

## IELTS reading passage - Doctoring Sales

### Doctoring Sales

- A. Kim Schaefer is one of the sales representatives of a major global pharmaceutical company. Few months ago she went into a medical centre in New York to get some information about her company's latest products and free samples. That day luckily there was a doctor available for her. He asked 'The last rep offered me a trip to Florida. What do you have?' in a half-joking manner.
- B. That day's offer was a pair of tickets for a New York musical. But, as today's typical drug rep, on any day Schaefer offers promotional gifts and gadgets in a car trunk full, budget for small country lunches and dinners, 100's of free drug samples, and freedom to offer \$200 for a physician to offer her new product to the next six patients that suits the drug profile. And she also has a few \$1,000 honoraria in exchange for doctor's attendance for her company's next educational lecture.
- C. In ethical judgement selling pharmaceuticals is a daily exercise. Buying a prospect's time for a free meal and prescribing their drugs by bribing the doctors is a common practice for every salesperson like Schaefer. They get highly criticised for their sales and marketing in the industry they work in. But, they stuck in between as the age old chicken or egg question that businesses won't use strategies that don't work. Is it right to blame the doctors for the escalating extravagance of pharmaceutical marketing? Or Industry need to take the responsibility to set the boundaries?
- D. The close examination of the pressures, influences, and relationships between drug reps and doctors takes place, due to the explosion of the number of salespeople in the Reid and the amount of funding used to promote their causes. For physicians, salespeople provide much-needed information and education. The primary sources of drug education are the brochures, article reprints and prescriptions they deliver for healthcare givers. The industry has done a huge investment in face to face selling, salespeople have become specialists in one or group of drugs and they have a

tremendous advantage in getting the attention of busy doctors if they need any information.

- E. In the office sales push rarely stops but it often followed up with the expensive restaurant meals, meetings at warm and sunny places, and promotional gadgets inundation for the left brochures and pamphlets. Patients rarely see a doctor have a pen that isn't emblazoned with a drug's name, or see a nurse using a tablet without a pharmaceutical company's logo. Pharmaceutical companies spent millions on promotional products like coffee mugs, shirts, umbrellas, and golf balls. Is the money spent well? That's hard to tell. One doctor said that I've been the recipient of golf balls from one company and I use them, but it doesn't make me prescribe their medicine. I think that what they gave me will not influence me.
- F. To make doctors and patients loyal to a product, offering free samples of new and expensive drugs might be the most effective way. Each week, salespeople hand out hundreds of dollars' worth of samples, nearly \$7.2 billion worth of them in one year. University of Washington investigated how drug sample availability affected the physicians prescription, though few comprehensive studies have been conducted. A total of 131 doctors self-reported that the availability of samples led them to dispense and prescribe drugs that differed from their preferred drug choice.
- G. As the bottom line, other than investing in research and development, pharmaceutical companies do more in marketing. For every pen that's handed out, every free theatre ticket, and every steak dinner eaten, patients are the ones who pay the sky-rocketing prescription prices. In the end, the fact remains that pharmaceutical companies have the right to make a profit and continue to find ways to increase sales. Companies will continue to be heavily scrutinised for their sales and marketing strategies as the medical world continues to grapple with what's acceptable and not.

## Doctoring Sales IELTS reading questions

### Questions (1-7)

The reading passage has seven paragraphs, A-G.

Choose the correct heading for each paragraphs from the list of headings below

Write the correct number, **i-x**, for 1-7.

**List of headings**

- i Not every doctors get influenced
- ii Picking the best offers
- iii Who takes the responsibility for the raise in promotion?
- iv The drug companies clash
- v Expectations of doctors from drug companies example
- vi Financial incentives are provided as gifts
- vii Research shows the impacts of promotion
- viii High research costs
- ix Drug promotion and its advantage
- x Who pays for the free gifts of doctors?

1. Paragraph A
2. Paragraph B
3. Paragraph C
4. Paragraph D
5. Paragraph E
6. Paragraph F
7. Paragraph G

**Questions (8-12)**

Do the following statements match the information with the passage?

Write

**YES** if the statement agrees with the views of the writer

**NO** if the statement contradicts the views of the writer

**NOT GIVEN** if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

8. Kim Schaefer and other salespeople work within a limited budget
9. The marketing technique used by Kim Schaefer was open to criticism in the moral ground
10. The information provided to the doctors by drug companies are not that useful
11. The healthcare environment is clearly impacted by the drug promotion
12. The free drug samples may given to the patients without the prescription of doctors by drug companies

### Questions (13-15)

Complete the sentences using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

13. The salespeople's regular practice was \_\_\_\_\_
14. The huge investments was done by the industry in \_\_\_\_\_ selling
15. As per the reports of \_\_\_\_\_ doctors, the sample availability impacts the prescription.

## Doctoring Sales IELTS reading answers key

Check out the *doctoring sales IELTS reading answers* here to identify what improvements you need to make and your performance.

**(Note: The text in italics from the reading passage shows the location from where the answer is taken or inferred. The text in the regular font explains the answer in detail)**

1. Paragraph A = v

**Explanation:** *The last rep offered me a trip to Florida. What do you have?* - This line clearly explains what the expectations of doctors would be.

2. Paragraph B = vi

**Explanation:** *100's of free drug samples, and freedom to offer \$200 for a physician* - This describes the financial incentives

3. Paragraph C = iii

**Explanation:** *Is it right to blame the doctors for the escalating extravagance of pharmaceutical marketing? Or Industry need to take the responsibility to set the boundaries?*

- This line is relevant to the responsibility

4. Paragraph D = ix

**Explanation:** *They have a tremendous advantage in getting the attention of busy doctors if they need any information.* - This shows the positive impact of the promotion

5. Paragraph E = i

**Explanation:** *One doctor said that I've been the recipient of golf balls from one company and I use them, but it doesn't make me prescribe their medicine. I think that what they gave me will not influence me.* This statement shows that not every doctor was influenced.

6. Paragraph F = vii

**Explanation:** *University of Washington investigated how drug sample availability affected the physicians prescription, though few comprehensive studies have been conducted* - This line was about the research conducted.

7. Paragraph G = x

**Explanation:** *For every pen that's handed out, every free theatre ticket, and every steak dinner eaten, patients are the ones who pay the sky-rocketing prescription prices* - This statement clearly shows who pays the price.

8. No

**Explanation:** *Schaefer offers promotional gifts and gadgets in a car trunk full, budget for small country lunches and dinners, 100's of free drug samples, and freedom to offer \$200 for*

*a physician to offer her new product to the next six patients that suits the drug profile. And she also has a few \$1,000 honoraria in exchange for doctor's attendance - From this paragraph you can see that the salesperson have huge budget to offer*

9. Yes

**Explanation:** *In ethical judgement selling pharmaceuticals is a daily exercise - This statement is relevant to the given term- moral ground.*

10. No

**Explanation:** *For physicians, salespeople provide much-needed information and education - This line shows that the information provided is much-needed.*

11. Yes

**Explanation:** *Patients rarely see a doctor have a pen that isn't emblazoned with a drug's name, or see a nurse using a tablet without a pharmaceutical company's logo - This statement shows the clear impact of the drug promotion*

12. Not Given

**Explanation:** The paragraphs have the key term free drug samples but it does not state that as per the statement.

13. Bribing the doctors

**Explanation:** *Buying a prospect's time for a free meal and prescribing their drugs by bribing the doctors is a common practice for every salesperson like Schaefer - This statement is clearly shows that regular practice*

14. Face to face

**Explanation:** *The industry has done a huge investment in face to face selling, salespeople have become specialists in one or group of drugs* - This line gives a direct answer for the question.

15. 131

**Explanation:** *A total of 131 doctors self-reported that the availability of samples led them to dispense and prescribe drugs that differed from their preferred drug choice* - This statement shows the number of doctors who reported.