



LABELLING AND DESCRIBING AN OBJECT

Labelling a diagram and describing parts of an object are tasks which may occur in the listening, reading or writing sections of the IELTS test.

As a reading task you will be required to name the numbered parts of a diagram using words from the reading passage. The answers are usually found in one particular section or paragraph of the reading passage but may not necessarily follow the order of the numbers on the diagram.

The texts for labelling diagrams will use descriptive language which identifies and describes the component parts of an object in the diagram. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the kinds of language, words and expressions that might be used.

Language features

Labelling diagrams test your understanding of certain language features and concepts. Descriptions of objects, maps and other pictorial information will often include the following kinds of language, words and expressions.

IELTS Tip

Answers for labelling a diagram question are usually found in one particular section of the reading passage.

Look out for language describing position, direction, shape, size and other features.

Also use the vocabulary provided in the diagram to help locate the part relevant to the answer.

Language Features	Examples
position	between, on the right, in front of, the highest point, on the side, at the bottom, inside, below, next to
direction	across, into, straight ahead, along, to, from
component parts	there are four sections, is made of, is comprised of, consists of, there are two main parts
sequencing	first, after, then, second, following
shape	square, round, oval, circular, triangle
size	small, tall, high, heavy, light, medium-sized
verbs	is shaped, is centred, it moves, navigates, maintains, removes, leads to
other vocabulary	it is called, known as, similar to, like

These language features are clues which help locate and identify in the reading passage information relating to the diagram. This is also a strategy for answering labelling type questions quickly and accurately.

The following page contains a summary of the skills and strategies to use when answering this question type.



Labelling a Diagram	
Strategies	Skills
look at the diagram to get a general idea of the content, i.e. is it a process, object, map	skimming
check for any labels or names and highlight key words	scanning the reading passage to locate the relevant section
decide what kind of information is needed to fill the numbered parts	identifying the parts of speech and predicting the types of word/s needed
use the language clues to identify the answers quickly and accurately	understanding language features and concepts
write only the number of words and/or number allowed	following instructions

Use these skills and strategies to practise labelling the diagram in Activity 1.

Unknown vocabulary

You do not need to know the meaning of every single word in an IELTS reading passage in order to answer questions correctly. If you do come across a word or phrase which you do not understand, use the context to help you work out the meaning. For example, the meaning of **panoramic view** in the sentence below can be determined from the conjunction **or** which precedes the collocation, and the adjective **like** which follows.

Example

This hat mirror gives the helicopter **all-round vision** or a **panoramic view** just **like** for an **insect which has 360° vision** of the horizon at all times.

The conjunction **or** gives another possibility in the form of a phrase with the same meaning, i.e. **all-round vision** means the same as **panoramic view**, while the adjective **like** provides an example of something that is similar, i.e. **an insect which has 360° vision**.