

**“STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING READING PROFICIENCY”**

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**Abstract**

This research paper aims to explore key areas to enhance reading skills from general to specific including all difficult components for both beginner and upper-intermediate levels. This paper examines effective strategies to improve reading skills specifically for IELTS, thereby maximizing test scores and promoting a deeper comprehension of English academic texts. The study investigates several approaches, including predicting, inferring, summarizing, skimming, and scanning. Moreover, it encompasses familiarity with question types, time management, vocabulary expansion, and intensive reading methods, which emphasizes the significance of a personalized approach and advocates for constant effort and strategic preparation. By implementing these techniques, students can increase their understanding, accuracy, and speed, ultimately reaching higher results.

**Keywords**

time management, comprehension, vocabulary expansion, skimming, scanning, inferring, predicting

**Introduction**

In recent years, the number of young individuals in Uzbekistan achieving impressive scores on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) has surged dramatically. In 2024, approximately 53,000 candidates scored 5.5 or higher, marking a fivefold increase compared to 2020, as reported by Alisher Sadullayev, Director of the Youth Affairs Agency, drawing on data from the British Council and IDP. Despite the rise in high scores, the reading section of the IELTS remains a challenge for many test-takers. The IELTS evaluates English proficiency across four skills: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking, with reading often cited as the most difficult due to time constraints, diverse question types, and complex texts.

The reading module assesses candidates' abilities to comprehend a variety of texts, accurately infer meaning, and interpret data across both academic and general training contexts. Achieving high scores in this section requires not only basic reading skills but also effective strategies and focused practice. As emphasized by educational experts, "Reading is the most crucial skill for a student to master in school because it is a prerequisite for learning other subjects." Strong reading skills are essential for academic and professional success, particularly for non-native English speakers.

The reading section consists of two versions: academic and general training. The academic version includes three passages from books, encyclopedias, and journals, while the general training version features extracts from everyday materials, such as advertisements and brochures. Success in this module demands a robust vocabulary, a good grasp of grammar, and the ability to efficiently locate key information, identify main ideas, and analyze content within a limited timeframe. Common challenges include unfamiliar vocabulary, time pressure, and various question formats, such as True/False/Not Given, Matching Headings, Summary Completion, Multiple Choice, and Short-answer questions. This paper outlines practical strategies to enhance reading comprehension and provides targeted methods to improve proficiency from Pre-intermediate to Upper-intermediate or Advanced levels.

### Methods

**Vocabulary enhancement.** According to Laufer, a strong command of language is key to IELTS reading success. "No text comprehension is possible, either in one's native language or in a foreign language, without understanding the text's vocabulary"<sup>87</sup>. Facing unfamiliar words may interrupt focus and slow reading speed. A rich word power assists in understanding and interpretation of the content. Strategies for vocabulary acquisition include:

**Active reading:** Reading wide-ranging content, such as academic papers, journals, and articles from daily newspapers to enlarge vocabulary resources. Highlighting new words while reading them and learning their meanings by definitions.

**Using context clues:** Recognizing unknown terms from other surrounding words and total meaning. Understanding words within their context rather than rote memorizing.

**Active recall:** Making flashcards to remember unfamiliar words from the text. Maintain a special dictionary and write recent words with examples for revision.

<sup>87</sup> Laufer, B. (1997). The lexical plight in second language reading: words you don't know, words you think you know and words you can't guess. In J. Coady and T. Huckin, (Eds.), *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: a Rationale for Pedagogy* (20-34). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Time management.** "Time management is also a significant issue; learners may spend too much time on difficult sections, leaving insufficient time for the rest of the test. Understanding implied meanings and drawing inferences from the text can further complicate comprehension, while unfamiliar topics can hinder their ability to grasp the content fully. Adhering to specific instructions, such as word limits for answers, can also pose problems, leading to potential errors"<sup>88</sup>. Answering 40 questions within only 60 minutes is demanding. Thus, controlling time effectively is a vital aspect of IELTS. Efficient strategies include:

**Allocating time for every three passages:** Practice reading articles within a limited time. Completing each passage by spending no more than 20 minutes.

**Answering easy questions first:** Missing challenging questions and doing easy ones to save enough time to consider remaining tasks.

**Avoiding overthinking:** If you are having trouble with a particular item, go on to the next question instead of wasting time.

**Intensive reading methods.** Predicting, Inferring, Skimming, and Scanning are crucial for efficient reading and easy comprehension.

**Skimming:** Looking through the passage to understand the main idea of the text. Instead of every word, focus on headings, subheadings, topic sentences, and concluding paragraphs. "Skimming is a specific method for quick and efficient reading. It is the rapid style used mainly to establish what a text is about before deciding where to read it. Normally the reader does not know exactly what he is looking for when skimming reading material. Therefore, the reader can use skimming in three ways"<sup>89</sup>.

**Sampling:** Mostly, the first sentence of each paragraph is likely to be key information. Therefore, reading by sampling may help you to comprehend the general idea of the whole article.

**Locating:** The reader should use locating to find specific information such as names of people or places, words in italics, and other special terms. This technique is helpful for several types of questions like Matching names, Summary completion, and Short-answer questions.

**Previewing:** "It is a combination of the find two techniques that use the first sentence of paragraphs and peripheral vision to identify the salient points. The reader can use previewing to gain an overview and see that pattern of organization

<sup>88</sup> Fitria, T. (2024). Teaching IELTS Reading Skills. Pioneer: Journal Of Language And Literature, 16(1), 94-111. doi:10.36841/pioneer.v16i1.3991

<sup>89</sup> Mya Thandar. (2019). Effective Methods and Strategies of Developing the Reading Skill. International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development, 3(5), 2203–2205. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3591220>

of material or as a means of defining purposes in reading or in assessing the relevance of the material to his immediate needs"<sup>90</sup>.

**Scanning:** "Scanning is reading a text quickly to find specific information. For the IELTS reading test, this will be the information for students to answer a question. Scanning is another everyday skill that students use, for example when deciding what to watch on television, learners should scan the program titles and the times they're on and then they may skim through the descriptive blurb to help them decide what they want to watch"<sup>91</sup>. Scanning quickly looking for particular information such as dates or names in the text while using the search terms from the question as a guide. This assists readers answer questions without reading the entire passage.

**Predicting:** Reading about what they already know, and guessing what will happen next. "This approach also includes student interaction that creates a sense of interest among the students and improves their understanding of the text. A comparison between the outcome of the actual text and the prediction process will guide the learner in developing his understanding of the text. Some of the approaches for teaching prediction are modeling, predicting throughout the text, with associates, with a graphic planner, or using Post-it notes all through the content. Moreover, using the title, table of contents, pictures, and keywords are also integral parts of the prediction approach"<sup>92</sup>.

**Inferring:** "Inferring is the strategy, which requires reading between the lines. In this process, students are expected to use their own knowledge as well as information from the text to come to a conclusion. This process would enable the students to come to conclusions, make predictions, distinguish underlying themes, use the information to generate meaning from text, and use images to create meaning". Inference logically creates conclusions and deductions based on the information provided in the text. When responding to queries that do not explicitly indicate the solution, this is essential.

**Mastering IELTS type-based questions:** Familiarizing yourself with each type of question and finding separate strategies for each type is the most beneficial aspect to success in the reading section. Practicing with all kinds of questions may help students to create their appropriate method for each sort of question. If

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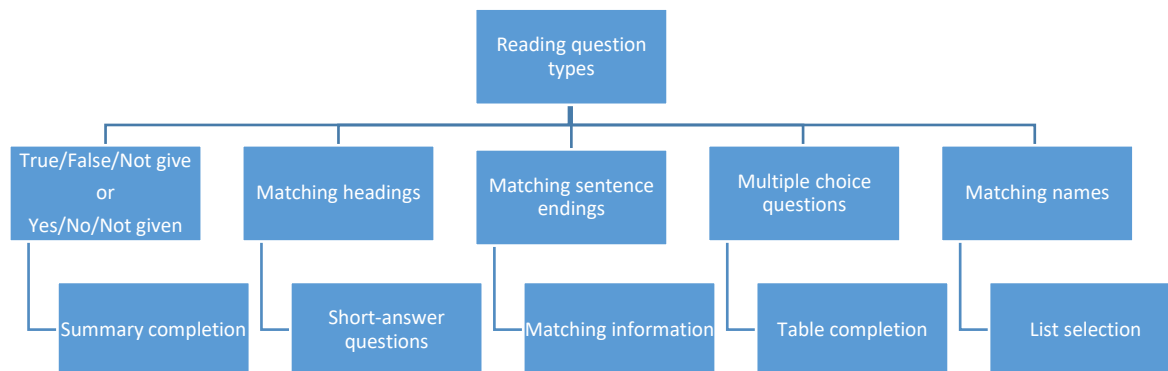
<sup>91</sup> Ziyoviddinova Shoxida. (2023). IMPROVING IELTS READING SKILL THROUGH DIFFERENT READING STRATEGIES. ILM-FAN VA INNOVATSIYA ILMIY-AMALIY KONFERENSIYASI, 2(02), 29–31. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7843392>

<sup>92</sup> Md. Ruhul Amin. (2019). Developing Reading Skills through Effective Reading Approaches. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2557919>



students know the techniques to utilize, they may not be afraid of any task during the exam.

The IELTS reading section consists of 10 types of activities:



## Results

People may think that IELTS reading is the most difficult task. However, with reliable strategies and special study techniques, you will never have a hard time. After the research findings, our overall results have reformed with my group mates. We tried to do reading tasks with the methods of research, and it had a huge impact on our success.

## Discussion

Due to the study, outcomes of this research and experience showed that we had a shortage of knowledge about reading methods before. Although we did not how to do reading sections efficiently, after a comprehensive study, we have noticed an effective improvement on understanding academic articles and doing IELTS reading sections. At the beginning of the study, we really worried about finding own techniques for reading tests by studying other researches. Finally, we have read huge information on topic, and summarized them by selecting suitable methods for students like me. This action of research was a worthwhile experience for me. We found solutions for spending time sufficiently, comprehending challenging texts and I am not scared of varied types of reading questions anymore because of my research consequence.

## Conclusion

Enhancing the reading skills for the IELTS (International English Language Test System) demands vocabulary development, and utilizing the time efficiently. Furthermore, by focusing on special reading strategies and practicing the type-based questions with specific techniques test-takers may be able to improve their performance significantly. To conclude, with customized practice and the right methods, success in the IELTS Reading test is achievable.

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