RECAP 3: TỔNG ÔN TẬP IELTS READING

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Đề thi thật 1: Life on Mars?

Terraforming may sound like something out of science fiction, but some believe it is possible to turn that fiction into fact.

As plans are slowly being drawn up for the first manned mission to Mars, many space travel sceptics are asking one vital question: why go there? Mars is a barren, desolate planet, and with its thin atmosphere and bitterly cold climate, it would appear to be completely unsuitable for human life. Above all, it is a very distant place, and getting there would be an enormous challenge. However, the planet might just hold the key to long-term human survival. With the Earth's population currently at more than seven billion and climbing, we may eventually be forced to look elsewhere in the solar system for somewhere to live. It is just possible that, contrary to photographic evidence, Mars may be more promising than it appears.

Today, Mars is a viciously cold, dry place. However, it does have some things in common with our own planet. For example, it has a daily rotation rate of 24 hours 37 minutes, compared with 23 hours 56 minutes on Earth. It also has an axial tilt of 24 degrees, which is just half a degree more than Earth's, and a gravitational pull one third of Earth's. Furthermore, it holds many of the elements that are required to support life, including carbon and oxygen (in the form of carbon dioxide), nitrogen, and frozen water at its polar ice caps. In fact, if you were to travel back in time several billion years, you would notice some remarkable parallels between the atmosphere on Earth then and Mars today. Back then, Earth was also a lifeless planet until photosynthetic bacteria developed and began to produce enough oxygen to allow for the development of animal and plant life. Our atmosphere also consisted entirely of carbon dioxide and nitrogen.

It comes as no surprise to learn, therefore, that some scientists believe the same process which turned Earth's atmosphere from mostly carbon dioxide into breathable air could be repeated on Mars, but by using technology rather than by letting nature and evolution take its natural course. Terraforming, as this process is known, would initially create a greenhouse effect that would heat the planet, which in turn would create other conditions necessary to provide a suitable living environment for plants and animals. However, it would be a highly challenging undertaking, and the process of terraforming the entire planet into an Earth-like habitat could still take many thousands of years.

Questions 1-5

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in the Reading passage?

Write:

- *YES if the statement agrees with the writer's view*
- *NO if the statement contradicts the writer's view*
- *NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this*

1. *Pictures of Mars suggest it might make a good place for people to settle.*
2. *Modern Mars and ancient Earth looked remarkably similar.*
3. *One method of terraforming could involve adapting technology that is already under development.*
4. *Greenhouse gas factories would provide enough oxygen for people to breathe without special equipment.*
5. *Terraforming Mars would be an extreme test of human skill and intelligence.*

Questions 6-9

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

6. *Which one of these factors suggests that Mars might be a good place for people to settle?*

A. It is not too far from Earth.
B. It has no other life forms living there.
C. It has a cool, dry climate.
D. It has some similarities with Earth.

7. *The first step in terraforming Mars would be to*

A. make the planet warmer.
B. create a breathable atmosphere.
C. find a suitable source of water.
D. create a habitat for living organisms.

8. *Special factories on Mars could be used to*

A. control the level of greenhouse gases.
B. absorb excess levels of carbon dioxide.
C. produce oxygen in a manner similar to plants.
D. help grow essential bacteria.

9. *What is the writer's main purpose in the passage?*

A. To explain why we need to terraform Mars.
B. To illustrate the three processes required to terraform a planet like Mars.
C. To consider how and why Mars might be terraformed.
D. To demonstrate how straightforward it would be to terraform a planet.

Three terraforming methods have been suggested, with the first already under development, albeit for a different purpose. At present, the American space agency NASA is working on a system that will use large mirrors to capture the sun's radiation. This radiation will be used to propel spacecraft through space, removing the need for heavy and expensive rocket fuel. With a few changes, it might be possible to use similar mirrors to reflect the sun's radiation and heat the surface of Mars. Aimed at the planet from a distance of two hundred thousand miles, these enormous mirrors would raise the surface temperature by a few degrees. If they were concentrated on the polar ice caps, they would provide enough heat to melt the polar ice caps and release the carbon dioxide that is believed to be trapped there. Gradually, as the temperature rose, greenhouse gases would be released, and this would create a form of Martian global warming, the first stage in making the planet sustainable for life.

The second method would be to set up greenhouse gas factories in order to raise the temperature of the planet. It is generally accepted that greenhouse gases produced by heavy industry are raising the Earth's temperature. Therefore, by building hundreds of greenhouse gas emitting factories on Mars, a similar effect could be achieved. Carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases would be pumped into the Martian atmosphere. The same factories would then produce oxygen by mimicking the natural process of plant photosynthesis: they would inhale the carbon dioxide they produce, and then emit oxygen. The process could be accelerated by 'sowing' the planet's surface with photosynthetic bacteria, which would increase the rate at which oxygen is produced. Eventually, there would be enough oxygen on the planet for humans to breathe using only special apparatus similar to that used by mountain climbers.

The third, and by far the most extreme, method has been proposed by space scientists Robert Zubrin and Christopher McKay. They believe that it would be possible to produce greenhouse gases and water by firing large, ammonia-bearing asteroids at the planet. Each asteroid would weigh about ten billion tons and would be powered by rocket engines which would move it towards Mars at around 10,000 miles per second. The energy produced by one asteroid slamming into Mars' surface, say Zubrin and McKay, would raise the temperature of the planet by three degrees Celsius and melt about one thousand billion tons of ice at the polar caps. They believe it would take many of these asteroids, and at least fifty years, in order to create a temperate climate and enough water to cover a quarter of the planet's surface.

Terraforming Mars, if it is ever attempted, will be neither cheap nor easy. And it certainly won't be quick. Although optimists like Zubrin and McKay say it could be achieved in five or six decades, the reality is that terraforming is more likely to take hundreds or even thousands of years. Furthermore, it will stretch human ingenuity to its limits and will require levels of will and commitment that have rarely been seen before. The challenge of developing a habitable environment and bringing life to the cold, dry world of Mars is fraught with challenges, but it might just be one that saves the human race.

Questions 10-14

Complete the summary using words from the box.

One method of terraforming Mars would be to 10 asteroids at the planet. Rockets attached to an enormous asteroid would propel it towards Mars, taking ten years to 11 the enormous distances required. The asteroid would 12 the planet with incredible force and 13 enough energy to 14 the planet's temperature. The result would be a temperate climate and lots of water from melting ice caps.

Word Box:

A. cover
B. create
C. hit
D. increase
E. land
F. drive
G. power
H. rise
I. shoot

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Đề thi thật 2: The Flynn Effect: Rising IQ Scores

How they are changing and what the changes signify

Studies from numerous countries suggest that IQ scores have been rising fast since at least the 1950s—enough to mean that someone with an IQ classed as average at that time could be labelled as having low intelligence today. However, psychologists disagree about what the upward trend in scores really means. Some researchers argue that people are not getting more intelligent overall, but just getting better at a particular sort of problem solving. Others say they have found echoes of rising IQ scores in real world measures of intelligence. To confuse things still more, there are suggestions that IQ scores may now be dropping in some places.

The rise in IQ scores is known as the Flynn effect, named after the New Zealand-based political scientist James Flynn. He documented the phenomenon in the mid-1980s, and became famous after others dubbed the pattern he had observed the Flynn effect. In a landmark analysis, Flynn examined data from tests used to measure intelligence. These IQ tests are composed of several sub-tests, each measuring a different aspect of intelligence, such as verbal, numerical and visuo-spatial abilities. This last test category usually includes 'Raven's matrices'—sequential patterns with one piece missing. The candidate has to choose, from a set of alternatives, which shape to put in the empty space. When Flynn took a closer look at the scores, the pattern was clear. The strongest gains in almost every case were on Raven's matrices and similar tests, while verbal and arithmetical scores showed more modest rises. Since presenting his original paper, Flynn has looked at data from further countries and found the same upward trend, with the same skills responsible.

Flynn feels that his eponymous effect is meaningful, but does not interpret it as evidence that people are becoming cleverer. "Our grandparents were not retarded and we are not geniuses," he says. More likely we have simply developed the skills needed to do well on this type of test. They are the skills involved in seeing analogies and connections, and—importantly—we take such problems seriously. Flynn believes that demands on visuo-spatial abilities have grown because of TV, computers and cars, and also that, in societies where intelligence has become something people focus on, abstract problem-solving skills develop faster than other skills.

Questions 14-18

Complete the summary below. Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.

The steady increase in IQ scores over decades is known as the 14 _____. This phenomenon was identified by James Flynn, who found the most significant improvements were in tests of 15 _____ abilities, such as Raven's matrices. In contrast, improvements in 16 _____ and numerical skills were smaller. Flynn himself does not believe the increase means people are more 17 _____, but rather that they have become more skilled at specific test-related problem-solving. Recent data suggests the trend may have 18 _____ or reversed in some countries.

Questions 19-22

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 2? Write:

YES if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer

NO if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

1. *A person with an average IQ in the 1950s would have a below-average IQ by today's standards.*
2. *James Flynn was the first psychologist to notice rising IQ scores.*
3. *Flynn believes that modern technology like TV and computers has helped develop visuo-spatial skills.*
4. *The passage confirms that improved nutrition is the definitive cause of the Flynn effect.*

One proposed explanation is that improvements in nutrition, healthcare, and education over the 20th century have created better conditions for cognitive development. Another theory is that we live in an increasingly complex visual and symbolic world, which trains our brains to think in more abstract and logical ways from a young age. However, recent data from some developed nations indicates that the Flynn effect may have plateaued or even reversed, with average IQ scores stabilizing or declining slightly. This has sparked new debates about potential causes, such as changes in educational focus, increased screen time displacing more cognitively demanding activities, or even demographic shifts. Ultimately, the Flynn effect demonstrates that average IQ scores are not fixed, but are sensitive to environmental, social, and cultural factors. It challenges the notion that intelligence is a static, purely inherited trait and suggests that what we measure as 'intelligence' is a set of skills that can be nurtured and enhanced by the world we live in.

Questions 23-26

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

23. *What was the key pattern James Flynn observed in IQ score gains?*

A. The highest gains were in verbal reasoning.
B. The highest gains were in solving abstract, non-verbal problems.
C. Gains were equal across all types of intelligence tests.
D. The highest gains were in mathematical calculation.

24. *According to Flynn, why might people perform better on modern IQ tests?*

A. Because they are genetically more intelligent.
B. Because they practice IQ tests more frequently.
C. Because they have learned to take abstract problems more seriously.
D. Because education systems have improved dramatically.

25. *What does the recent plateau or decline in scores in some nations suggest about the Flynn effect?*

A. It was based on flawed data.
B. It is a temporary phenomenon.
C. It may be sensitive to changing social conditions.
D. It only applies to developing countries.

26. *What is the main implication of the Flynn effect discussed in the final paragraph?*

A. IQ tests are worthless.
B. Intelligence is a fixed and unchangeable trait.
C. Average intelligence levels are increasing globally.
D. Measured intelligence can be influenced by environmental factors.

Đề thi thật 3: REWILDING

Ecologist Derek Gow looks at the challenges of 'rewilding' — restoring areas of land to the wild and reintroducing their original animal species.

In Holland they have developed a creative landscape philosophy called 'New Nature', and the most iconic illustration of this is the site called the Oostvaardersplassen, near Amsterdam. Here, throughout 6,000 enclosed hectares, feral Heck bulls excavate amphibian ponds with their hooves and horns, while stags and stallions battle fiercely for possession of herds of females. These creatures present a living vision that many 'rewilders' adore. Although this project may present a primeval impression, in reality it is a completely artificial though courageous creation, limited by fences, budgets, an adjacent main railway line, surrounding land users and fickle political support. Less than a lifetime ago the landscape these 'wild' herbivores now occupy was the bed of the North Sea.

Despite the contention that surrounds such projects, the Oostvaardersplassen has produced some inspirational results. Spoonbills have returned to breed in ever increasing numbers, creating a surplus population which has overlapped back into Britain. Sea eagles have raised their first nestlings in centuries, nourished by the ample supply of deer that the site affords. Projects of this type, which restore key species or re-engineer landscapes to allow natural processes such as seasonal flooding or forest fires to reoccur, have demonstrated that when nature is given free rein, the results which arise can be truly spectacular. Are we, however, prepared to live in landscapes where these processes, even if appropriately modified, become part of our own experience?

While space is without a doubt one of the biggest obstacles facing rewilders, a range of structural, social and cultural issues can also conspire to hinder change. As an example, I have been involved with the restoration of the Eurasian beaver — a large rodent that builds complex structures from wood, stones and mud across rivers — in Britain since the early 1990s. Although they once had a world range which extended from Britain to China and numbered tens of millions, beavers were hunted virtually to extinction by humans as a result of an insatiable demand for their fur, scent glands and meat. They have been widely reintroduced in parts of Europe, although never on a range as an awareness of their environmental function of wetland habitats has developed. Beaver-generated landscapes also play a significant part in the retention and purification of water.

Questions 27 – 31

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

27. What does the writer say about the Oostvaardersplassen in the first paragraph?

A. It is not a typical example of a successful rewilding project.

B. It is not an ecologically sustainable project in the long term.

C. It is not a true reconstruction of how the area originally was.

D. It is not faithful to the principles of its underlying philosophy.

28. What is the writer's attitude towards the Oostvaardersplassen?

A. admiration for what it has achieved

B. disappointment over its inevitable limitations

C. optimism that the project will be imitated elsewhere

D. concern about the choice of species introduced there

29. What point about beavers is emphasised in the third paragraph?

A. Their numbers are falling dramatically.

B. They play a key role within local ecosystems.

C. They require a very specific kind of habitat in order to survive.

D. There are environmental problems associated with their reintroduction.

30. The writer refers to beavers in the fourth paragraph in order to provide an

A. indication of the likely resistance to the reintroduction of other species.

B. illustration of a species that urgently needs to be restored to its habitat.

C. example of some lessons learnt about how not to try to reintroduce species.

D. example of a species whose restoration has faced more problems than most.

31. By putting inverted commas ' ' around the word 'their' in line 49, the writer suggests that

A. he has some sympathy for the hunters' situation.

B. there is some doubt as to who the deer belong to.

C. restoration of wolves caused harm to local wildlife.

D. the hunters have no right to claim ownership of the deer.

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Đề thi thật 3: Fishbourne Roman Palace

There is an abundance of entirely suitable beaver habitat available in Britain, and despite the fact that occasional conflicts will arise between beavers' engineering activities and human land use, European experience again demonstrates quite ably that these conflicts are manageable. Despite this well-established knowledge, the restoration of beavers in Britain has proven to be a pitifully slow process. Political apathy and indifference have coupled with the total lack of knowledge of opponents who simply want no change to the status quo. The official trials in Scotland and England have focused on the creation of tiny populations which remain extremely fragile.

If a species as benevolent as the beaver presents a significant challenge, then how much more difficult will it be to restore predators? While science and experience may dictate that wolves pose no significant threat to humans, their tentative re-colonisation of many western European countries over the course of the last few decades has often evoked a primal response. Farmers' groups have trapped them in pits in France and burnt them to death; hunters have poisoned them for killing 'their' deer; kindergarten teachers have implored forest authorities to remove them from the landscape to ensure that this medieval menace does not lurk in the dark when their tiny children go to school on a winter's morning. Attitude change, it would seem, is a slow and painful process, one not easily turned round by knowledge.

Any start to rewilding is therefore likely to be humble. Despite a measured approach, it is probable that fishermen and their strident support groups may not welcome the addition of the pelican, a 15kg water bird, to the large number of predators which they already detest. The scientific community may dislike the pragmatism required on a semi-industrial scale to restore small species to remake the base of essential food chains if newly available habitats emerge. Many farmers, despite the sums they would be paid, will not wish to see their once-drained bogs rehydrated, their dead animals consumed by sea eagles or their pastures revert to scrub.

In the end it comes down to changing patterns. We have moulded the landscapes of the world as a species to suit our own passing needs, predilections and pleasures. While change is commonly opposed on whatever basis arises, change is nevertheless a constant in life. It is likely that 'rewilding' or 'New Nature' — call it what you will — could become a base movement which affords a fresh opportunity to approach nature conservation in a fashion which will, over time, be all the more rewarding for the surprises it presents

Questions 32 – 36

Choose the correct letter A-H in questions 32-26

A. advice

B. ignorance

C. danger

D. wildlife

E. damage

F. prejudice

G. evidence

H. disinterest

Problems of Rewilding Projects

Rewilding projects have to deal with numerous challenges. For example, the reintroduction of beavers to Britain has faced 32..... disinterest from government ministers together with 33..... ignorance on the part of opponents to the scheme. Where wolves have been reintroduced in western Europe, there has been widespread 34..... prejudice against these animals among local people, despite clear 35..... evidence that the species poses virtually no 36..... danger to them.

Questions 37 – 40

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in the text?

In boxes 37 - 40 below, write

YES – if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer

NO – if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer

NOT GIVEN – if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

37. Beaver restoration in Britain is being held back by a lack of appropriate land.

38. Scientists have tried to persuade local residents of the benefits of restoring wolves.

39. Financial incentives will encourage most farmers to welcome rewilding on their land.

40. The results of rewilding will be unpredictable.