

IELTS GENERAL READING TEST 11

Section 1

Read the text below, and answer question 1-7

GREAT BARRIER ISLAND TRANSPORT			
Great Barrier Island is near the city of Auckland in New Zealand. It has only 850 permanent residents, but it is a popular tourist destination			
Ferries			
To Great Barrier Island		To Auckland	
Monday-Friday	Weekends & Public holidays	Monday-Friday	Weekends & Public holidays
First ferry: 0530	0630	0800	0900
Ferries leave on the hour every hour throughout the day			
Last ferry: 1800	1800	2030	2030
Fares		One way	Return
Adult:		\$75	\$120
Student / Pensioner:		\$50	\$80
Child (5-15; young children travel free):		\$25	\$40
Family (2 adults + 2 or more children):		\$180	\$300
Pet (Dogs must be on a lead; cats are forbidden):		\$10	\$15
Booking			
By phone: 846 1305.		In person: Tickets may be purchased at Wharf 4.	
Other information			
There is a restaurant on board. The journey lasts 2½ hours in calm seas. Ferries do not operate in thick fog, severe storms, or on Christmas Day.			
Car hire on Great Barrier Island			
Rates are for sedans; four-wheel drives are an additional \$30 per day.			
Half day (1-4 hours)	1-4 days	4 days +	
\$40	\$70	\$65 a day	
Bicycle hire			
Rates are for mountain bikes.			
Half day (1-4 hours)	1-4 days	4 days +	
\$20	\$35	\$30	

Questions 1-7

Answer the questions below. Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

1. How many people live on Great Barrier Island?
.....
2. When does the first ferry leave Great Barrier Island for Auckland on a weekday?
.....
3. How much does a return ticket to Great Barrier cost for a family?
.....
4. Which animals are not allowed on Great Barrier?
.....
5. How long does a normal ferry trip to Great Barrier take?
.....
6. What is one reason, connected to weather, that ferries do not run?
.....
7. How much does it cost to hire a 4-wheel drive for one day on Great Barrier?
.....

DISCOVERING GREAT BARRIER ISLAND

Read the text below, and answer question 8-14. What can tourists do on Great Barrier Island?

Walking	Mountain Biking
There are ten walking tracks that go through native forest or around beaches. Hiking times and degree of difficulty vary from 30 minutes and very easy to five hours and quite demanding. Views are stunning.	Recent track development by the Department of Conservation makes biking exciting on Great Barrier. It is New Zealand law to wear a helmet when riding. Watch out for walkers as they share tracks.
Surfing and Swimming	Kayaking and Diving
There are several famous surf beaches with big waves. Inland, there are hot springs. Bring plenty of sunscreen because the UV rays are extremely dangerous. Burn times in mid-summer are as low as ten minutes, and you still burn in the water.	There are two hire companies operating on Great Barrier for all the gear you need. Kayaking is done on the sheltered western side of the island. Snorkeling and scuba diving are popular everywhere. The wreck of the Wiltshire, off the south coast, provides extra interest.
Fishing and a Seafood Festival	Learning About Local History
Eating seafood is a must. Indulge in fish caught by locals, or try your luck at some popular fishing spots. January sees the Mussel Festival. Shellfish is cooked up in every way imaginable, accompanied by musical performances.	The hardwood forests on Great Barrier Island were exploited for over 100 years by loggers. Walking around, you will see ruins from this industry. Most trees are protected these days. There are some old wooden houses from the 19th century that make for excellent photographs.

Questions 8-14

Choose the correct letter **A, B, C, or D**. Write the correct letter in **boxes 8-14** on your answer sheet.

8. Walks along easy tracks on Great Barrier take about

- A 15 minutes.
- B half an hour. C 45 minutes.
- D one hour.

9. The views on Great Barrier are

- A extraordinary.
- B pleasant. C famous.
- D passable.

10. Walkers and bikers

- A take great photo.
- B have to wear helmets.
- C use some of the same tracks.
- D use different tracks.

11. One disadvantage of swimming in New Zealand is

- A sharks.
- B dangerous waves. C dangerous sun.
- D cold water.

12. It is better to kayak on the ____ side of the island.

- A northern
- B southern
- C eastern
- D western

13. The Mussel Festival takes place each year in

- A January.

B February. **C** March.

D April.

14. In the past, Great Barrier was noted for **A** tourism.

B photography.

C fishing.

D logging.

SECTION 2

Read the information below, and answer questions **15-21**.

A

Building Trades

(Including: Bricklaying, Building, Carpentry, Fire Protection, Floor & Wall Tiling, and Plumbing)

Building:

Part-time: 12 hours per week Duration:

2 years

This course is for people wanting to acquire building skills for the residential construction industry.

You will study the social, environmental, and legal aspects of residential construction projects. Special focus will be on: quantities of materials, site safety, and computing. This course, along with Carpentry and Bricklaying, will give you the technical qualifications for a Builder's Licence.

B

Child Studies

(Including: Children's Services, Early Childhood Education & Care, and a Traineeship)

Diploma of Early Childhood Education & Care:

Part-time: 21 hours per week (3 days)

Duration: 18 months

This course is for people wanting to become qualified childcare workers in day care centres.

You will develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to meet the intellectual, physical, and emotional needs of children in day care. Special focus will be on: occupational health and safety, ethical work practices, and legal issues. On completion of this diploma, graduates may apply for advanced standing at universities that offer Early Childhood courses.

Note: A police check will be carried out before applications are accepted. A criminal record involving violence or abuse seriously affects career prospects.

C

Real Estate

(Including: Agency Management, Marketing, and Property Services) Property Services:

Full time: 35 hours per week

Duration: 4 months

This certificate, which is recognised nationally, provides learners with the skills and knowledge needed to market, sell, lease, and manage property within an agency. It is a pre-requisite for the diploma.

D

Screen & Digital Media

(Including: Film & TV Production, Interactive Digital Media, & Network Administration) Film & TV Production:

Part-time: 21 hours per week (3 days)

Duration: 4 months

This certificate, a pre-requisite for the Diploma of Screen & Digital Media, introduces learners to the film and television industry. You will learn how to write a script, plan and produce a short-pre-recorded programme segment, and work effectively as a production crewmember.

E **Outreach**

A variety of courses chosen by learners from all Certificate I-II courses on offer at the college, as well as compulsory: Introductory Computing, First Aid, and English Language.

Flexible delivery options.

Outreach aims to remove barriers for people wanting to return to education. These barriers could be: income level, Englishlanguage ability, little previous education, geographic isolation, disability, or family commitments.

Questions 15-21

The text above has five sections: A-E. Which section, A-E, has the following information? Write the correct letter, A-E, in boxes 15-21 on your answer sheet.

This course:

- 15. is fulltime.
- 16. lasts the longest.
- 17. takes the fewest hours to complete.
- 18. leads to a licence.
- 19. helps people who are disadvantaged.
- 20. is related to the entertainment industry.
- 21. once completed, can go towards a university course

Questions 22-27

The passage below has seven paragraphs: A-G. Choose the correct heading for paragraphs B-G from the list of headings below. Write the correct number, i-ix, in boxes 22-27 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

i Older students sometimes resent the young ii
Worth the effort iii More mature-aged students in
developed countries iv High academic achievement
v The dangers of unfinished studies vi Why they exist
vii Oldies find friendship harder at university viii
Problems at home ix Mature-aged students are great
organisers

- 22. Paragraph B
- 23. Paragraph C
- 24. Paragraph D
- 25. Paragraph E
- 26. Paragraph F
- 27. Paragraph G

MATURE-AGED STUDENTS

A Only a generation ago, there were few tertiary students who had begun their studies when they were over the age of 21. It was virtually unheard of for people to start courses in their forties or fifties. These days, in all developed countries, not only are there large numbers of online learners who are mature-aged, but, on campus, mums and dads with their laptops and library books are also making an appearance. In some countries, China for example, university study still remains the preserve of the young. Population pressure means that providing education for those aged 18-24 is difficult enough. Only English-language and IT opportunities exist at private colleges for older people.

B There are four main reasons for this rise in mature-aged students. Firstly, universities have changed entry requirements as more courses have become fee-paying. If students can afford to pay, and meet the academic level, then it doesn't matter how old they are. Secondly, the concept of a job for life is a thing of the past. Many people now have several careers. Life expectancy has reached 80 in at least 20 countries; retirement ages have risen accordingly. Therefore, retraining for longer working lives is essential. Lastly, there has been a general expansion of the education sector as the workforce needs to be better trained for a more competitive knowledge-based world.

C Clearly there are advantages to undertaking study later in life. There is the increased likelihood of a higher salary after study, and enhanced self-esteem. But what are some of the difficulties mature-aged students face? The most glaring one is the visual fact that they're not as attractive or energetic as all those young things lounging on quadrangle lawns. It's unlikely that they will socialise with people the same age as their sons or daughters, and that could make university life rather lonely. Befriending other mature-aged students is a possibility, but perhaps they also seem too old.

D In lectures and tutorials, older learners may get tired more quickly, but research has proven they focus on their studies. They work harder, and generally perform better than younger students. Their life experiences and analytical powers are good study aids. When there are group assignments, older students may become annoyed, feeling they do all of the work while the youngsters are out partying or working at part-time jobs. Furthermore, younger students often feel the pressure of their peers more acutely. They may be scared to participate in tutorials, worried what those their own age thinks of them. This means older students contribute more to discussion. While tutors are certainly grateful for their efforts, the mature-aged students themselves may occasionally wish they are not in the spotlight so often.

E For most mature-aged students, juggling work, family, and other commitments is a tricky business. Their organisational skills are admirable. However, their children, partners, or workmates may resent the absence or distraction of the older student. The student may win a qualification, but he or she may have to fight other battles on the home front.

F Then there are the greatly discouraged mature-aged drop-outs. These people already feel they failed at the end of their schooling by not going on to university, and being unable to complete their studies a second time can cause considerable anxiety. Fortunately, statistics show there are not very many of these people. Completion rates for undergraduate and post-graduate courses, for mature-aged students, are high.

G It takes courage, determination, personal and financial sacrifice to complete studies at university. Despite these difficulties, large numbers of mature-aged men and women all over the world are succeeding.

SECTION 3

Read the text below and answer questions 28-40.

THE HUMBLE BANANA

As the world's most eaten fruit, it is hard to believe that the banana has only become widely available in the last one hundred years. Nor can most people imagine a world without bananas. However, disease is threatening the existence of popular varieties, and while the banana itself is unlikely to die out, what consumers call a banana could change dramatically since new disease resistant strains may differ in taste, texture, size, and colour from fruit currently on offer.

History

A native of tropical South and Southeast Asia, it is thought bananas were first cultivated in today's Papua New Guinea around 10,000 years ago. Spreading to Madagascar, Africa, and then the Islamic world, bananas reached Europe in the 15th century. The word 'banana' entered English via Portuguese from Wolof – a West African language. Only in 1872 did the French writer, Jules Verne, describe bananas to his readers in some detail as they were so exotic, and it was another 30 years before plantationgrown produce from Central America would flood the global market.

Botanical data

Most modern edible bananas come from the wild species *Musa acuminata*, *Musa balbisiana*, or their hybrids. Two common varieties today are the larger more curved Cavendish and the smaller straighter Lady Finger both of which turn yellow when ripe.

Bananas are herbs, not trees, although they can reach more than seven metres (24 ft). Their stem, not trunk, is a soft fibrous shoot from an underground corm, or bulb. After fruiting, the whole stem dies, and the plant regenerates from the corm, one of which may last 25 years.

Normally, each banana stem produces one very large purple heart inside of which the fruit develops from female flowers, and hangs in a cluster weighing 30-50 kilograms (66-110 lb) and containing hundreds of bananas.

Domesticated bananas no longer have seeds, so their propagation must occur through the removal and transplantation of part of the corm, or through tissue culture in a laboratory, the latter being a complicated procedure that can lead to plant contamination.

Uses and benefits

As bananas grow all year round, they have become a vital crop. They are easy to eat (just peel) and easy to transport (no packaging needed).

Banana fruit, skin, heart, and stem are all edible, and alcohol can also be made from the plant.

The world's greatest banana-eaters are in East Africa, where the average Ugandan devours 150 kilograms (330.6 lb) a year, and receives 30% of calories this way. This habit is healthy since a single 100-gram (3.5 oz) banana contains 371 kilojoules (89 kcal) of energy, and protein represents 1.09% of its weight – 25 times more than that of an apple.

In daily requirements for an adult, one banana provides: 2% of Vitamin B1, 5% of B2, 4% of B3, 7% of B5, 28% of B6, 5% of B9; 15% of Vitamin C; 1% of calcium; 2% of iron; 7% of magnesium; 3% of phosphorous; 8% of potassium; and, 1% of zinc.

A further health benefit is a lower risk of breast, bowel, or liver cancer, and some psychiatrists recommend bananas as they increase dopamine levels in the brain, thus improving mood.

Aside from food and drink, bananas have other uses. Their large flexible leaves become recyclable plates or food containers in Asia. Traditionally, the Japanese boiled banana shoots in lye until their fibres softened and separated. Fine cloth was woven from this fibre. Paper is made from banana stems, and more recently, skins have been employed to clean up polluted rivers as their absorption of heavy metals is high.

In several religions, bananas feature prominently. Tamils believe the banana is one of three holy fruits. Buddhists often decorate trays with bananas to offer to the Buddha. Moslems eat copious quantities during the holy month of Ramadan during which time global trade in the fruit spikes.

Threats to bananas

Between 1820 and 1950, a banana called the Gros Michel was the most common commercial variety. Suddenly, this was attacked by a fungus called Panama disease, and worldwide, the Gros Michel was almost wiped out. Its commercial replacement, the Cavendish, considered less delicious by gourmands, may now suffer the same fate as its predecessor. All Cavendish bananas are genetically identical, making them susceptible to disease. While the original Panama disease was controlled, it mutated into Tropical Race 4 (TR4), which has destroyed banana crops in Southeast Asia, and for which there is no known defence except genetic modification.

Black Sigatoka is another deadly disease. In Uganda – once a world-leader in banana production – it reduced crops by 40% in the 1970s. The treatment for Black Sigatoka is as controversial as it is expensive (\$1000 per hectare per annum) since chemical spray contaminates soil and water supplies. Banana cultivars resistant to Black Sigatoka do exist, but none has been accepted by major supermarket buyers because their taste and texture differ greatly from bananas that shoppers are used to.

In 2010, East Africa was hit by another plague – Banana Xanthomonas wilt. The Ugandan economy lost more than \$500 million due to this, and thousands of small farmers abandoned bananas as a crop, leading to widespread financial hardship and a far poorer diet.

Scientists, however, have not given up hope, and the National Banana Research Programme in Uganda has been adding a sweet pepper gene, disease-resistant in a number of vegetables, to bananas. Yet genetically modified crops remain banned in Uganda, and other scientists believe identifying and domesticating disease-free wild bananas rather than adopting expensive and largely unproven gene technology would be more prudent.

Human civilization has a long and critical relationship with bananas. If this is to continue, it may be time to reconsider what a banana is. The supermarkets may no longer be stocked with big sweet yellow cultivars but with tiny purple, pink, red, or green-and-white striped ones that currently exist in the depths of the forest and will not be cheap to domesticate.

Questions 28-33

Choose **ONE WORD OR A NUMBER** from the passage for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 28-33 on your answer sheet.

28. Only since the turn of the 20th century have bananas become readily
29. Farmers in what is now Papua New Guinea first started growing bananas about years ago.
30. Banana plants do not have a trunk but a(n)
31. An adult can receive% of his or her daily vitamin C requirements from an average banana.
32. The Japanese used to make from banana fibre.
33. During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, international in bananas increases dramatically.

Questions 34-39

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A-I, below. Write the correct letter, A-I, in boxes 34-39 on your answer sheet.

34. The popular banana, the Gros Michel, was
35. Since Cavendish bananas lack genetic diversity,
36. Scientists and farmers fought Panama disease, but it was not eradicated. Instead, it
37. Large numbers of Ugandan farmers
38. Vegetables with additional sweet pepper genes 39. Food security worldwide is partly dependent on
- A are no longer growing bananas.
- B there are enough bananas.
- C they may also be destroyed by disease.
- D are keen to try GM banana strains.
- E almost made extinct by a fungus.
- F have successfully withstood disease.
- G a continuous supply of bananas. H became Black Sigatoka disease.
- I transformed itself into TR4.

Question 40

Choose **TWO** of the following letters: A, B, C, D, or E. Write the correct letters in box 40 on your answer sheet.

Which **TWO** of the following does the writer believe about bananas on sale in supermarkets of the future? **A** They will not come from Africa.

- B They will be multicoloured.
- C They will taste better.
- D They will be less expensive.
- E They will be a variety of banana that is wild now.