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Studying Overseas

READING

- ▶ **Exam tasks** ▶ Short-answer questions; classification; true/false/not given
- ▶ **Skills** ▶ Skimming and scanning; predicting content

1 Introduction

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- Have you ever studied abroad? Where did you study? Did you enjoy it? What were the main benefits of studying abroad? What were the main challenges?
- If you have never studied abroad, would you like to? Where and what would you like to study? Why? What do you think are the main benefits of studying abroad? What do you think would be the main challenges?

2 Skimming and scanning

A Both skimming and scanning involve reading a text quickly, but are used for different reasons.

Skimming is when you quickly read for just the main idea of a text, without thinking about specific details. Scanning is when you read to find specific pieces of information, such as names, dates and facts.

Look at situations 1–4 and tick the correct box for each.

IN THE EXAM

Reading module: Academic and General Training

The IELTS Reading module takes 60 minutes and consists of three sections. In the Academic module, each section features one reading text taken from books, magazines, journals and newspapers. In the General Training module, each section may consist of one or more passages, taken from sources such as advertisements, leaflets and instruction manuals, of the kind you would find every day in an English-speaking country.

In both the Academic and General Training modules, you have to answer 40 questions in total, based on a variety of task types, such as matching, short-answer questions, true/false/not given and multiple-choice questions. The task types and skills required for them (skimming, scanning, making predictions, etc.) are the same for the Academic and General Training modules.

Express Tip

In the IELTS Reading module, one of your biggest challenges is time; being able to skim and scan quickly will help you save time.

- | | skim | scan |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 You look at a newspaper to see if there's a film on TV tonight. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 You look at a train timetable to see when the next train is due. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 You need to decide if a long article will be useful for some research you are doing. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 You have a meeting in ten minutes, and you haven't read the report you are going to discuss. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

B Skim the short article below in 30 seconds. Which of the following describes the main idea of the text?

- 1 It is important to speak English if you want to be successful in business.
- 2 Most of the world's mail is written in English.
- 3 English is the most widely used language in the world.

English is the second most commonly spoken, and by far the most widespread of the world's languages. It is estimated that there are 350 million native speakers, 300 million who use English as a second language and a further billion using it as a foreign language. English is spoken by scientists, pilots, computer experts, diplomats and tourists; it is the language of the world! Did you know over 50% of all business deals are conducted in English? And over 70% of all mail is written and addressed in English? It is the official or co-official language of over 50 countries and furthermore, it is spoken extensively in other countries where it has no official status. It is perhaps, therefore, not surprising that in recent years we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of students opting to study abroad. In the future this will cement the role that English plays in the cultural, political or economic life of many countries around the world from Australia to Zambia.

C Look at these numbers from the text. Do you remember what they refer to? Match the numbers with their reference below. Then scan the text in 30 seconds to find the answers.

- over 70% the amount of business done in English
 over 50% the amount of mail written in English

3 Predicting content

A Before you read a text in the IELTS exam, it is a good idea to predict what you are going to read. One way is to use the information in the title (or main heading), the summary paragraph and any subheadings.

Look at the article on page 12. Read the main heading and the subheadings. Based on the information in the headings, which of the following do you think best describes the text?

- 1 Information about universities, promoting each institution as a good place to study
- 2 A holiday brochure, 'selling' the UK as a destination for a quick break
- 3 A magazine article, giving advice on living and studying abroad in different English-speaking countries

B When you skim a text, don't worry about words you don't understand. Try to get an overall impression of the text. Make sure you read the first sentence of each paragraph. These will help you get an overview of the text. Time yourself, and take two minutes to skim the article. Then decide if your answer in 3A was correct.

Your adventure starts where?



An increasing number of students are thinking of going overseas to study for a degree. This week we focus on five English-speaking countries, examining what each has to offer and why you might choose to study there.

With thousands of institutions and courses to choose from, how do you decide where to study as an international student? Do you dream of heading for the land of Uncle Sam or would you feel more at home in Shakespeare's country? Perhaps the Australian outback will give you the space you need to work out the problems of the world. Whichever you choose, the adventure begins right here!

STUDY IN AUSTRALIA

Free-spirited Australia has been open to migration for many years and is today one of the world's top three destinations for international students. Australia's renowned cultural diversity, its high level of public safety and the vibrant atmosphere of its cities all help to make it easy for overseas visitors to feel at home. Academically speaking, most of the national, publicly-funded universities are of similarly high standard. Moreover, Australian institutions have a particularly strong reputation for research into the environment and sport science.

STUDY IN THE UK

Many students are attracted to Britain by its long history of literature, from Chaucer and Shakespeare to Bridget Jones and Harry Potter. Look beyond this, and you'll find a university system with one of the best reputations in the world. Universities in the UK have a record of achievement in business, law, the sciences, philosophy, linguistics and many other fields. Some UK institutions offer a foundation course (usually three months or one year in length) to prepare international students before they go on to do a full undergraduate or post-graduate degree; applying for one of these courses normally involves taking the IELTS exam.

STUDY IN NEW ZEALAND

With its vast and beautiful open spaces and friendly city

centres, New Zealand is a country where you can enjoy both the great outdoors and the conveniences and dynamism of modern city life. Low living costs and a high standard of living also make life here very appealing. New Zealand's highly respected educational programmes are based on the British system. A large part of a degree programme is practical; this gives graduates both the knowledge and the skills they need when entering the workplace.

STUDY IN THE USA

The population of the USA is made up of people from every continent, joined together by a shared language and a core set of values. Of these values, liberty and freedom are probably the most important, combined with individual responsibility. American students are therefore expected to think independently and have responsibility for their own studies; classes are often informal and students are encouraged to express their opinion. With 50 states all offering a huge range of different types of institutions – from two-year community college courses to four-year undergraduate programmes – deciding where to study in the USA may appear confusing, so it is important to do some research first.

STUDY IN CANADA

Surveys conducted by the United Nations have repeatedly found Canada to be among the top ten places in the world to live in. In addition, Canada's largest cities, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, have been recognised as world-class cities in which to live and work, for their cleanliness and safety and for their cultural activities and attractive lifestyles. A Canadian degree, diploma or certificate is well regarded in business, government and academic circles around the globe. Canada has two official languages – English and French. Studying and living in Canada could be your opportunity to learn both!

4 Short-answer questions

for this task – exam strategy

Short-answer questions ask you to write one, two or three words for each question. If your answer is too long or uses different words to those in the passage, it will be marked as incorrect.

For each question:

- ▶ First, decide what kind of information you need to answer the question. Is it a *where*, *when*, *what*, *which* or *who* question? Then look for keywords (most important words) in the question, for example, personal names, places and dates.

- ▶ Scan the headings in the passage to help you find the relevant part of the text. Then scan that section of the passage for possible answers (or to confirm your predicted answer).
- ▶ Check that your answer fits the maximum word count. Remember to use words taken directly from the passage. Don't change the form of the words or use different words.



Questions 1–5

Answer the following questions. Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

- 1 What type of university preparation course is available in the UK?
- 2 On which education system are New Zealand programmes founded?
- 3 Which two values are extremely important to Americans?
- 4 Which USA educational programmes are two years in length?
- 5 Who concluded that Canada is one of the best countries in the world to live in?

5 Classification

for this task – exam strategy

In classification tasks, you will see a list of categories and a number of statements. You need to match the statements with the correct categories according to the passage. The statements will be paraphrased; they will have the same meaning as the information in the text, but they may be worded differently. Sometimes the number of categories is the same as the number of statements, but not always.

- ▶ Skim the passage to decide which section of the passage each category (in this case each country) refers to.
- ▶ Read the first statement and scan the sections of the passage you identified to find an idea that has the same meaning. Note the letters that correspond to that country.
- ▶ Repeat the process for the rest of the statements.



Questions 6–10

Which countries do the following statements refer to? Choose your answers from the box and write the correct letters next to questions 6–10.

- AU Australia
- CA Canada
- NZ New Zealand
- UK United Kingdom
- US United States

Express Tip

The categories will be listed in a logical order, for example, alphabetically. Be careful because the categories may not match the order in which they appear in the text.

- 6 There is an enormous choice of colleges and universities to choose from.
- 7 Some universities are famous for courses in environmental studies.
- 8 It is well-known for producing many famous authors.
- 9 Students should be able to think for themselves.
- 10 It is not a very expensive place to live in.

6 True/false/not given

for this task – exam strategy ▶

True/False/Not Given questions ask you to read statements and compare them to the information given in the passage. You need to decide if the statement is true or false according to the passage. If the statement relates to information given in the passage, but the passage doesn't actually agree or disagree with the statement, you need to select 'Not Given'.

▶ Read the first statement. Look for keywords that can help you decide which part of the passage to focus on. Then skim the passage to find the relevant section.

▶ Read the information in that section of the passage carefully. If the idea expressed in the passage is the same as the statement, answer 'True'. If the passage disagrees with the statement, answer 'False'. If the passage contains information relating to the statement, but doesn't actually agree or disagree with it, answer 'Not Given'.

▶ Repeat the process for the rest of the statements.



Questions 11–15

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the passage? Next to questions 11–15 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

- 11 Australia is a dangerous country.
- 12 Most state universities in Australia are of comparable quality.
- 13 A degree from a UK university is highly regarded.
- 14 The British education system has a large practical element.
- 15 Canada has the top three universities in the world.



- ▶ **Exam focus** ▶ Speaking Part 1: Introduction and interview
 ▶ **Skills** ▶ Answering questions about yourself; extending your responses

1 Introduction

A Look at the photograph of people meeting for the first time. What questions do you think they are asking each other? Make a list of typical questions people ask each other when meeting for the first time.

B Now ask your partner some of these questions. Try to find out a little about him or her.

2 Answering questions about yourself

A Look at conversations 1–6 between speaker A and speaker B. Read speaker B's responses. What question do you think speaker A has asked? Discuss with a partner.

- 1 **A**
- B** (a) I don't like it very much. I think it's really difficult, especially the grammar.
- 2 **A**
- B** (b) I often go out with my friends, but sometimes I enjoy just reading in my room.

IN THE EXAM Speaking module: Part 1

The Speaking exam consists of three parts, which are the same for both the Academic and General Training modules. In Part 1, the examiner will ask you questions about yourself, such as your city or town, work or study, your family, your free time, your reasons for learning English and your plans for the future.

The questions in Part 1 are about you and your personal experience and opinions. You will be evaluated on fluency and coherence, range of vocabulary, grammatical range and accuracy and pronunciation.

Part 1 lasts about four to five minutes.

- 3 A?
 B I haven't really decided yet. (c) I'd like to one day, maybe in Canada or Australia.
- 4 A?
 B (d) , I have one brother and one sister.
- 5 A?
 B I have a part-time job in a local shop. (e) , I've worked there for more than three years.
- 6 A?
 B (f) , my parents moved around a lot and I've lived in many cities. Now I live in Osaka



B 1.1 Listen to the conversations and write down the questions that were asked.



C 1.1 Listen again and write the missing words or expressions (a–f) in speaker B's response in each conversation.

D Write words or expressions a–f in the table below. Then match each one with its function.

Express Tip

Using words or expressions like *actually, well* or *it depends* will make you sound more natural when you speak.

Expression	
a <i>I'm afraid</i>
b
c
d
e
f

Function	
i	I'm going to give extra information about my response.
ii	I think so or I suppose so.
iii	I'm going to apologise or disagree politely.
iv	I can't give you a simple answer.
v	Wait a second. I'm thinking.
vi	I'm going to tell you something surprising or interesting.

E Ask and answer questions 1–6 in a way that is true for yourself. Try to use some of the expressions in the table above.

3 Extending your responses

A To demonstrate your English ability to the examiner, it is important to give full responses. Instead of giving short, one- or two-word answers, try to extend your responses by providing two or three additional pieces of information. Look at the example below.

Examiner: 'Do you plan to study abroad?'

Candidate: 'Yes, I do. I hope to go to Ireland, to Dublin. I want to study medicine. People say the universities there are very good for this subject.'

B One way to extend your answers is to try asking yourself follow-up questions. This will help you think of additional information you can use in your response. Read the question below and with your partner, think of follow-up questions. Then take turns answering the question, using your follow-up questions to extend your answers.



Express Tip
Use words like *also*, *so* and *because* to join your ideas when you speak.

C Write a short answer for each of the questions below. Then extend your answer by adding two or three pieces of information. Your answers don't have to be full sentences. They can be notes.

- 1 Do you have any brothers or sisters?
- 2 Where do you live?
- 3 What do you do in your free time?
- 4 Do you enjoy studying English?
- 5 What's your job?
- 6 Do you plan to study abroad?



D 1.2 Listen to some students answering questions 1–6 above.

- 1 What extra information does each student provide? Write down the keywords as you listen.
- 2 What were the follow-up questions that they asked themselves?

4 Introduction and interview

for this task – exam strategy

In the beginning of Part 1, the examiner will greet you and ask for your name and some identification. Then you will be asked questions about yourself and your life.

- ▶ Listen to the examiner's questions carefully. Remember to extend your answers.

- ▶ Use expressions like *well*, *actually* and *I guess*, and linking words like *so* and *because* to connect your ideas and sound more fluent.
- ▶ Continue speaking even if you have made a mistake.



Work with a partner. In pairs, role-play Part 1 of the Speaking exam.

Student A: You are the examiner. Choose some questions from 3C above. For each question, think of follow-up questions (*why*, *when*, *where*, *who with*, etc.) and interview student B for four or five minutes. Listen to student B's answers carefully. Did he or she give short or extended responses?

Student B: You are the candidate. Imagine you are in the exam. Introduce yourself briefly and then listen to the examiner's questions. Answer as fully as possible, giving two or three additional pieces of information for each question. Follow the advice in *for this task – exam strategy*.

When you have finished, change roles with your partner.