many pages, users may give up and accept defaults they do not understand. Good design should reduce meaningless effort while preserving meaningful choice.

F Regulators have begun to pay closer attention to these issues. Some jurisdictions now restrict so-called dark patterns: design choices that steer users towards decisions they might not otherwise make. Examples include making cancellation much harder than sign-up, hiding extra fees until the final stage of payment or using confusing visual layouts to encourage consent. Regulation is difficult because not every persuasive design is abusive, and user preferences differ. Still, the debate shows that interface design has become a matter of public policy, not simply private taste.

G Businesses also have reasons to think carefully about friction. In the short term, aggressive convenience can increase sales, viewing time or data collection. In the long term, it may damage trust. Customers who feel trapped in subscriptions or manipulated into purchases are unlikely to remain loyal. Some companies therefore experiment with respectful friction: clear review screens, easy cancellation, spending alerts or prompts that ask users whether they want to continue after a long session. These features may reduce immediate engagement but strengthen the relationship between user and service.

H The deeper issue is that convenience changes the meaning of choice. A decision made after comparison, delay and reflection is different from one made in the half-second before a thumb touches a screen. Neither is automatically better. Fast decisions can be liberating when the task is routine, but risky

when the consequences are financial, emotional or long-lasting. The future of digital design may depend less on eliminating friction everywhere than on placing it carefully, so that technology supports human judgement rather than quietly replacing it.

Questions 27-32

The reading passage has eight paragraphs, A-H.

Choose the correct heading for paragraphs **B-G** from the list below.

Write the correct number, **i-ix**.

- i. Why companies may benefit from treating users more respectfully
- ii. The role of delay in protecting future interests
- iii. The complete failure of online regulation
- iv. The benefits of removing unnecessary effort
- v. The difficulty of separating useful and harmful effort
- vi. The historical origins of digital shopping
- vii. How smooth design can encourage automatic behaviour
- viii. Public concern about manipulative design
- ix. Why all online decisions should be slowed down

27. Paragraph B _____

28. Paragraph C _____

29. Paragraph D _____

30. Paragraph E _____

31. Paragraph F _____

32. Paragraph G _____

Questions 33-37

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 3?

Write **YES** if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer.

Write **NO** if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer.

Write **NOT GIVEN** if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.

33. Removing friction can sometimes make services easier for users. _____

34. Infinite scrolling creates a clear natural stopping point for users. _____

35. Every persuasive design technique should be illegal. _____

36. Excessively complex password rules may encourage unsafe behaviour. _____

37. The writer believes friction should be placed carefully rather than removed everywhere.

Questions 38-40

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C or D**.

38. In the first paragraph, the writer suggests that frictionless convenience can be problematic because

- A. it always prevents people from accessing services.
- B. it may lead people to act without enough thought.
- C. it makes digital services slower and less attractive.
- D. it is only useful for people with limited mobility.

39. What does the writer say about cancellation processes?

- A. They should be harder than signing up.
- B. They are never influenced by design.
- C. Making them difficult can be a dark pattern.
- D. They should always require a phone call.

40. What is the writer's overall argument?

- A. Digital systems should eliminate every possible delay.
- B. Convenience is useful, but some friction protects judgement.
- C. Users are fully responsible for all online manipulation.
- D. Businesses should ignore trust if engagement increases.