

Cambridge English

IELTS Academic

Lesson Plan: Reading

This lesson plan accompanies *Cambridge IELTS 11 Academic* Test 4, Reading Passage 3.

This lesson is suitable for students of intermediate level and above.

Lesson Goals

1. To raise students' awareness of paragraph matching activities in IELTS Reading
2. To develop strategies to undertake this task successfully
3. To improve summary reading skills

Activity (see brackets for resources required)	Time needed	Interaction
Warmer (Resource 1 for display to class)	10 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the students the photos (Resource 1). Ask students what they are about. • Ask students to work in groups of 3-4 and decide on a title that would be suitable for each photo. Depending on time, you may want to allocate only one to each group. If the students are finding it difficult to come up with ideas, you could show them one of the titles below to give them an example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Flooding brings travel chaos to country</i> ▪ <i>Earthquake causes road damage</i> ▪ <i>Nationwide infestations lead to crop failure</i> • Discuss with students what makes a good title. Ask students how writers decide on the title of a text. What things do they have to consider? Possible answers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>It should reflect in some way what the whole text is about</i> ▪ <i>It should be succinct</i> 	<p>2 mins</p> <p>5 mins</p> <p>3 mins</p>	<p>S-T</p> <p>Ss-Ss</p> <p>S-T</p>
Main activities (Resource 2 cut up into paragraphs for each group, Resource 3 for each group)	35 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students they are going to read part of a text (Resource 2) with the title of '<i>This Marvellous Invention</i>'. Write/Show the title on the board and ask students to predict what they think it will be about. • Give out the first of the three cut-up paragraphs (Paragraph A) of the text to students in their groups. One paragraph for each group. Ask students to compare their predictions of the topic 	<p>2 mins</p> <p>3 mins</p>	<p>T then S-T</p> <p>Ss-Ss</p>

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<p>with the content of the paragraph they have in front of them. Confirm everyone knows the topic is 'language'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the groups to read their paragraph carefully and, as with the photographs, suggest a title for it based on the content. Ask students to write their title down. 	5 mins	Ss-Ss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write (or ask a group representative to write) the suggested titles for the first paragraph on the board. Ask groups to justify their titles by asking what in the paragraph made them decide on their title. 	5 mins	T then S-T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now give out the other two cut-up paragraphs (B & C) to the groups and ask them to repeat the exercise. Make sure they write their titles down. Depending on the level of the students, you could allow them dictionaries to complete this exercise. 	8 mins	Ss-Ss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give each group of students the list of headings for matching (Resource 3). Ask them to compare with their versions. Ask students to match the most appropriate heading from the list to the three paragraphs they have read. 	4 mins	Ss-Ss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give students the answers to the exercise. 	1 min	T-S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on activity. Possible questions to ask are listed below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If your titles were different to the exam headings, what was the main difference?</i> <i>Which words, phrases or sentences in the paragraph are connected to the actual heading in the exam paper?</i> <p>N.B. This is an important part of the learning process and sufficient time should be allocated to it.</p>	7 mins	S-T
Extension activity (Paragraphs D, E, F from Practice Test 4 p97-98 for each group)	15 mins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give out the rest of the text (paragraphs D – F) and encourage students to follow the same procedure (i.e. reading each paragraph and trying to create a written summary for each one before comparing their summary with the remaining headings). Feedback as before. 	15 mins	Ss-Ss

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Resource 1 – Photos for summarising



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Resource 2

A. Of all mankind's manifold creations, language must take pride of place. Other inventions - the wheel, agriculture, sliced bread - may have transformed our material existence, but the advent of language is what made us human. Compared to language, all other inventions pale in significance, since everything we have ever achieved depends on language and originates from it. Without language, we could never have embarked on our ascent to unparalleled power over all other animals, and even over nature itself.

B. But language is foremost not just because it came first. In its own right it is a tool of extraordinary sophistication, yet based on an idea of ingenious simplicity: 'this marvellous invention of composing out of twenty-five or thirty sounds that infinite variety of expressions which, whilst having in themselves no likeness to what is in our mind, allow us to disclose to others its whole secret, and to make known to those who cannot penetrate it all that we imagine, and all the various stirrings of our soul'. This was how, in 1660, the renowned French grammarians of the Port-Royal abbey near Versailles distilled the essence of language, and no one since has celebrated more eloquently the magnitude of its achievement. Even so, there is just one flaw in all these hymns of praise, for the homage to language's unique accomplishment conceals a simple yet critical incongruity. Language is mankind's greatest invention - except, of course, that it was never invented. This apparent paradox is at the core of our fascination with language, and it holds many of its secrets.

C. Language often seems so skillfully drafted that one can hardly imagine it as anything other than the perfected handiwork of a master craftsman. How else could this instrument make so much out of barely three dozen measly morsels of sound? In themselves, these configurations of mouth - *p, f, b, v, t, d, k, g, sh, a, e* and so on - amount to nothing more than a few haphazard spits and splutters, random noises with no meaning, no ability to express, no power to explain. But run them through the cogs and wheels of the language machine, let it arrange them in some very special orders, and there is nothing that these meaningless streams of air cannot do: from sighing the interminable boredom of existence to unravelling the fundamental order of the universe.

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Resource 3

- Apparently incompatible characteristics of language
- The way in which a few sounds are organised to convey a huge range of meaning
- Why language is the most important invention of all

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READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 27–40**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 on the following pages.

Questions 27–32

Reading Passage 3 has six paragraphs, **A–F**.

Choose the correct heading for paragraphs **A–F** from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, **i–vii**, in boxes 27–32 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i** Differences between languages highlight their impressiveness
- ii** The way in which a few sounds are organised to convey a huge range of meaning
- iii** Why the sounds used in different languages are not identical
- iv** Apparently incompatible characteristics of language
- v** Even silence can be meaningful
- vi** Why language is the most important invention of all
- vii** The universal ability to use language

- 27** Paragraph **A**
- 28** Paragraph **B**
- 29** Paragraph **C**
- 30** Paragraph **D**
- 31** Paragraph **E**
- 32** Paragraph **F**

‘This Marvellous Invention’

- A** Of all mankind’s manifold creations, language must take pride of place. Other inventions – the wheel, agriculture, sliced bread – may have transformed our material existence, but the advent of language is what made us human. Compared to language, all other inventions pale in significance, since everything we have ever achieved depends on language and originates from it. Without language, we could never have embarked on our ascent to unparalleled power over all other animals, and even over nature itself.
- B** But language is foremost not just because it came first. In its own right it is a tool of extraordinary sophistication, yet based on an idea of ingenious simplicity: ‘this marvellous invention of composing out of twenty-five or thirty sounds that infinite variety of expressions which, whilst having in themselves no likeness to what is in our mind, allow us to disclose to others its whole secret, and to make known to those who cannot penetrate it all that we imagine, and all the various stirrings of our soul’. This was how, in 1660, the renowned French grammarians of the Port-Royal abbey near Versailles distilled the essence of language, and no one since has celebrated more eloquently the magnitude of its achievement. Even so, there is just one flaw in all these hymns of praise, for the homage to language’s unique accomplishment conceals a simple yet critical incongruity. Language is mankind’s greatest invention – except, of course, that it was never invented. This apparent paradox is at the core of our fascination with language, and it holds many of its secrets.
- C** Language often seems so skillfully drafted that one can hardly imagine it as anything other than the perfected handiwork of a master craftsman. How else could this instrument make so much out of barely three dozen measly morsels of sound? In themselves, these configurations of mouth – *p, f, b, v, t, d, k, g, sh, a, e* and so on – amount to nothing more than a few haphazard spits and splutters, random noises with no meaning, no ability to express, no power to explain. But run them through the cogs and wheels of the language machine, let it arrange them in some very special orders, and there is nothing that these meaningless streams of air cannot do: from sighing the interminable boredom of existence to unravelling the fundamental order of the universe.
- D** The most extraordinary thing about language, however, is that one doesn’t have to be a genius to set its wheels in motion. The language machine allows just about everybody – from pre-modern foragers in the subtropical savannah, to post-modern philosophers in the suburban sprawl – to tie these meaningless sounds together into an infinite variety of subtle senses, and all apparently without the slightest exertion. Yet it is precisely this deceptive ease which makes language a victim of its own success, since in everyday life its triumphs are usually taken for granted. The wheels of language run so smoothly that one rarely bothers to stop and think about all the resourcefulness and expertise that must have gone into making it tick. Language conceals art.

Test 4

- E** Often, it is only the estrangement of foreign tongues, with their many exotic and outlandish features, that brings home the wonder of language's design. One of the showiest stunts that some languages can pull off is an ability to build up words of breath-breaking length, and thus express in one word what English takes a whole sentence to say. The Turkish word *şehirliliştiremediklerimizdensiniz*, to take one example, means nothing less than 'you are one of those whom we can't turn into a town-dweller'. (In case you were wondering, this monstrosity really is one word, not merely many different words squashed together – most of its components cannot even stand up on their own.)
- F** And if that sounds like some one-off freak, then consider Sumerian, the language spoken on the banks of the Euphrates some 5,000 years ago by the people who invented writing and thus enabled the documentation of history. A Sumerian word like *munintumáa* ('when he had made it suitable for her') might seem rather trim compared to the Turkish colossus above. What is so impressive about it, however, is not its lengthiness but rather the reverse – the thrifty compactness of its construction. The word is made up of different slots, each corresponding to a particular portion of meaning. This sleek design allows single sounds to convey useful information, and in fact even the absence of a sound has been enlisted to express something specific. If you were to ask which bit in the Sumerian word corresponds to the pronoun 'it' in the English translation 'when he had made it suitable for her', then the answer would have to be nothing. Mind you, a very particular kind of nothing: the nothing that stands in the empty slot in the middle. The technology is so fine-tuned then that even a non-sound, when carefully placed in a particular position, has been invested with a specific function. Who could possibly have come up with such a nifty contraption?

Questions 33–36

Complete the summary using the list of words, **A–G**, below.

Write the correct letter, **A–G**, in boxes 33–36 on your answer sheet.

The importance of language

The wheel is one invention that has had a major impact on **33** aspects of life, but no impact has been as **34** as that of language. Language is very **35**, yet composed of just a small number of sounds.

Language appears to be **36** to use. However, its sophistication is often overlooked.

A	difficult	B	complex	C	original
D	admired	E	material	F	easy
G	fundamental				

Questions 37–40

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

In boxes 37–40 on your answer sheet, write

YES if the statement agrees with the views of the writer
NO if the statement contradicts the views of the writer
NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

- 37** Human beings might have achieved their present position without language.
38 The Port-Royal grammarians did justice to the nature of language.
39 A complex idea can be explained more clearly in a sentence than in a single word.
40 The Sumerians were responsible for starting the recording of events.

READING

**Reading Passage 1,
Questions 1–13**

- 1 FALSE
- 2 NOT GIVEN
- 3 NOT GIVEN
- 4 TRUE
- 5 A
- 6 C
- 7 B
- 8 A
- 9 A
- 10 D
- 11 B
- 12 E
- 13 F

**Reading Passage 2,
Questions 14–26**

- 14 B
- 15 A
- 16 B
- 17 D
- 18 C
- 19 D

- 20 TRUE
- 21 TRUE
- 22 NOT GIVEN
- 23 TRUE
- 24 FALSE
- 25 C
- 26 A

**Reading Passage 3,
Questions 27–40**

- 27 vi
- 28 iv
- 29 ii
- 30 vii
- 31 i
- 32 v
- 33 E
- 34 G
- 35 B
- 36 F
- 37 NO
- 38 YES
- 39 NOT GIVEN
- 40 YES

If you score ...

0–12	13–25	26–40
you are unlikely to get an acceptable score under examination conditions and we recommend that you spend a lot of time improving your English before you take IELTS.	you may get an acceptable score under examination conditions but we recommend that you think about having more practice or lessons before you take IELTS.	you are likely to get an acceptable score under examination conditions but remember that different institutions will find different scores acceptable.