

True, False, or Not Given

Lesson Plan: IELTS Academic and General Training Reading, C1+

Level: B2-C2

Time: 60-70 minutes

Focus: True/False/Not Given logic

Skills: Reading, close inference, exam accuracy

1. Warmer (5-7 minutes)

Write two sentences on the board: 'The shop closes at 6pm on weekdays' and 'The shop is closed on Sundays.' Tell students the shop actually closes at 6pm on weekdays and stays open every day of the week, including Sundays. Ask: which sentence is wrong, and which one did the text simply never mention? Use their answers to introduce the core distinction: some statements are contradicted, and some are simply absent. English does not mark this difference with any special grammar, so it has to be reasoned out every time.

2. Presentation (10-12 minutes)

Read the short passage below, then look at how each statement type is judged against it.

Passage: Vertical Farming. Vertical farming involves growing crops in stacked layers, often indoors under artificial light. Advocates argue it can produce more food per square metre than traditional farming, since growing space is multiplied vertically rather than spread horizontally. Water use is typically far lower than in open-field agriculture, because closed systems recycle most of what plants do not absorb. Critics point out that the energy needed for lighting and climate control is substantial, and that vertical farms currently specialise in leafy greens and herbs rather than staple crops like wheat or rice.

Type	Test	Example against the passage
True	The statement matches what the passage states.	'Vertical farms generally use less water than open-field farming.' Matches the passage directly.
False	The statement contradicts the passage.	'Vertical farming uses more water than traditional farming.' The passage says the opposite.
Not Given	The passage never addresses this claim, true or false.	'Vertical farms are cheaper to build than traditional greenhouses.' Cost of construction is never mentioned.

The test worth teaching explicitly: for Not Given, ask 'could I argue either side of this using only the passage?' If the answer is no, because the passage is silent, it is Not Given, regardless of whether the claim sounds plausible or matches general knowledge. Real-world plausibility is irrelevant. Only the text in front of you counts.

3. Controlled Practice (12-15 minutes)

Using the Vertical Farming passage above, mark each statement True, False, or Not Given.

- 1. Vertical farming can produce more food per square metre than traditional farming.
- 2. Vertical farms grow crops outdoors under natural sunlight.
- 3. Vertical farming uses artificial light.
- 4. Vertical farms currently focus mainly on leafy greens and herbs.
- 5. Vertical farming is the most cost-effective way to grow wheat.
- 6. Water use in vertical farms is typically lower than in open-field agriculture.
- 7. Energy use for lighting and climate control is described as substantial.
- 8. Vertical farming has been adopted by most major grain producers.

4. Freer Practice (15 minutes)

In pairs, students choose a short paragraph from a news article, textbook, or the Vertical Farming passage above, and each writes three statements about it, one True, one False, and one Not Given, without labelling which is which. Partners swap and identify each type, then discuss any disagreements by pointing to the exact words in the text that settle the question. This is the same skill the exam tests, constructing a Not Given statement is much harder than spotting one, and doing it deliberately makes the underlying logic far more visible.

5. Exam-Style Task (12 minutes)

Read the passage, then answer True, False, or Not Given for each statement.

Passage: The Postal Stamp. The first adhesive postage stamp, the Penny Black, was introduced in Britain in 1840 as part of a reform to simplify how postage was charged and paid. Before this, the cost of sending a letter was usually paid by the recipient rather than the sender, and was calculated by distance and the number of sheets used, a system that was slow and often disputed at the door. The reform instead set a flat rate regardless of distance within the country, prepaid by the sender through the stamp itself. Other countries gradually adopted similar systems over the following decades, though the pace of change varied considerably depending on each country's existing postal infrastructure.

- 1. Before 1840, letters in Britain were usually paid for by the person receiving them.
- 2. The Penny Black was introduced in a country outside Britain.
- 3. The pre-reform system calculated cost based on distance and number of sheets.
- 4. The flat rate introduced in 1840 varied depending on distance.
- 5. Every country adopted the new stamp system within five years of Britain.
- 6. The reform required the sender to pay for postage in advance.

Answer Key

Controlled Practice

1. True 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. Not Given 6. True 7. True 8. Not Given

Exam-Style Task

1. True 2. False 3. True 4. False 5. Not Given 6. True