

READING SKILLS

Identifying the writer's point of view
Scanning for synonyms
Identifying detailed information and scanning for facts

EXAM PRACTICE

Matching information
Yes/No/Not Given
Short answer questions



A

Identifying the vocabulary of opinions

1 Look at these images and answer the questions.

- How do you think images A and B are connected with education?
- The words in the list below have positive, negative and neutral connotations (emotional associations). Complete the table with words from the list that you would associate with each of the images A and B.

healthy ■ filthy ■ happy ■ starving ■ well-fed ■ abandoned ■ neglected
loved ■ mistreated ■ child ■ miserable ■ secure ■ clean ■ sick

Positive	Neutral	Negative

- Write down as many synonyms for these words as you already know.
- Look for more synonyms in a thesaurus.

Skills

Scanning for synonyms

2 Scan the passage on pages 79–80 about sport and physical activity and complete the table with synonyms for the key words in the heading.

facilitating	lifelong	participation	sport/physical activity

3 Rewrite the heading of the passage using some of the words in the table. Make sure the new heading is grammatically accurate.



B

Exam skills

Matching information questions

This type of question tests your ability to scan a text for detail by asking you to identify sections of the reading passage where you can find specific information. Before you scan the whole text, identify the key words in the questions and think of synonyms you might expect to find in the passage. You can then scan each paragraph for key words and synonyms to locate the information.

- 4** Which paragraph in the reading passage contains the following information? Write *A* or *B* next to each statement.
- a** a justification for giving school children the opportunity to practise a range of sports _____
 - b** the main reason why people do not develop an early interest in practising sport _____
 - c** research findings on the effectiveness of physical education in encouraging long-term interest in sport _____
 - d** the reason why secondary school physical education programmes fail to encourage long-term involvement in sports _____
 - e** the ultimate objectives of school sports programmes across the world _____

Facilitating lifelong participation in sport and physical activity

A According to the UK's Department of Education and Science (1992) the purpose of learning in physical education (PE) is to develop specific knowledge, skills and understanding, and to promote the physical development and competence that determines long-term engagement in sport and physical activity. Other countries make similar statements in policy documentation (see, for example, the contributors in Pühse and Gerber, 2005). In fact, in their survey of 52 countries around the world, Bailey and Dismore (2006) found that the promotion of lifelong physical activity was a universal aim of PE. Such expectations are not without justification, as a large body of literature suggests that PE – as the main societal structure for the promotion of regular physical activity during childhood – is the most suitable vehicle for promoting lifelong participation in sport and physical activity (Fairclough, Stratton and Baldwin, 2002; McKenzie, 2001; Shephard and Trudeau, 2002; Trudeau, Laurencelle and Shephard, 2004).

B In most developed countries children experience some form of regular curricular PE between the ages of 5 and 16 years (Hardman, 2001; Hardman and Marshall, 2009; Pühse and Gerber, 2005). However, many children do not maintain a lifelong involvement in sport or physical activity (Green, 2002; Roberts, 1996; Sallis and McKenzie, 1991). We suggest that this is, at least partly, ascribable to the poor quality of the PE experience. Ten years ago, Williams (2000) described primary PE in England as mixed in quality. After an investment of approximately £1 billion in PE and school sport, one government adviser was only able to say that 'a few schools are beginning to explore how they can realistically expect higher levels of achievement from a greater proportion of pupils, but this culture is proving slow to change' (Casbon, 2006, 15). This does not seem to be a local problem, as a number of international surveys have described similar situations elsewhere. Hardman and Marshall's (2009) worldwide survey, for example, revealed considerable cause for concern in terms of contributory factors for quality provision

in both developing and developed countries. As a consequence, the foundation provided is so inconsistent that the start of the pathway is undermined. At the secondary level, PE is largely organized into short blocks of physical activities dominated by team sports that may not necessarily equip learners with the skills needed for lifelong participation in sport and physical activity (Fairclough, Stratton and Baldwin, 2002; Kirk, 2010; Penney and Jess, 2004; Trost, 2006). In fact, research in PE is increasingly concerned that the movement skills, knowledge and understanding essential for lifelong participation are not 'integral, explicit and valued elements of physical education' (Penney and Jess, 2004, 275). Roberts (1996) noted that PE teachers defend a 'sport for all' approach to curricular PE on the premise that by including a range of sports and activities more 'pupils would be able to find a sport at which they were competent and which they enjoyed and this would extend their participation into out-of-school and post-school lives' (1996, 50). Kirk's (2010) analysis suggests that a multi-sport approach continues to dominate and shows little sign of losing influence. However, Penney and Jess (2004) argue that it is important to broaden the skills, knowledge and understanding encompassed in PE curricula that claim to facilitate lifelong engagement in sport and physical activity.

Skills

Identifying the writer's point of view

Look again at the Skills section in Unit 4, page 34 on *Identifying opinions* to review the ways writers can indicate their point of view in a reading text.

Before you read the text in detail, you can use the following techniques to identify the writer's point of view:

- 1 Look at the heading of the text and any images that illustrate it. Do they have positive or negative connotations?
- 2 Scan the passage for adjectives and adverbs. Are they positive or negative?
- 3 Look for words that qualify the writer's statements for:
 - a truth – how probable does the writer think the evidence is? (e.g., *possible, probably, unlikely*)
 - b strength – how strong is the writer's claim? (e.g., *rather, somewhat, quite, decidedly*)
 - c attitude – what is the writer's feeling about the facts? (e.g., *unfortunately, optimistically, confidently*)
- 5 Read the following sentences a–f and write the letter A, B or C above the words that indicate whether the author is expressing:
 - A probability
 - B strength
 - C attitude

Some sentences have examples of more than one of these.

- a One surprising effect of a government-sponsored programme to promote better school meals was to increase the number of children bringing their lunch from home.
- b Quite a lot of people believe that 'a healthy mind in a healthy body' is an essential guideline for a happy life.
- c There is a significant difference between the concepts of 'education for health' and the 'impact of health on education'.
- d It is a regrettable fact that many children throughout the world start the school day without breakfast.
- e Research points to a strong likelihood that the recent increase in childhood obesity is a direct result of the abolishment of compulsory sports at school.
- f Evidence indicates that education in healthy eating has only a slight influence on school children's choice of food.

- 6** Make the claim in sentences a–e *weaker* or *stronger* by adding a suitable adjective, adverb or modal verb from the list. Some words fit in more than one sentence.

may ■ extremely ■ loose ■ might ■ distinctly ■ striking

Example: Regular sports classes at school have a beneficial effect on children's health and academic performance.

Weaker: Regular sports classes at school may have a beneficial effect on children's health and academic performance.

- a** Research has found that there is a connection between literacy and nutrition.
Weaker: _____
- b** There is a difference in academic attainment between children who have stable families and those who are cared for by foster parents or in institutions.
Stronger: _____
- c** Children who learn to cook at school grow up to be more aware of the importance of a healthy diet.
Weaker: _____
- d** It is possible that children will learn to enjoy exercise if they practise sports at an early age.
Stronger: _____
- e** Children who are emotionally insecure are unlikely to perform well at school.
Stronger: _____

- 7** Which of the following phrases (a–l) from the reading passage report the findings of previous research and which express the views of the writers? Write *R* (research) or *W* (writers' claim) by each phrase.

- a** According to the UK's Department of Education and Science ... _____
- b** Other countries make similar statements ... _____
- c** ... in their survey of 52 countries around the world, Bailey and Dismore (2006) found that ... _____
- d** Such expectations are not without justification ... _____
- e** We suggest that this is, at least partly, ascribable to ... _____
- f** ... Williams (2000) described ... _____
- g** This does not seem to be a local problem ... _____
- h** Hardman and Marshall's (2009) worldwide survey, for example, revealed ... _____
- i** ... research in PE is increasingly concerned that ... _____
- j** Roberts (1996) noted that ... _____
- k** Kirk's (2010) analysis suggests that ... _____
- l** Penney and Jess (2004) argue ... _____

Exam skills

Yes/No/Not Given questions

In this type of task you are asked to decide whether the statements in the question agree with the writer's claims or views. Remember that the answer NO means that the statement clearly contradicts the writer's claims. You must be careful not to confuse this with NOT GIVEN, which indicates that the writer has not expressed an opinion in the passage. In this case it is not possible to say whether or not the statement agrees with the writer's views.

8 Read the following passage on children's food choices. Do the following statements (a–e) match the claims of the writer? Write *YES*, *NO* or *NOT GIVEN*.

- a Children prefer to eat unhealthy foods. _____
- b Children are reluctant to eat more vegetables. _____
- c Scottish boys have a saltier diet than South-Asian children. _____
- d Adolescent girls eat fruit less often than boys of the same age. _____
- e School programmes to increase children's consumption of fruit and vegetables do not have a long-term effect. _____

Food choices are driven primarily by a child's familiarity with food and secondly by taste. Perceptions of which foods should be eaten in moderation and an understanding of balancing a diet appear to be weak. Where there is a wide variety of choice, children naturally choose the foods they like the most and even if more healthy foods are offered, a balanced meal may not always be chosen. Children and young people tend to leave the healthier elements of a meal while eating the less healthy items. Foods high in sugar and low in fibre, iron and vitamin A are frequently chosen and children's understandings of the dangers of a high-salt diet are also generally poor. Scottish children, and especially boys, have the highest likelihood of having a diet furthest from healthy-eating guidelines and minority groups, particularly South-Asian populations, have shown to be lacking in vitamin D and tend to eat more unhealthy foods and fewer vegetables than white Europeans.

Overall, children's knowledge of the positive benefits of fruit is greater than their knowledge of vegetables, and children tend to prefer fruit to vegetables. It is also easier to increase a child's consumption of fruit than it is vegetables. Apples and oranges are generally the most popular fruits although preference for both fruit and vegetables has been shown to vary with age and sex, with fruit intakes being higher among teenage girls than teenage boys and higher in England than in Scotland. Children participating in school fruit and vegetable schemes tend to have greater nutritional knowledge about fruit and vegetables than those not participating in schemes. Such schemes may be associated with a lower intake of fruit and vegetables in the home if parents rely on schools to provide children with their daily portions. Although schemes can increase fruit and vegetable intake in the short term, this increase tends not to be maintained once the intervention is withdrawn.

Reading Passage 10

You should spend 20 minutes on questions 1–13, which are based on Reading Passage 10.

Malnutrition and children's learning

- A** The impact of malnutrition on children's learning is not simply that they are tired and unable to concentrate in class because they have not eaten enough on a given day. Malnutrition in the first 1000 days – from the start of a woman's pregnancy until her child's second birthday – has a devastating impact on children's future potential. It restricts their cognitive development, means they are more likely to be sick and miss out on school, and reduces their ability to learn.
- B** This 1000-day window is a critical time for structural brain development. Good maternal nutrition is essential: pregnant or breastfeeding mothers who can't access the right nutrients are more likely to have children with compromised brain development and who suffer from poor cognitive performance. And once the child is born, nutrition continues to play a key role in ensuring the brain develops properly. But the effects of malnutrition on a child's cognitive development and education go beyond the biology of the brain. A child's nutritional status can impact on the experiences and stimulation that children receive. Parents sometimes treat a malnourished boy or girl differently because they are small, and this child is also more likely to miss school and key learning opportunities due to illness.
- C** The impact is not just on academic achievement. Malnutrition is associated with children having lower self-esteem, self-confidence and career aspirations. Malnourished children not only face direct damage to their bodies and minds, but are less confident to learn and aspire to change the situation they were born into.
- D** In the longer term, malnutrition can have a big impact on earnings when children reach adulthood. The effects of malnutrition on physical stature, the ability to do physical work, and on cognitive development, can lock children into poverty and entrench inequalities.
- E** Children who are malnourished go on to earn 20% less as adults than the children who are well nourished. But there is some evidence that the difference could be even larger – one study has estimated this earning deficit for malnourished children at 66%.
- F** This in turn means that malnutrition can act as a big barrier to economic growth. Estimates suggest that in low- and middle-income countries, the impact of malnutrition could decrease GDP by between 2% and 11%. This is partly a result of its impacts on educational development – as well as on physical productivity and health.
- G** This report presents new estimates of malnutrition's effect on GDP. By extrapolating a 20% reduction in earnings to a global level, this report shows that today's malnutrition could cost the global economy as much as \$125 billion when today's children reach working age in 2030.

- H** Investments in the potential of future generations are more important than ever before. With mortality rates falling rapidly but fertility rates declining at a lower rate, developing countries will experience an increase in the size of their working-age population in the next few decades. Many countries will have two people of working age for every dependent. This presents them with a critical window of opportunity to boost economic development, known as the 'demographic dividend'.
- I** The IMF has predicted that seven of the 10 fastest growing economies in the next five years will be in Africa. Meanwhile, economists have identified the 'Next 11' countries – those that have the potential for stellar economic growth in the next decade. A common theme in each of these countries is the potential provided by their demographic structures.
- J** But to capitalize on the demographic dividend, developing countries must invest now in the health and skills of their future workforce. Investments made now in proven nutrition interventions could increase opportunities for millions of children to become more healthy and productive members of society. The next generation of children in developing countries could fuel improved innovation, prosperity and job creation.
- K** But if we fail to make that investment the consequences could be catastrophic. Not only would that leave a future public health disaster – with a huge burden placed on health systems by a generation of people left more susceptible to disease by malnutrition – but also an economic crisis. If countries are not able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by demographic changes, then in 50 to 60 years' time they will be left with a large cohort of elderly dependents without having generated the resources to care for them.

Questions 1–4

Reading Passage 10 has 11 paragraphs, labelled A–K. Which paragraphs contain the following information?

- 1 the psychological impact of malnutrition
- 2 the effect of parental attitudes on children's educational opportunities
- 3 the cost to the world economy of childhood malnutrition
- 4 the influence of childhood malnutrition on the national economy of individual nations

Questions 5–9

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in the passage?

Write

- YES** if the statement agrees with the writer's claims.
NO if the statement contradicts the writer's claims.
NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.

- 5 In developing nations, birth rates are falling at a slower rate than death rates.

- 6 All the countries with the most promising prospects for expansion in the next 10 years are in Africa.
- 7 Malnutrition has a direct effect on both physical and intellectual development.

- 8 Poor nutrition during pregnancy does not affect the development of the child's brain.

- 9 It is essential for developing nations to devise strategies for taking care of the sick.

Questions 10–13

Answer questions 10–13 with words from the text. Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**.

- 10 How can the cognitive development of babies be assured before birth?

- 11 What is the main cause of absenteeism from school in underfed children ?

- 12 What factor most supports the future economic expansion of the 'Next 11' countries?
- 13 Who would benefit most immediately from effective nutritional programmes in developing countries?