

Answer Key & Explanations

Academic Reading Paper 40 — Shrines, Dinosaurs and Averages

Mark your answer sheet before you read this

HOW TO USE THIS

- Mark one point for each correct answer. Spelling must be correct.
- Convert your total with the band table on the next page.
- Then read the explanation for **every** question you got wrong, and for every one you guessed. The explanation names the mechanism the wrong answer was built on.

The band figure is an estimate. A real paper is pre-tested on thousands of candidates and these have not been, so read the band as a position, not a prediction.

Q	Answer	Code	Mechanism	Where
1	cypress	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph B.
2	felling	E1	Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy	Paragraph B.
3	eight years	E2	Answer sits after its own distractor	Paragraph B.
4	nails	F3	Grammatical fit — tense, number, comparative	Paragraph D.
5	bridge	E2	Answer sits after its own distractor	Paragraph F.
6	generation	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph D.
7	drawings	E1	Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy	Paragraph D.
8	forest	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph G.
9	civil wars / civil war	F2	Word limit decides which words are the answer	Paragraph H.
10	TRUE	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph C.
11	FALSE	A7	Time relation reversed	Paragraph G.
12	NOT GIVEN	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph G.
13	FALSE	C1	Overstatement — hedge removed	Paragraph H.
14	D	F1	Answers out of order + repeats allowed	Paragraph D.
15	C	F1	Answers out of order + repeats allowed	Paragraph C.
16	B	F1	Answers out of order + repeats allowed	Paragraph B.
17	F	F1	Answers out of order + repeats allowed	Paragraph F.
18	G	F1	Answers out of order + repeats allowed	Paragraph G.
19	A	D2	Intermediate actor named beside the originator	Paragraph A.
20	C	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph D.

Q	Answer	Code	Mechanism	Where
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21	B	B1	Relation swap	Paragraph B.
22	C	A5	Wrong agent for the action	Paragraph D.
23	B	E1	Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy	Paragraph E.
24	A	E4	Minimal-pair options	Paragraph E.
25	C	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph E.
26	D	E4	Minimal-pair options	Paragraph F.
27	NO	C2	The extreme version the writer explicitly refused	Paragraph D.
28	YES	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph G.
29	NOT GIVEN	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph A.
30	NO	D1	Statement moved from another paragraph	Paragraph C.
31	YES	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph F.
32	NOT GIVEN	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraphs F and H.
33	C	D1	Statement moved from another paragraph	Paragraph D.
34	A	E1	Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy	Paragraph E.
35	B	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph F.
36	D	R	Straight retrieval — no trap	Paragraph H.
37	A	A2	Scope widened or narrowed by dropping a qualifier	Paragraph B.
38	B	C2	The extreme version the writer explicitly refused	Paragraph C.
39	B	D1	Statement moved from another paragraph	Paragraph E.
40	B	C2	The extreme version the writer explicitly refused	Paragraph H.

Score to band

Raw score out of 40	Estimated band
39–40	9
37–38	8.5
35–36	8
33–34	7.5
30–32	7
27–29	6.5
23–26	6
19–22	5.5
15–18	5
13–14	4.5
10–12	4
8–9	3.5
6–7	3
4–5	2.5

Questions 1–5

1 **cypress** · Paragraph B.

'Around ten thousand **cypress** logs are required.'

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

2 **felling** · Paragraph B.

'starting with the **felling** of the first trees'. The question says *opens with* where the passage says *starting with*, and *earliest* where it says *first*.

Mechanism E1 — Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy

3 **eight years** · Paragraph B.

'The preparation begins about **eight years** before the buildings go up.' A reader scanning for a period of time meets *twenty years* twice before this, in paragraph A.

Mechanism E2 — Answer sits after its own distractor

4 **nails** · Paragraph D.

'joinery of a kind that uses no **nails**'. The plural is required by *any*; *nail* would not fit the sentence.

Mechanism F3 — Grammatical fit — tense, number, comparative

5 **bridge** · Paragraph F.

'The great timbers of the **bridge** are re-erected as gateways at the entrances.' The sentence before it sends the old wood to *shrines* throughout the country, so a reader scanning the paragraph meets the decoy first.

Mechanism E2 — Answer sits after its own distractor

Questions 6–9

6 **generation** · Paragraph D.

'Twenty years is roughly the length of a working **generation** in a craft.'

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

7 **drawings** · Paragraph D.

'does not survive in **drawings**. It survives in hands that have done it.' The question says *held in* for *survive in*.

Mechanism E1 — Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy

8 **forest** · Paragraph G.

'the shrine should eventually draw again on its own **forest**'.

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

9 **civil wars / civil war** · Paragraph H.

'During the **civil wars** of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the rebuilding lapsed.' The full phrase in the passage runs to eleven words; the two-word limit tells you which two.

Mechanism F2 — Word limit decides which words are the answer

Questions 10–13

10 **TRUE** · Paragraph C.

'No piece of the structure standing today has been there for more than twenty years.'

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

11 **FALSE** · Paragraph G.

The order is the other way round: 'The forest immediately around the shrine was worked out centuries ago ... In 1923 a programme of replanting was begun.' One item in every paper turns on the order of two events rather than on the events themselves.

Mechanism A7 — Time relation reversed

12 **NOT GIVEN** · Paragraph G.

The passage gives the year it began, the reason for it and the date the timber is expected to be ready. It says nothing at all about what it costs.

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

13 **FALSE** · Paragraph H.

'at least once the chain of hands was broken and something had to be reconstructed from records'. *Unbroken* is the absolute the paragraph exists to deny.

Mechanism C1 — Overstatement — hedge removed

Questions 14–18

14 D · Paragraph D.

'one of them had been sitting misidentified in a museum as a small dinosaur'.

Mechanism F1 — Answers out of order + repeats allowed

15 C · Paragraph C.

'Dinosaur collarbones are thin, they are not attached firmly to the rest of the skeleton, and they are therefore among the first bones to be lost.'

Mechanism F1 — Answers out of order + repeats allowed

16 B · Paragraph B.

'Heilmann proposed instead that both had descended from an earlier and more generalised group of reptiles.'

Mechanism F1 — Answers out of order + repeats allowed

17 F · Paragraph F.

'negative claims of that kind are only as good as the effort spent looking'.

Mechanism F1 — Answers out of order + repeats allowed

18 G · Paragraph G.

'In the technical sense used by biologists this is exactly right ... In the ordinary sense it is misleading.'

Mechanism F1 — Answers out of order + repeats allowed

Questions 19–22

19 A · Paragraph A.

'he proposed birds were the descendants of dinosaurs, and he said so in print'. Ostrom reopened the question a century later, which is what makes C tempting; the word here is *first*.

Mechanism D2 — Intermediate actor named beside the originator

20 C · Paragraph D.

'the details of its wrist allowed a folding motion of the hand that is otherwise known in birds'.

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

21 B · Paragraph B.

'A structure cannot reappear once it has been lost.'

Mechanism B1 — Relation swap

22 C · Paragraph D.

'Ostrom then went back to the specimens of Archaeopteryx.' Huxley also worked from specimens, which is the whole reason A is placed on the list.

Mechanism A5 — Wrong agent for the action

Questions 23–26

23 B · Paragraph E.

'The sediments at Liaoning are fine enough to preserve **soft tissue**.' F is the kind of thing lake beds are often used to reconstruct, but not what is said here.

Mechanism E1 — Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy

24 A · Paragraph E.

'on animals that plainly could not fly'. The box holds **flight** and **speed** side by side, and the passage says nothing about how fast these animals moved.

Mechanism E4 — Minimal-pair options

25 C · Paragraph E.

'Feathers had evolved before flight and for some other **purpose**.'

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

26 D · Paragraph F.

'Once people were looking for them they were found in one group after another.' **Searching** is the box's word for the passage's *looking*.

Mechanism E4 — Minimal-pair options

Questions 27–32

27 NO · Paragraph D.

'The general point is not that averages are useless, which is the overcorrection people reach for.'
The paragraph is there to refuse exactly this position.

Mechanism C2 — The extreme version the writer explicitly refused

28 YES · Paragraph G.

'The objection is always available and it is almost always cost-free, which is a reliable sign that it is doing no work.'

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

29 NOT GIVEN · Paragraph A.

The passage says the cockpit was designed from 1920s measurements and that the obvious hypothesis was that the average had since shifted. Whether those measurements were well or badly taken is never discussed.

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

30 NO · Paragraph C.

'over the objections of firms who said it was impossible and expensive. It was neither.' The claim is in the passage, but as something the writer reports in order to reject.

Mechanism D1 — Statement moved from another paragraph

31 YES · Paragraph F.

'it does so more severely the more dimensions the design has to satisfy'.

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

32 NOT GIVEN · Paragraphs F and H.

The passage asks for particular practices when reporting and designing. It never raises the question of how designers should be taught.

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

Questions 33–36

33 C · Paragraph D.

'An average is an excellent summary of a distribution with one peak and no long tail.' G is assembled from the ten dimensions of paragraphs A and B, where the number of dimensions is the problem rather than the condition for success.

Mechanism D1 — Statement moved from another paragraph

34 A · Paragraph E.

'Incomes have a long tail to the right, so the average sits above what most people earn and moves whenever a small number of very large values change.'

Mechanism E1 — Synonym substitution, passage keyword parked on a decoy

35 B · Paragraph F.

'A chair fitted to average height and average leg length and average weight and average reach is fitted to a person who does not exist.'

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

36 D · Paragraph H.

'Report the spread alongside the centre, as a matter of routine.'

Mechanism R — Straight retrieval — no trap

Questions 37–40

37 A · Paragraph B.

'The answer was none. Not a small number: none.' D keeps the words of the finding and quietly changes *all ten at once* into *at least one*, which would have been true of nearly everybody.

Mechanism A2 — Scope widened or narrowed by dropping a qualifier

38 B · Paragraph C.

'The Air Force did not recompute a better average. It required manufacturers to build adjustable seats, adjustable pedals, adjustable straps.' A is stated in the passage as the thing that was *not* done.

Mechanism C2 — The extreme version the writer explicitly refused

39 B · Paragraph E.

'Delays, damage from storms, the size of cities, the number of connections a person has and the length of a hospital stay all have the same shape.' The three wrong options are each built from language used elsewhere in the passage.

Mechanism D1 — Statement moved from another paragraph

40 B · Paragraph H.

'when a thing is being designed rather than described, treat the range as the specification and the middle as one point within it'. A and C are the two overstatements paragraphs D and G were written to refuse.

Mechanism C2 — The extreme version the writer explicitly refused