

## Test section – Reading

# Dealing with Matching Features questions

### Activities

1. Matching information
2. Surveying a text
3. Skimming a text
4. Scanning for key words
5. Ordering – a strategy for Matching Features questions
6. Test practice

### Aims

- To review key reading skills: surveying, skimming and scanning
- To help students develop a strategy for dealing with Matching Features questions

### Learning outcomes

- Students will have reviewed and practised key reading skills.
- Students will have analysed a strategy for Matching Features questions.
- Students will have practised Matching Features questions.

### Information about this section of IELTS

In the Reading test there are 40 questions, designed to test a wide range of reading skills. These include reading for gist, reading for main ideas, reading for detail, skimming, understanding logical argument and recognising writers' opinions, attitudes and purpose. The test takes 60 minutes.

The IELTS Academic Reading Test includes three long texts which range from the descriptive and factual to the discursive and analytical. These are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers. They have been selected for a non-specialist audience but are appropriate for people entering university courses or seeking professional registration.

The IELTS General Training Reading Test has three sections. Section 1 may contain two or three short texts or several shorter texts. Section 2 comprises two texts. In Section 3, there is one long text. These texts include extract from books, magazines, newspapers, notices, advertisements, company handbooks and guidelines. These are materials you are likely to encounter on a daily basis in an English-speaking environment.

<b>Time</b>	45-60 minutes
<b>Level</b>	B1+
<b>Class</b>	Suitable for groups / large classes, F2F / Online
<b>Interaction</b>	Individual / pair work
<b>Materials</b>	Worksheet (attached)

## Extra information



### Matching Features questions

Students are required to match a set of statements or pieces of information to a list of options. The options are presented as a group of features from the text with each one identified by letters. For example, they may be required to match different research findings to a list of researchers, events to historical periods, etc. It is possible that some options will not be used, and that others may be used more than once. The instructions will say if the options can be used more than once.

Matching features will assess students' ability to recognise relationships and connections between facts in the text and their ability to recognise opinions and theories. It may be used both with factual information, as well as opinion-based discursive texts. Students will need to be able to skim and scan the text in order to locate the required information and then to read for detail to match the correct feature.

**NB The answers are NOT in the same order as the text.**

**Material:** Worksheet

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

**Procedure:**

- introduce the focus of the lesson – dealing with Matching Features questions in the IELTS Reading Test.
- explain that these questions require test takers to match features/characteristic to the options given.
- tell students to look at worksheet, Exercise 1. (This is just to give an idea).
- students work in pairs and match the characteristics to the 3 items: liquids, gases and solids.

**Answers**

1 Liquids: a, c

2 Gases: d, f

3 Solids: b, e

## Exercise 2

- elicit from students what they remember/understand by surveying a text (quickly looking at a text to establish extent, if there are titles, pictures, glossaries etc.
- tell students they have 20 seconds to survey the text.
- tell students to close or turn over their worksheets: Ask the following questions:

How long is the text? (about 2 pages)

Does it have a title? (Yes: The Triune Brain)

Does it have any sub-titles/headings? (No)

Does it have any pictures or diagrams? (Yes)

Does it have a glossary? (Yes)

## Exercise 3

- elicit from students what they remember/understand by skimming a text (reading first/topic sentences and final sentences to get an idea of gist and text organisation).
- tell students they have 60 seconds to skim the text and underline the topic sentences.
- get class feedback. (Note that in paragraphs 2 & 3, the topic sentence is the third sentence. The first two sentences just provide a contrast or a link with what has gone before.)

1) The first of our three brains to evolve is what scientists call the reptilian cortex. This brain sustains the elementary activities of animal survival such as respiration, adequate rest and a beating heart (Q15). We are not required to consciously “think” about these activities. The reptilian cortex also houses the “startle centre”, a mechanism that facilitates swift reactions to unexpected occurrences in our surroundings. (Q22) That panicked lurch you experience when a door slams shut somewhere in the house, or the heightened awareness you feel when a twig cracks in a nearby bush while out on an evening stroll are both examples of the reptilian cortex at work. When it comes to our interaction with others, the reptilian brain offers up only the most basic impulses: aggression, mating, and territorial defence. There is no great difference, in this sense, between a crocodile defending its spot along the river and a turf war between two urban gangs.

2) Although the lizard may stake a claim to its habitat, it exerts total indifference toward the well-being of its young. Listen to the anguished squeal of a dolphin separated from its pod or witness the sight of elephants mourning their dead, (Q16) however, and it is clear that a new development is at play. Scientists have identified

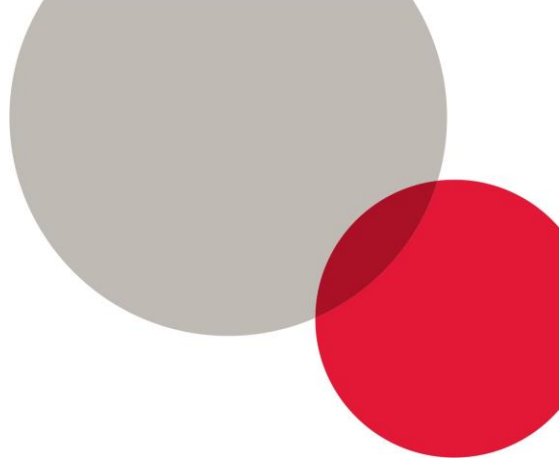
**this as the limbic cortex.** Unique to mammals, the limbic cortex impels creatures to nurture their offspring (Q21) by delivering feelings of tenderness and warmth to the parent when children are nearby. These same sensations also cause mammals to develop various types of social relations and kinship networks. (Q17) When we are with others of “our kind” – be it at soccer practice, church, school or a nightclub – we experience positive sensations of togetherness, solidarity and comfort. If we spend too long away from these networks, then loneliness sets in and encourages us to seek companionship.

3) Only human capabilities extend far beyond the scope of these two cortexes. Humans eat, sleep and play, but we also speak, plot, rationalise and debate finer points of morality. **Our unique abilities are the result of an expansive third brain – the neocortex – which engages with logic, reason and ideas.** The power of the neocortex comes from its ability to think beyond the present, concrete moment. While other mammals are mainly restricted to impulsive actions (although some, such as apes, can learn and remember simple lessons), humans can think about the “big picture”. We can string together simple lessons (for example, an apple drops downwards from a tree; hurting others causes unhappiness) to develop complex theories of physical or social phenomena (Q20) (such as the laws of gravity and a concern for human rights).

4) **The neocortex is also responsible for the process by which we decide on and commit to particular courses of action.** (Q18) Strung together over time, these choices can accumulate into feats of progress unknown to other animals. Anticipating a better grade on the following morning’s exam, a student can ignore the limbic urge to socialise and go to sleep early instead. (Q14) Over three years, this ongoing sacrifice translates into a first-class degree and a scholarship to graduate school; over a lifetime, it can mean ground-breaking contributions to human knowledge and development. The ability to sacrifice our drive for immediate satisfaction in order to benefit later is a product of the neocortex.

5) **Understanding the triune brain can help us appreciate the different natures of brain damage and psychological disorders.** The most devastating form of brain damage, for example, is a condition in which someone is understood to be brain dead. In this state a person appears merely unconscious – sleeping, perhaps – but this is illusory. Here, the reptilian brain is functioning on autopilot despite the permanent loss of other cortexes.

6) **Disturbances to the limbic cortex are registered in a different manner.** Pups with limbic damage can move around and feed themselves well enough but do not register the presence of their littermates. Scientists have observed how, after a limbic lobotomy<sup>2</sup>, “one impaired monkey stepped on his outraged peers as if



treading on a log or a rock”. In our own species, limbic damage is closely related to sociopathic behaviour. Sociopaths in possession of fully-functioning neocortexes are often shrewd and emotionally intelligent people but lack any ability to relate to, empathise with or express concern for others.

7) One of the neurological wonders of history occurred when a railway worker named Phineas Gage survived an incident during which a metal rod skewered his skull, taking a considerable amount of his neocortex with it. Though Gage continued to live and work as before, his fellow employees observed a shift in the equilibrium of his personality. Gage’s animal propensities were now sharply pronounced while his intellectual abilities suffered; garrulous or obscene jokes replaced his once quick wit. New findings suggest, however, that Gage managed to soften these abrupt changes over time and rediscover an appropriate social manner. This would indicate that reparative therapy has the potential to help patients with advanced brain trauma to gain an improved quality of life.

Glossary

<sup>1</sup> Triune = three-in-one

<sup>2</sup> Lobotomy = surgical cutting of brain nerves

#### Exercise 4

- put students into pairs to do Exercise 4.
- get class feedback.

#### Answers

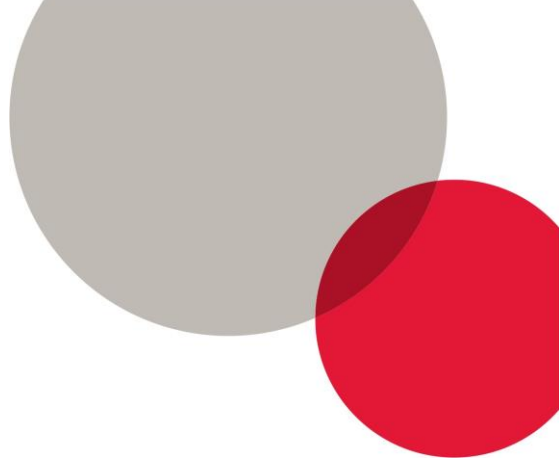
a particular example of brain damage	7
damage to the brain	5
damage to the limbic brain	6
the limbic brain	2
the neocortex	3, 4
the reptilian brain	1

#### Exercise 5

- students work in pairs and put the sentences into the correct order to form a strategy for dealing with Matching Features questions.
- get class feedback.

#### Answers

Correct order: b, c, e, d, a



**Exercise 6**

- work through the example given on the worksheet with your students.
- ask: which paragraph would you read for information on reptilian brain? (1)
- tell students to look at Question 19. Elicit synonyms or other ways of expressing the highlighted key words. (Possible answers: protecting / territory/ground)
- tell students to look at paragraph 1 of the text where the synonyms of the key words are highlighted.
- students read the relevant sentences to check that 'guarding areas of land' is a feature of the reptilian brain. So, the answer is A.

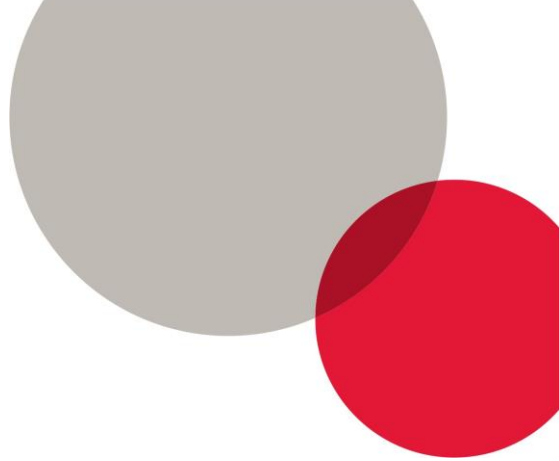
You may wish to work through other examples, this time getting the students to identify the key words in the questions, thinking of synonyms, and scanning for them in the relevant parts of the text.

Give students 10-15 minutes to answer the questions.

**Answers**

- |    |   |                   |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 14 | giving up short-term happiness for future gains     | C                 |
| 15 | maintaining the bodily functions necessary for life | A                 |
| 16 | experiencing the pain of losing another             | B                 |
| 17 | forming communities and social groups               | B                 |
| 18 | making a decision and carrying it out               | C                 |
| 19 | guarding areas of land <b>Example of key words</b>  | <b>Answer = A</b> |
| 20 | developing explanations for things                  | C                 |
| 21 | looking after one's young                           | B                 |
| 22 | responding quickly to sudden movement and noise     | A                 |

The relevant sentences are highlighted in the teacher's text.



## Reading Skills – Matching Features

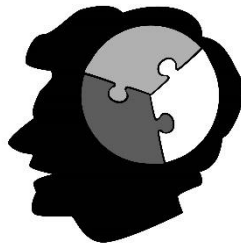
### Worksheet

1 Work with a partner. Match the items with two of their characteristics. The options a-f can only be used once.

- |   |         |   |                                |
|---|---------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Liquids | a | can flow.                      |
|   |         | b | cannot flow.                   |
| 2 | Gases   | c | have a surface.                |
|   |         | d | do not have a surface.         |
| 3 | Solids  | e | have a rigid shape.            |
|   |         | f | do not have a definite volume. |

2 Survey the following reading passage.

## The Triune<sup>1</sup> Brain



1) The first of our three brains to evolve is what scientists call the reptilian cortex. This brain sustains the elementary activities of animal survival such as respiration, adequate rest and a beating heart. We are not required to consciously “think” about these activities. The reptilian cortex also houses the “startle centre”, a mechanism that facilitates swift reactions to unexpected occurrences in our surroundings. That panicked lurch you experience when a door slams shut somewhere in the house, or the heightened awareness you feel when a twig cracks in a nearby bush while out on an evening stroll are both examples of the reptilian cortex at work. When it comes to our interaction with others, the reptilian brain offers up only the most basic impulses: aggression, mating, and territorial defence. There is no great difference, in this sense, between a crocodile defending its spot along the river and a turf war between two urban gangs.

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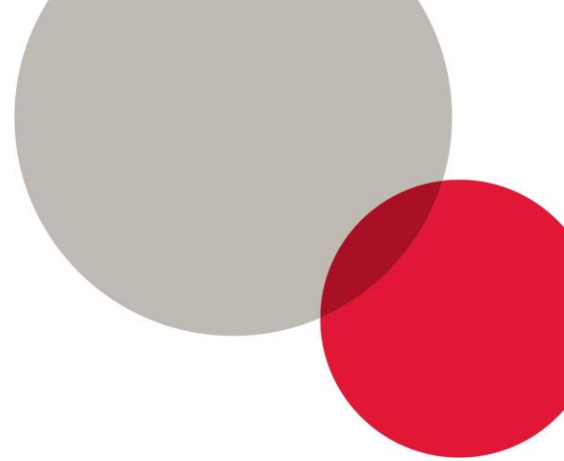
separated from its pod or witness the sight of elephants mourning their dead, however, and it is clear that a new development is at play. Scientists have identified this as the limbic cortex. Unique to mammals, the limbic cortex impels creatures to nurture their offspring by delivering feelings of tenderness and warmth to the parent when children are nearby. These same sensations also cause mammals to develop various types of social relations and kinship networks. When we are with others of “our kind” – be it at soccer practice, church, school or a nightclub – we experience positive sensations of togetherness, solidarity and comfort. If we spend too long away from these networks, then loneliness sets in and encourages us to seek companionship.

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6) Disturbances to the limbic cortex are registered in a different manner. Pups with limbic damage can move around and feed themselves well enough but do not register the presence of their littermates. Scientists have observed how, after a limbic lobotomy<sup>2</sup>, “one impaired monkey stepped on his outraged peers as if treading on a log or a rock”. In our own species, limbic damage is closely related to sociopathic behaviour. Sociopaths in possession of fully-functioning neocortexes are often shrewd and emotionally intelligent people but lack any ability to relate to, empathise with or express concern for others.

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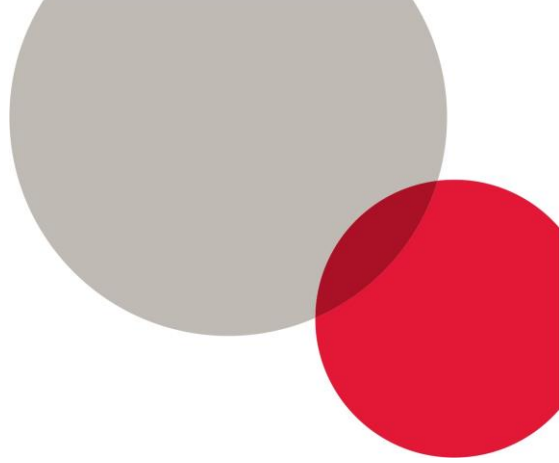
<sup>2</sup> Lobotomy = surgical cutting of brain nerves

3 *Skim the text. You have 60 seconds. Underline the topic sentences and the final sentences in each paragraph.*

4 *Work in pairs. **Only** looking at the topic and final sentences, decide in which paragraph you would look for answers on questions about the following:*

- a particular example of brain damage .....
- damage to the brain .....
- damage to the limbic brain .....
- the limbic brain .....
- the neocortex .....
- the reptilian brain .....

5 *Put the following into the correct order to give you a strategy for dealing with Matching Features questions.*



a) Close read around those words to find the answer.	.....
b) From your skimming, note down which paragraphs/parts of the text are relevant to the items A-C listed.	.....
c) Read the questions and underline/highlight key words. Key words are those words that you will try and find in the text.	.....
d) Scan the relevant parts of the text and underline key words or synonyms from the questions.	.....
e) Think of synonyms of these or other ways they may be expressed.	.....

**Questions 14–22**

Classify the following as typical of

- A** the reptilian cortex
- B** the limbic cortex
- C** the neocortex

**Example: paragraph 1**

Write the correct letter, **A**, **B** or **C**, in boxes 14–22 on your answer sheet.

- 14 giving up short-term happiness for future gains
- 15 maintaining the bodily functions necessary for life
- 16 experiencing the pain of losing another
- 17 forming communities and social groups
- 18 making a decision and carrying it out
- 19 **guarding** areas of **land**      **Example of key words**      **Answer = A**
- 20 developing explanations for things
- 21 looking after one’s young
- 22 responding quickly to sudden movement and noise

6      Use the strategy to answer questions 14-18 and 20-22.