

# Exercise 1: Text Structure Mapping Exercise

**Skill Focus:** Text organization analysis

**IELTS Application:** Matching headings, paragraph completion, summary completion

**Estimated Time:** 15 minutes

## Learning Objective

Develop the ability to identify text structure patterns and organizational features quickly – a critical skill for navigating IELTS reading passages efficiently and answering questions that test understanding of text organization.

## Instructions

IELTS reading passages follow predictable organizational patterns. Being able to recognize these patterns helps you locate information quickly and understand how ideas relate to each other. In this exercise, you'll analyze the structure of our social media text to identify its organizational framework.

## Task

For the "Social Media Networks" reading passage:

1. Identify the purpose of each paragraph (e.g., introduction, example, contrast, solution)
2. Circle or note all discourse markers and transition signals (e.g., however, in addition, therefore)
3. Create a simple text map showing:
  - Main topic of each paragraph (1-2 words)
  - Relationship between paragraphs (contrast, elaboration, cause-effect, etc.)
  - Progression of ideas through the text

## Guidance Tips

When mapping text structure:

- Look for signal words that indicate relationships between ideas
- Pay attention to the first and last sentences of paragraphs
- Notice when the author shifts perspective or introduces new aspects
- Identify whether the text follows patterns like problem-solution, compare-contrast, or chronological order

## Your Turn

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## Model Answer

### Text Structure Map: Social Media Networks

#### Paragraph 1: Introduction + Context

- Main topic: Social media convenience
- Function: Introduces topic and raises initial question
- Key discourse markers: "but," "also"
- Structure notes: Begins with benefits, shifts to questioning these benefits

#### Paragraph 2: Problem + Solution

- Main topic: Workplace implications
- Function: Presents problem and suggests balanced approach
- Key discourse markers: "Others," "Perhaps"
- Structure notes: Contrasts with paragraph 1 by shifting from general use to specific workplace context

**Overall Text Structure:** The text follows a "balanced perspective" pattern, presenting:

1. Benefits of social media (convenience, ease of connection)
2. Problems with social media (workplace distraction, potential job loss)
3. Suggested middle ground (appropriate timing for social media use)

The relationship between paragraphs is one of expanding focus: first establishing the general context of social media use, then narrowing to a specific context (workplace), and concluding with a suggested balanced approach.

## Tutor Feedback

Excellent structure mapping! This kind of analysis is exactly what helps top-scoring IELTS candidates navigate complex texts quickly.

Notice how identifying the purpose of each paragraph gives you a "mental roadmap" of the text. This skill directly helps with matching headings questions in IELTS, where you need to identify the main purpose or topic of each paragraph.

Your identification of discourse markers is particularly important. In IELTS Reading, these small but powerful words are often crucial for understanding relationships between ideas. For example, noting that paragraph 2 begins with "Others" immediately signals a contrast with the previous content – this awareness helps you anticipate the development of ideas.

The overall structure you've identified – moving from benefits to problems to balanced solution – is a common pattern in IELTS texts. Being familiar with these typical text structures means you can anticipate where information will appear, saving precious time during the exam.

For further improvement, practice identifying the weight given to different perspectives. Notice that this text spends more time on the problems than the benefits, suggesting the author is more concerned about the negative impacts while still acknowledging the positive aspects.

This text mapping skill also helps with summary completion and paragraph insertion questions, as it gives you a clear understanding of how information is organized and how new information would fit into the existing structure.

### **Challenge Extension**

Take a longer IELTS-style reading passage and create a one-sentence summary of each paragraph, focusing on its function in the overall text. Then identify the organizational pattern of the entire text (e.g., chronological, problem-solution, thesis-support).

## **Exercise 2: True/False/Not Given Analysis Exercise**

**Skill Focus:** Evidence evaluation and inference control

**IELTS Application:** True/False/Not Given questions

**Estimated Time:** 15 minutes

### **Learning Objective**

Master the critical skill of distinguishing between stated facts, implied information, and absent information – the most challenging question type for many IELTS candidates.

### **Instructions**

True/False/Not Given questions test your ability to identify information that is explicitly stated (True), contradicted (False), or not mentioned at all (Not Given). The key is to remain strictly objective and avoid making assumptions based on your own knowledge. In this exercise, you'll practice analyzing statements against the text evidence.

### **Task**

For each statement below, determine if it is True, False, or Not Given based solely on the information in the "Social Media Networks" text:

1. Facebook and Twitter are the most popular social media platforms.
2. Companies block social media sites because employees waste time on them.
3. The author believes people should never use social media at work.
4. Some people use social media because they lack time for face-to-face meetings.

5. Most people have been fired for using social media at work.

For each answer, identify the exact text evidence that supports your decision or explain why the statement is Not Given.

## Guidance Tips

When analyzing T/F/NG statements:

- Look for exact matches or direct contradictions in the text
- Be wary of statements that contain extreme words like "all," "never," or "always"
- Remember that "Not Given" means the text neither confirms nor denies the statement
- Don't use your own knowledge or assumptions
- Watch for paraphrases and synonyms of key terms

## Your Turn

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## Model Answer

1. **Facebook and Twitter are the most popular social media platforms.**
  - **Answer: Not Given**
  - **Evidence:** The text mentions Facebook and Twitter as examples ("You can update your Facebook status and follow your friends' tweets on Twitter") but doesn't state whether they are the most popular platforms. It also mentions Instagram later but makes no comparison of popularity.
2. **Companies block social media sites because employees waste time on them.**
  - **Answer: True**
  - **Evidence:** "Others admit they waste time online when they are at work... Some companies block popular websites. They don't trust their employees to stay on task." This directly connects the blocking of websites to employees wasting time.
3. **The author believes people should never use social media at work.**
  - **Answer: False**
  - **Evidence:** "Perhaps there is a happy medium... Maybe you should wait until your break to check." This suggests the author believes social media use is acceptable during breaks, not that it should never be used at work.
4. **Some people use social media because they lack time for face-to-face meetings.**
  - **Answer: True**
  - **Evidence:** "Some people say they use networks like Instagram because they don't have time to socialize in person." This directly states that some people use social media due to lack of time for in-person meetings.
5. **Most people have been fired for using social media at work.**
  - **Answer: Not Given**
  - **Evidence:** The text states "Social networking on the job is a common cause for dismissal," but doesn't specify what proportion of people have actually been fired.

"Common cause" refers to the reason for dismissal, not the frequency of dismissals.

## **Tutor Feedback**

Excellent analysis! Your approach demonstrates the precise reading skills that IELTS examiners look for in high-scoring candidates.

For statement 1, you correctly identified a "Not Given" by recognizing that while Facebook and Twitter are mentioned, their popularity ranking isn't stated. Many IELTS candidates struggle with this exact situation – they confuse mention of something with information about its relative importance.

Your analysis of statement 3 shows strong attention to nuance. The phrase "happy medium" and the suggestion to "wait until your break" clearly contradicts the absolute "never" in the statement. In IELTS, watching for these absolute terms can often help identify False statements.

For statement 5, you've demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of "Not Given." The phrase "common cause for dismissal" tells us social media misuse frequently leads to firing when dismissals occur, but tells us nothing about how many people have actually been fired. This distinction is exactly what IELTS is testing!

One important strategy you've applied is focusing on precise evidence rather than general impressions. For each statement, you've cited specific text and explained your reasoning – this methodical approach is essential for T/F/NG questions.

Remember that approximately 60% of IELTS candidates score below Band 6 on T/F/NG questions because they bring outside knowledge or make assumptions. Your careful analysis based solely on the text is exactly what's needed for higher band scores.

## **Challenge Extension**

Create three additional True/False/Not Given statements about the social media text, including at least one of each type. Exchange with a partner and solve each other's statements, explaining your reasoning.

## **Exercise 3: Multiple Choice Strategy Exercise**

**Skill Focus:** Distractor analysis and evidence-based selection

**IELTS Application:** Multiple-choice questions

**Estimated Time:** 12 minutes

## **Learning Objective**

Develop a systematic approach to multiple-choice questions by analyzing question stems, predicting answers before viewing options, and methodically eliminating incorrect choices.

## **Instructions**

Multiple-choice questions in IELTS often contain clever distractors that include partial truths or statements that sound plausible. The key is to predict your answer before looking at the options, then carefully analyze each option against the text. In this exercise, you'll practice a strategic approach to multiple-choice questions.

## **Task**

For each multiple-choice question below about the "Social Media Networks" text:

1. Read the question stem carefully
2. Before looking at the options, predict what the answer might be
3. Then evaluate each option against both your prediction and the text
4. Eliminate options that contradict the text or contain partial information
5. Select the best answer and explain why the other options are incorrect

## **Questions:**

1. According to the text, some people use social networks like Instagram because: a) They are more comfortable with online communication than face-to-face meetings b) They don't have time to meet friends in person c) They prefer to see photos of their friends' activities d) They want to avoid direct conversations with certain people
2. What does the text suggest about companies that block social media websites? a) They are too controlling of their employees b) They don't believe employees can focus on their work c) They have had problems with information security d) They want to increase productivity at all costs

## **Guidance Tips**

When approaching multiple-choice questions:

- Pay careful attention to qualifying words in the question (some, most, all, etc.)
- Look for options that contain true information but don't answer the specific question
- Be wary of options that include information not mentioned in the text
- Notice when options include extreme positions that the text doesn't support
- Look for options that combine true and false elements

## **Your Turn**

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## **Model Answer**

**Question 1: According to the text, some people use social networks like Instagram because:**

**Prediction before seeing options:** Based on the text, some people use networks like Instagram because they don't have time to meet friends in person.

**Analysis of options:**

- Option a) Not mentioned in the text. The text doesn't discuss comfort levels with different forms of communication.
- Option b) CORRECT. The text explicitly states: "Some people say they use networks like Instagram because they don't have time to socialize in person."
- Option c) Not mentioned. The text doesn't discuss people's preferences for photos or visual content.
- Option d) Not mentioned. The text doesn't suggest people use social media to avoid conversations.

**Question 2: What does the text suggest about companies that block social media websites?**

**Prediction before seeing options:** The text suggests that companies block social media because they don't trust employees to focus on their work instead of getting distracted.

**Analysis of options:**

- Option a) Not supported. The text doesn't characterize companies as "controlling" - this is a value judgment not in the text.
- Option b) CORRECT. The text directly states: "They don't trust their employees to stay on task."
- Option c) Not mentioned. Information security isn't discussed in the text.
- Option d) While increasing productivity might be implied, the text specifically mentions trust in employees to stay focused, not productivity "at all costs" which suggests an extreme position.

## **Tutor Feedback**

Excellent analysis of the multiple-choice questions! Your methodical approach demonstrates key strategies that distinguish high-scoring IELTS candidates.

The prediction strategy you employed is particularly effective. By formulating your own answer before looking at the options, you created a clear target to match against the choices. This prevents you from being swayed by cleverly worded distractors.

In Question 1, you correctly identified that options a), c), and d) introduce information not mentioned in the text. This is a common IELTS trap – options that sound plausible but go beyond what the text actually states.

Your analysis of Question 2 shows sophisticated understanding of how IELTS constructs distractors. Option d) contains a partial truth (companies likely do want to increase productivity) but adds the extreme phrase "at all costs" that isn't supported by the text. Recognizing these subtle additions is crucial for achieving Band 7+ scores.

Also noteworthy is your attention to the specific language in the text. In Question 2, you correctly matched "don't trust employees to stay on task" with option b) about believing employees can focus on work. This ability to recognize paraphrased ideas is essential for IELTS success.

For future multiple-choice questions, continue using this methodical approach of prediction followed by careful elimination. Remember that IELTS often includes distractors that:

1. Contain information from the wrong part of the text
2. Mix true and false elements
3. Use extreme language not present in the text
4. Present logical but unsupported extensions of the text's ideas

### **Challenge Extension**

Create your own multiple-choice question about the "Social Media Networks" text, including one correct answer and three plausible distractors. Explain why each distractor might tempt a reader but is ultimately incorrect.

## **Exercise 4: Vocabulary in Context Exercise**

**Skill Focus:** Lexical understanding and contextual analysis

**IELTS Application:** All reading question types, especially matching features and sentence completion

**Estimated Time:** 12 minutes

### **Learning Objective**

Develop the ability to understand vocabulary in context, recognize paraphrases, and work out meanings of unfamiliar words – essential skills for all IELTS Reading question types.

### **Instructions**

Understanding vocabulary in context is crucial for IELTS Reading success. This involves more than knowing definitions; it requires recognizing how words function in specific contexts and how ideas can be paraphrased. In this exercise, you'll analyze vocabulary usage and paraphrasing in the "Social Media Networks" text.

### **Task**



For each vocabulary item from the "Social Media Networks" text:

1. Identify the sentence where it appears
2. Explain its meaning in this specific context
3. Provide a paraphrase of the sentence using different words but maintaining the same meaning
4. Describe how the word contributes to the author's message

### **Vocabulary items to analyze:**

1. "keep in touch"
2. "face-to-face"
3. "on task"
4. "happy medium"
5. "dismissal"

### **Guidance Tips**

When analyzing vocabulary in context:

- Pay attention to the words surrounding the target vocabulary
- Look for clues in the broader paragraph
- Consider how the word relates to the main idea
- Notice patterns of positive/negative connotations
- Think about why the author chose this particular word

### **Your Turn**

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### **Model Answer**

#### **1. "keep in touch"**

- **Sentence:** "Keeping in touch with friends is easy these days."
- **Context meaning:** Maintaining regular communication and connection with friends over time.
- **Paraphrase:** "Maintaining regular contact with friends is simple in the current era."
- **Contribution to message:** Establishes the theme of social connection and introduces the idea that technology has made communication easier, setting up the comparison between digital and in-person interaction.

#### **2. "face-to-face"**

- **Sentence:** "Social media is convenient, but how often do you see your friends face-to-face?"

- **Context meaning:** In person, with direct physical presence, as opposed to virtual interaction.
- **Paraphrase:** "Social networks are easy to use, but how frequently do you meet your friends in person?"
- **Contribution to message:** Creates the central tension of the text between convenient digital communication and potentially more meaningful in-person interaction.

### 3. "on task"

- **Sentence:** "They don't trust their employees to stay on task."
- **Context meaning:** Focused on work responsibilities rather than being distracted.
- **Paraphrase:** "They lack confidence that their workers will remain focused on their job duties."
- **Contribution to message:** Highlights the workplace productivity concerns that drive company policies about social media access.

### 4. "happy medium"

- **Sentence:** "Perhaps there is a happy medium."
- **Context meaning:** A balanced compromise between extremes (total freedom vs. complete restriction of social media).
- **Paraphrase:** "Maybe there exists a reasonable balance or compromise."
- **Contribution to message:** Introduces the author's proposed solution, suggesting moderation rather than extreme positions on social media use.

### 5. "dismissal"

- **Sentence:** "Social networking on the job is a common cause for dismissal."
- **Context meaning:** Termination of employment; being fired from a job.
- **Paraphrase:** "Using social media while working is a frequent reason for employees losing their positions."
- **Contribution to message:** Emphasizes the serious consequences of inappropriate social media use, strengthening the author's argument for finding appropriate times to check social networks.

## Tutor Feedback

Excellent vocabulary analysis! Your responses demonstrate the sophisticated understanding of contextual meaning that IELTS examiners look for in high-scoring candidates.

Your analysis of "keep in touch" shows how you recognize both the literal meaning and its function in setting up the text's theme. In IELTS Reading, understanding how vocabulary contributes to the overall message is crucial for questions about the author's purpose or attitude.

The paraphrases you've created are particularly strong. Notice how you've completely restructured sentences while maintaining meaning – this is exactly the skill tested in IELTS

paraphrase questions and summary completion tasks. For example, your transformation of "They don't trust their employees to stay on task" to "They lack confidence that their workers will remain focused on their job duties" demonstrates the lexical resource that would earn high marks in IELTS Writing as well.

Your analysis of "happy medium" shows understanding of idiomatic expressions, which often appear in IELTS Reading tests. Recognizing that this phrase refers to a balance between extremes helps you grasp the author's overall position on social media use.

For "dismissal," you've correctly identified both its meaning and its rhetorical purpose in the text – highlighting consequences. This awareness of how vocabulary serves the author's argument is essential for higher-level IELTS Reading questions.

To further develop this skill, practice identifying "word families" – for example, how "dismiss" (verb), "dismissal" (noun), and "dismissive" (adjective) might be used in different contexts. IELTS often tests this awareness of word forms and functions.

### **Challenge Extension**

Find a new article about social media or technology. Identify five key terms and create paraphrases for the sentences in which they appear. Then explain how each term contributes to the author's overall message or purpose.