

Chapter 1 : IELTS MEGA - #1 IELTS Preparation website

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Tea and the Industrial Revolution A Cambridge professor says that a change in drinking habits was the reason for the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Why did this particular Big Bang – the world-changing birth of industry-happen in Britain? And why did it strike at the end of the 18th century? For industry to take off, there needs to be the technology and power to drive factories, large urban populations to provide cheap labour, easy transport to move goods around, an affluent middle-class willing to buy mass-produced objects, a market-driven economy and a political system that allows this to happen. While this was the case for England, other nations, such as Japan, the Netherlands and France also met some of these criteria but were not industrialising. All these factors must have been necessary. But not sufficient to cause the revolution, says Macfarlane. Most historians are convinced there are one or two missing factors that you need to open the lock. The antiseptic properties of tannin, the active ingredient in tea, and of hops in beer – plus the fact that both are made with boiled water – allowed urban communities to flourish at close quarters without succumbing to water-borne diseases such as dysentery. The theory sounds eccentric but once he starts to explain the detective work that went into his deduction, the scepticism gives way to wary admiration. Macfarlane's case has been strengthened by support from notable quarters – Roy Porter, the distinguished medical historian, recently wrote a favourable appraisal of his research. Historians had alighted on one interesting factor around the mid-18th century that required explanation. But then there was a burst in population growth. People suggested four possible causes. Was there a sudden change in the viruses and bacteria around? Was there a revolution in medical science? Was there a change in environmental conditions? There were improvements in agriculture that wiped out malaria, but these were small gains. Sanitation did not become widespread until the 19th century. The only option left is food. But the height and weight statistics show a decline. So the food must have got worse. Efforts to explain this sudden reduction in child deaths appeared to draw a blank. Macfarlane deduced that whatever the British were drinking must have been important in regulating disease. For a long time, the English were protected by the strong antibacterial agent in hops, which were added to help preserve the beer. But in the late 17th century a tax was introduced on malt, the basic ingredient of beer. The poor turned to water and gin and in the 18th century the mortality rate began to rise again. Then it suddenly dropped again. Water-borne diseases had a much looser grip on the Japanese population than those in Britain. Could it be the prevalence of tea in their culture? Macfarlane then noted that the history of tea in Britain provided an extraordinary coincidence of dates. Tea was relatively expensive until Britain started a direct trade with China in the early 18th century. By the 1790s, about the time that infant mortality was dipping, the drink was common. Macfarlane guessed that the fact that water had to be boiled, together with the stomach-purifying properties of tea meant that the breast milk provided by mothers was healthier than it had ever been. No other European nation sipped tea like the British, which, by Macfarlane's logic, pushed these other countries out of contention for the revolution. Macfarlane notes that even though 17th-century Japan had large cities, high literacy rates, even a futures market, it had turned its back on the essence of any work-based revolution by giving up labour-saving devices such as animals, afraid that they would put people out of work. Questions Reading Passage 1 has seven paragraphs, A-G. Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

Chapter 2 : IELTS Share Box - Learning today, Leading tomorrow

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Stepwells A millennium ago, stepwells were fundamental to life in the driest parts of India. Although many have been neglected, recent restoration has returned them to their former glory. During the sixth and seventh centuries, the inhabitants of the modern-day states of Gujarat and Rajasthan in North-western India developed a method of gaining access to clean, fresh groundwater during the dry season for drinking, bathing, watering animals and irrigation. However, the significance of this invention – the stepwell – goes beyond its utilitarian application. Unique to the region, stepwells are often architecturally complex and vary widely in size and shape. During their heyday, they were places of gathering, of leisure, of relaxation and of worship for villagers of all but the lowest castes. Most stepwells are found dotted around the desert areas of Gujarat where they are called vav and Rajasthan where they are known as baori, while a few also survive in Delhi. Some were located in or near villages as public spaces for the community; others were positioned beside roads as resting places for travellers. As their name suggests, stepwells comprise a series of stone steps descending from ground level to the water source normally an underground aquifer as it recedes following the rains. When the water level was high, the user needed only to descend a few steps to reach it; when it was low, several levels would have to be negotiated. Some wells are vast, open craters with hundreds of steps paving each sloping side, often in tiers. Others are more elaborate, with long stepped passages leading to the water via several storeys built from stone and supported by pillars, they also included pavilions that sheltered visitors from the relentless heat. But perhaps the most impressive features are the intricate decorative sculptures that embellish many stepwells, showing activities from fighting and dancing to everyday acts such as women combing their hair and churning butter. Down the centuries, thousands of wells were constructed throughout northwestern India, but the majority have now fallen into disuse; many are derelict and dry, as groundwater has been diverted for industrial use and the wells no longer reach the water table. However, some important sites in Gujarat have recently undergone major restoration, and the state government announced in June last year that it plans to restore the stepwells throughout the state. It was built by Queen Udayamati during the late 11th century, but became silted up following a flood during the 13th century. At 65 metres long, 20 metres wide and 27 metres deep, Rani Ki Vav features distinct sculptures carved into niches throughout the monument, depicting gods such as Vishnu and Parvati in various incarnations. Incredibly, in January, this ancient structure survived a devastating earthquake that measured 7. The terraces house small, intricately carved shrines between the sets of steps. Rajasthan also has a wealth of wells. The ancient city of Bundi, kilometres south of Jaipur, is renowned for its architecture, including its stepwells. One of the larger examples is Rani Ki Baori, which was built by the queen of the region, Nathavatji, in 1570. At 46 metres deep, 20 metres wide and 40 metres long, the intricately carved monument is one of 21 baoris commissioned in the Bundi area by Nathavatji. Built in around AD 1570 next to the temple of Harshat Mata, the baori comprises hundreds of zigzagging steps that run along three of its sides, steeply descending 11 storeys, resulting in a striking geometric pattern when seen from afar. On the fourth side, covered verandas supported by ornate pillars overlook the steps. At ground level, there are 86 colonnaded openings from where the visitor descends steps to the deepest water source. Tourists flock to wells in far-flung corners of northwestern India to gaze in wonder at these architectural marvels from 1,000 years ago, which serve as a reminder of both the ingenuity and artistry of ancient civilisations and of the value of water to human existence.

Questions 5–8 Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1? Write your answers in boxes 6–8 on your answer sheet. Write your answers in boxes on your answer sheet. Now read for keywords and alternative to keywords.

Chapter 3 : IELTS (International English Language Testing System) | Cambridge English

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