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EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING IELTS READING TESTS WITH
CONFIDENCE

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Annotation. *This article looks at effective methods for boosting IELTS Reading skills. It stresses the need for skimming and scanning techniques and vocabulary growth and time management. The paper also points out the value of regular practice and shares personal insights on how students can improve their reading skills. References to official IELTS resources and guides are included to back up the suggestions.*

Keywords: *IELTS Reading, skimming, scanning, vocabulary development, time management, reading strategies.*

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one of the most widely recognized English proficiency exams worldwide. Many students take this test in order to study or work in English-speaking countries. Among the four sections of the IELTS exam, the reading test is often considered the most challenging. According to the British Council, the IELTS Reading section evaluates a candidate's ability to understand academic texts, identify key ideas, and locate specific information quickly. The reading section consists of three passages and a total of 40 questions, all to be finished in just 60 minutes. The texts are generally taken from books, magazines, academic journals, or newspapers. Since the passages tend to be fairly lengthy and can sometimes be quite challenging, students really need to apply smart and efficient reading techniques to do well on the test.

One of the most important techniques used in IELTS Reading is skimming.

Many teachers and books talk about skimming and scanning as key techniques for it, but here I refer to the words "skimming" and "scanning" as "finding". In fact many students get the wrong answers because they "skim" too quickly and miss the words that they are looking for.

Step 1. You need to be able to find the right part of the text quickly. You should practice finding a lot and then decide which words in the question you need to search for. Then, you should try to locate those words (or words with the same or similar meaning) in the text. When you are looking at sentences to understand the main points, try to find the keywords in the sentences, namely the subject, the verb and the object of the main clause. Try to ignore the other words, particularly the relative clauses and adverbial clauses.

While finding words don't try to understand every word. Jump from paragraph to paragraph, finding the main point in each paragraph before moving on to the next paragraph.



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Step 2. Another useful strategy is scanning. Scanning is a technique used to find specific information such as names, numbers, or dates. According to The Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS, scanning helps students quickly locate key details in a passage without reading the entire text carefully.

For example, if a question asks about a specific year or statistic, students should look for numbers in the passage rather than reading every sentence. This strategy is particularly helpful when answering factual questions in the IELTS Reading test.

Some practical tips that actually help:

- Don't read whole sentences when scanning-just let your eyes slide over numbers, capital letters (names, places), bold/italic words or anything that stands out visually.
- Work on one question at a time to stay focused-don't try to scan for everything at once.
- If the question uses a synonym or paraphrase, think of possible alternative words before you start scanning.
- Once you spot the potential spot, slow down just enough to read that sentence or two carefully.
- Practice helps a ton: try timing yourself to find a specific detail in under 20-30 seconds per question.

Almost all academic reading tests contain difficult but useful words like “corpus” (a collection of written or spoken texts) and “lexicographical” (related to writing dictionaries). According to Cambridge IELTS 17 Academic Student's Book with Answers, understanding synonyms is especially important because the words used in the questions are often different from those used in the text.

While you are looking for keywords it is not necessary to understand every word in the passage. However, you must know over 50% of the words if you want to understand the main points of the passage. It is very important to have a program of vocabulary development to learn 5 to 10 new words a day. Once good useful way to do this by reading articles that you find interesting in newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias and textbooks.

Time management is also crucial in the IELTS Reading test. Students have only 60 minutes to answer 40 questions. Experts from IDP Education recommend dividing the time equally among the three passages. If a question seems too difficult, students should skip it and return later. Spending too much time on a single question may prevent candidates from completing the rest of the test. Practicing under timed conditions can help students improve their speed and efficiency.

Many learners believe that reading is difficult because the texts are long, but the real problem is often the lack of strategy. Techniques such as skimming and scanning help students read more efficiently and reduce stress during the exam. Furthermore, developing a strong vocabulary and reading English materials every day can significantly improve comprehension skills. I believe



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that consistent practice and the use of correct techniques are the key factors for success in IELTS Reading.

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