IELTS Academic Reading Sample 129

Read the passage and answer Questions **27 - 40**

Fierce, fabulous and fantastic

A new exhibition traces the history of animal painting in Europe from the anatomically inaccurate to the highly sentimental.

The first picture you see in the exhibition Fierce Friends: Artists and Animals 1750-1900 is of a giraffe – sort of. Painted in about 1785, the creature in it has the neck of a giraffe, but its back is too long, its haunches too developed, and its legs are out of proportion to its body. Like most Europeans in the 18th century, the anonymous French artist who painted it had never seen a real giraffe. He relied on eyewitness descriptions, and on the skin of a giraffe the scientist and adventurer François Levallard had recently brought back from South Africa.

Exotic animals shipped back to Europe at this time usually died soon after arrival, even supposing they survived the voyage. Until about 1900, taxidermy consisted of stuffing the carcass with straw, so the results fell apart after a few years. This meant that ordinary men and women had very few opportunities to see exotic animals at first hand until the establishment of the first zoos – in Paris in 1793, in London in 1818. For an accurate depiction of a giraffe, Europeans had to wait until 1827 and the arrival of the first living specimen, when the Swiss artist Jacques-Laurent Agasse painted his lovely study of the Nubian giraffe sent to King George IV by the Ottoman Viceroy of Egypt.

For most people in the 18th century, animals meant farm animals, carriage horses, and food for the table. But the Enlightenment was an age both of exploration and of discovery, as more and more species of animals, birds, fish and insects were identified and brought back from the South Seas, Africa and India. In 1740, almost 600 species of animals were known to science. One hundred years later, the number had risen to 2,400, including many that are familiar to most children today as a matter of course – ostrich, rhino, orang-utan and buffalo.

Kings and princes, to be sure, had their own menageries, and wealthy collectors added rare birds, fish and mammals (shown side-by-side with two-headed calves and fake dragons) to their cabinets of curiosities. In this way, the forerunners of modern zoos and museums developed along parallel lines. On special occasions an entrepreneur might exhibit a wild beast to the paying public, as was the case when the Venetian artist Pietro Longhi painted bored masqueraders at carnival time gawping at a pathetic rhinoceros. Out of such displays came another invention of the 19th century, the circus.

Wider knowledge of the animal kingdom came with the publication of George-Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon's multi-volume Histoire Naturelle (1749-88). Based on specimens studied in the royal menageries, this remarkable book is still treasured – not for its scientific accuracy, but for its glorious hand-coloured engravings. Far too expensive for most people to buy, it at least helped to make men and women aware of the beauty of certain animals, as we can see in a service of Sèvres porcelain created in 1793, where the decorative motifs are taken from the birds drawn by de Buffon.

Gradually, humans began to notice that dumb creatures have feelings. Man cannot afford to feel pity for an animal bred for food. When that wonderful artist Jean-Baptise Oudry shows a display of dead game in the 1740s, he is simply painting a luxury – fresh meat – available only to the well-off. Peasants ate bread. His lavish paintings were considered suitable for the dining rooms of the nobility because no one then expressed the slightest ethical or moral hesitation about hunting and killing rabbit, deer and boar for the table, or about slaughtering such vermin as foxes and wolves.

Domestic animals were a different story. When Oudry depicts a hound with her newborn puppies, the simple picture has revolutionary undertones. The pretty white bitch, noticing that two of her pups have fallen asleep and are not getting the nourishment they need, is full of maternal solicitude. At a time when French noblewomen still sent their babes out to wet-nurses, even an animal is shown to display true maternal feeling. And in 1824, the year Delacroix shows two horses killed in battle, there is a new element in man's attitude towards the wanton slaughter of beautiful creatures: compassion. Delacroix's little masterpiece pierces the heart, whereas the grotesque memorial to animals killed in war unveiled in London recently leaves the viewer cold. But the moral impulse behind the creation of both works is exactly the same.

Once animals can be loved for their innocence or good nature, it becomes more difficult to treat them cruelly. Almost 15 years before Jean-Baptise Greuze painted a picture of a young girl mourning her pet sparrow (1765), William Hogarth published his series of prints, the Stages of Cruelty, showing how the mistreatment of animals leads inexorably to the devaluing of all forms of life, including human. In this show, it is almost impossible to look at Emile Edouard Mouchy's horrifying depiction of the vivisection of a dog (1832) without wincing. Though such experiments represent a necessary evil, our very squeamishness represents another rung upward in the moral evolution of mankind.

This process started in the early 19th century, when men began to see in the animal kingdom a mirror image of their own feelings. In his portrayal of a horse frightened by lightning, Gericault lets us see the animal's tensed body, foam-flecked mouth and brow furrowed in anxiety. In The Jealous Lioness of about 1880, the German artist Paul Meyerheim shows a caged lioness enraged at the attention her mate is paying to a beautiful lion

tamer.

Gradually, artists began to blur the distinctions between animal and human. When Edwin Landseer in High Life and Low Life contrasts a mongrel guard dog with a deer hound, the animals are surrogates for their absent masters, a butcher and a nobleman. All these artists emphasised the physical and emotional resemblances between animals and human beings.

Article: 'Fierce, fabulous and fantastic' - The Daily Telegraph 2005

Questions 27 – 40

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

Write the correct letter in boxes 1 - 5 on your answer sheet.

27. The point the writer is making about the picture of a giraffe is that:

A. the artist knew it was inaccurate.

B. it might seem ridiculous today.

C. its inaccuracies are understandable.

D. it is not totally unlike a real giraffe.

28. In the second paragraph, the writer explains why:

A. there were no accurate paintings of giraffes in Europe until 1827.

B. people in Europe were so keen to see exotic animals.

C. people in Europe preferred paintings of animals to stuffed animals.

D. the establishment of zoos had an effect on the painting of animals.

29. The writer's main topic in the third paragraph is

A. which animal species became popular in Europe in the 18th century.

B. why the identification of species became an important issue in the 18th century.

C. the extent to which knowledge of animals increased in the 18th century.

D. the way in which attitudes to animals changed in the 18th century.

30. Which of these is the writer doing in the fourth paragraph?

A. contrasting the development of zoos with that of museums.

B. criticising the commercial exploitation of creatures.

C. describing a change in the portrayal of animals in paintings.

D. explaining the origins of the use of creatures for public entertainment.

31. The writer mentions the porcelain created in 1793 as an example of:

A. improvements in the artistic portrayal of creatures.

B. the influence of Buffon's Histoire Naturelle.

C. one of the disadvantages of de Buffon's Histoire Naturelle.

D. the popularity of pictures of creatures with the wealthy.

Questions 32 – 35

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

Write the correct letter, A-F in boxes 6-9 on your answer sheet.

32. Delacroix's 1824 painting...

33. Greuze's 1765 painting...

34. Hogarth's series of prints...

35. Landseer's pair of paintings High Life and Low Life...

A: makes a moral point about human behaviour.

B: contrasts animal behaviour with human behaviour. C:

shows a human's feeling for a creature.

D: has an identical purpose to that of another work of art. E:

depicts similarities between creatures and people.

F: portrays the feelings creatures can have towards humans.

Questions 36 – 40

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

36 - 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

36. It is understandable that people feel no emotion towards certain animals.
37. Some of Oudry's paintings are more impressive than others.
38. Some people claim to love animals but treat them badly.
39. Mouchy's painting shows something that should never happen.
40. Early 19th century art reveals a change in people's attitudes towards animals.

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 130 - A Revolution in Knowledge Sharing

A Revolution in Knowledge Sharing

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-9 which are based on IELTS Reading Passage below:

The pressure to transform our institutions of learning continues. Virtually every enterprise and institution is grappling with the disruptions and opportunities caused by Web-enabled infrastructures and practices. New best practices, business models, innovations, and strategies are emerging, including new ways to acquire, assimilate, and share knowledge. Using technologies that are already developed or that will be deployed over the next five years, best practices in knowledge sharing not only are diffusing rapidly but will be substantially reinvented in all settings: educational institutions, corporations, government organizations, associations, and nonprofits. But institutions of learning are in a unique position to benefit from an added opportunity: providing leadership in e-knowledge.

E-knowledge finds expression in many shapes and forms in a profoundly networked world. It is not just a digitised collection of knowledge. E-knowledge consists of knowledge objects and knowledge flows that combine content, context, and insights on application. E-knowledge also emerges from interactivity within and among communities of practice and from the troves of tacit knowledge and tradecraft that can be understood only through conversations with knowledgeable practitioners.

E-knowing is the act of achieving understanding by interacting with individuals, communities of practice, and knowledge in a networked world. E-knowledge commerce consists of the transactions based on the sharing of knowledge. These transactions can involve the exchange of digital content/context and/or tacit knowledge through interactivity.

Transactable e-knowledge can be exchanged for free or for fee. E-knowledge is enabling not only the emergence of new best practices but also the reinvention of the fundamental business models and strategies that exist for e-learning and knowledge management. E-knowledge is technologically realized by the fusion of e-learning and knowledge management and through the networking of knowledge workers.

Transactable e-knowledge and knowledge net-working will become the lifeblood of knowledge sharing. They will create a vibrant market for e-knowledge commerce and will stimulate dramatic changes in the knowledge ecologies of enterprises of all kinds. They will support a “Knowledge Economy” based on creating, distributing, and adding value to knowledge, the very activities in which colleges and universities are engaged. Yet few

colleges and universities have taken sufficient account of the need to use their knowledge assets to achieve strategic differentiation.

In "It Doesn't Matter," a recent article in Harvard Business Review, Nicholas G. Carr endorsed corporate leaders' growing view that information technology offers only limited potential for strategic differentiation. Similar points are starting to be made about e-learning, and knowledge management has been under fire as ineffectual for some time.

The truth is that e-learning and knowledge management can provide strategic differentiation only if they drive genuine innovation and business practice changes that yield greater value for learners. Carr's article provoked a host of contrary responses, including a letter from John Seely Brown and John Hagel III. Brown is well-known for his insights into the ways in which knowledge sharing can provide organizations with a solid basis for strategic differentiation.

For questions **1-4**, choose **NO MORE** than **TWO WORDS** for each answer.

Thanks to the advent of the computer, learning institutions today are providing new ways of acquiring knowledge, through tools that are **1**..... fast and which are being already **2**.....in all fields and settings, despite the**3**.....the process may entail, which all institutions are now **4**.....

For Question **5-9** are based on the paragraph 46. In boxes **5 - 9** 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

5. E-knowledge is primarily based on practices used in business.

6. Educational institutions can be leaders in knowledge net-working.

7. E-knowledge has several benefits to it.

8. Communities of practice are one source of E-knowledge.

9. The key to the success of knowledge management and e-learning is offering strategic differentiation.

Answer:

1. diffusing
2. deployed
3. disruptions
4. grappling with
5. NO
6. YES
7. YES
8. YES
9. YES

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 131

Read the passage and answer Questions 1 - 13

Giving The Brain A Workout

Mental agility does not have to decline with age, as long as you keep exercising your mind, says Anna van Praagh.

A Use your brain and it will grow ± it really will. This is the message from neuropsychologist Ian Robertson, SURIHVVRU RI SV\FKRRJ\ DW 7ULQL\W\ &ROOHJH ▾XE\ DQG IRXQGLQJ GLUHFWRU RI WKH XQLYHUVLW\¶V ,QVWLWXWH RI Neuroscience. His book, Puzzler Brain Trainer 90-Day Workout, contains puzzles which he devised to stretch, sharpen and stimulate the brain. The puzzles, from 'memory jogs' to Sudoku to crosswords to number games are all-encompassing, and have been specially formulated to improve each and every p art of the brain, from visual-spatial ability to perception, attention, memory, numerical agility, problem-solving and language.

B Professor Robertson has been studying the brain for 57 years, in a career dedicated to changing and improving the way it works. During this time there has been a remarkable paradigm shift in the way scientists view the brain, he says. 'When I first started teaching and researching, a very pessimistic view prevailed that, from the age of three or four, we were continually losing brain cells and that the stocks couldn't be replenished. That has turned out to be factually wrong. Now that we know that the brain is "plastic" ± it changes, adapts and is physically sharpened according to the experiences it has.'

C Robertson likens our minds to trees in a park with branches spreading out, connecting and intertwining, with FRQQHFWLRQV LQFUHDVLQJ LQ GLUHFW FRUUHODWLRQ WR XVDJH +H VD\V WKDW WKH ³HXUHND´ PRPHQW LQ KLV FDUHHU ± and the UHDVRQ KH GHYLVHG KLV µEUDLQ WUDLQHU¶ SX]]OHV ± was the realisation that the connections multiply with use and so LW LV SRVVLEOH WR ERRVW DQG LPSURYH RXU PHQWDO IXQFWLRQV DW DQ\ DJH 1RZ ZH NQRZ WKDW LW¶V QRW MXVW FKLOGUHQ whose brains are "plastic"," he says. 'No matter how old we are, our brains are physically changed by what we do and what we think.'

D 5REHUWVRQ LOOXVWUDWHV KLV SRLQW E\ UHIHUULQJ WR ' ❨HDQR 0F*XLUH¶V VHPLQDO VWXG\ RI WKH EUDLQV RI London taxi drivers. That showed that their grey matter enlarges and adapts to help them build up a detailed mental map of the city. Brain scans revealed that the drivers had a much larger hippocampus (the part of the brain associated with navigation in birds and animals) compared with other people. Crucially, it grew larger the longer they spent doing their job. Similarly, there is strong statistical evidence that, by stretching the mind with

games and puzzles, brainpower is increased. Conversely, if we do not stimulate our minds and keep the connections robust and intact, these connections will weaken and physically diminish. A more recent survey suggested that a 20-minute problem-solving session on the Nintendo DS game called 'Dr Kawashima's Brain 7UDLQLQJ DW WKH EHJLQQLQJ RI HDFK GD\ GUDPDWLFDOO\ LPSURYHG SXSLOV¶ WHVW UHVXOWV FODVV DWWHQGDQFH DQG behaviour. Astonishingly, pupils who used the Nintendo trainer saw their test scores rise by 50 per cent more than those who did not.

E Robertson's puzzles have been designed to have the same effect on the brain, the only difference being that, for his, you need only a pencil to get started. The idea is to shake the brain out of lazy habits and train it to start IXQFWLRQLQJ DW LWV RSWLPXP OHYHO ,W LV 5REHUWVRQ¶V EHOLHI WKDW SHRSOH ZKR WDFNOH WKH SX]]OHV ZLOO VHH D GUDPDWLF improvement in their daily lives as the brain increases its ability across a broad spectrum. They should see an LPSURYHPHQW LQ HYHU\WKLQJ IURP UHPPEHULQJ SHRSOH¶V QDPHV DW SDUWLHV WR LQFUHDVHG DWWHQWLRQ VSDQ PHQWDO agility, creativity and energy.

F 'Many of us are terrified of numbers,' he says, 'or under-confident with words. With practice, and by gently increasing the difficulty of the exercises, these puzzles will help people improve capacity across a whole range of mental domains.' The wonderful thing is that the puzzles take just five minutes, but are the mental equivalent of doing a jog or going to the gym. 'In the same way that physical exercise is good for you, so is keeping your brain stimulated,' Robertson says. 'Quite simply, those who keep themselves mentally challenged function significantly better mentally than those who do not.'

G The puzzles are aimed at all ages. Robertson says that some old people are so stimulated that they hardly need to exercise their brains further, while some young people hardly use theirs at all and are therefore in dire need of a workout. He does concede, however, that whereas most young people are constantly forced to learn, there is a tendency in later life to retreat into a comfort zone where it is easier to avoid doing things that are mentally challenging. He compares this with becoming physically inactive, and warns of comparable UHSHUFXVVLRQV µ$V WKH SRSXODWLRQ DJHV SHRSOH DUH JRLQJ WR KDYH WR VWD\ PHQ\D\ DFWLYH ORQJHU ¶ KH FRQFOXGHV ¶ KH PXVW OHDUQ WR H[HUFLVH RXU EUDLQV MXVW DV PXFK DV RXU bodies. People need to be aware that they have the PRVW FRPS\H[HQ\L\ NQRZQ WR PDQ EHWZHHQ WKHLU HDUV ¶ KH FRQWLQXHV µDQG WKH NH\ WR DOORZ LW WR JURZ DQG EH KHD\K\ LV \LPS\ WR NHHS LW VWLPXODWHG ¶

Questions 1 and 2

Choose TWO letters, A-E. Write the correct letters in the boxes below.

Which TWO of the following are claims that Robertson makes about the puzzles in his book?

- ξ They will improve every mental skill.
- ξ They are better than other kinds of mental exercise.
- ξ They will have a major effHFW RQ SHRSOH¶V PHQWDO DELOLWLHV
- ξ They are more useful than physical exercise.
- ξ They are certain to be more useful for older people than for the young.

Questions 3 - 8

Complete the summary below.

*Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 3-8 below.*

Evidence supporting 5REHUWVRQ¶V theory

Research was carried out using **3**_____in London as subjects. It showed that their brains change, enabling them to create a **4** _____of London. Tests showed that their **5** _____increased in size as they continued in their job. There is also evidence of a **6** _____kind. People playing a certain game involving **7**_____for a period of time every day achieved significantly better **8**_____

Questions 9 - 13

Reading Passage 2 has seven paragraphs A-G.

*Which paragraph contains the following information? Write the correct letter, **A-G** in boxes **9-13** below.*

9. An example of a situation in which people will benefit from doing the puzzles in the book

10. $ UHDVRQ ZK\ VRPH SHRSOH GRQ¶W H[HUFLVH WKHLU PLQGV

11. A discovery that had an enormous effect on Robertson

12. Examples of things that people commonly feel they are not very good at

13. A reference to a change in beliefs about what happens to the brain over time

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 132

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions **1-5** which are based on IELTS Reading Passage below:

Wind Power in the US

Prompted by the oil crises of the 1970s, a wind-power industry flourished briefly in the United States. But then world oil prices dropped, and funding for research into renewable energy was cut. By the mid 1980s US interest in wind energy as a large-scale source of energy had almost disappeared. The development of wind power at this time suffered not only from badly designed equipment, but also from poor long-term planning, economic projections that were too optimistic and the difficulty of finding suitable locations for the wind turbines.

Only now are technological advances beginning to offer hope that wind power will come to be accepted as a reliable and important source of electricity. There have been significant successes in California, in particular, where wind farms now have a capacity of 1500 megawatts, comparable to a large nuclear or fossil-fuelled power station, and produce 1.5 per cent of the state's electricity.

Nevertheless, in the US, the image of wind power is still distorted by early failures. One of the most persistent criticisms is that wind power is not a significant energy resource. Researchers at the Battelle Northwest Laboratory, however, estimate that today wind turbine technology could supply 20 per cent of the electrical power the country needs. As a local resource, wind power has even greater potential. Minnesota's energy commission calculates that a wind farm on one of the state's south western ridges could supply almost all that state's electricity. North Dakota alone has enough sites suitable for wind farms to supply more than a third of all electricity consumed in the continental US.

The prevailing notion that wind power is too costly results largely from early research which focused on turbines with huge blades that stood hundreds of metres tall. These machines were not designed for ease of production or maintenance, and they were enormously expensive. Because the major factors influencing the overall cost of wind power are the cost of the turbine and its supporting systems, including land, as well as operating and maintenance costs, it is hardly surprising that it was thought at the time that wind energy could not be supplied at a commercially competitive price. More recent developments such as those seen on California wind farms have dramatically changed the economic picture for wind energy. These systems, like installations in Hawaii and several European countries, have benefited from the economies of scale that come through standardised manufacturing and purchasing. The result has been a dramatic drop in capital costs: the installed cost of new wind turbines stood at $1000 per kilowatt in 1993, down from about $4000 per kilowatt in 1980, and continues to fall. Design improvements and more efficient maintenance programs for large numbers of turbines have

reduced operating costs as well. The cost of electricity delivered by wind farm turbines has decreased from about 30 cents per kilowatt-hour to between 7 and 9 cents, which is generally less than the cost of electricity from conventional power stations. Reliability has also improved dramatically. The latest turbines run more than 95 per cent of the time, compared with around 60 per cent in the early 1980s. Another misconception is that improved designs are needed to make wind power feasible. Out of the numerous wind turbine designs proposed or built by inventors or developers, the propeller-blade type, which is based on detailed analytical models as well as extensive experimental data, has emerged as predominant among the more than 20,000 machines now in commercial operation world-wide. Like the gas-driven turbines that power jet aircraft, these are sophisticated pieces of rotating machinery. They are already highly efficient, and there is no reason to believe that other configurations will produce major benefits. Like other ways of generating electricity, wind power does not leave the environment entirely unharmed. There are many potential problems, ranging from interference with telecommunications to impact on wildlife and natural habitats. But these effects must be balanced against those associated with other forms of electricity generation.

Conventional power stations impose hidden costs on society, such as the control of air pollution, the management of nuclear waste and global warming. As wind power has been ignored in the US over the past few years, expertise and commercial exploitation in the field have shifted to Europe. The European Union spends 10 times as much as the US government on research and development of wind energy. It estimates that at least 10 per cent of Europe's electrical power could be supplied by land-based wind-turbines using current technology. Indeed, according to the American Wind Energy Association, an independent organisation based in Washington, Denmark, Britain, Spain and the Netherlands will each surpass the US in the generating capacity of wind turbines installed during the rest of the decade.

1 **Which one of the statements is true?**

A) Cost was a big factor in preventing the development of wind power
B) Wind power can provide enough electricty for the United States
C) Some US states are powered solely by wind
D) Wind power has developed steadily since the 1970s.

2 **What is the general view of wind energy in the United States?**

A) Very positive
B) It can only provide small amounts of energy
C) It will reduce global warming
D) Very negative

3 **Which of these factors has not contributed to the reduced cost of wind energy?**

A) State subsidies

B) Economies of scale

C) More efficient maintenance

D) Standardisation of design

4 **Wind turbine designs ...**

A) Are already very good

B) Will be much more efficient in the future

C) Are expected to improve in the future

D) Are good for the environment

5 **Wind energy is more developed in Europe than the USA**

- False
- True

Answer:

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. A 5. TRUE