

Academic Reading Practice Test 24

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Instructions for Taking the Test

Read the rules and regulations carefully before the test:

1. Switch off your mobile phone and electronic devices.
2. Manage your time strictly to **20 minutes** per passage, reading questions first to guide your skimming and scanning for answers, always paying close attention to word limits and matching synonyms.
3. Read the instructions thoroughly before answering the questions.
4. Read the questions carefully to avoid silly mistakes.

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Spoken Corpus Comes To Life

Historically, the act of compiling dictionaries is undertaken by the studious professorial types, who are usually bespectacled and love to read the large books and make formal comments on the finer nuances of meaning. Most likely, they are good at crosswords and know a lot of words. However, the image was always dusty and dry. The content of dictionaries and the structure in which it is arranged is revolutionised by the latest technology.

It is the first time that dictionary publishers incorporate real and spoken English into their data. This gives lexicographers (people who write dictionaries) an opportunity to access a more vibrant and up-to-date vernacular language which has never been studied before. A project has been conducted where 150 volunteers discreetly agreed to tie a walkman around their waist and leave it running for up to two weeks. All of their conversations were recorded. The tape length extended to about 35 times the depth of the Atlantic Ocean, when the data was collected. The tapes have been transcribed to produce a computerised database of ten million words by the team of audio typists.

Along with an existing written corpus, it has been the foundation for Language Activator dictionary. The lexicographer Professor Randolph Quirk described this dictionary as follows: "the book the world has been waiting for." It demonstrates how the English language is really used. For example, if you're checking the dictionary to know about the word such as "eat", it will be followed by related phrases like "wolf down" or "be a picky eater". It allows the student to pick up the appropriate phrase.

A Director of Dictionaries, Delia Summers, said that this sort of research is impossible without computers. It totally changed how the lexicographers work. The word "like" might strike you intuitively at first as a verb ("I like swimming"). But, it is not. It is the preposition: "she walked like a duck." The word or phrase will not enter into the dictionary just because it is frequently used. The process of sifting out is also significant as ever. Lexicographers, now, are able to search a word and figure out how frequently it is used with the help of a database, which performed intuitively before.



Researchers have found that written English works are different from spoken English. Literally, the phrase “say what you like” means “feel free to say anything you want”. But, evidence suggests that this phrase prevents the other person from voicing their disagreement. The phrase “it is now” is one of the most frequently used English phrases which has not appeared in a language learner’s dictionary before.

The Spoken Corpus computer reflects how people are innovative and humorous while they twist the familiar phrases in their language to bring the effect. It also shows how we use the pauses and noises to play for time, convey emotion, doubt and irony.

Foreign learners gain so many benefits from the Spoken Corpus, for the moment. Professor Geoffrey Leech of Lancaster University said that lexicographers are able to quickly search through more examples of real English by using computers. The Spoken Corpus is the section of the larger British National Corpus, which is initiated by some of the groups who are involved in the production of language learning materials such as publishers, universities and the British Library.

IELTS Reading Questions – *Spoken Corpus Comes To Life*

Questions 1–5

Answer the questions below.

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

1. What revolutionised the content of the dictionaries and the way it is put together ?
2. How many volunteers participated in a project ?
3. Which team transcribed the tapes to produce a computerised database of ten million words ?
4. Who said research is impossible without computers ?
5. Who gained most of the benefits from the Spoken Corpus ?



Questions 6–10

Complete the sentences below.

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

6. The people who write dictionaries are called _____.
7. When the data was collected, the tape extended to about _____ the depth of the atlantic ocean.
8. Delia Summers, a director of _____, said research is impossible without computers.
9. _____ computer shows the innovative and humorous side of people on how they twist familiar phrases in their language
10. The Spoken Corpus is part of the larger _____

Questions 11–14

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A–F, below.

Write the correct letter, A–F, as your answer to each question.

11. With the new form of dictionary, lexicographers have access
12. The lexicographer Professor Randolph Quirk described the dictionary as
13. The phrase it is now is one of the frequently used phrases which
14. By using computers, Professor Geoffrey Leech said that lexicographers are able to

- A. search the different articles at a faster rate
- B. the book the world has been waiting for
- C. search quickly through more examples of real English
- D. lots of vocabulary which contains all the unique words
- E. has not appeared in the language learner's dictionary previously
- F. to vernacular language which has never been studied before

[Click Here to Check Answers](#)



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Answers for IELTS Academic Reading Practice Test 24

1. Latest technology	2. 150 volunteers	3. Audio typists	4. Delia Summers
5. Foreign learners	6. Lexicographers	7. 35 times	8. Dictionaries
9. The Spoken Corpus	10. British National Corpus	11. F	12. B
13. E	14. C		

How many questions did you get right?

Correct Answers (Out of 13)	Your Next Step
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