

## Section 1

### Synaesthesia

**A** Imagine a page with a square box in the middle. The box is lined with rows of the number 5, repeated over and over. All of the 5s are identical in size, font and colour, and equally distributed across the box. There is, however, a trick: among those 5s, hiding in plain sight is a single, capital letter S. Almost the same in shape, it is impossible to spot without straining your eyes for a good few minutes. Unless, that is, you are a grapheme-colour synaesthete - a person who sees each letter and number in different colours. With all the 5s painted in one colour and the rogue S painted in another, a grapheme-colour synaesthete will usually only need a split second to identify the latter.

**B** Synaesthesia, loosely translated as "senses coming together" from the Greek words *syn* ("with") and *aesthesia* ("sensation"), is an interesting neurological phenomenon that causes different senses to be combined. This might mean that words have a particular taste (for example, the word "door" might taste like bacon), or that certain smells produce a particular colour. It might also mean that each letter and number has its own personality - the letter A might be perky, the letter B might be shy and self-conscious, etc. Some synaesthetes might even experience other people's sensations, for example feeling pain in their chest when they witness a film character get shot. The possibilities are endless: even though synaesthesia is believed to affect less than 5% of the general population, at least 60 different combinations of senses have been reported so far. What all these sensory associations have in common is that they are all involuntary and impossible to repress, and that they usually remain quite stable over time.

**C** Synaesthesia was first documented in the early 19th century by German physician Georg Sachs, who dedicated two pages of his dissertation on his own experience with the condition. It wasn't, however, until the mid-1990s that empirical research proved its existence, when Professor Simon Baron-Cohen and his colleagues used fMRIs on six synaesthetes and discovered that the parts of the brain associated with vision were active during auditory stimulation, even though the subjects were blindfolded.

**D** What makes synaesthesia a particularly interesting condition is that it isn't an illness at all. If anything, synaesthetes often report feeling sorry for the rest of the population, as they don't have the opportunity to experience the world in a multisensory fashion like they do. Very few drawbacks have been described, usually minimal: for instance, some words might have an unpleasant taste (imagine the word "hello" tasting like spoilt milk), while some synaesthetes find it distressing when they encounter people with names which don't reflect their personality (imagine meeting a very interesting person named "Lee", when the letter E has a dull or hideous colour for you - or vice versa). Overall, however, synaesthesia is widely considered more of a blessing than a curse and it is often linked to intelligence and creativity, with celebrities such as Lady Gaga and Pharrell Williams claiming to have it.

**E** Another fascinating side of synaesthesia is the way it could potentially benefit future generations. In a 2013 study, Dr Witthoft and Dr Winawer discovered that grapheme-colour synaesthetes who had never met each other before experienced strikingly similar pairings between graphemes and colours-pairings which were later traced back to a popular set of Fischer-Price magnets that ten out of eleven participants distinctly remembered possessing as children. This was particularly peculiar as synaesthesia is predominantly considered to be a hereditary condition, and the findings suggested that a synaesthete's environment might play a determining role in establishing synaesthetic associations. If that was true, researchers asked, then might it not be possible that synaesthesia can actually be taught?

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**F** As it turns out, the benefits of teaching synaesthesia would be tremendous. According to research conducted by Dr Clare Jonas at the University of East London, teaching people to create grapheme-colour associations the same way as a synaesthete may have the possibility to improve cognitive function and memory. As she put it, 'one possibility is guarding against cognitive decline in older people - using synaesthesia in the creation of mnemonics to remember things such as shopping lists.' To that end, researchers in the Netherlands have already begun developing a web browser plug-in that will change the colours of certain letters. Rothen and his colleagues corroborate the theory: in a paper published in 2011, they suggest that synaesthesia might be more than a hereditary condition, as the non-synaesthetic subjects of their study were able to mimic synaesthetic associations long after leaving the lab.

**G** There is obviously still a long way to go before we can fully understand synaesthesia and what causes it. Once we do, however, it might not be too long before we find out how to teach non-synaesthetes how to imitate its symptoms in a way that induces the same benefits 4.4% of the world's population currently enjoy.

### Questions 1-7

*The reading passage has 7 paragraphs, A-G. Which paragraph contains the following information?*

- 1 some of the disadvantages related to synaesthesia \_\_\_\_
- 2 what scientists think about synaesthesia's real-life usefulness \_\_\_\_
- 3 a prediction for the future of synaesthesia \_\_\_\_
- 4 an example of how grapheme-colour synaesthesia works \_\_\_\_
- 5 a brief history of synaesthesia \_\_\_\_
- 6 some of the various different types of synaesthesia \_\_\_\_
- 7 information about a study that suggests synaesthetic symptoms aren't arbitrary \_\_\_\_

### Questions 8-11

*Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?*

*Write*

**TRUE** if the statement is true according to the passage

**FALSE** if the statement is false according to the passage

**NOT GIVEN** if the information is not given in the passage

- 8 There are 60 different types of synaesthesia.
- 9 Before Professor Simon Baron-Cohen's research, synaesthesia was thought to be a myth.
- 10 A lot of celebrities are affected by synaesthesia.
- 11 Most scientists believe that synaesthesia runs in families.

### Questions 12-14

*Complete the summary.*

*Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.*

Synaesthesia is a unique neurological condition that causes different senses to get mixed. Recent research has suggested that teaching synaesthesia to non-synaesthetes can enhance **12** \_\_\_\_\_ and guard against the deterioration of cognitive **13** \_\_\_\_\_; unfortunately, it might be a while before we come up with a beneficial way to **14** \_\_\_\_\_ it to the general population.

## Section 2

### The Tamam Shud Case

It has been more than 65 years since the Taman Shud case was first opened, but this notoriously bizarre murder mystery from Australia continues to baffle scientific investigators and crime aficionados from around the world today.

On the morning of 1st December 1948, the body of an unidentified man was discovered propped against a rock wall on Somerton beach in Adelaide, opposite the Crippled Children's home. The man was around 40-45 years old, had an athletic figure and was dressed in a smart suit and tie. He had no form of ID on him and all the labels on his clothes had been removed. The only things found on his body were an unused 10:50 a.m. ticket from Adelaide Railway Station to Henley Beach for the 30th November, a packet of chewing gums, an aluminium comb, a packet of cigarettes, a box of Bryan & May matches, sixpence and a small piece of paper with the words "Tam am shud" printed on it - which means "ended" or "finished" in Persian. To make matters more interesting, the autopsy revealed that his death had been unnatural, but determined no cause of death: although he had clearly died of heart failure, his heart had been healthy and no signs of violence or poisoning were discovered in his system.

The case garnered media attention almost immediately, with dozens of people with missing friends and relatives travelling to Adelaide to have a look at the Somerton man's body - but none of them being able to positively identify him. The next piece of evidence came when a journalist named Frank Kennedy discovered that the piece of paper with the printed words had been ripped from the last page of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, a book of collected poems by Omar Khayyam, an 11th century Persian poet. Following pleas by the police for the public to check their copies of *The Rubaiyat* for any missing pages, a local man brought in the correct copy, which he reported having found in the back seat of his car six months earlier, around the time the corpse had been discovered.

This is where things get even more complicated: in the back of the book, police discovered five lines of letters that appeared to be some sort of secret code. In the back cover, they also found a phone number which led them to a 27-year-old woman known as "Jestyn" who lived on Moseley Street, a stone's throw from the crime scene. Jestyn denied any knowledge of the man and was generally guarded and non-committal throughout the police interview. Nevertheless, the police decided not to pursue the lead. As for the code? Despite years of research by cryptology experts and students, no one has managed to crack it to this day.

It's not just the mysterious code, however, that makes this case so popular with crime fans. It's been more than half a century since the man's death, but his identity is still a mystery. Although copies of the victim's fingerprints and photograph, as well as the name "T. Keane" (which was written on some labels found in his suitcase) were sent around the world to all Commonwealth countries, the search turned up no results. Some theories regarding the man's origins have arisen over the years, with many believing that he was American due to the predominantly US way the stripes slanted on his tie, his aluminium comb (rare in Australia at the time) and the belief that Americans were far more likely to chew gum than Australians in the 1940s. Others also theorise that he was Jestyn's lover, and perhaps even a Soviet spy agent - although this all still remains just speculation for now.

Interest in the case was rekindled in 2013, following an interview on the show *60 Minutes* with Kate Thompson, the daughter of "Jestyn" - whose actual name was revealed to be Jo Thompson. Kate Thompson claimed that her mother had lied to the police about not knowing the Somerton Man. She also said her mother was a Soviet spy with a "dark side" and that she might've been responsible for the man's murder. Also participating in the show were Roma and

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Rachel Egan, wife and daughter respectively of Kate Thompson's late brother Robin, whom many believe to have been the Somerton man's son. The two women have backed a request to get the man's body exhumed in the interest of proving this claim, which they also believe to be correct. A similar bid had been rejected previously in 2011 by Attorney-General John Rau, citing insufficient "public interest reasons". There is currently a petition on Change.org, as well as an Indiegogo campaign to raise funds in support of solving the case.

### Questions 15-20

Complete the timeline below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from Reading Passage 2 for each answer.

**1948, November 30th** - The Somerton Man misses a train to **15** \_\_\_\_\_.

**1948, December 1st** - The Somerton Man's body is discovered on Somerton beach

**1948, December 2nd** - Post mortem reveals no **16** \_\_\_\_\_.

**1949, January 14th** - Adelaide Railway Station discover deceased man's suitcase

**1949, July 22nd** - A businessman from Somerton hands in copy of poem book that contains the **17** \_\_\_\_\_ and Jestyn's **18** \_\_\_\_\_.

**1949, July 25th** - Police visit Jestyn at her house on **19** \_\_\_\_\_ to speak with her - she remains **20** \_\_\_\_\_ during questioning.

### Questions 21-24

Complete each sentence with the correct ending A-G below.

**21** The code written on the back of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

**22** Journalist Frank Kennedy

**23** The identity of the woman to whom the phone number belonged

**24** Kate Thompson's sister-in-law

**A** believes her daughter is related to the Somerton man.

**B** has tried to solve it for decades with no results.

**C** was revealed by her daughter in 2013.

**D** inadvertently assisted the police in their investigation.

**E** was only named as "Jestyn".

**F** remains a mystery.

**G** revealed that Jo Thompson was a cruel Soviet spy.

### Questions 25-28

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

**25** According to the autopsy on the Somerton man

**A** his heart failed for no reason.

**B** there were traces of poison in his system.

**C** he was physically fit.

**D** there was nothing wrong with his heart.

**26** The copy of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam with the missing page

**A** was discovered in a local man's garage.

**B** was in a local man's possession for six months after the murder.

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C was discovered by a local man six months after the murder.

D was found by journalist Frank Kennedy.

**27** One of the reasons many believe that the Somerton Man was American is that

A he wasn't found in any database in Commonwealth countries.

B he had been chewing a gum before his death.

C his tie had an American pattern of stripes.

D the name "T. Keane" was found in his suitcase.

**28** Roma and Rachel Egan

A are critical of attempts to exhume the Somerton man's body.

B disagree that Robin Thompson was the Somerton man's son.

C backed the request that was rejected in 2011 by Rau.

D voiced their beliefs on the same programme as Kate Thompson.

## Section 3

### Coinage in Ancient Greece

**A** There are more than 170 official national currencies currently in circulation around the world - and while they may differ greatly in value, most show a high degree of commonality when it comes to their design. Typically, a coin or banknote will feature the effigy of a notable politician, monarch or other personality from the country of origin on one side and a recognisable state symbol (e.g. a building or an animal) on the reverse. This pattern, which has been around for more than 21 centuries, originated in ancient Greece.

**B** Prior to the invention of legal tender, most transactions in the ancient world took the form of trading a product or service for another. As sea trade grew in the Mediterranean, however, the once popular barter system became hard to maintain for two reasons: firstly, because it was tricky to calculate the value of each item or service in relation to another, and secondly, because carrying large goods (such as animals) on boats to do trade with neighbouring cities was difficult and inconvenient. Therefore, the need soon arose for a commonly recognised unit that would represent a set value - what is known today as a currency. As Aristotle explains in *Politics*, metal coins naturally became the most popular option due to the fact that they were easy to carry, and didn't run the risk of expiring. According to ancient Greek historian Herodotus, the first coins were invented in 620 BC in the town of Lydia, although some theorise that they actually originated in the city of Ionia. (Coins had already existed for nearly 400 years in China, unbeknownst to Europeans.)

**C** Much like with every other form of ancient Greek art, the history of ancient Greek coins can be divided into three distinct chronological periods: the Archaic (600- 480 BC), the Classic (480-330 BC) and the Hellenistic Period (330-1st century BC). As ancient Greece was not a united country like today, but rather comprised of many independent city-states known as *poleis*, each state produced its own coins. The island of Aegina was the first to mint silver coins, perhaps adopting the new system upon witnessing how successfully it had facilitated trade for the Ionians. Aegina being the head of a confederation of seven states, it quickly influenced other city-states in the Mediterranean and the new method of trade soon became widespread. Up until approximately 510 BC, when Athens began producing its own coin, the Aegina coin - which featured a turtle on its surface - was the most predominant in the region.

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**D** The tetradrachm, Athens's new coin bearing the picture of an owl on its obverse as a tribute to the city's protector, the goddess Athena, brought with it a shift in the world of coinage. Prior to the tetradrachm, Athenians had been using simple iron rods known as 'obols' for currency. As the average human hand could grasp about six *obols*, that number soon came to represent a 'drachma' (from the Greek verb 'dratto', which means 'to grasp') - so the new tetradrachm had the same value as 24 *obols*. With Athens continually growing in power, the tetradrachm soon replaced the Aegina 'turtle' as the most preponderant coin in the region. It was around that time that an agreement akin to way the EU's euro currency functions also appeared, with different coins from all over the Mediterranean being made to the same standards as the Athenian coin (albeit with each city's own symbols on them) and being used interchangeably among the trading city-states.

**E** Coinage soon spread beyond those city-states. Romans abandoned the bronze bars they'd been using in favour of coins around the year 300 BC, and Alexander the Great and his father King Philip of Macedonia began to produce massive quantities of coins to fund their military escapades around the same time. It was with the death of the latter, in 336 BC, that the Hellenistic Period began. Two things characterise the Hellenistic Period: the introduction of a "type" (the design that coins were stamped with) on the reverse of the coins, and mass production, which mostly took place in kingdoms beyond the Greek city-states, such as Egypt, Syria and the far east. Another new feature, which was heavily criticised by the Greeks, was the introduction of profiles of kings and other important living figures as stamps in lieu of the traditional symbols of animals and buildings. Athens, still a powerful city at the time, eschewed these designs and continued to produce its own tetradrachm coins, even introducing - a new style coin characterised by broad, thin flans - a design which became popular across the Aegean and lasted until the spread of Roman rule over Greece.

**F** It's not difficult to see why ancient Greek coins continue to fascinate coin collectors and historians today. They marked the beginning of a new era in business and introduced a model of trade in Europe that is still present nowadays; they greatly influenced the design of modern coinage, with symbols such as the owl (which can be seen on the Greek version of the euro today) and portraits of important personalities; and, since they were hand-made to high technical standards representative of ancient Greek perfectionism, many are even remarkable in their own right, as tiny metal works of art.

### Questions 29-34

*The reading passage has six paragraphs, A-F. Choose the correct heading for paragraphs A-F from the list of headings below.*

#### List of Headings

- I** The beginning of the Archaic period
- II** The Athenian obol replaces the turtle
- III** How product exchange became insufficient
- IV** Roman and Macedonian coins
- V** The relevance of ancient Greek coins today
- VI** New cities introduce new design rules
- VII** A precursor of the modern euro
- VIII** The difference between Ionian and Lydian coins
- IX** Modern coin designs and their origin

29 Paragraph A \_\_\_\_

30 Paragraph B \_\_\_\_



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31 Paragraph C \_\_\_\_

32 Paragraph D \_\_\_\_

33 Paragraph E \_\_\_\_

34 Paragraph F \_\_\_\_

### Questions 35-38

Answer the questions below with words taken from Reading Passage 3.

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

35 What were the ancient Greek city-states commonly known as? \_\_\_\_\_

36 Which type did the Aegina coin use? \_\_\_\_\_

37 What was the value of a drachma in ancient Athens? \_\_\_\_\_

38 What did the Romans use prior to the introduction of coins? \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions 39-40

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

39 The Athenian Hellenistic-period tetradrachm coin

A replaced the owl type with the profile of a king.

B was a thin, wide metal disk.

C remained popular under Roman rule.

D was massively produced in Syria and Egypt.

40 Ancient Greek coins

A are still a method of trade in Europe nowadays.

B are remarkably different from modern coins.

C are a fine example of ancient Greek art.

D were a tribute to the goddess Athena, protector of Athens.

## Answer Keys

### IELTS Reading Section 1

1. **D.** 'Disadvantages' from the questions are paraphrased as 'drawbacks' in the text of Paragraph D.
2. **F.** Second and third sentences of Paragraph F mention the potential usefulness of the condition. Even though Paragraph E mentions a study on how it could be of benefit to future generations, no real-life examples of its application are listed.
3. **G.** The prediction in paragraph G is to find out ways of using the benefits of this condition by general population. Paragraph E has the phrase 'future generations' in the first sentence
4. **A.** 'Grapheme-colour synaesthesia' is the keyword here and it can be found in the middle of Paragraph A. Paragraph B describes more general cases that are not limited to grapheme-colour case.
5. **C.** From the very first sentence of Paragraph C the answer is evident.
6. **B.** From second sentence onwards we are given various kinds of synaesthesia.
7. **E.** 'Arbitrary' means 'based on chance, not planned'. The studies state the opposite - in other words, according to these studies the symptoms of synaesthesia are predetermined or based on certain factors. Paragraph E suggests that synaesthesia 'can be taught' - in other words it is a factor that can be controlled.
8. **FALSE.** Paragraph B, last but one sentence states: 'at least 60 different combinations of senses have been reported so far'. So saying there are 60 types is false - the bit 'at least' suggests that there can be more, whereas saying that there are only 60 limits it to this number.
9. **NOT GIVEN.** Nothing is mentioned about synaesthesia believed to be a myth. Second sentence of Paragraph C states that 'empirical research proved its existence', but there was no doubt expressed about its actual existence. Remember how in TRUE/FALSE/NOT GIVEN tasks you shouldn't infer and speculate, but instead operate with the solid facts taken from the text.
10. **NOT GIVEN.** Last sentence of Paragraph D names two celebrities affected by synaesthesia. We can neither confirm nor deny that 'a lot of celebrities' are affected by it based on two people. In any case, no such information is given in the text.
11. **TRUE.** In the middle of Paragraph E: 'synaesthesia is predominantly considered to be a hereditary condition'. The word 'hereditary' means 'passed from parents to children, from one generation to another'.
12. **Memory.** 'Enhance' in the questions has similar meaning to 'improve' from the text. The answer to this and the next question are found in the middle of Paragraph F.
13. **Function.** See question 12. Note that you should always use words from the text. Even though using the word 'ability' would be grammatically and lexically correct, it is not used in the relevant sentence from the text and therefore shouldn't be picked for the answer.
14. **Teach.** Paragraph G mentions how it could take some time before scientists come up with ways to teach people synaesthesia.

### IELTS Reading Section 2

15. **Henley Beach.** Paragraph Two, fourth sentence. Two things to note here: first is that preposition 'to' indicates destination, second is that both words should be capitalised, otherwise the answer won't be counted as correct.
16. **Cause of death.** 'Post mortem' is paraphrased as 'autopsy', both mean post-death examination of body, often to determine the reason for death. Answering 'signs of violence/poisoning' is incorrect as one answer does not include the other, and 'cause of death' in this case is more general and preferred.



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- 17.**(Secret) code.** Paragraph Four, first sentence states that a secret code was found in the book.
- 18.**(Phone) number.** Second sentence of Paragraph four - Jestyn's phone number was found along with the secret code.
- 19.**Moseley Street.** Preposition 'on' helps to understand that it is the street name that should go in the gap. Don't forget to capitalise both words, otherwise it won't be scored.
- 20.**Guarded and non-committal.** Note that non-committal is a compound adjective and therefore is counted as one word. If you omit either word you won't get a point. There are no half-points in IELTS.
- 21.**F.** Last two sentences of Paragraph Four ('As for the code?')
- 22.**D.** Paragraph Three, second sentence. The word 'inadvertently' means 'unintentionally'. This is a rare case of having to go back in text to find the answer. This will happen several times in this text.
- 23.**C.** Last Paragraph, third sentence. Jestyn's daughter reveals that her mother was a Soviet spy.
- 24.**A.** The answer is in the middle of last paragraph: '... whom many believe to have been the Somerton man's son'.
- 25.**D.** Last sentence of Paragraph Two. The choice here is between A and D: 'although he had clearly died of heart failure, his heart had been healthy'. A doesn't fit as nothing is mentioned of the reason - whether there was or wasn't one. However, it is clearly states that his heart was in good state - there was nothing wrong with it.
- 26.**B.** Paragraph Three, last sentence. Here we struggle to choose between B and C. **Answer C** implies that the the book had been found six months after the murder, which is true. However, Answer B is more complete as it states that the man had had that book in his car all that time, although he had not been aware of it.
- 27.**C.** Paragraph Five, last but one sentence. The slant of the tie pattern is clearly mentioned here. Chewing gum shouldn't be picked for two reasons - first, it is a supporting argument at the end of the sentence and second, it is unknown whether he had in fact chewed gum before his death, the chewing gum was just in his possession.
- 28.**D.** Last paragraph: 'Also participating in the show were Roma and Rachel Egan.'

### IELTS Reading Section 3

- 29.**IX.** This is a very straightforward answer. V - relevance of Greek coins can't be used here as it is only a minor point.
- 30.**III.** The paragraph focuses on flaws of barter system and how with the growth of Mediterranean trade a new form of exchange appeared.
- 31.**I.** A good reference point can be found at the end of the paragraph: 'Up until approximately 510 BC'. At the beginning of the paragraph three distinct periods are mentioned, and then the paragraph refers to the first - Archaic one.
- 32.**VII.** 'Precursor' is something that existed before the thing that influenced it. For example, a cart is a precursor of the modern automobile. Thus, the system adopted in Athens was an earlier design of what is now used in the European Union.
- 33.**VI.** A number of states and cities are mentioned such as Egypt, Syria and Athens, all coming up with their own rules and patterns of coin design.
- 34.**V.** Ancient Greek coins remain desirable both as items of great period of history and as things of beautiful design.
- 35.**Poleis.** Paragraph Two, second sentence. Make sure to get the spelling right.
- 36.**Turtle.** There were several 'types' of coins, including a 'turtle' type. Another type mentioned in the text is the tetradrachm.

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37. **Six obols/6 obols.** The answer is in the third sentence of Paragraph C. Do not confuse it with tetradrachm, which is 24 obols.
38. **Bronze bars.** Second sentence of Paragraph E mentions the Romans giving up using bronze bars in favor of coins around 300 BC.
39. **B.** Answers A, C and D generally refer to coins of Hellenistic period, whereas only answer B is true for coins made in Athens during that period (last sentence of Paragraph E).
40. **C.** Last paragraph of the text focuses on the aesthetic value of the coins of Ancient Greece and how they are a worthy example of art of that time and place.

## Vocabulary

The vocabulary below is meant to help you with the more difficult words. If the word isn't on the list then you are either supposed to know it or it is too specific to be worth learning and you don't have to know it to answer the question. Symbols in brackets mean part of speech (see bottom of the list). Sentences in italics give examples of usage for some more complex words and phrases.

**And remember — you are not given a vocabulary list (or a dictionary) at your real exam.**

### Reading Section 1

**Strain** (v) - to stretch or apply pressure to something. Can also be used figuratively. *Her witty remark really strained our relationship.*

**Rogue** (adj) - behaving in an unusual or unexpected way that is usually harmful. *This cellphone operator is known for its rogue practice of overcharging their clients.*

**Perky** (adj) - happy and energetic. *The new employee was a perky girl in her late twenties.*

**Self-conscious** (adj) - shy, lacking confidence and uncomfortable because you're too worried of other people's opinion of you. *I couldn't help being self-conscious in my school years, I worried about things too much.*

**Witness** (v) - to see something in person, be present when something happens. *I witnessed a huge row between our employees in the company cafeteria today.*

**Blindfolded** (adj) - with one's eyes covered by something like a piece of fabric. *You don't expect me to walk across this busy street blindfolded, do you?*

**Drawback** (n) - a negative aspect of something, a disadvantage. *One of the major drawbacks of having a full-time job is that you have almost no time for yourself.*

**Peculiar** (adj) - unusual or strange, sometimes unpleasantly so. *There was a peculiar smell in our kitchen I couldn't find the source of.*

**Hereditary** (adj) - being passed from parents to children, from one generation to the other. *This disease is not hereditary so you shouldn't be worried about it at all!*

**Tremendous** (adj) - impressively big in amount, size, or exceptionally good. *Unexpectedly, the school play turned out to be a tremendous success.*

**Corroborate** (v) - to add proof or additional information to some statement. *The scientists corroborated the research in quantum physics.*

**Cognitive decline** - a process when one's intelligence, memory and other brain functions become worse or slower. *It is believed that learning foreign languages can offset cognitive decline among the elderly.*

## IELTS Reading – Practice Test 12

### Reading Section 2

**Baffle** (v) - to puzzle, to make or be difficult to understand. *No matter how hard I try to understand it, physics simply baffles me.*

**Aficionado** (n) - someone who is knowledgeable and passionate about something. *This wine shop is very popular with local aficionados.*

**Noncommittal** (adj) - not participating, not having any opinion on something. *Despite my expectations, the majority of our class remained noncommittal when it came to choosing school president.*

**Rekindle** (v) - to bring back to life, to bring old feelings back. *I don't think that old love can be rekindled.*

**Exhume** (v) - to extract a body from the ground after it had been buried. *I don't think it is a good idea to exhume the corpse - it is extremely disrespectful.*

### Reading Section 3

**Coinage** (n) - the process of making coins. *Coinage in some countries costs more than the actual coins produced.*

**Currency** (n) - money used in a particular country. *Tugrik is the national currency of Mongolia.*

**Commonality** (n) - sharing something with someone, e.g. interests or experience. *There is no commonality between you two, you are completely different.*

**Effigy** (n) - an object that represents something or someone. Sometimes used negatively. *The car's front part was adorned with a tiny effigy of a woman.*

**Legal tender** - just another word for officially recognised money. *A one hundred dollar bill is a well-known form of a legal tender.*

**Transaction** (n) - the act or process of exchanging things, usually financial. *We have set up the meeting at ten o'clock to conduct the transaction.*

**Expire** (v) - if something expires, it becomes too old to be useful or edible. *This milk has expired, you'd better throw it away.*

**Mint** (v) - to produce coins. Similar to coinage. *The government has announced that it will not mint coins starting in 2021.*

**Preponderant** (adj) - large, significant or important. *A series of preponderant events.*

**Escapade** (n) - an out-of-ordinary act or event, usually involving danger or excitement. *Julian offered to join him in his usual weekend escapades. It was too grand an opportunity to miss.*

**In lieu (of)** - instead of. *The company offered me money in lieu of the days off I couldn't take.*

**Eschew** (v) - to avoid something or to give something up. *The policy of not hiring people from other cities should be eschewed.*