Language
Cert

LANGUAGECERT IESOL EXAM

EXAM HELP BOOKLET

READING

This booklet is to be used exclusively for LanguageCert exam preparation in Hungary.

How to use this booklet

This booklet has been created to help you prepare for the reading tasks that you will need to do in the reading section of the LanguageCert IESOL exam. The booklet will focus on three exam levels, B1, B2 and C1.

The booklet has 5 sections with each section having been designed to guide you through the process.

Table of Contents

1. The Structure of the Reading section of LanguageCert IESOL exams

When you are preparing for a language exam, it is important to familiarise yourself with the structure of the exam, so let's have a look at some of the things you can expect when taking a B1, B2 or C1 IESOL exam. You will have 2 hours and 10 minutes to complete BOTH the reading and writing sections at B1 and B2 level and 2 hours and 40 minutes at C1 level, so you'll need to plan your time wisely. This section of the booklet will explain the types of reading you need to perform and the criteria you will be measured against.

Marks and features of each reading task for each level

	B1	B2	C1
Part 1	5 short texts, each with **part of the text removed**. Item selected from multiple choice	1 long text followed by 6 **multiple-choice** items to test understanding.	Learners read text and 5 statements and writes T for **True or F for False** in the box next to each statement.
Part 2	A text with **sentences removed**. Learners select the correct sentences to complete the text	A text with **sentences removed**. Learners select the correct sentences to complete the text	A text with **sentences removed**. Learners select the correct sentences to complete the text.
Part 3	**4 short texts**. Learners use texts to **find the correct answers** to questions	**4 short texts**. Learners use texts to **find the correct answers** to questions	**4 short texts**. Learners use texts to **find the correct answers** to questions.
Part 4	Learners read text and answer **open questions** to show understanding	Learners read text and answer **open questions** to show understanding	Learners read text and answer **open questions** to show understanding

B1 tasks

B1	Focus	Type	Language area tested and other features
Part 1 5 marks	understanding of the organisational, lexical and grammatical features of a text	5 short texts, each with part of the text removed. Learners read and select correct item for gap from multiple-choice answers	Conventions of layout Linking devices (logical and connecting) Grammatical devices (pronominal reference, clauses etc.) Lexical devices (synonyms, words with related meaning, etc) Coherence
Part 2 6 marks	understanding of how meaning is built up in discourse	A text with sentences removed. Learner selects the correct sentences to complete the text	Types of sentences that may be removed: Topic sentence Exemplifying sentence Sentence containing anaphoric or cataphoric reference Sentence which develops an idea Sentence which emphasises a point (eg in fact) Summarising sentence Final sentence of a paragraph Sentence expressing opinion Sentence expressing contrast (eg On the other hand…) Sentence expressing sequence (eg Secondly, …)
Part 3 7 marks	awareness of the purpose of different texts and the ability to locate specific information	4 short texts. Learners use texts to find the correct answers to questions	The texts are linked by a common topic Items require learners to read in detail as well as skim and scan 2 questions test awareness of purpose of texts or intended audience 5 questions require the learner to read in detail in order to find information
Part 4 8 marks	Locating and obtaining specific information	Learners read text and answer questions to show understanding	The questions require learners to scan for the location of the answer in the text The questions follow the order of the text The correct answer may not be obvious by merely spotting similar words from the text in the question A maximum of 3 words is allowed, but most answers are answerable in 1 word

B2 tasks

	Focus	Type	Language area tested and other features
Part 1 6 marks	Detailed understanding of information, ideas and opinions	1 long text followed by 6 multiple-choice items to test understanding.	The item focus may be on opinion, fact, gist, attitude, stance etc. The questions follow the order of the text The correct answer may not be obvious by merely spotting similar words from the text in the question.
Part 2 6 marks	Understanding of how meaning is built up in discourse	A text with sentences removed. Learners select the correct sentences to complete the text	Types of sentences that may be removed: Topic sentence Exemplifying sentence Sentence containing anaphoric or cataphoric reference Sentence which develops an idea Sentence which emphasises a point (eg in fact) Summarising sentence Final sentence of a paragraph, linking to the next, to show transition to another idea Sentence expressing opinion Sentence expressing contrast (eg On the other hand…) Sentence expressing cause and effect, (eg Consequently, …) Sentence expressing sequence (eg Secondly, …)
Part 3 7 marks	Awareness of the purposes of different texts and the author's stance and attitudes, and the ability to locate specific information.	4 short texts. Learners use texts to find the correct answers to questions	The texts are linked by a common topic Items require learners to read in detail as well as skim and scan 3 questions test awareness of purpose of texts or intended audience 4 questions require the learner to read in detail in order to find information
Part 4 7 marks	Locating and obtaining specific information	Learners read text and answer questions to show understanding	The questions require learners to scan for the location of the answer in the text The questions follow the order of the text The correct answer may not be obvious by merely spotting similar words from the text in the question. A maximum of 5 is words allowed, but most answers are answerable in 3 words

C1 tasks

	Focus	Type	Language area tested
Part 1 5 marks	Understanding of use of language in articles and texts dense with complex structures.	Learner reads text and 5 statements and writes T for True or F for False in the box next to each statement.	The text will contain idiomatic language, narrative or academic ideas, arguments and opinions The statements paraphrase ideas and meaning
Part 2 6 marks	Understanding of how meaning is built up in discourse	A text with sentences removed. Learner selects the correct sentences to complete the text.	Types of sentences that may be removed: Topic sentence Exemplifying sentence Sentence containing anaphoric or cataphoric reference Sentence which develops an idea Sentence which emphasises a point (eg in fact) Summarising sentence Final sentence of a paragraph Sentence expressing opinion Sentence expressing contrast (eg On the other hand…) Sentence expressing cause and effect (eg Consequently, …) Sentence expressing sequence (eg Secondly, …)
Part 3 7 marks	Awareness of the purpose of different texts and the ability to locate specific information.	4 short texts. Learners use texts to find the correct answers to questions.	The texts are linked by a common topic Items require learners to read in detail as well as skim and scan 3 questions test awareness of purpose of texts or intended audience 4 questions require the learner to read in detail in order to find information
Part 4 8 marks	Locating and obtaining specific information	Learners read text and answer open questions to show understanding	The questions require learners to scan for the location of the answer in the text The questions follow the order of the text The correct answer may not be obvious by merely spotting similar words from the text in the question. A maximum of 5 is words allowed, but most answers are answerable in 3 words

	Focus	Type	Language area tested

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2. The Assessment of the Reading section of LanguageCert IESOL exams

The reading tasks are evaluated with the help of paper-specific mark schemes. Each exam paper version has a paper-specific mark scheme with solutions to the multiple choice questions as well as answers to the open question tasks. The total marks awarded for the tasks are the sum of the marks awarded for each item. In order to pass, a candidate needs to achieve 50% of the total score.

Level and Marks	B1	B2	C1
Part 1	5	6	5
Part 2	6	6	6
Part 3	7	7	7
Part 4	8	7	8
Total	**26**	**26**	**26**
Pass	**13**	**13**	**13**

Tips on marks and timing

It's up to you which task you start with. However, it is a good idea to bear in mind the scores awarded for each task when deciding how much time to spend completing it. At all the levels above, the highest scores are awarded to Part 3 and Part 4. Remember that spending too much time on Part 2 might not be a good strategy as it is only worth 6 marks and at the same time is relatively difficult.

You will have to manage the time available to achieve a good balance between time dedicated to reading and writing tasks. You will have 2 hours and 10 minutes for BOTH the reading and writing sections at B1 and B2 level and 2 hours and 40 minutes at C1 level. Consider spending approximately 60 minutes on the reading tasks at B1 and B2 level and 80 minutes at C1.

Further notes on marking

The main focus of the reading section of the exam is to determine whether your reading skills meet the requirements of the level you are attempting and therefore your use of the other skills (listening, writing and speaking) will be very limited so that your reading skills can be tested accurately. The only time when you have to write is in Part 4 when you need to answer open questions. Since we are not testing your grammar, spelling or your writing skills, we will accept misspelt words and American spelling as long as the word is clearly recognisable as the correct answer. However, answers exceeding the maximum word limit stated in the rubric will not be accepted and neither will two answers (even if one of them is the correct one).

The best way to avoid losing marks by making one of the above mistakes is to copy your answer directly from the text. Remember that you do not have to use synonyms; you can use the words from the text.

CEFR

Remember that the language exams have been aligned to the CEFR, so that can provide you with valuable information about the exam you are planning to take. Before anything else happens, test yourself with the help of the can-do statements. Can you perform the reading activities below successfully? For instance, if you require a B2 exam, can you read articles on the Internet or enjoy reading an unabridged book? If not, then this level may be too hard for you.

Level	Can do statement
A1	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.
A2	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.
B1	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency every-day or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
B2	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.
C1	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.
C2	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.

3. Tips for the reading parts – how to solve the tasks

In this section, we will give you some ideas and guidance on how you can score the highest marks for each of the four tasks we mentioned in the previous chapter.

1. Gapped text

TIP #1

Quickly read through the text to get the gist if it, then read the sentences and underline the clue words that can help you identify the correct place of the given sentence. Remember that there is only one correct place for each sentence; therefore there must be some clue as to where the sentence belongs. Let's have a look at some examples.

A   Here, the green of the fields lies as flat as the blue of the meres: you could iron a shirt on it.

B   I can hear the long, withdrawing roar of waves a quarter of a mile away from my campsite.

C   It was built with the stone of three old monasteries to create something resembling a cathedral.

D   This made me realise just how much damage has already been done.

E   Maintaining the nine miles of defences after them is apparently unsustainable.

F   Nevertheless, I was unprepared to witness the full extent of the sea's destructive power.

G   If this isn't what the English countryside should be, I don't know what is.

Before reading the text itself, the learner here has highlighted the clue words to help decide where the sentences belong. What are these clue words?

	Clue word	Refers to:
A	Here	a place (already mentioned)
C	It	singular noun (a building - already mentioned)
D	This	a singular noun or a description (already mentioned)
E	After them	a plural noun (already mentioned)
F	Nevertheless	a previous sentence with contrasting ideas to this
G	This	a previous description of the countryside

After highlighting and identifying pronominal and other references, the learner can now read the text carefully and locate the information to which the highlighted words refer.

TIP #2

This task requires relatively conscious understanding of grammar, so make sure you know how pronominal references/pronouns work. Essentially pronouns are words that do not make sense on their own, but instead they refer back (or forward) to other words. Let's take an example.

'**It**'s amazing.'

Do we know what the person is talking about, ie what is amazing? We don't and therefore this sentence is ambiguous since we need to see the word *'it'* refers to. It could be a film, an aqua park, an activity etc. What we do know however is that *'it'* cannot refer to plural nouns such as films, aqua parks, or activities nor can it refer to a man or a woman. Let's take another example.

After all **this**, **he** didn't want to leave.

Here we have two pronouns. '*This'* is a demonstrative pronoun which will probably refer to an event and *'he'* will need a singular male in the previous sentence. Remember that pronominal references always need their referent in the previous sentence and not 2 or 3 sentences before.

TIP #3

Apart from pronominal references, this task may make use of linking words as well. Linking words are useful in creating cohesion, a logical link between words, sentences and paragraphs. There are several types of linking words, some of them express contrast (However, although), some purpose or result (therefore, so), some sequence (then) etc. The type of linking word you find in the sentence will help you find its place in the text. Let's take an example.

'However, I cannot tolerate staff members smoking any longer.'

What kind of idea can be expressed in the previous sentence? All we know is it has to be contrasting the idea expressed in the sentence above. For example, 'I am a very tolerant man.' Or I have always been a very open-minded manager.'

Remember to identify the function of the linking word and the type of sentence that the preceding sentence must be.

TIP #4

If you don't seem to get the hang of this task, remember that it is only worth 6 marks, so you should probably focus on the other three tasks. Remember that this particular task might be the most difficult one of all 4 and therefore it might not be worth spending an excessive amount of time on it if it proves to be too difficult. Aim to complete it in 20 minutes and then move on, but don't leave any boxes blank – even if you are not sure, it's worth guessing.

TIP #5

Practise noticing pronominal references by looking out for them when reading an article or a book. You will be surprised how many you will find and how logical it will seem after a while. Let's take an example (excerpt from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland).

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice 'without pictures or conversations?'

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!' (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

You can see some (but not all) pronominal references highlighted. The colour of highlight shows you what the referents are. Look at the way the story unfolds with mainly 4 main 'characters': Alice, the Rabbit, the watch and the waist-coat pocket and how a correct use of pronouns make it easy for the reader to understand the sequence of events. Try to remember that a similar logic will be useful for this exam task.

Now let's see some tips from the examiners themselves

- *Don't waste time checking vocabulary. You do not need to fully understand this task, you mainly need to locate pronominal references and linking words*
- *Set a time limit of a maximum of 20 minutes for this task*
- *Do not leave any boxes empty even if you have no idea about the solutions*
- *The monolingual dictionary is not particularly useful here as this is primarily a grammar-focused task. Don't waste time checking words that won't help you to solve the task*

2. Four texts task

TIP #1

Remember that the 4 texts have a common topic so don't choose one text merely because it uses the same word as one of the questions. It might be mentioned in a different context and the same idea might be expressed in another text as well. Locate the sentence(s) that contain(s) a given idea expressed by a question and use the time and dictionary to fully understand that sentence. Let's take an example. Here, text D mentioned the same words (forthcoming concerts) and it even includes the name of a venue (the Plaza). However, it would be a mistake to choose D as Plaza is not the location of their next concert. The correct answer can be found in text B even though it is more difficult to spot as it includes a paraphrased version of the question ('next week' instead of 'forthcoming' and 'will be performing' instead of 'concert'). Remember that you will not be able to solve this task by merely 'spotting' words.

7.   Where is the venue of one of the band's forthcoming concerts?

D

> Unfortunately, the famous band has decided to cancel all forthcoming concerts due to serious problems. The lead singer had a mild breakdown at the Plaza because of the intensity of the tour. All tickets already sold can be returned and everyone will be reimbursed. On behalf of the band, we would like to apologise profusely to the fans who have so generously supported them. We hope the singer makes a swift recovery so that we can all enjoy seeing him on stage again soon.

B

> Next week the most critically acclaimed band is coming your way, Brixton! The "Mix n' Snooze" will be performing live at the Corona Theatre on June 10th at 10 p.m. Make sure you buy your ticket in good time because it's definitely going to be a great performance. Tickets cost from £10 to £50. Don't forget to leave your cameras and any other recording devices back home. Security measures will be tight and if you get caught carrying one, you will not be allowed to attend.

TIP #2

Don't forget to use your monolingual dictionary in this task, but use it wisely. Do not start reading the text checking random words. First read the questions, use the dictionary for words in the questions to make sure you understand them. Then, start reading the text, locate the target sentences (where the answer might be) and THEN use the dictionary to fully understand the target sentence. As an example, in the case above the learner could have avoided choosing text D by checking the first 2 sentences (cancel, breakdown).

TIP #3

The 'Which text: ….?' type of questions test awareness of purpose of texts or intended audience. These require you to skim read. Skim-reading means reading for general information or gist. In order to skim-read, you need to run your eyes over the text to gather the most important information. You use this kind of reading in everyday life when you read a newspaper or news site to keep up-to-date with what is happening in the world. You also use it when you flick through the advertisements on a job site to find the job you are qualified to do. You read and then eliminate unimportant information and choose important information. For example, you would not start reading a job advertisement for the position of plumber if you are looking for a payroll specialist position.

TIP #4

Questions beginning 'Which text tells you/is saying the following:…' test ability to scan. Scanning means reading for specific information or words. In order to scan, you need to run your eyes through the text to locate certain words. You use this kind of reading in everyday life when you are trying to find your plane on the departure board at the airport, or when you would like to know when the Wimbledon TV coverage starts. You read and then eliminate unimportant words or phrases and choose important ones. For instance, you would not stop to read the plot summary of Cliffhanger if you are looking for tennis coverage. Make sure you read carefully, though, in order to find the detail you are searching for.

TIP #5

The difference between scanning and skimming is where the necessary information can be found. With scanning, the answer to the exam question will be located in one part of the text whereas skimming may require you to read several parts of the text to get a general understanding or feel of what the text is about and who it is for. When you skim read, remember these three steps.

1. Read the text quickly

2. Mentally summarise the information for later use

3. Remember keywords only, not every detail

When you scan, underline the sentence which you think holds the answer to the question. This will help you later when you want to check your work before handing in the paper. It will also make your work more focused and it will be easier to avoid choosing a text merely because you 'feel like' it is the correct answer or have 'spotted' a word.

Now let's see some tips from the examiners themselves

- *Don't overuse the dictionary here*
- *Read the questions first and then start reading the texts*
- *Remember that the four texts are about the same topic, and therefore similar words are bound to appear in any of the four texts, so don't choose a text because you spotted a word which appeared in the question.*
- *Underline the section of the text that you are basing your decision on*

3. Open questions

TIP #1

This task will require you to scan, so remember the basic rules of scanning. Scanning means reading for specific information or words. In order to scan, you need to run your eyes through the text to locate certain words. Remember to underline the sentence which you think holds the answer to the question. This will help you later when you want to check your work before handing in the paper. It will also make your work more focused and it will be easier to avoid choosing an answer merely because you 'feel like' it is the correct answer.

TIP #2

Remember that the questions follow the order of the text. This will be helpful when you are trying to locate the target sentence (the sentence which holds the answer). Imagine you have difficulty locating the answer to question 4, but you have already found the answer to question 3. What you could do is move on to question 5 and once you have found it, it will be easier to find question 4.

TIP #3

Limit dictionary use to the target sentences. Remember that you are not trying to understand everything, but you are trying to solve the task. Don't check words unless you have already established that they are in one of the target sentences.

TIP #4

Remember that the correct answer will not be obvious and the question will not include words from the text in a way that would make 'word spotting' possible. The question will often paraphrase the text or use the opposite of one of the words. Use a dictionary to avoid making the wrong choice.

TIP #5

This is the only part of the reading section of the exam where you will have to write the solutions yourself as opposed to choosing from the options given, so you need to make sure that what you write is acceptable.

Remember the following:
1. Grammar and spelling errors will not be penalised as long as the answer given is clearly recognisable as the correct answer and as long as the 'misspelled' solution is not another existing word in English
2. Answers exceeding the maximum number of words stated in the rubric will not be accepted
3. Two answers will not be accepted (even if one of them is the correct answer)
4. If the answer does not answer the question, it will not be accepted

Let's take some examples to demonstrate the above rules.
1. if the answer is 'heat', 'hit' is not acceptable, if the answer is 'lovely girl', 'loveli girl' will be accepted, if the answer is sunset, sundown, twilight or dusk will be accepted, but you don't need to use synonyms (unless specifically asked to do so). It's safer to use words from the text.
2. Full sentences over the word limit and copied out from the text will not be accepted. Make sure you choose the five-word (3-word at B1) section of the text that is necessary. If you need to, omit articles (a , an, the) to make the answer fit the rubric or re-phrase if necessary.
3. Question: Where does the tour start? – At the zoo at 5am. This will not be accepted as it includes irrelevant and incorrect information. Make sure you only answer the question and that you do not include any irrelevant information.
4. Question: What does the author think of the play? – I think it is amazing. The problem with this answer is that the subject has not been changed to match the subject of the question; it has merely been copied out of the text.

Now let's see some tips from the examiners themselves

- *Underline the part of the text that answers the question*
- *Don't use the dictionary too much, just for some vital words*
- *Remember that the questions follow the order of the text and use this to your advantage when trying to locate answers*
- *Make sure your answer does not exceed the maximum number of words stated in the rubric*

4. Multiple choice

TIP #1

This task will primarily require you to scan, so remember the basic rules of scanning. Scanning means reading for specific information or words. In order to scan, you need to run your eyes through the text to locate certain information. What kind of words are we looking for here? It might be a synonym of a word mentioned in the question or in one of the four options (A, B or C). Remember to underline the sentence which you think holds the answer to the question. This will help you later when you want to check your work before handing in the paper. It will also make your work more focused and it will be easier to avoid choosing an answer merely because you 'feel like' it is the correct answer. To avoid this, remember to follow these steps:

1. Locate the questions/options in the text

2. Underline the area or sentence

3. Use the dictionary to fully understand that area of text

4. Eliminate incorrect answers by comparing them to the underlined area

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TIP #2

Eliminate incorrect answers. Remember that the correct answer will never be obvious and the question will not include words from the text in a way that would make 'word spotting' possible. The question will often paraphrase the text or use the opposite of one of the words. Use a dictionary to avoid making the wrong choice. Let's take an example.

In the examples below, the target sentences have been highlighted. In question number one, option d includes the word 'regret' as does the target sentence. However, upon further studying, the learner might find that the idea expressed by the sentence is more complex than just merely regretting what happened.

In question number two, the key is to eliminate the answers which are not mentioned in the text (b and c) and then differentiate between options a and d, which can be done by successfully identifying a passive in a and thus understanding what happened to the girlfriend. Note how word spotting was not possible in this instance either because synonyms were used (sued, taken to court and took legal action)

Evelyn Adams won $5.4 million on the New Jersey lottery in 1986. Today the money is all gone and Adams lives in a trailer.
'Everybody wanted my money. I never learned to say 'No.' I wish I had the chance to do it all over again. I'd be much smarter about it now. I was a big-time gambler,' admits Adams. 'I made mistakes, some I regret, some I don't. I can't go back now so I just go forward, one step at a time.'

William 'Bud' Post won $16.2 million in the Pennsylvania lottery in 1988.
'I wish it had never happened. It was a total nightmare,' says Post.
A former girlfriend successfully sued him for a share of his winnings, a brother was arrested for hiring a hit man to kill him, hoping to inherit a share of the winnings. Other siblings persuaded him to invest in a car showroom and a restaurant, both of which failed through his mismanagement and further strained family relationships.

1. For Evelyn, winning the lottery
   a) has taught her a lot about life.
   b) was the best thing to happen to her.
   c) brought her closer to her family.
   d) is something she regrets.

2. William Post's ex-girlfriend
   a) was taken to court by him.
   b) bought the winning lottery ticket.
   c) stole some of his money.
   d) took legal action against him.

TIP #3

Remember that the questions follow the order of the text. This will be helpful when you are trying to locate the target sentence (the sentence which holds the answer). Imagine you have difficulty locating the answer to question 4, but you have already found the answer to question 3. What you could do is move on to question 5 and once you have found the answer to that, it will be easier to find question 4.

The final item will often be a summary or overview statement. Summary or overview questions cannot be answered by scanning since the answer is not located in just one place. Such a question will require you to skim-read.

When you skim read, remember these three steps.

1. Read the text quickly

2. Mentally summarise the information for later use

3. Remember keywords only, not every detail

Let's take an example. In Tip number 2, we discussed the text about lottery winners. The final question (see below) is an overview question. The answer to this cannot be located and underlined as we did with the first five items, because this requires skim-reading. In order to answer this, you have to quickly read the text and mentally summarise what the main points of the articles were.

6. The article shows that money

    a) can bring happiness.
    b) often leads to problems.
    c) brings out the best in people.
    d) is best invested in business.

TIP #5

Practise answering summary or overview questions by regularly reading articles and reviews. When you have finished reading them, try to find different sections in the text that help you decide what the main message of the text is or what the author's stance is.

Now let's see some tips from the examiners themselves

- *Eliminate incorrect answers. Remember that in a passive sentence, the subject is not the person who did the action (eg She sued him. ≠ She was taken to court by him).*
- *Remember that the answer to the first 5 questions requires you to locate the answers whereas the last question often requires you to get a general understanding of the text*

4. Dictionary use

Another important skill that you must develop before the exam is your dictionary use. In the LanguageCert exams, you can only use a monolingual dictionary, so you should familiarise yourself with how it works. Have a look at the following page to get a basic understanding of the structure of a monolingual dictionary.

Apart from the structure of an entry in a dictionary, you also have to learn how to use it to check the meaning of words. Let's take an example to learn the steps.

*'coming to cinemas near you this **fall**'*

1. Identify the part of speech of the word (fall).

It follows a determiner (this), so it is a noun.

2. Look up the noun 'fall' in the dictionary (see a section of the dictionary entry of 'fall' below).

3. Start reading the different definitions for each sense one by one and imagine a blank line in the sentence where the word that you don't know is.

'coming to cinemas near you this _____'

4. Substitute the meaning that you feel is correct into the sentence.

e.g. *'coming to cinemas near you this ~~falling/snow falling/waterfall/~~autumn'*

5. You will instantly feel if you have substituted the correct definition (sense 5 in this case). However, if you are in doubt, check the example sentences as well (italicised below) to confirm.

1. act of falling

 [countable] an act of falling

I had a bad fall and broke my arm. She was killed in a fall from a horse.

2. of snow/rocks

 [countable] fall (of something) an amount of snow, rocks, etc. that falls or has fallen

a *heavy fall of snow a rock fall*

3. way something falls/happens

[singular] fall of something the way in which something falls or happens

the dark fall of her hair (= the way her hair hangs down)

4. of water

falls [plural] (especially in names) a large amount of water falling down from a height

synonym waterfall

The falls upstream are full of salmon. Niagara Falls

5. autumn

 [countable] (North American English) = autumn

in the fall of 2009

last fall

fall weather

5. Reading outside the classroom

The purpose of this booklet is to help you prepare for LanguageCert exams. However, exams are not the ultimate purpose. You do not prepare for a driving test; you do your best to learn to drive and the driving test acts as feedback that you are ready to drive in traffic. Similarly, your purpose is to develop your language skills, and the role of exams is to test how well you are doing that.

Therefore, apart from preparing for the exam tasks, you should also dedicate time to reading regularly so that you can develop your reading skills to the desired level. If your goal is C1 level, you will need to be able to read long, complex texts understanding attitudes, viewpoints, different styles and finer shades of meaning (see table below).

B1	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency every-day or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
B2	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.
C1	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.

The best way to achieve that is by reading an extensive range of texts. Let's have a look at a few examples of what you can read and why you should.

What?	Why?
• Reports, proposals	• To understand the goal of writing
• Application forms, questionnaires	• To learn words in context
• Advertisements, posters, announcements	• To see words in action
• Dictionaries, Wikipedia, encyclopaedia	• To observe real, authentic grammar
• Fiction, novels, short stories	• To observe how paragraphs work
• Newspapers, journals, magazines	• To observe how linking words work
• Online magazines and newspapers	• To understand coherence and cohesion
• News sites, blog posts, film reviews	• To get inspired