

IELTS General Reading Practice Test 35

'This Marvellous Invention'

Of all mankind's manifold creations, language must take pride of place. Other inventions – the wheel, agriculture, sliced bread – may have transformed our material existence, but the advent of language is what made us human. Compared to language, all other inventions pale in significance, since everything we have ever achieved depends on language and originates from it. Without language, we could never have embarked on our ascent to unparalleled power over all other animals, and even over nature itself.

But language is foremost not just because it came first. In its own right it is a tool of extraordinary sophistication, yet based on an idea of ingenious simplicity: 'this marvellous invention of composing out of twenty-five or thirty sounds that infinite variety of expressions which, whilst having in themselves no likeness to what is in our mind, allow us to disclose to others its whole secret, and to make known to those who cannot penetrate it all that we imagine, and all the various stirrings of our soul'. This was how, in 1660, the renowned French grammarians of the Port-Royal abbey near Versailles distilled the essence of language, and no one since has celebrated more eloquently the magnitude of its achievement. Even so, there is just one flaw in all these hymns of praise, for the homage to language's unique accomplishment conceals a simple yet critical incongruity. Language is mankind's greatest invention – except, of course, that it was never invented. This apparent paradox is at the core of our fascination with language, and it holds many of its secrets

Questions 1 – 4

Complete the summary using the list of words, A-G, below. Write the correct letter, A-G, in boxes 1-4 on your answer sheet.

The importance of language

The wheel is one invention that has had a major impact on 1 aspects of life, but no impact has been as 2 as that of language. Language is very 3 , yet composed of just a small number of sounds. Language appears to be 4 to use. However, its sophistication is often overlooked.

A difficult
D admired
G fundamental

B complex
E material

C original
F easy

Questions 1–14

Read the text below and answer Questions 1–7.

Volunteers

Thank you for volunteering to work one-on-one with some of the students at our school who need extra help.

Smoking policy

Smoking is prohibited by law in the classrooms and anywhere on the school grounds.

Safety and Health

Volunteers are responsible for their own personal safety and should notify the school of any pre-existing medical conditions. Prescription and any other medications that you normally carry with you must be handed in to the school nurse on arrival and collected on departure. If you require them, the nurse will dispense them to you in her office.

Sign-in

A sign-in book is located at office reception. Please sign this register every time you come to the school. This is important for insurance purposes and emergency situations. After signing the book, collect a Visitor's badge from the office. This must be worn at all times when you are on school premises. Remember to return the badge afterwards.

Messages

Teachers will communicate with volunteers via telephone, email or messages left at the office. Always ask for messages. You may communicate with teachers in the same way – the preferred method is to leave a memo in the relevant teacher's pigeonhole. These can be found at the end of the corridor in the staffroom block.

Work hours

We understand that your time commitment is entirely voluntary and therefore flexible. If your personal schedule should change and this affects your availability, please contact the Co-ordinator for Volunteers at the school on extension 402; alternatively, you could drop in to her office situated in F block.

Role of the Co-ordinator

The Co-ordinator is responsible for matching volunteer tutors with students, organising tutorial rooms, ensuring student attendance and overseeing volunteer tutor training. If you encounter any problems, contact her as above.

Questions 1–7

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text on the previous page?

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. As a volunteer, you will be helping students individually.
2. You may smoke in the playground.
3. You cannot take any medicine while at the school.
4. If you forget to sign the register, you won't be insured for accidents.
5. The best way of communicating with teachers is in writing.
6. You can choose your own hours of work.
7. The co-ordinator keeps student attendance rolls.

Read the text below and answer Questions 8–14.

Camping in the Bush

Minimal impact bushwalking

Responsible campers observe minimal impact bushwalking practices. This is a code of ethics and behaviour aimed at preserving the natural beauty of bushwalking areas.

Planning

Good planning is the key to safe and successful camping trips. Obtaining a camping permit in advance of leaving to camp out overnight in a national park is obligatory.

Bookings are also compulsory for some parks. There could be limits on group sizes in some parks. Occasionally campsites may be closed owing to bushfire danger or for other reasons. Always obtain permission from the owner prior to crossing private property.

Equipment

As well as your usual bushwalking gear, you will need the right equipment for camping.

A fuel stove and fuel for cooking is essential: not only is it safer, faster and cleaner; but it is easier to use in wet weather. It is recommended that you pitch a free-standing tent which requires few pegs and therefore has less ecological impact. Take a sleeping mat, if you have one, to put your sleeping bag on for a more comfortable night's sleep. You will also need a hand trowel to bury human waste – for proper sanitation and hygiene.

Campfires

The traditional campfire actually causes a huge amount of environmental damage. If you gather firewood, you are removing the vital habitat of insects, reptiles, birds and small mammals. When campfires lead to bushfires, they create enormous danger to native bush inhabitants and bushwalkers alike and result in destruction of the environment. Under no circumstances should you light a fire in the bush.

Campsites

Erect your tent at an existing site if possible; otherwise try to find a spot where you won't damage vegetation. Never cut branches or move rocks or disturb the soil unnecessarily. Aim to leave your campsite as you found it or even cleaner.

Rubbish

Remove all rubbish – carry it out with you. Don't attempt to burn or bury rubbish because this creates a fire hazard and/or disturbs the soil. Animals can dig up buried rubbish and scatter it about. Never feed the local wildlife – carry out all food scraps as these disturb the natural nutrient balance and can create weed problems.

Walk safely

Keep on the track. Wear footwear suitable for the terrain. Take a map.

Questions 8–14

The passage refers to three ways in which campers should behave.

Classify the following behaviours as something that campers

A. must do

B. may do

C. must not do

Write the correct letter A, B or C

8. get the landowner's consent before walking across his land

9. use a sleeping mat

10. make a campfire in the bush

11. feed the birds

12. use a free-standing tent

13. dig a hole to bury rubbish in

14. get authorisation before setting out to camp in a national park