

Change and consequences

READING SKILLS

Scanning
Completing sentences (gapped)
Answering True/False/Not Given
statements

EXAM PRACTICE

Answering True/False/Not Given
statements
Completing sentences (gapped)
Completing multiple-choice questions



Scanning

- 1 Look at the photo and answer the questions below.
 - a What are the main causes of the expanding desert in the picture?
 - b Do you think the situation can be reversed? If so, what can be done?
 - c Is the responsibility for trying to stop this problem local or global?
 - d What are the consequences to mankind in general? Are they social, economic or environmental?

- 2 Look quickly at the block of text. Find the words *Sahel* and *desertification* and underline them. Then answer the questions below.

dkdnvtruenncmcompletinomnSahelvocmdessertnfindf
ksssjoodesertificationdeesosjdvnvffkmvmdmvfalsekdw
rfvdcnvtextadnvmllfkjvirhgijflvnlkokdfnkfkfvlkdvkkn

- a Why can you see the word *Sahel* easily? Choose a reason.
 - because it is a large word
 - because it is in the middle of the text
 - because it has a capital letter
 - because you don't have to look for the meaning.
- b Can you see the word *desertification* as easily? Why/Why not?

- 3 Decide which suggestions a–g are most helpful for scanning. Add your own suggestions.

- a Look only for specific words or phrases.
- b Look for each word or phrase in turn.
- c Look at every word in the text.
- d Try not to think of the meaning as you scan.
- e Use a pencil to guide you.
- f Underline the word when you find it.
- g Think of the meaning of the word you are looking for.

Technique

Scan any text or image to find a word or phrase. Do not aim to understand the whole text. Aim only to find the word or phrase.

- 4 Scan the text to find the words below and underline them. The first word has been underlined for you.

zone ■ marginal ■ steadily crept ■ Botswana ■ increasing population ■ overcultivation
plant species ■ management

DEFORESTATION AND DESERTIFICATION

A The Sahel zone lies between the Sahara desert and the fertile savannahs of northern Nigeria and southern Sudan. The word *sahel* comes from Arabic and means marginal or transitional, and this is a good description of these semi-arid lands, which occupy much of the West African countries of Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad.



B Unfortunately, over the last century the Sahara desert has steadily crept southwards, eating into once productive Sahel lands. United Nations surveys show that over 70 per cent of the dry land in agricultural use in Africa has deteriorated over the last 30 years. Droughts have become more prolonged and more severe, the most recent lasting over 20 years in parts of the Sahel region. The same process of desertification is taking place across southern Africa as the Kalahari desert advances into Botswana and parts of South Africa.

C One of the major causes of this desert advance is poor agricultural land use, driven by the pressures of increasing population. Overgrazing – keeping too many farm animals on the land – means that grasses and other plants cannot recover, and scarce water supplies are exhausted. Overcultivation – trying to grow too many crops on poor land – results in the soil becoming even less fertile and drier, and beginning to break up. Soil erosion follows, and the land turns into desert.

D Another cause of desertification is loss of tree cover. Trees are cut down for use as fuel and to clear land for agricultural use. Tree roots help to bind the soil together, to conserve moisture and to provide a habitat for other plants and animals. When trees are cut down, the soil begins to dry and loosen, wind and rain erosion increase, other plant species die and eventually the fertile topsoil may be almost entirely lost, leaving only bare rock and dust.

E The effects of loss of topsoil and increased drought are irreversible. They are, however, preventable. Careful conservation of tree cover and sustainable agricultural land use have been shown to halt deterioration of soils and lessen the effects of shortage of rainfall. One project in Kita in south-west Mali funded by the UNDP has involved local communities in sustainable management of forest, while at the same time providing a viable agricultural economy based on the production of soaps, beekeeping and marketing shea nuts. This may be a model for similar projects in other West African countries.

5 When you scan for a word or phrase, avoid looking at other words. Diagrams 1–5 show five techniques for doing this. Match each diagram with the correct description a–e.

- a Scan the text in a zigzag from right to left. Look at either side of the zigzag line.
- b Scan from the bottom right to left, then left to right.
- c Scan from the bottom. Move right to left, right to left.
- d Scan vertically from the bottom to the top. Look at either side of the line.
- e Scan from the bottom right of a paragraph to the top left. Look at either side of the diagonal line.

6 Use the scanning technique in diagram 4, exercise 5 to find the following words in the *Deforestation and Desertification* passage. Then underline them.

transitional ■ unfortunately ■ surveys ■ severe ■ exhausted ■ bind eventually ■ shea

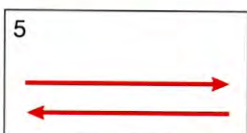
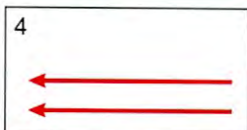
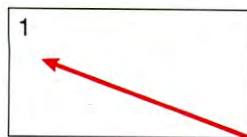
7 Use the scanning technique in diagram 2, exercise 5 to find words and phrases with these meanings. Use the paragraph reference and the first letter to help you.

- a It begins with *o* and means *cover*. (Paragraph A)
- b It begins with *t* and means *happening*. (Paragraph B)
- c It begins with *s* and means *limited*. (Paragraph C)
- d It begins with *e* and means *completely*. (Paragraph D)
- e It begins with *h* and means *stop*. (Paragraph E)

8 Choose a scanning technique from the options given in exercise 5. Scan the whole text for words or phrases with these meanings. The words are not necessarily in the order of the text.

- a It begins with *p* and means *long*.
- b It begins with *p* and means *fertile*.
- c It begins with *e* and means *wearing away*.

9 Build up a revision list of scanning techniques on a card or in your notebook.



Technique

Keep revision cards of reading techniques such as those for scanning. Remember to use and try a range of techniques for all reading skills and not just one.

Completing sentences (gapped)

1 Read sentences 1–6 taken from a Sentence completion task. Decide whether the missing words are adjectives or nouns/noun phrases.

- 1 The climate of the Sahel is described as _____.
- 2 In some areas of the Sahel, there has been no rainfall for more than _____.
- 3 Desertification is caused by overgrazing, but this in turn is due to the pressure from _____.
- 4 When trees are cut down, the soil is affected, which leads to the death of the surrounding _____.
- 5 The consequences of the loss of topsoil cannot be reversed, but they are _____.
- 6 Looking after trees reduces the consequences of a lack of _____.

Technique

Look out for the answers to the Gapped sentence completion in the text. New and important information is often at the end or towards the end of the sentence. Notice where answers to questions are in the reading passage, e.g. questions 2 and 3. This will help your scanning and prediction techniques.

2 Scan the reading passage on the previous page using one of the techniques in exercise 5 and complete the sentences in exercise 1. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

Answering True/False/Not Given statements

- 1 Statements 1–7 in exercise 2 are taken from a True/False/Not Given task. Underline words which could be used to scan the passage. Explain your choices.

Example

The semi-arid land of the Sahel is found only in Mali.

Scan for Mali because it is easy to see (capital letter) and cannot be expressed in another way.

- 2 Look again at the statements in 1–7 below. Underline words that qualify or limit each statement, especially adverbs and adjectives.

Example

The semi-arid land of the Sahel is found only in Mali.

- 1 The Sahara has spread slowly northwards into the Sahel region.
- 2 Just over 70 per cent of the dry land in agricultural use in Africa has deteriorated over the last 30 years.
- 3 Desertification is taking place faster in southern Africa than in the Sahel.
- 4 The advance of the desert is not the result of poor agricultural land use.
- 5 The loss of tree cover is a minor cause of desertification.
- 6 If there is a loss of tree cover, the deterioration in the soil is halted.
- 7 Tree conservation is more effective than sustainable agricultural land use in reducing the consequences of lack of rain.

- 3 Decide whether the statements in exercise 2 are False or Not Given according to the passage.

- 4 Explain why each statement 1–4 below is Not Given in the text. Use the example to help you.

Example

The Sahel covers more of the land in Mali than it does in Chad.

Not Given because there is no comparison in the text. We know that it covers much of Mali and Chad, but we do not know which country has more.

- 1 Agricultural land in Africa could deteriorate further in the coming years.
- 2 There could be another severe drought in the Sahel over the next three decades.
- 3 In some areas, the UNDP may provide financial support for forestry management to local communities in the future.
- 4 A second project has been planned in Mali to develop sustainable forestry management.

Technique

Keep a list of the common grammatical structures you come across in *True/False/Not Given* sentences with examples, e.g. comparison and contrast (The Sahel covers more of the land in Mali than it does in Chad), cause and effect, present simple for general statements, time phrases.

Improve your IELTS word skills

- 1 Identify the type of words in the box below. Are they (a) general nouns which need a context for their meaning or (b) nouns which have specific meaning?

consequence ■ factor ■ change ■ result ■ impact ■ effect ■ cause ■ role

- 2 Complete the sentences with a word from the box above. Some will need to be put in the plural form.

- a Technology has had a huge _____ on our lives.
- b The area has undergone many _____ in recent years.
- c Planting trees can have a knock-on _____ on the economy of arid areas.
- d Deforestation can have unforeseen _____ for the ecology of a region.
- e It is sometimes difficult to discover the exact _____ of a problem.
- f To achieve the best _____, it is important to initiate change at a local level.
- g The main _____ contributing to success in any organization is a happy workforce.
- h The climate has played a major _____ in this region's economic history.

Technique

Make a list of general nouns like the ones in the box above. Write a phrase to go with each one to put it in context. General nouns are useful in all parts of the exam.

- 3 Complete the sentences with a phrase from the box.

gradual development ■ limited impact ■ far-reaching consequences
dramatic changes ■ favourable outcome ■ underlying cause ■ profound effect

- a Government intervention has had _____ for regional growth.
- b Shock tactics can bring about _____ in people's behaviour.
- c _____ is much more acceptable than rapid change.
- d The introduction of new farming practices has had a _____ on people's lives.
- e To achieve the most _____ the countries involved need to negotiate.
- f The _____ in this particular case is not easy to find.
- g The huge sums invested had only a _____ on the neighbourhood.

Technique

Keep lists of general nouns with possible adjective collocations. Use the *Macmillan Collocations Dictionary*. This will help to build your vocabulary range for the other skills as well as reading.

- 4 Decide whether the words in brackets have the same or opposite meaning to the words in *italics*.

Example

Tourists have changed the coastline *dramatically*. (slightly) *Opposite meaning*

- a The wasteland was *completely* transformed. (totally)
- b The government *fully* accept the consequences of their actions. (partially)
- c The marine life in the coral reef is *highly* sensitive to temperature fluctuations. (exceedingly)
- d Alternative sources of energy like solar power can *vastly* improve life in remote communities. (marginally)
- e The rising sea level will *greatly* affect the livelihoods of people on some Pacific islands. (considerably)

Reading Passage 1

You should spend 20 minutes on questions 1–14, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

Technique

Follow these stages when you look at a reading passage and the associated questions:

- 1 Survey the title, text and questions in three or four seconds.
- 2 Use the title to think of the contents of the text.
- 3 Skim the text and questions. You should aim to eventually do this in two minutes.
- 4 Use the information from the question to help you to scan and locate the answers in the reading passage.

Swallows in Migration



Every April, along with many other species of birds, the swallow arrives to spend the summer months in northern Europe, in Russia, Iran and parts of Siberia. Here it will breed and raise its young.

The swallow is well known for several reasons. Firstly, it is very distinctive, with its forked tail and characteristic acrobatic swooping flight. Secondly, it is very common, and, like its near relative the house martin, lives in close proximity to human habitation, at least in rural areas.

It is, however, rarely to be encountered in towns or cities.

For centuries, people have observed swallows, noted their arrival and their patterns of feeding. In several countries, these observations have passed into the language as proverbs or sayings. In England, people comment on unpredictable late spring weather by saying, 'one swallow does not a summer make'. Similarly, 'the swallows are flying low' was held to predict rainy, even stormy weather. There may be

15

20

25 some truth in this observation, though it
is the insects the swallows feed on that
seem to be more susceptible to the fall in
barometric pressure that heralds a storm.
Insects keep low in these conditions, and so
30 do the swallows that hunt them. At the end
of the summer season, when the swallows
are about to leave, they frequently flock
together in large numbers on convenient
high open perches, like roof ridges and
35 telegraph wires. When people remark that
'the swallows are gathering', they mean that
autumn has arrived.

At some point in mid-September the
swallows leave together, usually all on the
40 same day. One day there are thousands,
the next there are none, and none will be
seen again until the following spring. For
centuries, this was a complete mystery to
people. The Hampshire naturalist Gilbert
45 White, writing in the late eighteenth century,
believed that the swallows dived into ponds
and rivers in autumn and remained in the
bottom mud the whole winter, re-emerging
the following spring. This idea seems
50 extraordinary to us, but White was not a
stupid man: many of his other observations
of natural life were informed and accurate.
In this case, however, he simply had no
means of determining the truth and was
55 forced to make a random guess. The idea
that swallows migrate to central or southern
Africa would have seemed as fanciful to him
as his theory seems to us.

Although we now know that swallows
60 migrate, there are still unanswered
questions. Why do they go so far? Why not
stay on the shores of the Mediterranean?
The majority continue to equatorial Africa,
and some even further south. Also it
65 appears that populations of swallows that
have bred in different countries also spend
the winter in different areas. Those from
France, Germany and much of western

Europe have mostly been traced to East
Africa, Kenya or Tanzania for example.
Above all, how does a bird weighing
approximately twenty grams find its way
across mountain ranges, ocean and desert
75 to winter in the south, and then return the
following year to the very location it was
born, in some cases to the very same nest?

Birds can navigate by the Sun, and are also
able to detect the magnetic field of the
Earth. Species that migrate at night are
also able to navigate by the stars. By these
means, they travel long distances. The close
navigation that brings them back to the
same field or nest appears to be related to
memory of local landmarks imprinted on the
85 minds of young birds as they crisscross the
area in the weeks before departure.

Nevertheless, the journey is very dangerous.
Long sea crossings, where there is little
available food or water, are generally
90 avoided. In western Europe, most swallows
cross to Africa via the Straits of Gibraltar,
or fly the length of Italy before tackling the
relatively short crossing to Tunisia in North
Africa. However, in storms they may be
blown hundreds of kilometres off course.
Exhausted swallows sometimes come to rest
on ships way out in the Atlantic Ocean. They
have to cross mountain ranges too, where
again the weather may be unpredictable and
100 food scarce. Along the coast of North Africa,
many young swallows become the prey of
Eleonora's falcons, which time their breeding
to coincide with the migration of young
birds southwards. But the most dangerous
105 part of the journey is the crossing of the
Sahara desert. Here, there is little food or
water, sandstorms may delay and exhaust
the already weakened birds, and many die.
It is estimated that around 50 per cent of
adult birds die, and up to 80 per cent of
110 young birds, but enough survive to ensure
the continuation of the species.

Questions 1–6

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the passage?

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 The swallow is the only species of bird that migrates to spend the summer in northern Europe.
- 2 The swallow is easily noticeable because of its tail and the way it flies.
- 3 The swallow is frequently seen in cities.
- 4 The insects, not the swallows themselves, appear to predict stormy weather.
- 5 Swallows form larger flocks than other birds when they depart in the autumn.
- 6 White's theory seems strange to people now.

Technique

True/False/Not Given

- 1 Look for words in each statement to help you scan.
- 2 Identify comparisons or qualifying expressions in the statements.
- 3 Try to predict some answers.
- 4 Find your scan words in the text then read around them closely to locate the answers. Remember that the answers follow the order of the reading passage.

Questions 7–12

Complete the sentences.

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

- 7 In the past, the destination of the swallows in autumn was a
- 8 As White could not verify what happened to the swallows, he made a
- 9 Despite knowing that swallows migrate, we are still left with
- 10 Sometimes, swallows have been known to return not just to the same area, but even to the
- 11 Birds that travel by night can find their way using the
- 12 Bird navigation appears to be connected with the memory of

Technique

Sentence completion

- 1 Remember that the answers follow the order of the passage.
- 2 Note the word limit for each gap.
- 3 Look for words in each sentence to help you scan.
- 4 Find your scan words in the text. Think of the part of the sentence the answer might be in: the beginning or the end. Then read around them to locate the answers. Note in the sentences for completion: 'a' before the gap = singular countable noun, no article = plural or uncountable noun, the = any noun.

Questions 13 and 14

Choose **TWO** letters, A–F.

Which **TWO** of the following dangers faced by swallows during migration are mentioned in the text?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| A The Sahara desert | D Hungry sailors |
| B Long sea crossings | E Eleonora's falcons |
| C Lack of nesting places | F The crossing to Tunisia |