IELTS Academic Reading Sample 88 - Networking

N E T W O R K I N G

Networking as a concept has acquired what is in all truth an unjustified air of modernity. It is considered in the corporate world as an essential tool for the modern businessperson, as they trot round the globe drumming up business for themselves or a corporation. The concept is worn like a badge of distinction, and not just in the business world.

People can be divided basically into those who keep knowledge and their personal contacts to themselves, and those who are prepared to share what they know and indeed their friends with others. A person who is insecure, for example someone who finds it difficult to share information with others and who is unable to bring people, including friends, together does not make a good networker. The classic networker is someone who is strong enough within themselves to connect different people including close friends with each other. For example, a businessman or an academic may meet someone who is likely to be a valuable contact in the future, but at the moment that person may benefit from meeting another associate or friend.

It takes quite a secure person to bring these people together and allow a relationship to develop independently of himself. From the non-networker's point of view such a development may be intolerable, especially if it is happening outside their control. The unfortunate thing here is that the initiator of the contact, if he did but know it, would be the one to benefit most. And why?
Because all things being equal, people move within circles and that person has the potential of being sucked into ever growing spheres of new contacts. It is said that, if you know eight people, you are in touch with everyone in the world. It does not take much common sense to realize the potential for any kind of venture as one is able to draw on the experience of more and more people.

Unfortunately, making new contacts, business or otherwise, while it brings success, does cause problems. It enlarges the individual's world. This is in truth not altogether a bad thing, but it puts more pressure on the networker through his having to maintain an ever larger circle of people. The most convenient way out is, perhaps, to cull old contacts, but this would be anathema to our networker as it would defeat the whole purpose of networking. Another problem is the reaction of friends and associates. Spreading oneself thinly gives one less time for others who were perhaps closer to one in the past. In the workplace, this can cause tension with jealous
colleagues, and even with superiors who might be tempted to rein in a more successful inferior. Jealousy and envy can prove to be very detrimental if one is faced with a very insecure manager, as this person may seek to stifle someone's career or even block it completely.

The answer here is to let one's superiors share in the glory; to throw them a few crumbs of comfort. It is called leadership from the bottom. In the present business climate, companies and enterprises need to co-operate with each other in order to expand. As globalization grows apace, companies need to be able to span not just countries but continents. Whilst people may rail against this development it is for the moment here to stay. Without co-operation and contacts, specialist companies will not survive for long. Computer components, for example, need to be compatible with the various machines on the market and to achieve this, firms need to work in conjunction with others. No business or institution can afford to be an island in today's environment. In the not very distant past, it was possible for companies to go it alone, but it is now more difficult to do so.

The same applies in the academic world, where ideas have been jealously guarded. The opening-up of universities and colleges to the outside world in recent years has been of enormous benefit to industry and educational institutions. The stereotypical academic is one who moves in a rarefied atmosphere living a life of sometimes splendid isolation, a prisoner of their own genius. This sort of person does not fit easily into the mould of the modern networker. Yet even this insular world is changing. The ivory towers are being left ever more frequently as educational experts forge links with other bodies; sometimes to stunning effect as in Silicon Valley in America and around Cambridge in England, which now has one of the most concentrated clusters of high tech companies in Europe.

It is the networkers, the wheeler-dealers, the movers and shakers, call them what you will, that carry the world along. The world of the Neanderthals was shaken between 35,000 and 40,000 BC; they were superseded by Homo Sapiens with the very 'networking' skills that separate us from other animals: understanding, thought abstraction and culture, which are inextricably linked to planning survival and productivity in humans. It is said the meek will inherit the earth. But will they?

Questions 1-5

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 87?

In boxes **11-13** on your answer sheet, write:

YES if the statement agrees with the writer's claims

NO if the statement contradicts the writer's claims

NOT GIVEN if there is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

Example	**Answer**
Networking is a concept	Yes

1 Networking is not a modern idea.

2 Networking is worn like a badge exclusively in the business world.

3 People fall into two basic categories.

4 A person who shares knowledge and friends makes a better networker than one who does not.

5 The classic networker is physically strong and generally in good health.

Questions 6-10

Using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage, complete the sentences below.

6 Making new acquaintances..... but also has its disadvantages.

7 At work, problems can be caused if the manager is ..... .

8 A manager can suppress, or even totally..... the career of an employee.

9 In business today, working together is necessary in order for .....to grow.

10 Businesses that specialize will not last for long without ..... .

Questions 11-15

Using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage, complete the sentences below.

11 In which sphere of life have ideas been protected jealously? .....

12 Which type of individual does not easily become a modern networker? .....

13 Where is one of the greatest concentrations of high tech companies in Europe? .....

14 Who replaced the Neanderthals? .....

15 What, as well as understanding and thought abstraction, sets us apart from other animals?

.....

Answer:

1. YES 2. NO 3. YES 4. YES 5. NOT GIVEN 6. brings success 7. (very) insecure/jealous/envious 8.

block 9. companies and enterprises 10. co-operation and contacts 11. (the) academic world 12. (the) stereotypical academic 13. Cambridge/ around Cambridge/ Cambridge in England 14. Homo Sapiens 15. culture

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 89 - A Silent Force

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions **16-22**, which are based on Reading Passage 89 on the following pages.

A SILENT FORCE

A There is a legend that St Augustine in the fourth century AD was the first individual to be seen reading silently rather than aloud, or semi-aloud, as had been the practice hitherto. Reading has come a long way since Augustine's day. There was a time when it was a menial job of scribes and priests, not the mark of civilization it became in Europe during the Renaissance when it was seen as one of the attributes of the civilized individual.

B Modern nations are now seriously affected by their levels of literacy. While the Western world has seen a noticeable decline in these areas, other less developed countries have advanced and, in some cases, overtaken the West. India, for example, now has a large pool of educated workers. So European countries can no longer rest on their laurels as they have done for far too long; otherwise, they are in danger of falling even further behind economically.

C It is difficult in the modern world to do anything other than a basic job without being able to read. Reading as a skill is the key to an educated workforce, which in turn is the bedrock of economic advancement, particularly in the present technological age. Studies have shown that by increasing the literacy and numeracy skills of primary school children in the UK, the benefit to the economy generally is in billions of pounds. The skill of reading is now no more just an intellectual or leisure activity, but rather a fully-fledged economic force.

D Part of the problem with reading is that it is a skill which is not appreciated in most developed societies. This is an attitude that has condemned large swathes of the population in most Western nations to illiteracy. It might surprise people in countries outside the West to learn that in the United Kingdom, and indeed in some other European countries, the literacy rate has fallen to below that of so-called less developed countries.

E There are also forces conspiring against reading in our modern society. It is not seen as cool among a younger generation more at home with computer screens or a Walkman. The solitude of reading is not very appealing. Students at school, college or university who read a lot are called bookworms. The term indicates the contempt in which reading and learning are held in certain circles or subcultures. It is a criticism, like all such attacks, driven by the insecurity of those who are not literate or are semi-literate. Criticism is also a means, like all bullying, of keeping peers in place so that they do not step out of line. Peer pressure among young people is so powerful that it often kills any attempts to change attitudes to habits like reading.

F But the negative connotations apart, is modern Western society standing Canute-like against an uncontrollable spiral of decline? I think not.

G How should people be encouraged to read more? It can easily be done by increasing basic reading skills at an early age and encouraging young people to borrow books from schools. Some schools have classroom libraries as well as school libraries. It is no good waiting until pupils are in their secondary school to encourage an interest in books; it needs to be pushed at an early age. Reading comics, magazines and low brow publications like Mills and Boon is frowned upon. But surely what people, whether they be adults or children, read is of little import. What is significant is the fact that they are reading. Someone who reads a comic today may have the courage to pick up a more substantial tome later on.

H But perhaps the best idea would be to stop the negative attitudes to reading from forming in the first place. Taking children to local libraries brings them into contact with an environment where they can become relaxed among books. If primary school children were also taken in groups into bookshops, this might also entice them to want their own books. A local bookshop, like some local libraries, could perhaps arrange book readings for children which, being away from the classroom, would make the reading activity more of an adventure. On a more general note, most countries have writers of national importance. By increasing the standing of national writers in the eyes of the public, through local and national writing competitions, people would be drawn more to the printed word. Catch them young and, perhaps, they just might then all become bookworms.

Questions 16-22

Reading Passage 86 has eight paragraphs labelled **A-H**.

Choose the most suitable heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

Write the appropriate numbers **(i-xii)** in boxes **16-22** on your answer sheet.

One of the headings has been done for you as an example. Any heading may be used more than once.

Note: There are more headings than paragraphs, so you will not use all of them.

List of Headings

i Reading not taken for granted

ii Taking children to libraries

iii Reading: the mark of civilization

iv Reading in St Augustine's day

v A large pool of educated workers in India

vi Literacy rates in developed countries have declined because of people's attitude

vii Persuading people to read

viii Literacy influences the economies of countries in today's world

xi Reading benefits the economy by billions of pounds

x The attitude to reading amongst the young

xi Reading becomes an economic force

xii The writer's attitude to the decline in reading

16 Paragraph **A**

17 Paragraph **B**

18 Paragraph **C**

19 Paragraph **D**

20 Paragraph **E**

21 Paragraph **F**

22 Paragraph **G**

Example Paragraph **H** **Answer vii**

Questions 23-27

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 86?

In boxes **23-27** on your answer sheet, write

YES if the statement agrees with the writer's claims

NO if the statement contradicts the writer's claims

NOT GIVEN if there is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

Example	**Answer**
According to legend, St Augustine was the first person to be seen reading silently.	Yes

23 European countries have been satisfied with past achievements for too long and have allowed other countries to overtake them in certain areas.

24 Reading is an economic force.

25 The literacy rate in less developed nations is considerably higher than in all European countries.

26 If you encourage children to read when they are young the negative attitude to reading that grows in some subcultures will be eliminated.

27 People should be discouraged from reading comics and magazines.

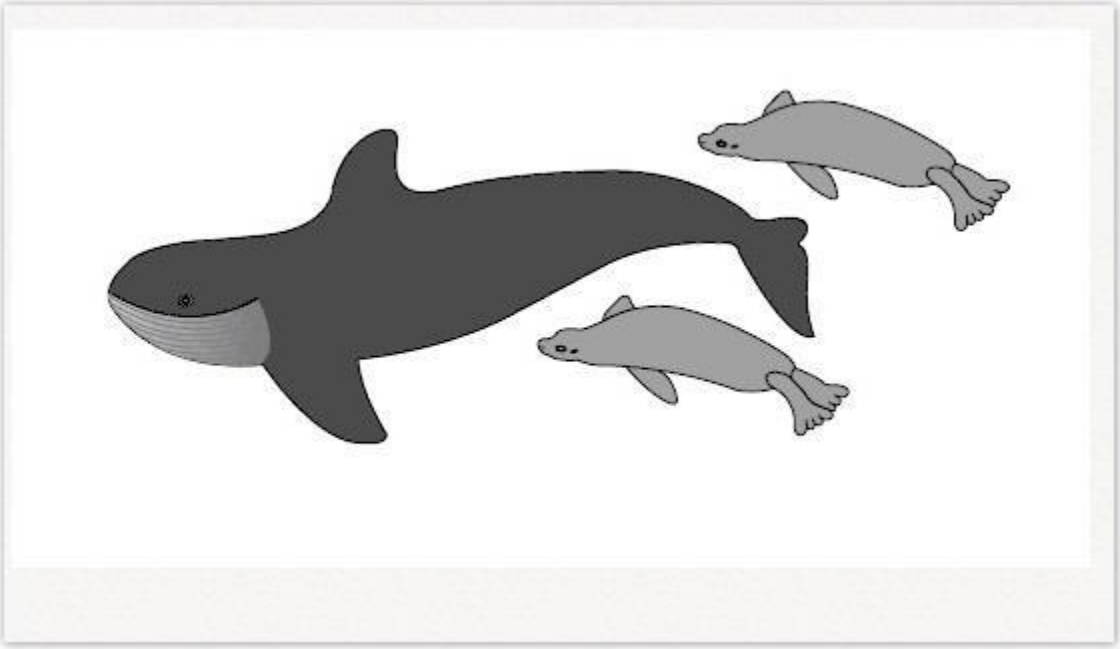
Answer:

16. iii 17. viii 18. xi 19. vi 20. x 21. xii 22. vii 23. YES 24. YES 25. NOT GIVEN 26. YES 27. NO

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 90 - What Do Whales Feel?

What Do Whales Feel?

An examination of the functioning of the senses in cetaceans, the group of mammals comprising whales, dolphins and porpoises



Some of the senses that we and other terrestrial mammals take for granted are either reduced or absent in cetaceans or fail to function well in water. For example, it appears from their brain structure that toothed species are unable to smell. Baleen species, on the other hand, appear to have some related brain structures but it is not known whether these are functional. It has been speculated that, as the blowholes evolved and migrated to the top of the head, the neural pathways serving sense of smell may have been nearly all sacrificed. Similarly, although at least some cetaceans have taste buds, the nerves serving these have degenerated or are rudimentary.

The sense of touch has sometimes been described as weak too, but this view is probably mistaken. Trainers of captive dolphins and small whales often remark on their animals' responsiveness to being touched or rubbed, and both captive and freeranging cetacean individuals of all species (particularly adults and calves, or members of the same subgroup) appear to make frequent contact. This contact may help to maintain order within a group, and stroking or touching are part of the courtship ritual in most species. The area around the blowhole is also particularly sensitive and captive animals often object strongly to being touched there.

The sense of vision is developed to different degrees in different species. Baleen species studied at close quarters underwater – specifically a grey whale calf in captivity for a year, and free-ranging right whales and humpback whales studied and filmed off Argentina and Hawaii – have obviously tracked objects with vision underwater, and they can apparently see moderately well both in water and in air. However, the position of the eyes so restricts the field of vision in baleen whales that they probably do not have stereoscopic vision.

On the other hand, the position of the eyes in most dolphins and porpoises suggests that they have stereoscopic vision forward and downward. Eye position in freshwater dolphins, which often swim on their side or upside down while feeding, suggests that what vision they have is stereoscopic forward and upward. By comparison, the bottlenose dolphin has extremely keen vision in water. Judging from the way it watches and tracks airborne flying fish, it can apparently see fairly well through the air–water interface as well. And although preliminary experimental evidence suggests that their in-air vision is poor, the accuracy with which dolphins leap high to take small fish out of a trainer's hand provides anecdotal evidence to the contrary.

Such variation can no doubt be explained with reference to the habitats in which individual species have developed. For example, vision is obviously more useful to species inhabiting clear open waters than to those living in turbid rivers and flooded plains. The South American boutu and Chinese beiji, for instance, appear to have very limited vision, and the Indian susus are blind, their eyes reduced to slits that probably allow them to sense only the direction and intensity of light.

Although the senses of taste and smell appear to have deteriorated, and vision in water appears to be uncertain, such weaknesses are more than compensated for by cetaceans' well-developed acoustic sense. Most species are highly vocal, although they vary in the range of sounds they produce, and many forage for food using echolocation. Large baleen whales primarily use the lower frequencies and are often limited in their repertoire. Notable exceptions are the nearly song-like choruses of bowhead whales in summer and the complex, haunting utterances of the humpback whales. Toothed species in general employ more of the frequency spectrum, and produce a wider variety of sounds, than baleen species (though the sperm whale apparently produces a monotonous series of high-energy clicks and little else). Some of the more complicated sounds are clearly communicative, although what role they may play in the social life and 'culture' of cetaceans has been more the subject of wild speculation than of solid science.

1.echolocation:the perception ofobjects by means ofsound wave echoes.

Questions 15-21

Complete the table below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from Reading Passage 85 for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **15–21** on your answer sheet.

SENSE	SPECIES	ABILITY	COMMENTS
Smell	toothed	no	evidence from brain structure
	baleen	not certain	related brain structures are present
Taste	some types	poor	nerves linked to their **15 .....** are underdeveloped
Touch	all	yes	region around the blowhole very sensitive
Vision	**16**.....	yes	probably do not have stereoscopic vision
	dolphins, porpoises	yes	probably have stereoscopic vision **17**..... and .....
	18.....	yes	probably have stereoscopic vision forward and upward
	bottlenose dolphin	yes	exceptional in **19 .....** and good in air-water interface
	boutu and beiji	poor	have limited vision
	Indian susu	no	probably only sense direction and intensity of light
Hearing	most large baleen	yes	usually use **20 .....** repertoire limited

21..... whales and ..... whales	yes	song-like
toothed	yes	use more of frequency spectrum; have wider repertoire

Questions 22-26

Answer the questions below using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **22–26** on your answer sheet.

22 Which of the senses is described here as being involved in mating?

23 Which species swims upside down while eating?

24 What can bottlenose dolphins follow from under the water?

25 Which type of habitat is related to good visual ability?

26 Which of the senses is best developed in cetaceans?

Answer:

15. taste buds 16. baleen / the baleen whales 17. forward , downward 18. freshwater dolphin(s) / the freshwater dolphin(s) 19. water / the water 20. lower frequencies / the lower frequencies 21. bowhead,

humpback 22. touch / sense of touch 23. freshwater dolphin(s) / the freshwater dolphin(s) 24. airborne flying fish 25. clear water(s) / clear open water(s) 26. acoustic sense / the acoustic sense

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 91 - The effects of light on plant and animal species

The effects of light on plant and animal species

Light is important to organisms for two different reasons. Firstly it is used as a cue for the timing of daily and seasonal rhythms in both plane and animals, and secondly it is used to assist growth in plants.

Breeding in most organisms occurs during a part. of the year only, and so a reliable cue is needed to trigger breeding behaviour. Day length is an excellent cue, because it provides a perfectly predictable pattern of change within the year. In the temperate zone in spring, temperatures fluctuate greatly from day to day, but day length increases steadily by a predictable amount. The seasonal impact of day length on physiological responses is called photoperiodism, and the amount of experimental evidence for this phenomenon is considerable. For example, some species of birds' breeding can be induced even in midwinter simply by increasing day length artificially (Wolfson 1964). Other examples of photoperiodism occur in plants. A short-day plant flowers when the day is less than a certain critical length. A long-day plant flowers after a certain critical day length is exceeded. In both cases the critical day length differs from species to species. Plane which flower after a period of vegetative growth, regardless of photoperiod, are known as day-neutral plants.

Breeding seasons in animals such as birds have evolved to occupy the part of the year in which offspring have the greatest chances of survival. Before the breeding season begins, food reserves must be built up to support the energy cost of reproduction, and to provide for young birds both when they are in the nest and after fledging. Thus many temperate-zone birds use the increasing day lengths in spring as a cue to begin the nesting cycle, because this is a point when adequate food resources will be assured.

The adaptive significance of photoperiodism in plane is also clear. Short-day plane that flower in spring in the temperate zone are adapted to maximising seedling growth during the growing season. Long-day plants are adapted for situations that require fertilization by insects, or a long period of seed ripening. Short-day plane that flower in the autumn in the temperate zone are able to build up food reserves over the growing season and over winter as seeds. Day-neutral plane have an evolutionary advantage when the connection between the favourable period for reproduction and day length is much less certain. For example, desert annuals germinate, flower and seed whenever suitable rainfall occurs, regardless of the day length.

The breeding season of some plants can be delayed to extraordinary lengths. Bamboos are perennial grasses that remain in a vegetative state for many years and then suddenly flower, fruit and die (Evans 1976). Every bamboo of the species Chusquea abietifolio on the island

of Jamaica flowered, set seed and died during 1884. The next generation of bamboo flowered and died between 1916 and 1918, which suggests a vegetative cycle of about 31 years. The climatic trigger for this flowering cycle is not-yet known, but the adaptive significance is clear. The simultaneous production of masses of bamboo seeds (in some cases lying I2 to I5 centimetres deep on the ground) is more than all the seed-eating animals can cope with at the time, so that some seeds escape being eaten and grow up to form the next generation (Evans 1976).

The second reason light is important to organisms is that it is essential for photosynthesis. This is the process by which plants use energy from the sun to convert carbon from soil or water into organic material for growth. The rate of photosynthesis in a plant can be measured by calculating the rate of its uptake of carbon. There is a wide range of photosynthetic responses of plants to variations in light intensity. Some plants reach maximal photosynthesis at one-quarter full sunlight, and others, like sugarcane, never reach a maximum, but continue to increase photosynthesis rate as light intensity rises.

Plants in general can be divided into two groups: shade-tolerant species and shade-intolerant species. This classification is commonly used in forestry and horticulture. Shade-tolerant plane have lower photosynthetic rates and hence have lower growth rates than those of shade-intolerant species. Plant species become adapted to living in a certain kind of habitat, and in the process evolve a series of characteristics that prevent them from occupying other habitats. Grime (1966) suggests that light may be one of the major components directing these adaptations. For example, eastern hemlock seedlings are shade-tolerant. They can survive in the forest understorey under very low light levels because they have a low photosynthetic rate.

Questions 27-33

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 84?

In boxes **27-33** 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

27 There is plenty of scientific evidence to support photoperiodism.

28 Some types of bird can be encouraged to breed out of season.

29 Photoperiodism is restricted to certain geographic areas.

30 Desert annuals are examples of long-day plants.

31 Bamboos flower several times during their life cycle.

32 Scientists have yet to determine the cue for Chusquea abietifolia's seasonal rhythm.

33 Eastern hemlock is a fast-growing plant.

Questions 34-40

Complete the sentences.

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

Write your answers in boxes **34-40** on your answer sheet.

34 Day length is a useful cue for breeding in areas where .....are unpredictable.

35 Plants which do not respond to light levels are referred to as ..... .

36 Birds in temperate climates associate longer days with nesting and the availability of ..... .

37 Plants that Bower when days are long often depend on.....to help them reproduce.

38 Desert annuals respond to.....as a signal for reproduction.

39 There is no limit to the photosynthetic rate in plants such as ..... .

40 Tolerance to shade is one criterion for the.....of plants in forestry and horticulture.

Answer:

27. TRUE 28. TRUE 29. NOT GIVEN 30. FALSE 31. FALSE 32. TRUE 33. FALSE 34. temperatures 35. day-neutral / day-neutral plants 36. food / food resources / adequate food resources 37. insects / fertilization by insects 38. rainfall / suitable rainfall 39. sugarcane 40. classification