

IELTS ACADEMIC READING

Why You Still Lose Marks in IELTS READING

**The 10 Hidden Traps That Keep
Capable Readers at Band 6.5**



Stop reading harder.

*Start reading the way
the test rewards.*

marie semsim

**Ideal for IELTS Teachers &
Self-Study Students**

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Band 7 Strategy coaching • Full answer key

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First Edition, 2026

Printed and distributed digitally.

How to Use This Workbook

Who this is for. You already read English comfortably and score around Band 6–6.5, yet the Reading section keeps pulling you down. The problem at this stage is rarely vocabulary or grammar — it is the *design of the questions*. IELTS Reading is built on a small set of recurring traps. Once you can name a trap, you stop falling for it.

How it is organised. Each of the ten chapters follows the same rhythm: a short explanation of the trap, a worked example showing the trap in action, a list of warning signals, and a set of exercises built around an original C1–C2 passage. Answers and full reasoning are at the back.

The one habit that fixes most trap errors

Before you choose an answer, point to the exact words in the passage that justify it. If you cannot underline a specific phrase, you are guessing — and guessing is exactly what every trap below is engineered to produce.

Recommended approach: work one chapter per study session. Do the exercises under loose timing first, then re-do them slowly while reading the explanations. The second, slow pass is where the learning happens.

How Band 7 Readers Think

The difference between a Band 6.5 and a Band 7.5 in Reading is rarely speed or vocabulary. It is a way of thinking. Lower-band readers try to **match words**; high-band readers test **meaning**. Before you start the chapters, internalise these five shifts.

The mindset shift behind all ten traps

The test is not checking whether you understood the passage. It is checking whether you can tell the difference between what the passage **actually said** and what merely **sounds right**. Every trap is a gap between those two things.

- **They read the question first.** They decide what is being tested — a cause? a date? a view? — so they know which trap to expect before they read the options.
- **They locate before they decide.** They find the exact sentence in the passage every time, and never answer from memory of the gist.
- **They distrust the familiar option.** The choice that looks most like the passage is, more often than chance, the trap.
- **They separate “absent” from “contradicted.”** They decide NOT GIVEN vs FALSE deliberately, as a conscious step, not a feeling.
- **They move on.** If a question costs more than two minutes, they mark a best answer, flag it, and return. Accuracy across all questions beats perfection on one.

Which Traps Catch You? A 60-Second Diagnostic

Be honest with each statement. Every “yes” points you to the chapter to study first.

☐ I often choose the option that repeats words from the passage.	→ Trap 7 — Similar Wording
☐ I pick TRUE because a statement “seems reasonable,” even when I can’t find it.	→ Trap 10 — Not Given
☐ I confirm the first half of an option and stop reading.	→ Trap 2 — Half-True Statements
☐ I mix up which researcher said what.	→ Trap 3 — Wrong Researcher
☐ I accept strong words like “all” or “never” without checking the passage’s hedging.	→ Trap 1 — Extreme Words
☐ I lose time finding the right paragraph for an idea.	→ Trap 4 — Wrong Paragraph
☐ I misread numbers, dates, or similar-looking figures.	→ Trap 5 — Detail Trap
☐ I treat a small study as if it applied to everyone.	→ Trap 6 — Scope Trap
☐ I get cause and effect backwards.	→ Trap 8 — Reverse Logic
☐ I read an opinion as if it were a proven fact.	→ Trap 9 — Opinion vs Fact

Most students tick three or four. Start with those chapters; the boxes inside each one show you the exact fix.

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