

# IELTS Academic Reading Sample 80 - Advantages of public transport

## Advantages of public transport

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**A** A New study conducted for the World Bank by Murdoch University's Institute for Science and Technology Policy (ISTP) has demonstrated that public transport is more efficient than cars. The study compared the proportion of wealth poured into transport by thirty-seven cities around the world. This included both the public and private costs of building, maintaining and using a transport system. The study found that the Western Australian city of Perth is a good example of a city with minimal public transport. As a result, 17% of its wealth went into transport costs. Some European and Asian cities, on the other hand, spent as little as 5%. Professor Peter Newman, ISTP Director, pointed out that these more efficient cities were able to put the difference into attracting industry and jobs or creating a better place to live. According to Professor Newman, the larger Australian city of Melbourne is a rather unusual city in this sort of comparison. He describes it as two cities: 'A European city surrounded by a car-dependent one'. Melbourne's large tram network has made car use in the inner city much lower, but the outer suburbs have the same car-based structure as most other Australian cities. The explosion in demand for accommodation in the inner suburbs of Melbourne suggests a recent change in many people's preferences as to where they live.

Newman says this is a new, broader way of considering public transport issues. In the past, the case for public transport has been made on the basis of environmental and social justice considerations rather than economics. Newman, however, believes the study demonstrates that 'the auto-dependent city model is inefficient and grossly inadequate in economic as well as environmental terms'.

Bicycle use was not included in the study but Newman noted that the two most 'bicycle friendly' cities considered - Amsterdam and Copenhagen - were very efficient, even though their public transport systems were 'reasonable but not special'.

It is common for supporters of road networks to reject the models of cities with good public transport by arguing that such systems would not work in their particular city. One objection is climate. Some people say their city could not make more use of public transport because it is either too hot or too cold. Newman rejects this, pointing out that public transport has been successful in both Toronto and Singapore and, in fact, he has checked the use of cars against climate and found 'zero correlation'.

When it comes to other physical features, road lobbies are on stronger ground. For example, Newman accepts it would be hard for a city as hilly as Auckland to develop a really good rail network. However, he points out that both Hong Kong and Zürich have managed to make a success of their rail systems, heavy and light respectively, though there are few cities in the world as hilly.

In fact, Newman believes the main reason for adopting one sort of transport over another is politics: 'The more democratic the process, the more public transport is favored.' He considers Portland, Oregon, a perfect example of this. Some years ago, federal money was granted to build a new road. However, local pressure groups forced a referendum over whether to spend the money on light rail instead. The rail proposal won and the railway worked spectacularly well. In the years that have followed, more and more rail systems have been put in, dramatically changing the nature of the city. Newman notes that Portland has about the same population as Perth and had a similar population density at the time.

**B** In the UK, travel times to work had been stable for at least six centuries, with people avoiding situations that required them to spend more than half an hour travelling to work. Trains and cars initially allowed people to live at greater distances without taking longer to reach their destination. However, public infrastructure did not keep pace with urban sprawl, causing massive congestion problems which now make commuting times far higher.

**C** There is a widespread belief that increasing wealth encourages people to live farther out where cars are the only viable transport. The example of European cities refutes that. They are often wealthier than their American counterparts but have not generated the same level of car use. In Stockholm, car use has actually fallen in recent years as the city has become larger and wealthier. A new study makes this point even more starkly. Developing cities in Asia, such as Jakarta and Bangkok, make more use of the car than wealthy Asian cities such as Tokyo and Singapore. In cities that developed later, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank discouraged the building of public transport and people have been forced to rely on cars - creating the massive traffic jams that characterize those cities.

**D** Newman believes one of the best studies on how cities built for cars might be converted to rail use is The Urban Village report, which used Melbourne as an example. It found that pushing everyone into the city centre was not the best approach. Instead, the proposal advocated the creation of urban villages at hundreds of sites, mostly around railway stations.

**E** It was once assumed that improvements in telecommunications would lead to more dispersal in the population as people were no longer forced into cities. However, the ISTP team's research demonstrates that the population and job density of cities rose or remained constant in the 1980s after decades of decline. The explanation for this seems to be that it is valuable to place people working in related fields together. 'The new world will largely depend on human creativity, and creativity flourishes where people come together face-to-face.'

### Questions 1-5

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-13, which are based on Reading Passage 95.

Reading Passage 95 has five paragraphs, **A-E**.

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

Write the correct number **i-viii**, in boxes **1-5** on your answer sheet.

#### List of Headings

- i Avoiding an overcrowded centre
- ii A successful exercise in people power
- iii The benefits of working together in cities
- iv Higher incomes need not mean more cars
- v Economic arguments fail to persuade
- vi The impact of telecommunications on population distribution
- vii Increases in travelling time
- viii Responding to arguments against public transport

- 1 Paragraph A
- 2 Paragraph B
- 3 Paragraph C
- 4 Paragraph D
- 5 Paragraph E

### Questions 6-10

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 95?

In boxes **6-10** 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** The ISTP study examined public and private systems in every city of the world.

**7** Efficient cities can improve the quality of life for their inhabitants.

**8** An inner-city tram network is dangerous for car drivers.

**9** In Melbourne, people prefer to live in the outer suburbs.

**10** Cities with high levels of bicycle usage can be efficient even when public transport is only averagely good.

### Questions 11-13

Look at the following cities (*Questions 11-13*) and the list of descriptions below.

Match each city with the correct description, **A-F**.

Write the correct letter, **A-F**, in boxes **11-13** on your answer sheet.

**11** Perth

**12** Auckland

**13** Portland

**List of Descriptions**

- A** successfully uses a light rail transport system in hilly environment
- B** successful public transport system despite cold winters
- C** profitably moved from road to light rail transport system
- D** hilly and inappropriate for rail transport system
- E** heavily dependent on cars despite widespread poverty
- F** inefficient due to a limited public transport system

**Answer:**

1. ii 2. vii 3. iv 4. i 5. iii 6. FALSE 7. TRUE 8. NOT GIVEN 9. FALSE 10. TRUE 11. F 12. D 13. C

# IELTS Academic Reading Sample 81 - Adam's Wine

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You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-15, which are based on Reading Passage 81 on the following pages.

## A D A M ' S   W I N E

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A    Water is the giver and, at the same time, the taker of life. It covers most of the surface of the planet we live on and features large in the development of the human race. On present predictions, it is an element that is set to assume even greater significance.

B    Throughout history, water has had a huge impact on our lives. Humankind has always had a rather ambiguous relationship with water, on the one hand receiving enormous benefit from it, not just as a drinking source, but as a provider of food and a means whereby to travel and to trade. But forced to live close to water in order to survive and to develop, the relationship has not always been peaceful or beneficial. In fact, it has been quite the contrary. What has essentially been a necessity for survival has turned out in many instances to have a very destructive and life-threatening side.

C    Through the ages, great floods alternated with long periods of drought have assaulted people and their environment, hampering their fragile fight for survival. The dramatic changes to the environment that are now a feature of our daily news are not exactly new: fields that were once lush and fertile are now barren; lakes and rivers that were once teeming with life are now long gone; savannah has been turned to desert. What perhaps is new is our naive wonder when faced with the forces of nature.

D    Today, we are more aware of climatic changes around the world. Floods in far-flung places are instant news for the whole world. Perhaps these events make us feel better as we face the destruction of our own property by floods and other natural disasters.

E    In 2002, many parts of Europe suffered severe flood damage running into billions of euros. Properties across the continent collapsed into the sea as waves pounded the coastline wreaking havoc with sea defences. But it was not just the seas. Rivers swollen by heavy rains and by the effects of deforestation carried large volumes of water that wrecked many communities.

F    Building stronger and more sophisticated river defences against flooding is the expensive short-term answer. There are simpler ways. Planting trees in highland areas, not just in Europe but in places like the Himalayas, to protect people living in low-lying regions like the Ganges Delta, is a cheaper and more attractive solution. Progress is already being made in convincing countries that the emission of carbon dioxide and other

greenhouse gases is causing considerable damage to the environment. But more effort is needed in this direction.

**G** And the future? If we are to believe the forecasts, it is predicted that two-thirds of the world population will be without fresh water by 2025. But for a growing number of regions of the world the future is already with us. While some areas are devastated by flooding, scarcity of water in many other places is causing conflict. The state of Texas in the United States of America is suffering a shortage of water with the Rio Grande failing to reach the Gulf of Mexico for the first time in 50 years in the spring of 2002, pitting region against region as they vie for water sources. With many parts of the globe running dry through drought and increased water consumption, there is now talk of water being the new oil.

**H** Other doom-laden estimates suggest that, while tropical areas will become drier and uninhabitable, coastal regions and some low-lying islands will in all probability be submerged by the sea as the polar ice caps melt. Popular exotic destinations now visited by countless tourists will become no-go areas. Today's holiday hotspots of southern Europe and elsewhere will literally become hotspots - too hot to live in or visit. With the current erratic behaviour of the weather, it is difficult not to subscribe to such despair.

**I** Some might say that this despondency is ill-founded, but we have had ample proof that there is something not quite right with the climate. Many parts of the world have experienced devastating flooding. As the seasons revolve, the focus of the destruction moves from one continent to another. The impact on the environment is alarming and the cost to life depressing. It is a picture to which we will need to become accustomed.

### **Questions 1-8**

Reading Passage **94** has eight paragraphs labelled **A-I**.

Choose the most suitable headings for paragraphs **B-I** from the list of headings below.

Write the appropriate numbers **(i-xiii)** in boxes **1-8** on your answer sheet.

*One of the headings has been done for you as an example.*

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

### **List of Headings**

- i Environmental change has always been with us
- ii The scarcity of water
- iii Rivers and seas cause damage
- iv Should we be despondent? Or realistic?
- v Disasters caused by the climate make us feel better

- vi Water, the provider of food
- vii What is water?
- viii How to solve flooding
- ix Far-flung flooding
- x Humans' relationship with water
- xi The destructive force of water in former times
- xii Flooding in the future
- xiii A pessimistic view of the future

- 1 Paragraph B
- 2 Paragraph C
- 3 Paragraph D
- 4 Paragraph E
- 5 Paragraph F
- 6 Paragraph G
- 7 Paragraph H
- 8 Paragraph I

**Example** Paragraph A **Answer** vii

**Questions 9-15**

Choose the appropriate letters **A-D** and write them in boxes **9-15** on your answer sheet.

**9** The writer believes that water

- A is gradually becoming of greater importance.
- B will have little impact on our lives in future.
- C is something we will need more than anything else.
- D will have even greater importance in our lives in the future.

**10** Humankind's relationship with water has been

- A two-sided.
- B one-sided.
- C purely one of great benefit.
- D fairly frightening.

**11** The writer suggests that

- A we are in awe of the news we read and see on TV every day.
- B change to the environment leaves us speechless.

- C we should not be in awe of the news we read and see on TV every day.
- D our surprise at the environmental change brought about by nature is something new.

**12** According to the text, planting trees

- A has to be co-ordinated internationally.
- B is more expensive than building sea and river defences.
- C is a less expensive answer to flooding than building river defences.
- D is not an answer to the problem of flooding in all regions.

**13** By 2025, it is projected that

- A at least half the world population will have fresh water.
- B the majority of the world population will have fresh water.
- C one-third of the world population will have fresh water.
- D fresh water will only be available to half of the world population.

**14** According to the text, in the future low-lying islands

- A will still be habitable.
- B will not be under water.
- C are likely to be under water.
- D will probably not be under water.

**15** According to the writer,

- A people do not need to get used to environmental damage.
- B people will need to get used to climate changes that cause environmental damage.
- C people are now more used to environmental damage than they have been in the past.
- D the general despondency about environmental changes is ill-founded.

**Answer:**

1. x 2. i 3. v 4. iii 5. viii 6. ii 7. xiii 8. iv 9. D 10. A 11. D 12. C 13. C 14. C 15. B

# IELTS Academic Reading Sample 82 - EVA HESSE - Three Pieces Plus

## EVA HESSE Three Pieces Plus...

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**The Guggenheim Art Gallery, New York.**

In one corner of the room is a mass of tangled rope suspended from the ceiling with some sections dangling to the floor; the first of three encountered pieces of work that have a resounding impact on the viewing public.

It stops one in one's tracks: how dare it be there - this mess of nothing! It is like arranged chaos: that is, the confused mixture of varying sizes of rope, dipped in latex, looks as though it might collapse in a heap on the floor at any moment. At the same time, it is held up and in place by a series of fine wires and hooks, giving it a strange sense of ... order.

A deliberate challenge to the forces of gravity. It is a shambles. It makes one laugh. It is play. It is drawing in the air! Maybe it can move or dance about! Yet, it is hardly there, like something imagined.

The materials are cheap and disposable. Impermanent, like ... the people looking at it. But it is very definitely present! It has a presence. You can see that people want to walk into it and become a part of it - but alas! The gallery guard is hovering nearby.

To the left of this piece, running along the wall, in two rows on top of each other, is a long series of lid-less boxes. They are mounted at average nose height and are made of fibreglass which gives them a shiny, almost moist, appearance. They are the colour of murky water, absorbing the gallery light with an opacity similar to that of mucus or tree gum.

They look as though they might be soft and malleable to touch, with their irregular edges and non-conforming sides. This gives the overall impression that they could fall in on themselves or slide down the wall. The structure is puzzlingly familiar, similar to things in the world, and yet it is not like anything in particular.

In the adjacent corner is the third piece, consisting of a collection of nine cylindrical open-ended objects, slit part way from end to end. They give the appearance of being randomly placed - some lying, some leaning on the wall or on each other-all seeming somehow to be related. Like the boxes, they are a multiple of each other. Made of fibreglass with a shiny surface they look almost like abandoned pods that had once been alive. The

associations seem to jump around in one's head, running between sensations of delight and pleasure, violence and discomfort.

One has to bend down to be with them more. Driven by the desire to physically interact, one is almost forced to stoop further so that one can touch, or indeed taste, this intriguing surface; but no, the guard is there.

The visual language apparent in these artworks is unfamiliar, as is the artist, Eva Hesse. Her work is as exciting as it is disturbing. For many, Hesse's sculpture refers essentially to the body. This, perhaps, does not seem surprising when it is in relation to the body that women are generally assessed. Hesse died of a brain tumour in 1970 at the age of 34. It must be an inescapable inevitability, therefore, that her work was read in the context of its time where it has, until recently, been largely abandoned.

Given the influence of feminism on our cultural consciousness since that period, it seems paramount that we avoid, or at the very least attempt to avoid, those dramatic facts about her life and family history. We may then be freed from a limited and narrow translation of her art.

Hesse's work is much more ambiguous and funny than some rather literal readings would have us believe. Perhaps it is precisely because her use of metaphor in her work is so subtle that it escapes the one-line definitions we so love to employ.

We are now, more than ever, hungry for the cult of 'personality'. While Hesse and others before and since can more than fill that demand, we seem in danger of focusing on the life of the artist and not on the life of the art.

When looking at Hesse's sculpture, drawings and paintings, the most interesting and challenging aspects lie just there - within the work. And this must be the starting point for any interpretation, not her complex life or untimely death.

### **Questions 31-36**

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 93?

In boxes **31-36** on your answer sheet, write:

**YES** if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer

**NO** if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer

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

#### **Example**

#### **Answer**

The Guggenheim Art Gallery is in New York.

Yes

- 31 The first piece of Hesse's art has little effect on visitors to the gallery.
- 32 The order inherent in the first piece of Hesse's art is essential to the understanding of her work.
- 33 The second piece of art by Hesse is inferior in several significant ways to the first.
- 34 The second piece by Hesse has several design faults that attract the public.
- 35 The third piece of work arouses different emotions.
- 36 Of the three pieces of Hesse's work described, the first is the writer's favourite.

**Question3 37-40**

Choose the appropriate letter **A-D** and write it in box **30** on your answer sheet.

37 According to the writer, Eva Hesse

- A is not a well-known artist.
- B is very familiar, as is her work.
- C is not a good artist.
- D is strongly attracted by visual language.

38 The writer concludes that

- A Hesse's work is timeless.
- B the understanding of Hesse's work has until recently been interpreted only in the context of its time.
- C Hesse's work is a product of her time and is not relevant to the modern world.
- D Hesse's work is easy to read.

39 The writer thinks that it is.....to define Hesse's work.

- A not difficult
- B essential
- C not important.
- D not easy

40 In the present climate,

- A we may lose sight of Hesse's art and focus on her life.
- B personality is very important.
- C art cults are in vogue.
- D we may lose sight of Hesse's life and focus on her art.

**Answer:**

31. No 32. NOT GIVEN 33. NOT GIVEN 34. NOT GIVEN 35. YES 36. NOT GIVEN 37. A 38. B 39.  
D 40. A

# IELTS Academic Reading Sample 83 - Try It and See

## TRY IT AND SEE

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*In the social sciences, it is often supposed that there can be no such thing as a controlled experiment. Think again.*

**A** In the scientific pecking order, social scientists are usually looked down on by their peers in the natural sciences. Natural scientists do experiments to test their theories or, if they cannot, they try to look for natural phenomena that can act in lieu of experiments. Social scientists, it is widely thought, do not subject their own hypotheses to any such rigorous treatment. Worse, they peddle their untested hypotheses to governments and try to get them turned into policies.

**B** Governments require sellers of new medicines to demonstrate their safety and effectiveness. The accepted gold standard of evidence is a randomised control trial, in which a new drug is compared with the best existing therapy (or with a placebo, if no treatment is available). Patients are assigned to one arm or the other of such a study at random, ensuring that the only difference between the two groups is the new treatment. The best studies also ensure that neither patient nor physician knows which patient is allocated to which therapy. Drug trials must also include enough patients to make it unlikely that chance alone may determine the result.

**C** But few education programmes or social initiatives are evaluated in carefully conducted studies prior to their introduction. A case in point is the 'whole-language' approach to reading, which swept much of the English-speaking world in the 1970s and 1980s. The whole-language theory holds that children learn to read best by absorbing contextual clues from texts, not by breaking individual words into their component parts and reassembling them (a method known as phonics). Unfortunately, the educational theorists who pushed the whole-language notion so successfully did not wait for evidence from controlled randomised trials before advancing their claims. Had they done so, they might have concluded, as did an analysis of 52 randomised studies carried out by the US National Reading Panel in 2000, that effective reading instruction requires phonics.

**D** To avoid the widespread adoption of misguided ideas, the sensible thing is to experiment first and make policy later. This is the idea behind a trial of restorative justice which is taking place in the English courts. The experiment will include criminals who plead guilty to robbery. Those who agree to participate will be assigned randomly either to sentencing as normal or to participation in a conference in which the offender comes face-to-face with his victim and discusses how he may make emotional and material restitution. The purpose of the trial is to assess whether such restorative justice limits re-offending. If it does, it might be adopted more widely.

**E** The idea of experimental evidence is not quite as new to the social sciences as sneering natural scientists might believe. In fact, randomised trials and systematic reviews of evidence were introduced into the social sciences long before they became common in medicine. An apparent example of random allocation is a study carried out in 1927 of how to persuade people to vote in elections. And randomised trials in social work were begun in the 1930s and 1940s. But enthusiasm later waned. This loss of interest can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that early experiments produced little evidence of positive outcomes. Others suggest that much of the opposition to experimental evaluation stems from a common philosophical malaise among social scientists, who doubt the validity of the natural sciences, and therefore reject the potential of knowledge derived from controlled experiments. A more pragmatic factor limiting the growth of evidence-based education and social services may be limitations on the funds available for research.

**F** Nevertheless, some 11,000 experimental studies are known in the social sciences (compared with over 250,000 in the medical literature). Randomised trials have been used to evaluate the effectiveness of driver-education programmes, job-training schemes, classroom size, psychological counselling for post-traumatic stress disorder and increased investment in public housing. And where they are carried out, they seem to have a healthy dampening effect on otherwise rosy interpretations of the observations.

**G** The problem for policymakers is often not too few data, but what to make of multiple and conflicting studies. This is where a body called the Campbell Collaboration comes into its own. This independent non-profit organisation is designed to evaluate existing studies, in a process known as a systematic review. This means attempting to identify every relevant trial of a given question (including studies that have never been published), choosing the best ones using clearly defined criteria for quality, and combining the results in a statistically valid way. An equivalent body, the Cochrane Collaboration, has produced more than 1,004 such reviews in medical fields. The hope is that rigorous review standards will allow Campbell, like Cochrane, to become a trusted and authoritative source of information.

### **Questions 27-32**

*You should spend about 20 minutes on questions 27-40, which are based on Reading Passage 3.*

*Reading Passage 3 has seven paragraphs A-G.*

*Choose the correct heading for paragraphs B-G from the list of headings below.*

*Write the correct number i-x in boxes 27-32 on your answer sheet.*

**List of Headings**

- i Why some early social science methods lost popularity
- ii The cost implications of research
- iii Looking ahead to an unbiased assessment of research
- iv A range of social issues that have been usefully studied
- v An example of a poor decision that was made too quickly
- vi What happens when the figures are wrong
- vii One area of research that is rigorously carried out
- viii The changing nature of medical trials
- ix An investigative study that may lead to a new system
- x Why some scientists' theories are considered second-rate

**Example Paragraph A Answer X**

- 27** Paragraph B
- 28** Paragraph C
- 29** Paragraph D
- 30** Paragraph E
- 31** Paragraph F
- 32** Paragraph G

**Questions 33-36**

Complete the summary below.

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

Write your answers in boxes **33-36** on your answer sheet.

**Fighting Crime**

Some criminals in England are agreeing to take part in a trial designed to help reduce their chances of **33**.....The idea is that while one group of randomly selected criminals undergoes the usual **34**..... the other group will discuss the possibility of making some repayment for the crime by meeting the **35** ..... . It is yet to be seen whether this system, known as **36**.....will work.

**Questions 37-40**

Classify the following characteristics as relating to

- A Social Science
- B Medical Science
- C Both Social Science and Medical Science
- D Neither Social Science nor Medical Science

Write the correct letter **A, B, C** or **D** in boxes **37-40** on your answer sheet.

**37** a tendency for negative results in early trials

**38** the desire to submit results for independent assessment

**39** the prioritisation of research areas to meet government needs

**40** the widespread use of studies that investigate the quality of new products

**Answer:**

27. vii 28. v 29. ix 30. i 31. iv 32. iii 33. re-offending 34. sentencing 35. victim 36. restorative  
justice 37. A 38. C 39. D 40. B