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In response to the growing popularity of IELTS the Taipei Times, in conjunction with the British Council, brings our readers an IELTS preparation page which will run every Saturday on p14 of the Taipei Times. Each week will focus on a different area of the test. IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is an upper-intermediate test of English communication. It can be used for university entry and emigration around the English-speaking world and beyond. It measures your ability to communicate across the four language skills — reading, writing, listening and speaking — through authentic challenging tasks. With over 700,000 people taking IELTS annually, it is one of the fastest growing English tests in the world, trusted and accepted by over 4,000 organisations and faculties worldwide, and is a great alternative to TOEFL.

The Reading Test

- ▶ 60 minutes
- ▶ 40 questions
- ▶ Three texts
- ▶ Total length between 2,000 and 2,750 words

The texts used in the test come from magazines, books and journals, and are written for the average educated reader. There are several different question types which are designed to test as realistically as possible the reading skills you will need as a university student in an English language environment.



The British Council, Taipei.

PHOTO: CATHERINE THOMAS, TAIPEI TIMES

Question Types: Multiple Choice

For these questions, you need to choose the best answer from a list of four or more options. Example question one tests your overall understanding of the text by asking you to choose the most suitable heading.

Exam strategy:

1. Spend one or two minutes skimming the whole article.
2. Decide what you think the main topic is. Go through the options and choose the one closest to your original idea.

Some multiple choice questions require you to locate specific information in the text. You also sometimes need to choose two or more answers.

Exam strategy:

1. Find the relevant section of the text.
2. Scan the section to locate any of the choices given in the question.
3. Read the sentence carefully to check that what is said in the text matches what is said in the question exactly.

Sentence Completion



For this type of question you have to complete sentences with exact words taken from the text. You will be told how many words you can choose, normally one to three, and you will not get any marks if you write more than this. The question will reword the information in the article, so you have to look out for synonyms (words that mean the same thing) in the questions and the text. Also, think about what kind of words fit grammatically: Do you need to find a noun, an adjective or a verb?

CREDIT: HARRY HAYNES, THE BRITISH COUNCIL, TAIPEI

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We currently operate in 109 countries and territories and have over 70 years of experience. In Taiwan our aim is to build lasting relationships between the UK and Taiwan by connecting people with learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK.

- We offer free, professional and impartial support for studying in the UK.
- We organise collaborative events and exchanges in education, arts, science, and English language teaching.
- We support learners and teachers of English in Taiwan.
- We provide English language courses.
- We offer access to UK examinations — including IELTS.

READING TEST

Vietnam's capital Hanoi plans to drive street vendors and hawkers off its sidewalks from Saturday in a push to bring order to the city and ease traffic flow, the administration said. Women in conical hats selling flowers and fruit have been an iconic part of Hanoi's colourful cityscape along with chanting vendors peddling wares from bicycle stores, informal roadside cafes, open-air barbers and noodle shops.

But all that is set to change if the communist administration forges ahead with its newly announced campaign to clear the sidewalks of unlicensed small businesses and shift them into small alleys and lanes. Under a new directive, from Saturday vendors will be officially banned from selling goods on big streets and outside schools, hospitals, government offices, religious, cultural and historic sites and bus and train stops.

"We will prohibit all forms of trading, such as peddling or automobile washing services, that take place on the sidewalk," the mayor, Hanoi People's Committee Chairman Nguyen The Thao, told state media this week. "The purpose of the programme is to make sidewalks available for pedestrians and improve the face of the city. Foreign tourists will be happier and appreciate our management," he told the state-run *Vietnam News daily*. But street vendors and many residents voiced alarm as they waited to see how strictly the measure will be enforced.

"We will die of hunger," cried Hoang Thi Hong, a 37-year-old newspaper hawkker. "I have two children and a whole family to support... This is my only chance to earn money for the family." Resident Pham Quang Hung, 56,

buying a steaming corn cob from a street seller, said: "I often buy things on the streets. It's cheap and good and convenient. It's inhumane to drive those people away. How can they live?"

Debate has raged over the plan since it was announced several weeks ago. "Hanoi stands to lose its distinctive colour and charm in favour of Singapore-style regimentation," said one letter to a Vietnamese newspaper. But Thao told the *Vietnam News* that while he agreed Vietnam should safeguard its cultural traditions, "we do not have to conserve what is essentially a characteristic of underdevelopment. That tradition can be kept by filming and photographing," he said. With most Hanoi houses cramped, shops and cafes long ago began encroaching on the streets, while roadside spots have been coveted by merchants, tradesmen, hawkers and people selling underground lottery tickets. Every day before dawn hundreds of rural women make hours-long bicycle trips from their small farms into the city of about three million to earn a few dollars selling fresh fruit and vegetables to wealthier city dwellers.

The small businesses have long operated on the edge of legality and Hanoi police, travelling in small vans equipped with loudhailers, have sporadically chased them away, sometimes fining them or confiscating their goods. Thao said Hanoi was asking districts and industries to find ways to help the vendors and said the city "will choose a plan that allows peddlers, mostly people living in suburban areas, time to find a new way to earn a living".

(AFP)

Question 1 :

Which is the most suitable title for the article?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| A. Hanoi to preserve cultural heritage | B. Hanoi bans street merchants |
| C. Hanoi streets great for bargains | D. Hanoi developing fast |



Question 2 :

According to the article, which TWO groups will appreciate the governments' plan?

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| A. Flower sellers | B. Small businesses |
| C. Tourists | D. Rural women |
| E. Pedestrians | F. Students |

Questions 3 - 8 :

Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER from the text for each answer.

3. The government plans to move street traders into small _____.
4. According to one resident, the plan to move traders away is _____.
5. The mayor suggests preserving traditions by _____.
6. Farmers sell their produce to _____.
7. _____ are being asked to help the people affected by the plan.
8. The city wants to help peddlers find a new way to _____ over time.



Key Vocab :

iconic:

The classic Coca-Cola bottle is one of the most iconic designs of the twentieth century.

forge ahead:

With yet another win, Manchester United are forging ahead in the Premier League this season.

banned:

Pubs in the UK have lost a lot of money since smoking was banned last year.

pedestrians:

Pedestrians in Taipei have to watch out for scooters riding on the pavement.

inhumane:

A lot of people disagree with capital punishment, labelling it inhumane.



PHOTO: CATHERINE THOMAS, TAIPEI TIMES

Answers:

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|------------|---------------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. B | 2. C and E | 3. alleys and lanes | 4. inhumane | 5. filming and photographing | 6. (wealthier) city dwellers | 7. districts and industries | 8. earn a living |
|------|------------|---------------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|