

IELTS Academic Reading Practice Test 19

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

The Creativity Myth

A. It is a myth that creative people are born with their talents: gifts from God or nature. Creative genius is, in fact, latent within many of us, without our realising. But how far do we need to travel to find the path to creativity? For many people, a long way. In our everyday lives, we have to perform many acts out of habit to survive, like opening the door, shaving, getting dressed, walking to work, and so on. If this were not the case, we would, in all probability, become mentally unhinged. So strongly ingrained are our habits, though this varies from person to person, that sometimes when a conscious effort is made to be creative, automatic response takes over. We may try, for example, to walk to work following a different route, but end up on our usual path. By then it is too late to go back and change our minds. Another day, perhaps. The same applies to all other areas of our lives. When we are solving problems, for example, we may seek different answers, but, often as not, find ourselves walking along the same well-trodden paths.

B. So, for many people, their actions and behaviour are set in immovable blocks, their minds clogged with the cholesterol of habitual actions, preventing them from operating freely, and thereby stifling creation. Unfortunately, mankind's very struggle for survival has become a tyranny – the obsessive desire to give order to the world is a case in point. Witness people's attitude to time, social customs and the panoply of rules and regulations by which the human mind is now circumscribed.

C. The groundwork for keeping creative ability in check begins at school. School, later university and then work, teach us to regulate our lives, imposing a continuous process of restrictions which is increasing exponentially with the advancement of technology. Is it surprising then that creative ability appears to be so rare? It is trapped in the prison that we have erected. Yet, even here in this hostile environment, the foundations for creativity are being laid; because setting off on the creative path is also partly about using rules and regulations. Such limitations are needed so that once they are learnt, they can be broken.

D. The truly creative mind is often seen as totally free and unfettered. But a better image is of a mind, which can be free when it wants, and one that

recognises that rules and regulations are parameters, or barriers, to be raised and dropped again at will. An example of how the human mind can be trained to be creative might help here. People's minds are just like tense muscles that need to be freed up and the potential unlocked. One strategy is to erect artificial barriers or hurdles in solving a problem. As a form of stimulation, the participants in the task can be forbidden to use particular solutions or to follow certain lines of thought to solve a problem. In this way, they are obliged to explore unfamiliar territory, which may lead to some startling discoveries. Unfortunately, the difficulty in this exercise, and with

E. Lifting barriers into place also plays a major part in helping the mind to control ideas rather than letting them collide at random. Parameters act as containers for ideas and thus help the mind to fix on them. When the mind is thinking laterally and two ideas from different areas of the brain come or are brought together, they form a new idea, just like atoms floating around and then forming a molecule. Once the idea has been formed, it needs to be contained or it will fly away, so fleeting is its passage. The mind needs to hold it in place for a time so that it can recognise it or call on it again. And then the parameters can act as channels along which the ideas can flow, developing and expanding. When the mind has brought the idea to fruition by thinking it through to its conclusion, the parameters can be brought down and the idea allowed to float off and come in contact with other ideas.

Questions 1-5

Reading Passage 1 has five paragraphs, A-E.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter A-E in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet. You may use **any letter more than once**.

- 1 the way parameters in the mind help people to be creative
- 2 the need to learn rules to break them
- 3 how habits restrict us and limit creativity
- 4 how to train the mind to be creative
- 5 how the mind is trapped by the desire for order

Questions 6-10

Choose the correct answers **A-D** and write them next to **6-10** on your answer sheet.

6 According to the writer, creative people

- A are usually born with their talents
- B are born with their talents
- C are not born with their talents

D are geniuses

7 According to the writer, creativity is

A a gift from God or nature

B an automatic response

C difficult for many people to achieve

D a well-trodden path

8 According to the writer

A the human race's fight to live is becoming a tyranny

B the human brain is blocked with cholesterol

C the human race is now circumscribed by talents

D the human race's fight to survive stifles the creative ability

9 Advancing technology

A holds creativity in check

B improves creativity

C enhances creativity

D is a tyranny

10 According to the author, creativity

A is common

B is increasingly common

C is becoming rarer and rarer

D is a rare commodity

Questions 11-14

Do the following statements reflect the claims of the writer?

In boxes 11-14 on your answer sheet write

YES, if the statement agrees with the information in the passage

NO, if the statement contradicts the information in the passage

NOT GIVEN, if there is no information about the statement in the passage

11 Rules and regulations are examples of parameters.

12 The truly creative mind is associated with the need for free speech and a free society.

13 One problem with creativity is that people think it is impossible.

14 The act of creation is linked to madness.