IELTS | Advanced

EWS-IELTS-L3-01 | Guided learning and practice

Academic Reading: build a passage map

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Academic Reading uses substantial texts for a non-specialist audience. Begin by identifying the subject and the writer's purpose, then notice the function of each paragraph. A passage can move from an early theory to new evidence, or from a problem to competing solutions. A passage map is a few words per paragraph, not a detailed translation. It helps you return to evidence efficiently.

Read a question closely before searching. Names, dates and unusual technical terms can be useful locators, but the answer often appears through paraphrase. Once you find a likely area, slow down and read the complete sentence and its neighbours. Avoid deciding from a single matching word. If a text introduces a specialist term and immediately defines it, use that definition rather than external knowledge. Your task is to understand the provided argument, including its uncertainty and limits, even when the topic itself is new.

Worked examples

Paragraph map: early explanation → new experiment → remaining limitation.

"A possible explanation" is less certain than "the proven cause".

Try it yourself: language control

1. Choose: The evidence suggests a link; it does not (prove / proof) a cause.

2. Correct the overstatement: Every student learns best online.

3. Choose: (Despite / Although) the cost, the project continued.

4. Choose the word meaning only if: The proposal would benefit residents, (provided / unless) access remains affordable.

5. Rewrite: The council spent more, but use did not increase.

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True, False, Not Given: test the exact claim

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A factual statement is True when the passage supports it, False when the passage contradicts it, and Not Given when the passage does not establish the required information. The distinction is logical, not a measure of plausibility. Compare subject, action, time, quantity and degree. Words such as all, only, always and first make strong claims that need equally strong evidence.

Work with the smallest claim that controls the decision. If the text says some workers travel by train, it does not prove that all workers do, but it also does not by itself prove that some do not. Information about preference does not necessarily establish actual behaviour. Avoid using your own knowledge to fill a gap. During review, point to supporting or contradicting wording; for Not Given, name the missing link. This habit makes the reasoning visible and helps prevent a familiar topic from creating an unjustified answer.

Worked examples

Text: The centre opened in May. Claim: It opened in June. Decision: False.

Text: The centre opened in May. Claim: It was the town's first centre. Decision: Not Given.

A reusable-container trial

A college cafe offered reusable lunch containers to reduce packaging. Customers paid a small deposit and received it back when they returned a container. After six weeks, the cafe had distributed 900 lunches in reusable containers, but this did not mean that 900 different people had joined: customers could use the scheme repeatedly. Staff also recorded water and labour used in washing. Although fewer disposable boxes were ordered, the manager would not describe the scheme as cost-free. Some customers forgot returns, and the cafe had to keep enough clean containers for busy periods. The manager planned a longer review before expanding the scheme.

Find evidence in the text

1. When was the deposit returned?
2. Does 900 lunches prove that 900 different people participated?
3. Name a resource used to maintain the scheme.
4. True, False or Not Given: The manager called the scheme cost-free.
5. What was planned before expansion?

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Task 1: select key features and write an overview

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Academic Task 1 describes visual information objectively. Begin by identifying what is measured, the units and any time period. Then select the most important patterns: an overall rise, a clear contrast, a stable category or the major stages of a process. An overview synthesises those features; it should not become a list of every number. Do not explain causes that the visual does not provide.

Organise details into meaningful groups. Compare similar trends or contrasting categories so that the reader can follow the information without reconstructing the whole chart. Use figures to support a comparison rather than dropping isolated numbers into a paragraph. A statement such as “Both categories increased, but bus use grew more sharply” gives a useful relationship. Keep the description accurate: if data are estimates or forecasts, signal that. A short example here is a teaching model, not a complete 150-word Task 1 answer.

Worked examples

Overview: Public transport use rose overall, while private-car use declined.

Comparison: The bus figure was twice the rail figure, at 40 and 20 per cent respectively.

Apply the skill

1. Academic Task 1 practice: The table shows weekly bicycle journeys in three areas. Area A: 2020 200, 2025 350; B: 2020 300, 2025 330; C: 2020 100, 2025 250. Write at least 150 words, summarising and comparing the data.

2. General Training Task 1 practice: Write to a landlord about a heating problem. Explain the problem, its effect and the action you request. Write at least 150 words.

3. Task 2 practice: Some people prefer online study, while others prefer classroom learning. Discuss both views and give your opinion. Write at least 250 words.

Use separate paper or a device recording for longer responses. Keep your attempt for feedback. This is EWS skill practice, not an official score.

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