

## IELTS placement test

You have 1 hour to complete this test.

20 minutes for READING

40 minutes for WRITING

Write all your answers on the answer sheets  
and return only the answer sheets.

## IELTS Reading passage

You should spend about **20 minutes** on Questions 1-13, which are based on the reading passage below.

### Section A

The sense of smell (or olfaction) is our most primitive sense and is located in the same part of our brain that effects emotions, memory, and creativity. Our sense of smell allows us to identify food, mates, and danger, as well as sensual pleasures like perfume and flowers/nature. Sudden scents, like smelling salts, will jolt the mind.

The senses of smell and taste, two of the five senses identified by Aristotle, are called “chemical senses” and are sometimes regarded as one sense rather than separate senses. About 80% of what we taste is actually due to our sense of smell. Without the sense of smell, we would only be able to recognize five tastes: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and savory. A food’s flavor can be altered by simply changing its smell, while keeping its taste the same. In fact, our sense of smell becomes stronger when we are hungry.

### Section B

Aromas, scents and fragrances, good and bad smells, are all odors or odorants. An odor is a chemical dissolved in air, generally at a very low concentration, which we perceive by the sense of smell or olfaction. Odors are also called “smells,” which can refer to both pleasant and unpleasant odors. In contrast, “stench” and “stink” are used specifically to describe an unpleasant odor. The terms “fragrance”, “scent,” or “aroma” are used primarily by the air treatment companies like Prolitec as well as food and cosmetic companies to describe a pleasant odor. The term “perfume” is used to refer to fine fragrances or wearable scents.

Humans are able to distinguish over 10,000 different odor molecules. When inhaled, these odor molecules travel into the nose and interact with odor receptors. The odor receptors then transmit the information to the olfactory bulb, which is located in the brain’s limbic system. The limbic system also controls memory and emotions, and is connected to the pituitary gland and hypothalamus area that controls the release of hormones that affect our appetite, nervous system, body temperature, stress levels, and concentration.

### Section C

While there is no theory that explains olfaction fully, one theory is that millions of axons or nerve fibers cover the circumference of the olfactory bulb. Depending on which nerve fibers interact with or capture the odor molecules, a pattern of activity is generated which cause the perception of a unique smell. Another theory is that odor receptors function like a key-lock system. If the airborne molecules of a certain chemical can fit into the lock, the nerve cell will respond.

Some odors are perceived as pleasant like flowers, perfumes, and cooking aromas. Some odors are called malodors because they are perceived as an unpleasant stench or stink. Malodors are like pleasant odors in that they are caused by specific combinations of chemicals. The perception of all odors is subjective and based on cultural conditioning or emotional state.

### Section D

Since the olfactory system is located in the brain, the sense of smell is closely tied to memory, mood, stress, and concentration. For example, at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, doctors use fragrance to reduce anxiety during medical testing. Doctors from Duke University Medical Center are treating women in menopause with fragrances to alleviate depression and mood swings. This use of scent to affect mood or behavior is called aromatherapy.

Anosmia is the loss of one's sense of smell. The inability to smell can lead to loss of appetite, libido, and depression linked to smell memories. Anosmia is sometimes an early symptom of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's are degenerations of systems associated with the Limbic System.

The human olfactory system adjusts over time and has trouble detecting both bad and good odors provided they are not too strong. This is called olfactory adaptation and it usually takes an hour to become adapted to an odor or scent. For example, people working in a scented environment often adapt to the scent and lose their ability to detect it even if people entering the space can readily perceive it.

### Questions 1-5

The reading passage has four sections, **A-D**.

Which section (**A, B, C** or **D**) contains the following information?

**NB** You may use any letter more than once.

1. problems that can occur if you do not have a sense of smell
2. the external and internal parts of the body involved in the perception of smell
3. tastes that you can still identify if you lose your sense of smell
4. health problems that are being treated with fragrances
5. a definition of the term 'odor'

### Questions 6-13

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

6. According to the first paragraph, humans' sense of smell

- A is not very developed
- B enables us to recognise friends
- C can warn us of danger
- D is more developed in people with good memories

7. Aristotle recognised smell and taste as

- A a single sense
- B the most important senses
- C separate senses
- D chemical senses

8. According to the third paragraph, an odor is a term

- A used to describe good and bad smells
- B used by cosmetic companies
- C invented by Prolitec
- D referring only to perfumes

9. According to the fourth paragraph, the limbic system is responsible for

- A humans' emotions, memory and sense of smell
- B the hypothalamus area of the brain
- C human's appetite, body temperature and nervous system
- D humans' emotions, memory and appetite

10. One theory of olfaction claims we perceive a smell when

- A odor molecules are produced by the olfactory bulb
- B nerve fibres are cut
- C a chemical is recognised by an odor receptor
- D we are feeling emotionally sensitive

11. Malodors are

- A similar to the smells of flowers and perfumes
- B unpleasant smells that are produced when certain chemicals combine
- C smells that are the same to people from different cultures
- D smells that make people feel happy or sad

12. According to the last paragraph, we do not perceive a smell

- A when it is weak
- B after we are exposed to it for a period of time
- C if a new smell is introduced
- D if other people say they cannot perceive it

13. What is the best title for the reading passage?

- A The science of smell
- B Life without a sense of smell or taste
- C Good and bad smells
- D Smells can cause disease

# Reading test answer sheet

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

Question	Answer
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# Writing

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent: \_\_\_\_\_

You should spend about **40 minutes** on this task.

Write about the following topic.

*Some young people prefer to leave school at 16 or 18 to get a job, while others feel that there are more advantages to entering university after finishing their school education.*

*What are the advantages and disadvantages of leaving school at 16 or 18 to work instead of going to university?*

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write **at least 250 words**.

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