IELTS Academic Reading Sample 75 - Finding the Lost Freedom

You are advised to spend about 15 minutes on Questions 1 - 14 which refer to Reading Passage 75 below.

FINDING THE LOST FREEDOM

1. The private car is assumed to have widened our horizons and increased our mobility. When we consider our children's mobility, they can be driven to more places (and more distant places) than they could visit without access to a motor vehicle. However, allowing our cities to be dominated by cars has progressively eroded children's independent mobility. Children have lost much of their freedom to explore their own neighbourhood or city without adult supervision. In recent surveys, when parents in some cities were asked about their own childhood experiences, the majority remembered having more, or far more, opportunities for going out on their own, compared with their own children today. They had more freedom to explore their own environment.

2. Children's independent access to their local streets may be important for their own personal, mental and psychological development. Allowing them to get to know their own neighbourhood and community gives them a 'sense of place'. This depends on active exploration', which is not provided for when children are passengers in cars. (Such children may see more, but they learn less.) Not only is it important that children be able to get to local play areas by themselves, but walking and cycling journeys to school and to other destinations provide genuine play activities in themselves.

3. There are very significant time and money costs for parents associated with transporting their children to school, sport and to other locations. Research in the United Kingdom estimated that this cost, in 1990, was between 10 billion and 20 billion pounds.

4. The reduction in children's freedom may also contribute to a weakening of the sense of local community. As fewer children and adults use the streets as pedestrians, these streets become less sociable places. There is less opportunity for children and adults to have the spontaneous of community. This in itself may exacerbate fears associated with assault and molestation of children, because there are fewer adults available who know their neighbours' children, and who can look out for their safety.

5. The extra traffic involved in transporting children results in increased traffic congestion, pollution and accident risk. As our roads become more dangerous, more parents drive their children to more places, thus contributing to increased levels of danger for the remaining pedestrians. Anyone who has experienced either the reduced volume of traffic in peak hour during school holidays, or the traffic jams near schools at the end of

a school day, will not need convincing about these points. Thus, there are also important environmental implications of children's loss of freedom.

6. As individuals, parents strive to provide the best upbringing they can for their children. However, in doing so, (e.g. by driving their children to sport, school or recreation) parents may be contributing to a more dangerous environment for children generally. The idea that 'streets are for cars and back yards and playgrounds are for children' is a strongly held belief, and parents have little choice as individuals but to keep their children off the streets if they want to protect their safety.

7. In many parts of Dutch cities, and some traffic calmed precincts in Germany, residential streets are now places where cars must give way to pedestrians. In these areas, residents are accepting the view that the function of streets is not solely to provide mobility for cars. Streets may also be for social interaction, walking, cycling and playing. One of the most important aspects of these European cities, in terms of giving cities back to children, has been a range of 'traffic calming' initiatives, aimed at reducing the volume and speed of traffic. These initiatives have had complex interactive effects, leading to a sense that children have been able to 'recapture' their local neighbourhood, and more importantly, that they have been able to do this in safety. Recent research has demonstrated that children in many German cities have significantly higher levels of freedom to travel to places in their own neighbourhood or city than children in other cities in the world.

8. Modifying cities in order to enhance children's freedom will not only benefit children. Such cities will become more environmentally sustainable, as well as more sociable and more livable for all city residents. Perhaps it will be our concern for our children's welfare that convinces us that we need to challenge the dominance of the car in our cities.

Questions 1 - 5

Read statements 1-5 which relate to Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of the reading passage.
Answer **T** if the statement is true, **F** if the statement is false, or **NI** if there is no information given in the passage.
Write your answers in the spaces numbered 1-5 on the answer sheet.
One has been done for you as an example

Example: The private car has made people more mobile. Answer: **T**

1. The private car has helped children have more opportunities to learn.

2. Children are more independent today than they used to be.

3. Walking and cycling to school allows children to learn more.

4. Children usually walk or cycle to school.

5. Parents save time and money by driving children to school.

Questions 6-9

In Paragraphs 4 and 5, there are **FOUR** problems stated. These problems, numbered as questions 6-9, are listed below.

Each of these problems has a cause, listed A - G.

Find the correct cause for each of the problems.

Write the corresponding letter A -G, in the spaces numbered 6 - 9 on the answer sheet.

One has been done for you as an example.

There are more causes than problems so you will not use all of them and you may use any cause more than once

Problem	**Causes**
Example: low sense of community feeling	*Answer: F*
6. streets become less sociable	A few adults know local children
7. fewer chances for meeting friends	B fewer people use the streets
8. fears of danger for children	C increased pollution
9. higher accident risk	D streets are less friendly
	E less traffic in school holidays
	F reduced freedom for children
	G more children driven to school

Questions 10-14

Questions 10 -14 are statement beginnings which represent information given in Paragraphs 6, 7 and 8.

In the box below, there are some statement endings numbered **i-x**.

Choose the correct ending for each statement.

Write your answers i - x, in the spaces numbered 10 - 14 on the answer sheet.

One has been done for you as an example.

There are more statement endings than you will need.

Example : By driving their children to school, parents help create ... Answer : **i**

10. Children should play ...

11. In some German towns, pedestrians have right of way ...

12. Streets should also be used for ...

13. Reducing the amount of traffic and the speed is ...

14. All people who live in the city will benefit if cities are ...

List of statement endings

i ... a dangerous environment.

ii ... modified.

iii ...on residential streets.

iv ... modifying cities.

v ... neighbourhoods.

vi ... socialising.

vii ...in backyards.

viii ...for cars.

ix ... traffic calming.

x ... residential

Answer:

1. F 2. T 3. NI 4. F 5. B 6. B 7. B / A 8. G 9. vii 10. iii 11. vi 12. ix 13. ii 14. G

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 76 - Investigating Children's Language

Investigating Children's Language

A For over 200 years, there has been an interest in the way children learn to speak and understand their first language. Scholars carried out several small-scale studies, especially towards the end of the 19th century, using data they recorded in parental diaries. But detailed, systematic investigation did not begin until the middle decades of the 20th century, when the tape recorder came into routine use. This made it possible to keep a permanent record of samples of child speech, so that analysts could listen repeatedly to obscure extracts, and thus produce a detailed and accurate description. Since then, the subject has attracted enormous multi-disciplinary interest, notably from linguists and psychologists, who have used a variety of observational and experimental techniques to study the process of language acquisition in depth.

B Central to the success of this rapidly emerging field lies the ability of researchers to devise satisfactory methods for eliciting linguistic data from children. The problems that have to be faced are quite different from those encountered when working with adults. Many of the linguist's routine techniques of enquiry cannot be used with children. It is not possible to carry out certain kinds of experiments, because aspects of children's cognitive development – such as their ability to pay attention, or to remember instructions – may not be sufficiently advanced. Nor is it easy to get children to make systematic judgments about language, a task that is virtually impossible below the age of three. And anyone who has tried to obtain even the most basic kind of data – a tape recording of a representative sample of a child's speech – knows how frustrating this can be. Some children, it seems, are innately programmed to switch off as soon as they notice a tape recorder being switched on.

C Since the 1960s, however, several sophisticated recording techniques and experimental designs have been devised. Children can be observed and recorded through one-way-vision windows or using radio microphones, so that the effects of having an investigator in the same room as the child can be eliminated. Large-scale sampling programmes have been carried out, with children sometimes being recorded for several years. Particular attention has been paid to devising experimental techniques that fall well within a child's intellectual level and social experience. Even pre-linguistic infants have been brought into the research: acoustic techniques are used to analyse their vocalisations, and their ability to perceive the world around them is monitored using special recording equipment. The result has been a growing body of reliable data on the stages of language acquisition from birth until puberty.

D There is no single way of studying children's language. Linguistics and psychology have each brought

their own approach to the subject, and many variations have been introduced to cope with the variety of activities in which children engage, and the great age range that they present. Two main research paradigms are found.

E One of these is known as 'naturalistic sampling'. A sample of a child's spontaneous use of language is recorded in familiar and comfortable surroundings. One of the best places to make the recording is in the child's own home, but it is not always easy to maintain good acoustic quality, and the presence of the researcher or the recording equipment can be a distraction (especially if the proceedings are being filmed). Alternatively, the recording can be made in a research centre, where the child is allowed to play freely with toys while talking to parents or other children, and the observers and their equipment are unobtrusive.

F A good quality, representative, naturalistic sample is generally considered an ideal datum for child language study. However, the method has several limitations. These samples are informative about speech production, but they give little guidance about children's comprehension of what they hear around them. Moreover, samples cannot contain everything, and they can easily miss some important features of a child's linguistic ability. They may also not provide enough instances of a developing feature to enable the analyst to make a decision about the way the child is learning. For such reasons, the description of samples of child speech has to be supplemented by other methods.

G The other main approach is through experimentation, and the methods of experimental psychology have been widely applied to child language research. The investigator formulates a specific hypothesis about children's ability to use or understand an aspect of language, and devises a relevant task for a group of subjects to undertake. A statistical analysis is made of the subjects' behaviour, and the results provide evidence that supports or falsifies the original hypothesis.

H Using this approach, as well as other methods of controlled observation, researchers have come up with many detailed findings about the production and comprehension of groups of children. However, it is not easy to generalise the findings of these studies. What may obtain in a carefully controlled setting may not apply in the rush of daily interaction. Different kinds of subjects, experimental situations, and statistical procedures may produce different results or interpretations. Experimental research is therefore a slow, painstaking business; it may take years before researchers are convinced that all variables have been considered and a finding is genuine.

Questions 1-5

Reading Passage 99 has eight paragraphs, **A-H**.

Which paragraphs contains the following information?

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

NB You may use any letter more than once.

1 the possibility of carrying out research on children before they start talking

2 the difficulties in deducing theories from systematic experiments

3 the differences between analysing children's and adults' language

4 the ability to record children without them seeing the researcher

5 the drawbacks of recording children in an environment they know

Questions 6-9

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 99?

In boxes **6-9** on your answer sheet, write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

6 In the 19th century, researchers studied their own children's language.

7 Attempts to elicit very young children's opinions about language are likely to fail.

8 Radio microphones are used because they enable researchers to communicate with a number of children in different rooms.

9 Many children enjoy the interaction with the researcher.

Question 10-14

Complete the summary below.

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

Write your answers in boxes **10-14** on your answer sheet.

Ways of investigating children's language

One method of carrying out research is to record children's spontaneous language use. This can be done in their homes, where, however, it may be difficult to ensure that the recording is of acceptable **10** ..... Another venue which is often used is a **11.....** , where the researcher can avoid distracting the child. A drawback of this method is that it does not allow children to demonstrate their comprehension.

An alternative approach is to use methodology from the field of **12 .....**In this case, a number of children are asked to carry out a **13** ....., and the results are subjected to a **14** .....

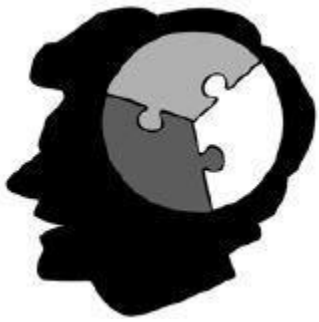
Answer:

1. C 2. H 3. B 4. C 5. E 6. TRUE 7. TRUE 8. FALSE 9. NOT GIVEN 10. acoustic quality 11. research centre/ center 12. experimental psychology 13. (relevant) task 14. statistical analysis

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 78 - The Triune Brain

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14–26, which are based on Reading Passage 78 below.

The Triune[1] Brain



The first of our three brains to evolve is what scientists call the reptilian cortex. This brain sustains the elementary activities of animal survival such as respiration, adequate rest and a beating heart. We are not required to consciously “think” about these activities. The reptilian cortex also houses the “startle centre”, a mechanism that facilitates swift reactions to unexpected occurrences in our surroundings. That panicked lurch you experience when a door slams shut somewhere in the house, or the heightened awareness you feel when a twig cracks in a nearby bush while out on an evening stroll are both examples of the reptilian cortex at work. When it comes to our interaction with others, the reptilian brain offers up only the most basic impulses: aggression, mating, and territorial defence. There is no great difference, in this sense, between a crocodile defending its spot along the river and a turf war between two urban gangs.

Although the lizard may stake a claim to its habitat, it exerts total indifference toward the well-being of its young. Listen to the anguished squeal of a dolphin separated from its pod or witness the sight of elephants mourning their dead, however, and it is clear that a new development is at play. Scientists have identified this as the limbic cortex. Unique to mammals, the limbic cortex impels creatures to nurture their offspring by delivering feelings of tenderness and warmth to the parent when children are nearby. These same sensations also cause mammals to develop various types of social relations and kinship networks. When we are with others of “our kind” – be it at soccer practice, church, school or a nightclub – we experience positive sensations of togetherness, solidarity and comfort. If we spend too long away from these networks, then loneliness sets in and encourages us to seek companionship.

Only human capabilities extend far beyond the scope of these two cortexes. Humans eat, sleep and play, but we also speak, plot, rationalise and debate finer points of morality. Our unique abilities are the result of an expansive third brain – the neocortex – which engages with logic, reason and ideas. The power of the neocortex comes from its ability to think beyond the present, concrete moment. While other mammals are mainly restricted to impulsive actions (although some, such as apes, can learn and remember simple lessons), humans can think about the "big picture". We can string together simple lessons (for example, an apple drops downwards from a tree; hurting others causes unhappiness) to develop complex theories of physical or social phenomena (such as the laws of gravity and a concern for human rights).

The neocortex is also responsible for the process by which we decide on and commit to particular courses of action. Strung together over time, these choices can accumulate into feats of progress unknown to other animals. Anticipating a better grade on the following morning's exam, a student can ignore the limbic urge to socialise and go to sleep early instead. Over three years, this ongoing sacrifice translates into a first class degree and a scholarship to graduate school; over a lifetime, it can mean groundbreaking contributions to human knowledge and development. The ability to sacrifice our drive for immediate satisfaction in order to benefit later is a product of the neocortex.

Understanding the triune brain can help us appreciate the different natures of brain damage and psychological disorders. The most devastating form of brain damage, for example, is a condition in which someone is understood to be brain dead. In this state a person appears merely unconscious – sleeping, perhaps – but this is illusory. Here, the reptilian brain is functioning on autopilot despite the permanent loss of other cortexes.

Disturbances to the limbic cortex are registered in a different manner. Pups with limbic damage can move around and feed themselves well enough but do not register the presence of their littermates. Scientists have observed how, after a limbic lobotomy2, "one impaired monkey stepped on his outraged peers as if treading on a log or a rock". In our own species, limbic damage is closely related to sociopathic behaviour. Sociopaths in possession of fully-functioning neocortexes are often shrewd and emotionally intelligent people but lack any ability to relate to, empathise with or express concern for others.

One of the neurological wonders of history occurred when a railway worker named Phineas Gage survived an incident during which a metal rod skewered his skull, taking a considerable amount of his neocortex with it. Though Gage continued to live and work as before, his fellow employees observed a shift in the equilibrium of his personality. Gage's animal propensities were now sharply pronounced while his intellectual abilities suffered; garrulous or obscene jokes replaced his once quick wit. New findings suggest, however, that Gage managed to soften these abrupt changes over time and rediscover an appropriate social manner. This would indicate that reparative therapy has the potential to help patients with advanced brain trauma to gain an

improved quality of life.

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[1] *Triune = three-in-one*

[2] *Lobotomy = surgical cutting of brain nerves*

Questions 14–22

Classify the following as typical of

A the reptilian cortex

B the limbic cortex

C the neocortex

Write the correct letter, A, B or C, in boxes **14–22** on your answer sheet.

14 giving up short-term happiness for future gains

15 maintaining the bodily functions necessary for life

16 experiencing the pain of losing another

17 forming communities and social groups

18 making a decision and carrying it out

19 guarding areas of land

20 developing explanations for things

21 looking after one's young

22 responding quickly to sudden movement and noise

Questions 23–26

Complete the sentences below.

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

Write your answers in boxes **23–26** on your answer sheet.

23 A person with only a functioning reptilian cortex is known as …….

24 .....in humans is associated with limbic disruption.

25 An industrial accident caused Phineas Gage to lose part of his …….

26 After his accident, co-workers noticed an imbalance between Gage's

…..... and higher-order thinking.

Answer:

14. C
15. A
16. B
17. B
18. C
19. A
20. C
21. B
22. A
23. brain dead
24. sociopathic behaviour
25. neocortex
26. animal propensities

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 79 - Making Time for Science

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1–13, which are based on Reading Passage 79 below.

MAKING TIME FOR SCIENCE

Chronobiology might sound a little futuristic – like something from a science fiction novel, perhaps – but it's actually a field of study that concerns one of the oldest processes life on this planet has ever known: short-term rhythms of time and their effect on flora and fauna.

This can take many forms. Marine life, for example, is influenced by tidal patterns. Animals tend to be active or inactive depending on the position of the sun or moon. Numerous creatures, humans included, are largely diurnal – that is, they like to come out during the hours of sunlight. Nocturnal animals, such as bats and possums, prefer to forage by night. A third group are known as crepuscular: they thrive in the lowlight of dawn and dusk and remain inactive at other hours.

When it comes to humans, chronobiologists are interested in what is known as the circadian rhythm. This is the complete cycle our bodies are naturally geared to undergo within the passage of a twenty-four hour day. Aside from sleeping at night and waking during the day, each cycle involves many other factors such as changes in blood pressure and body temperature. Not everyone has an identical circadi an rhythm. 'Night people', for example, often describe how they find it very hard to operate during the morning, but become alert and focused by evening. This is a benign variation within circadian rhythms known as a chronotype.

Scientists have limited abilities to create durable modifications of chronobiological demands. Recent therapeutic developments for humans such as artificial light machines and melatonin administration can reset our circadian rhythms, for example, but our bodies can tell the difference and health suffers when we breach these natural rhythms for extended periods of time. Plants appear no more malleable in this respect; studies demonstrate that vegetables grown in season and ripened on the tree
are far higher in essential nutrients than those grown in greenhouses and ripened by
laser.

Knowledge of chronobiological patterns can have many pragmatic implications for our day-to-day lives. While contemporary living can sometimes appear to subjugate biology – after all, who needs circadian rhythms when we have caffeine pills, energy drinks, shift work and cities that never sleep? – keeping in synch with our body clock is important.

The average urban resident, for example, rouses at the eye-blearing time of 6.04 a.m., which researchers believe to be far too early. One study found that even rising at 7.00 a.m. has deleterious effects on health unless exercise is performed for 30 minutes afterward. The optimum moment has been whittled down to 7.22 a.m.; muscle aches, headaches and moodiness were reported to be lowest by participants in the study who awoke then.

Once you're up and ready to go, what then? If you're trying to shed some extra pounds, dieticians are adamant: never skip breakfast. This disorients your circadian rhythm and puts your body in starvation mode. The recommended course of action is to follow an intense workout with a carbohydrate-rich breakfast; the other way round and weight loss results are not as pronounced.

Morning is also great for breaking out the vitamins. Supplement absorption by the body is not temporal-dependent, but naturopath Pam Stone notes that the extra boost at breakfast helps us get energised for the day ahead. For improved absorption, Stone suggests pairing supplements with a food in which they are soluble and steering clear of caffeinated beverages. Finally, Stone warns to take care with storage; high potency is best for absorption, and warmth and humidity are known to deplete the potency of a supplement.

After-dinner espressos are becoming more of a tradition – we have the Italians to thank for that – but to prepare for a good night's sleep we are better off putting the brakes on caffeine consumption as early as 3 p.m. With a seven hour half-life, a cup of coffee containing 90 mg of caffeine taken at this hour could still leave 45 mg of caffeine in your nervous system at ten o'clock that evening. It is essential that, by the time you are ready to sleep, your body is rid of all traces.

Evenings are important for winding down before sleep; however, dietician Geraldine Georgeou warns that an after-five carbohydrate-fast is more cultural myth than chronobiological demand. This will deprive your body of vital energy needs. Overloading your gut could lead to indigestion, though. Our digestive tracts do not shut down for the night entirely, but their work slows to a crawl as our bodies prepare for sleep. Consuming a modest snack should be entirely sufficient.

Questions 1–7

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 96?

In boxes **1–7** on your answer sheet, write:

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

1 Chronobiology is the study of how living things have evolved over time.

2 The rise and fall of sea levels affects how sea creatures behave.

3 Most animals are active during the daytime.

4 Circadian rhythms identify how we do different things on different days.

5 A ‘night person’ can still have a healthy circadian rhythm.

6 New therapies can permanently change circadian rhythms without causing harm.

7 Naturally-produced vegetables have more nutritional value.

Questions 8–13

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

Write the correct letter in boxes 8–13 on your answer sheet.

8 What did researchers identify as the ideal time to wake up in the morning?

A 6.04

B 7.00

C 7.22

D 7.30

9 In order to lose weight, we should

A avoid eating breakfast

B eat a low carbohydrate breakfast

C exercise before breakfast

D exercise after breakfast

10 Which is NOT mentioned as a way to improve supplement absorption?

A avoiding drinks containing caffeine while taking supplements

B taking supplements at breakfast

C taking supplements with foods that can dissolve them

D storing supplements in a cool, dry environment

11 The best time to stop drinking coffee is

A mid-afternoon

B 10 p.m.

C only when feeling anxious

D after dinner

12 In the evening, we should

A stay away from carbohydrates

B stop exercising

C eat as much as possible

D eat a light meal

13 Which of the following phrases best describes the main aim of Reading Passage 96?

A to suggest healthier ways of eating, sleeping and exercising

B to describe how modern life has made chronobiology largely irrelevant

C to introduce chronobiology and describe some practical applications

D to plan a daily schedule that can alter our natural chronobiological rhythms

Answer:

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