

IELTS READING PRACTICE PAPER

This IELTS reading example focuses on the following IELTS reading question types:

- **Multiple Choice**
- **Sentence Completion**
- **Cause and Effect table completion**

The Container Trade

The shipping container is one of the mainstays of international trade. The globalised modern economy depends on the rapid and efficient movement of goods that containerisation allows. In many ways it was the advent of the container that allowed this globalised economy to develop.

Invented during World War two as an efficient method of moving equipment to the front lines, there are now at any one time up to 15 million containers being used to transport goods on land and sea or waiting to be filled at factories and ports. They are vital in the supply chain and have allowed the added efficiency of "just in time" inventory management, where companies no longer keep large warehouses of stock or parts, but rely on the ability to quickly order what they want from their suppliers. It is estimated that since the 1980s the ratio of inventory to GDP in American business' has fallen from 25% to 15%. Altogether total business inventory in the US is estimated at \$1.5 trillion, without "just in time" management methods this might be as much as \$2.5 trillion.

This means that companies rely more and more on the prompt delivery of parts from their suppliers to fulfill orders. This is particularly true of industries such as computer manufacture, which no longer make all the parts of the products that bear their names, but instead out source, often to suppliers half way around the world. American computer manufacturers are, for example, increasingly dependent on Asian microchip manufacturers in countries such as Taiwan and Thailand. An example of the kind of problems any disruption to the supply chain causes came after the September 11 attacks in the US when the Canadian border was shut for just two days causing chaos in the Detroit car industry, which relies on a regular flow of parts from Canada.

There are three main flows of sea borne cargo: trans-Pacific, trans-Atlantic and Europe-Far East. The trans-Pacific route is by far the largest flow. At 11 million TEU ("twenty foot equivalent units") a year, it is almost twice the volume of Europe-Far East trade and three times the size of trans-Atlantic traffic. During the 1990s, during America's boom years, the trade of all the routes grew enormously and this led to more and larger ships being built. The container fleet grew by 12% in 2001. Until then, a container ship commonly carried 600 TEU, during the 1990s ships were being build that could carry up to 8000 TEU. However

after the 1990s there was a dramatic fall off in trade. Trans-Pacific trade, for example, fell to 50% of its 1990s high.

This down turn is being handled by the shipping alliances which manage the global trade. These large organizations are responsible for maintaining the fleets and seeing that the flow of goods is uninterrupted. This is a job that governments feel that the regular and reliable flow of trade is so important that in many cases the shipping alliances are exempt from anti-trust and monopoly laws. Their response has been to cut services, rest some of the older ships and share the burden amongst themselves.

At first, containers reduced theft as it was more difficult for casual thieves to get into the containers. However, criminal gangs soon saw the potential for taking whole containers. This became a profitable crime as the average value of a container grew to \$500,000 by the 1980s. Criminals also benefited from the convenience of containers when using them to transport drugs, illegal immigrants or other illegal goods. Measures to combat this, including stronger locks and preference schemes for shippers who have anti-theft programmes, have had some success, but crime is a constant menace to the container trade.

Increasingly, the huge number of containers and their self-contained and enclosed nature has been raising worries about their possible use by terrorists. In fact, possible terrorists have already been found hiding in containers. This is particularly worrying considering that only 2% of containers are inspected. Containers are also extremely difficult to track and monitor. This is because they pass through so many countries and jurisdictions and because they can travel on both land and sea. Each transaction involving a container can involve as many as 25 different parties and generate between 30 and 40 documents. For a ship carrying 600 TEU this would result in approximately 4000 documents. The sheer scale of the information involved makes tracking containers a daunting task. Screening them to determine the contents is another solution that would take a great deal of effort because of the large numbers of containers. Additionally, it might cause delays in delivery that would disrupt international trade and industry out of proportion to the good the searches do.

For the foreseeable future, there would seem to be no alternative to containers and their use is bound to grow. They are one of the cornerstones of global trade, but many yet cause problems their inventors never envisaged.

IELTS Reading Example: Questions 1 – 6

Choose the best TWO alternatives to complete the sentences. Write them in the box.

Questions 1 and 2

Choose TWO letters A – E.

The invention of containers...

A resulted from the efficient movement of goods.

B led to more global trade.

C was initially for military purposes.

D came just in time for many managers.
E relied on the ability to receive orders quickly.

Questions 3 and 4

Choose TWO letters A – E.

Containers are important because they...

- A prevent the need for companies to hold large amounts of stock.*
- B increase the amount of business inventory.*
- C make trade between countries on different sides of the world easier.*
- D regularly supply manufactures in Canada.*
- E reduce the amount of out sourcing needed by companies.*

Questions 5 and 6

Choose TWO letters A – E.

The Trans-Pacific trade route...

- A has nearly double the amount of trade as that of the Europe-Far East trade route.*
- B had its container fleet increase by 12%.*
- C sparked the boom years of the 1990s.*
- D usually carried around 600 TEU.*
- E has witnessed a substantial decrease in container trade.*

IELTS Reading Example: Questions 7 – 10

Complete the table below.

Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the reading passage for each answer.

Write your answers in the boxes.

CAUSE	EFFECT
<i>a sharp fall in container trade</i>	<i>shipping alliances (7) <input type="text"/> old ships</i>
<i>originally difficult to get into containers</i>	<i>A drop in (8) <input type="text"/></i>
<i>vast numbers of containers, which are relatively secure</i>	<i>Concerns over (9) <input type="text"/></i>

Containers must pass through many countries and involve a vast amount of paperwork.

Containers are... (10) ...

IELTS Reading Example: Questions 11 – 12

Complete the sentences below using words taken from the reading passage.

Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 11 – 12 on your answer sheet.

11. The benefits of searching containers would be outweighed by the negative impacts on worldwide trade and industry due to the

12. The inventors must never have imagined that containers would

IELTS READING SAMPLE – THE AUSTRALIAN GREAT WAR

This reading passage will provide you practice with the following:

- **Short Sentence Completion**
- **Yes, No, Not Given**

Australia and the Great War, 1914 – 1918

Australia's role in the First World War, or the Great War as it was known until 1939, is central to the development of modern Australia's vision of itself in the world. In many ways it has served to create what is in some ways a second founding of the nation in the Gallipoli campaign and on the battlefields of France and Belgium. The influence of the war experience in the First, and Second, World War is evident in the way in which ANZAC day is, perhaps even more than Australia day, the country's national day.

When the war broke out in 1914, it was a certainty that, because of longstanding economic, family and defense ties, Australia, along with New Zealand, would stand alongside Britain. The then Prime Minister Andrew Fisher was quick to pledge the country's support to "the last man, the last shilling". This was no idle promise and Australia paid a high price for their loyalty to their colonizers. From a pre-war population of 5m, 417,000 enlisted in the armed forces, of which 324,000 served abroad. By the end of the war, Australia had lost 60,000 dead and 155,000 men had been wounded. The economic price was also high. The national debt, which had stood at £6m in 1914, was £325m by the end of the war.

It is possible that the first shot of the war was fired in Australia, when a shot was fired across the bow of the German merchant ship *Pfalz* as it tried to escape from Port Arthur only a few hours after the declaration of war. In late 1914 the light cruiser HMAS *Sydney* sank the German warship *Emden* off the west coast of the country. Also early in the war, Australian troops captured the German radio transmitters in Rabaul and Nauru and conquered all of German New Guinea.

At first the Australian forces were intended only to defend Australia, but in 1915 the Australia New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) departed for Europe. Their first stop was Egypt and it was because they were so close that they were chosen to take part in the campaign to capture the Gallipoli peninsula, the key to shipping into the Black Sea, from the Turks. The plan was for British, French and Anzac forces to land on the peninsula at night at weak points in the Turkish defense. However, strong winds blew the troops off course to better defended spots and in the advantage was lost. What followed was months of bitter fighting in which 20,000 British and 7,000 ANZAC soldiers were killed and which ended in a successful withdrawal, but no gain for the Allies. It was at this moment of history that Australia was propelled on to the world stage. From this moment onward Australia began to think of itself as a country in its own right; as being separate to Britain and no longer a colony.

Most of the ANZAC force was sent to Europe, but the Australian Light Horse remained to fight Turkish forces in Palestine and Syria. They defended the Suez Canal and advanced through Palestine and Syria. They also took part in what was one of the world's last great cavalry charges at Beersheba.

The main ANZAC force arrived in Europe in 1916. The ANZAC experience was similar to that of the other participants in the war; a high death toll and little gain to be shown for it. Australian forces were present at all the major battles of the war and sustained some terrible casualties. For example, in 24 hours near Pozieres the 5th Division suffered 5,000 casualties. At the battle of Bullecourt, of the 3,000 men who advanced, 2,339 were killed, wounded or captured.

By 1917 most of the officers were not professional soldiers. The most prominent example was General Sir John Monash, who was an engineer by training. He commanded the allied forces at the battle of Hamel so well that the general staff published the battle reports as a model. In August 1918, he commanded 200,000 troops on what was called "Ludendorff's black day", a turning point in the war. Monash was probably Australia's greatest military figure.

Unlike in other armies in the war, the Australian soldiers were all volunteers. They were also more individualistic and showed less respect for the rulebook than other soldiers. The relationship between ranks was more democratic and officers had to win the respect of their troops. All in all, they paid a high price for fighting in the war. Of the 324,000 soldiers who served overseas in the war 215,000 were killed or wounded. This was the highest proportion of any of the countries in the war and was probably due to the Australians fighting qualities, which meant that they were often used on the frontline of the fighting.

At home, the war had a significant effect on the economy. Negative effects included the end of British investment, the closure of many shipping lanes and the stockpiling of Australia's main export, wool. However, the isolation that resulted from the war meant that Australia had to make some things that had previously been imported. This led to the development of new industries. In addition, the BHP smelting company, which is now a major Australian company, saw a great increase in demand for iron and steel. The needs of the war were stimulus for the beginning of full industrialization in Australia.

At the signing of the treaty of Versailles, which marked the end of the war, Australia signed as a separate country. This reflected the fact that, at the cost of 60,000 dead, Australia had finally emerged from the shadow of Britain. The Great War was, perhaps, the beginning of modern Australian history.

961 words

IELTS Reading Passages: Questions 1 – 7

Complete the sentences below (1 – 7) with words taken from the passage.

*Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.*

1. According to the passage Australia's view of itself is directly related to its involvement in the
2. Soon after the war had begun, Australia's Prime Minister offered the
3. Australia had an early involvement in the war and it is even possible that they were responsible for the
4. When combating the Turkish defense, the British, French and Anzac forces ended up attacking stronger points than they had originally intended because of
5. The outcome of the bitter fight with the Turks was significant for Australia because it enabled them to take their place on the
6. John Monash commanded the battle of Hamel so well that reports of the battle were published in order to be used
7. The Great War marked the beginning of modern Australia. They had emerged as a separate country and would no longer have to live under the

IELTS Reading Passages: Questions 8 – 12

Classify the following statements as representing

YES *if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer*

NO *if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer*

NOT GIVEN *if it is impossible to know what the writer thinks
about this*

Write the appropriate answers in the boxes.

8. Australia's national debt increased greatly as a result of the Great War.

9. Australia made a great contribution to the successful outcome of the First World War.

10. The British forces suffered a greater number of casualties than the Anzac forces during the months of fighting with the Turkish.

11. Overall, the British had a higher proportion of soldiers killed or injured than Australia.

12. Australian soldiers were never disrespectful to their superiors.