Reading Test 5 – Opinions and Inference

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IELTS Reading Practice – B1 and Above

⏱️ **Time:** 10 minutes • 📝 **Questions:** 10 • 🎯 **Skills:** matching features, identifying opinions, inference

This test practises questions about **people's opinions**: matching ideas to the people who said them, and understanding what a writer means even when it is not stated directly.

How to use this test: set a timer for 10 minutes, read the passage and answer all the questions. Then check your score with the Answer Key and read the explanations to see **why** each answer is correct.

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Click a heading to go straight to that part of the test.

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✅ **Answer Key and Score**

🔄 **Answers Explained**

🧭 **What Should You Practise Next?**

⏱️ **Try It Again**



Less scrolling, more space to think?

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📖 Reading Passage

The people in this passage are fictional.

Is Boredom Good for You?

A Most of us try hard to avoid boredom. With a smartphone in our pocket, we never need to wait in a queue or sit on a train with nothing to do. But a growing number of researchers believe that this constant entertainment may come at a cost, and that a little boredom could actually be good for us.

B Psychologist Dr Helen Marsh has studied the link between boredom and creativity. In one of her studies, half the participants spent twenty minutes sorting coloured beads into boxes, a deliberately dull task, while the others went straight to the next activity. Both groups were then asked to think of as many uses as possible for an old newspaper. The group who had been bored produced more ideas, and more unusual ones. "When there is nothing interesting around us," Marsh explains, "the mind starts to look for stimulation inside our own heads."

C Professor Tom Okafor, who researches education, is more cautious. He agrees that children need free, unstructured time, but warns that boredom is not automatically useful. "A child who is bored in class because the work is too easy is not becoming more creative," he says. "They are simply switching off. The kind of boredom that helps is the kind that leaves room for play and imagination."

D Neuroscientist Dr Lena Sato points to what happens in the brain when we are not focused on a task. Brain scans show that certain areas become more active when the mind wanders, and this activity appears to be linked to planning, remembering and imagining the future. In Sato's view, constantly checking our phones may reduce the time the brain spends in this state. However, she admits that more research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

E Not everyone is convinced. The writer Mark Evans argues that the benefits of boredom have been exaggerated. He points out that boredom is also linked to unhealthy habits, such as overeating, and that for people in repetitive jobs it can cause real unhappiness. "It is easy to praise boredom," he writes, "if you are not bored for eight hours a day."

F Perhaps the most sensible conclusion is that boredom, like many experiences, is neither good nor bad in itself. What matters is how we respond to it. Putting the phone away from time to time and letting our minds wander may be one of the simplest ways to think more clearly.

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🔎 Questions 1–5 – Matching Features

Look at the following statements and the list of people below.

Match each statement with the correct person, **A–D**. You may use any letter more than once.

List of People

A Dr Helen Marsh
B Professor Tom Okafor
C Dr Lena Sato
D Mark Evans

1. Some types of boredom do not help learning. _____
2. People may not understand the problems of boredom if they rarely experience it for long. _____
3. Being bored can lead people to produce more original ideas. _____
4. The evidence is not yet strong enough to be certain. _____
5. Boredom can be connected with unhealthy behaviour. _____

🎯 Questions 6–8 – Multiple Choice

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

6. What does the writer suggest about smartphones in paragraph A?
   A. They have made boredom less common.
   B. They make people more creative.
   C. They are mainly used on public transport.
   D. They should be banned in schools.
   Answer: _____
7. What does Okafor mean when he says bored pupils are “switching off”?
   A. They are turning off their devices.
   B. They have stopped thinking actively.
   C. They are relaxing and playing.
   D. They are falling asleep in class.
   Answer: _____
8. What is the writer’s conclusion in paragraph F?
   A. Boredom should always be avoided.
   B. Boredom is always good for us.
   C. The effect of boredom depends on how we react to it.
   D. More research into boredom is unnecessary.
   Answer: _____

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✍️ Questions 9–10 – Choose Two Letters

Choose **TWO** letters, **A–E**.

Which **TWO** activities does Dr Sato link with mind-wandering?

A planning
B exercising
C remembering
D sleeping
E reading

9. First letter:
10. Second letter:

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✅ Answer Key

Q	Answer
1	B
2	D
3	A
4	C
5	D
6	A
7	B
8	C
9	A or C
10	C or A – one mark each, in either order

Your Score

Score	What it means
9–10	Excellent. Try the next test, or repeat this one in 8 minutes.
7–8	Good. Read the explanations for the questions you missed.
5–6	A solid start. Use **What Should You Practise Next?** to choose a skill to work on.
0–4	Read the explanations carefully, then try the test again tomorrow without a time limit.

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🔄 Answers Explained

Read the passage again, without the time limit. For each question, notice how the words in the question **paraphrase** the words in the text.

Questions 1–5: Matching Features

1. B – Okafor

Question: *some types of boredom do not help learning* → **Text:** a child bored because the work is too easy *is not becoming more creative*.

2. D – Evans

Text: *It is easy to praise boredom if you are not bored for eight hours a day.* The question explains what he means.

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3. A – Marsh

The bored group *produced more ideas, and more unusual ones*: *unusual → original*.

4. C – Sato

She *admits that more research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn*.

5. D – Evans

Text: boredom *is also linked to unhealthy habits, such as overeating*.

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Questions 6–8: Multiple Choice

6. A

With a smartphone, *we never need to wait... with nothing to do* – so we are bored less often. This is **inference**: the writer suggests it rather than saying it directly.

7. B

Okafor contrasts *switching off* with becoming more creative. It means losing interest and not thinking. A is a trap: it uses the literal meaning of the phrase.

8. C

neither good nor bad in itself. What matters is how we respond to it.

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Questions 9–10: Choose Two Letters

9–10. A and C

Paragraph D: activity *linked to planning, remembering and imagining the future*. Exercising, sleeping and reading are not mentioned.

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🧭 What Should You Practise Next?

Look at the questions you got wrong. They show you which skill to practise.

If you missed...	Practise this	Start IELTS lesson
Questions 1–5	matching opinions to people and recognising paraphrased ideas	Reading: Scanning
Questions 6–8	inference and the writer's overall view	Reading: Understanding Paragraphs
Questions 7 and 9–10	reading the exact sentence carefully; avoiding literal traps	Reading: Intensive Reading

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In matching features questions, scan for the **names** first. Then read what each person says carefully – the statements will always be paraphrased.

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⏱️ Try It Again

Give yourself **2 minutes**.

For each person in the passage, write **one short sentence** summarising their view of boredom: positive, cautious or negative?

Then find one phrase in paragraph F that shows the writer's own opinion.

Next: You have completed all five Start IELTS Reading Tests. Go back to the test with your lowest score and try it again in 8 minutes.

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