

IELTS Academic Reading Practice Test 32

Density and Crowding

A. Of the great myriad of problems which man and the world face today, there are three significant trends which stand above all others in importance: the unprecedented population growth throughout the world – a net increase of 1,400,000 people per week – and all of its associations and consequences; the increasing urbanization of these people, so that more and more of them are rushing into cities and urban areas of the world; and the tremendous explosion of communication and social contact throughout the world, so that every part of the world is now aware of every other part. All of these trends are producing increased crowding and the perception of crowding.

B. It is important to emphasize at the outset that crowding and density are not necessarily the same. Density is the number of individuals per unit area or unit space. It is a simple physical measurement. Crowding is a product of density, communication, contact, and activity. It implies a pressure, a force, and a psychological reaction. It may occur at widely different densities. The frontiersman may have felt crowded when someone built a homestead a mile away. The suburbanite may feel relatively uncrowded in a small house on a half-acre lot if it is surrounded by trees, bushes, and a hedgerow, even though he lives under much higher physical density than did the frontiersman. Hence, crowding is very much a psychological and ecological phenomenon and not just a physical condition.

C. A classic crowding study was done by Calhoun (1962), who put rats into a physical environment designed to accommodate 50 rats and provided enough food, water, and nesting materials for the number of rats in

the environment. The rat population peaked at 80, providing a look at cramped living conditions. Although the rats experienced no resource limitations other than space restriction, a number of negative conditions developed: the two most dominant males took harems of several female rats and occupied more than their

share of space, leaving other rats even more crowded; many females stopped building nests and abandoned their infant rats; the pregnancy rate declined; infant and adult mortality rates increased; more aggressive and physical attacks occurred; sexual variation increased, including hypersexuality, inhibited sexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality.

D. Calhoun's results have led to other research on crowding's effect on human beings, and these research findings have suggested that high density is not the single cause of negative effects on humans. When crowding is defined only in terms of spatial density (the amount of space per person), the effects of crowding are variable. However, if crowding is defined in terms of social density, or the number of people who must interact, then crowding better predicts negative psychological and physical effects.

E. There are several reasons why crowding makes us feel uncomfortable. One reason is related to stimulus overload – there are just too many stimuli competing for our attention. We cannot notice or respond to all of them. This feeling is typical of the harried mother, who has several children competing for her attention, while she is on the phone and the doorbell is ringing. This leaves her feeling confused, fatigued and yearning to withdraw from the situation. There are strong feelings of a lack of privacy – being unable to pay attention to what you want without being repeatedly interrupted or observed by others.

F. Field studies done in a variety of settings illustrate that social density is associated with negative effects

on human beings. In prison studies, males generally became more aggressive with increases in density. In male prison, inmates living in conditions of higher densities were more likely to suffer from the fight. Males rated themselves as more aggressive in small rooms (a situation of high spatial density), whilst the females rated themselves as more aggressive in large rooms (Stokols et al., 1973). These differences relate

to the different personal space requirements of the genders. Besides, Baum and Greenberg found that high density leads to decreased attraction, both physical attraction and liking towards others and it appears to have gender differences in the impact that density has on attraction levels, with males experiencing a more extreme reaction. Also, the greater the density is, the less the helping behavior. One reason why the level of helping behavior may be reduced in crowded situations links to the concept of diffusion of responsibility. The more people that are present in a situation that requires help, the less often help is given. This may be due to the fact that people diffuse responsibility among themselves with no one feeling that they ought to be the one to help.

G. Facing all these problems, what are we going to do with them? The more control a person has over the crowded environment the less negatively they experience it, thus the perceived crowding is less (Schmidt and Keating). The ability to cope with crowding is also influenced by the relationship the individual has with the other people in the situation. The high density will be interpreted less negatively if the individual experiences it with people he likes. One of the main coping strategies employed to limit the impact of high density is social withdrawal. This includes behaviors such as averting the gaze and using negative body language to attempt to block any potential intrusions.

Questions 1-7

The Reading Passage has seven paragraphs, A-G.

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

Write the correct number, I-X.

List of headings

- I Other experiments following Calhoun's experiment offering a clearer indication
- II The effects of crowding on people in the social scope
- III Psychological reaction to crowding
- IV Problems that result in crowding
- V Responsibility does not work
- VI What causes the upset feel of crowding

VII Definitions of crowding and density

VIII Advice for the crowded work environment

IX Difference between male and females' attractiveness in a crowd

X Nature and results of Calhoun's experiment

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

- 6. Paragraph F**
- 7. Paragraph G**

Questions 8-13

Complete the sentences below.

Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer.

- 8. Being disturbed repeatedly, the harried mother feels frustrated for the lack of..... .**
- 9. Inmates in high-density settings were more aggressive in..... .**
- 10. The different result between male and female is associated with the varying need of..... .**
- 11. Especially for male, Baum and Greenberg found that declined with high density.**
- 12. The idea of responsibility diffusion may explain a person's reluctant to**
- 13. Schmidt and Keating suggest that if more..... was present there would be a reduction in crowding stress.**

Intelligence and Giftedness

A. In 1904 the French minister of education, facing limited resources for schooling, sought a way to separate the unable from the merely lazy. Alfred Binet got the job of devising selection principles and his brilliant solution put a stamp on the study of intelligence and was the forerunner of intelligence tests still used today, he developed a thirty-problem test in 1905, which tapped several abilities related to intellect, such as judgment and reasoning, the test determined a given child's mental age'. The test previously

established a norm for children of a given physical age. (for example, five-year-old on average get ten items correct), therefore, a child with a mental age of five should score 10, which would mean that he or she was functioning pretty much as others of that age. The child's mental age was then compared to his physical age.

B. A large disparity in the wrong direction (e.g., a child of nine with a mental age of four) might suggest inability rather than laziness and mean he or she was earmarked for special schooling, Binet, however, denied that the test was measuring intelligence, its purpose was simply diagnostic, for selection only. This message was however lost and caused many problems and misunderstanding later.

C. Although Binet's test was popular, it was a bit inconvenient to deal with a variety of physical and mental ages. So in 1912, Wilhelm Stern suggested simplifying this by reducing the two to a single number, he divided the mental age by the physical age and multiplied the result by 100. An average child, irrespective of age, would score 100. A number much lower than 100 would suggest the need for help, and one much

higher would suggest a child well ahead of his peer.

D. This measurement is what is now termed the IQ (for intelligence quotient) score and it has evolved to be used to show how a person, adult or child, performed in relation to others. (the term IQ was coined by Lewis M. Terman, professor of psychology and education of Stanford University, in 1916. He had constructed an enormously influential revision of Binet's test, called the Stanford-Binet test, versions of which are still given extensively.)

E. The field studying intelligence and developing tests eventually coalesced into a sub-field of psychology called psychometrics (psycho for 'mind' and metrics for 'measurements'). The practical side of psychometrics (the development and use of tests) became widespread quite early, by 1917, when Einstein

published his grand theory of relativity, mass-scale testing was already in use. Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare (which led to the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915) provoked the United States to finally enter the First World War in the same year. The military had to build up an army very quickly; it had two million inductees to sort out. Who would become officers and who enlisted men? Psychometricians developed two intelligence tests that help sort all these people out, at least to some extent, this was the first major use of testing to decide who lived and who died, as officers were a lot safer on the battlefield, the tests themselves were given under horrendously bad conditions, and the examiners seemed to lack commonsense, a lot of recruits simply had no idea what to do and in several sessions most inductees scored zero! The examiners also came up with the quite astounding conclusion from the testing that the average American adult's intelligence was equal to that of a thirteen-year-old!

F. Intelligence testing enforced political and social prejudice, their results were used to argue that Jews ought to be kept out of the United States because they were so intelligently inferior that they would pollute the racial mix, and blacks ought not to be allowed to breed at all. And so abuse and test bias controversies continued to plague psychometrics.

G. Measurement is fundamental to science and technology, science often advances in leaps and bounds when measurement devices improve, psychometrics has long tried to develop ways to gauge psychological qualities such as intelligence and more specific abilities, anxiety, extroversion, emotional stability, compatibility, with a marriage partner, and so on. Their scores are often given enormous weight, a single IQ measurement can take on a life of its own if teachers and parents see it as definitive, it became a major issue in the 70s, when court cases were launched to stop anyone from making important decisions based on IQ test scores, the main criticism was and still is that current tests don't really measure intelligence, whether intelligence can be measured at all is still controversial, some say it cannot others say that IQ tests

are psychology's greatest accomplishments.

Questions 14-17

The Reading Passage has seven paragraphs A-G

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter A-G.

14. IQ is just one single factor of human characteristics.

15. Discussion of the methodology behind Professor Stern's test.

16. Inadequacy of IQ test from Binet.

17. The definition of IQ was created by a professor.

Questions 18-21

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

18. Professor Binet devises the test to

A find those who do not perform satisfied

B choose the best one

C measure the intelligence

D establish the standard of intelligence

19. The test is designed according to

A math

B age

C reading skill

D gender

20. U.S. Army used Intelligence tests to select.....

A Officers

B Normal Soldiers

C Examiners

D Submarine drivers.

21. The purpose of the text is to.....

A Give credit to the contribution of Binet in IQ test

B prove someone's theory is feasible.

C discuss the validity and limitation of the test

D outline the history of the test

Questions 22-26

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 2?

TRUE t If the statement is true

FALSE s If the statement is false

NOT GIVEN If the information is not given in the passage

22. Part the intension in designing the test by professor Binet has been misunderstood.

23. Age as a factor is completely overlooked in the simplified tests by Wilhelm Stern

24. Einstein was a counter-example of IQ test conclusion.

25. IQ test may probably lead to racial discrimination as a negative effect.

26. The author regards measuring intelligent test as a goal hardly meaningful.