

# IELTS READING- A brief history of the swimming pool S34GT5



IELTS READING A brief history of the swimming pool Reading Practice Test has 10 Questions belongs to the Leisure & Recreation subject..

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**A** The first public swimming pool in the UK opened in 1828. After that, the number of pools developed rapidly, but they were segregated by social class, and women rarely had the opportunity to learn to swim. The catastrophic sinking of the Princess Alice on the river Thames in 1878 highlighted the dangers of not being able to swim. It also drew attention to the inequality between the sexes. Most of the deaths, when the ship sank, were of female non-swimmers dragged down by their long skirts. Changes in swimming habits went hand in hand with changes to social attitudes. Gradually, it became more acceptable for the sexes to mix while wearing swimsuits and more and more swimming pools were constructed.

Questions 28-35

The text is divided into 5 sections, **A-E**.

Which section contains the following information?

Write the correct letter **A-E**, in boxes **28-35** on your answer sheet.

28

The limitations of some swimming pools.

29

Two main reasons outdoor swimming pools shut down.

30

An alternative way for elite swimmers to train.

31

Growth of awareness of the importance of swimming.

32

Places where poorer people now swim.

33

Why pools are shallower than they used to be.

34

Flexible use of the available space.

35

The period when outdoor pools were constructed.

The 1930s are considered the ‘golden age of lidos’ when 169 of them were built across the UK. Lidos are outdoor swimming pools, which were at the height of their popularity in the twentieth century before foreign holidays became affordable.

**B** Lidos typically had sunbeds and lawns around them for sunbathing and the emphasis was more on recreation than serious swimming. Visits to the local lido would last all day. Families would bring a picnic and it was a relatively affordable way to spend a day during the summer holidays. Most people over 50 have happy memories of splashing around at their local lido.

Today there are only about 80 lidos in the country. It was not only the possibility of travelling abroad which led to the closure of so many outdoor pools. The British climate means that there are only a few months of the year where open-air swimming is attractive to the majority of people. Maintaining a facility used so little became unfeasible in times of cuts in public spending.

**C** However, it is not just lidos that have shut down. In the three years to March 2022, Britain lost over 65 public pools, including indoor pools. The number of children not learning to swim has increased, which has been called an ‘absolute health and welfare disaster’. While most can still access a pool if they are willing to travel, not all pools are suitable for activities such as synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

The pools that remain have changed dramatically from the pools of the 20th century. People who were young then remember nearly every pool had diving boards and deep ends. From the end of the last century, pool renovations often involved reducing the depth of pools and replacing diving boards with flumes (long tunnel like slides) and wave machines. The two main reasons for these changes were cost and safety. A 5 foot (1.5 meter) deep pool is easier and cheaper to heat and maintain than a 12 foot (3.6 meter) deep pool. Diving accidents are the fourth most common cause of spinal injury leading to paralysis. It became apparent that the best way to avoid lawsuits was to remove the diving boards.

Questions 36-40

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **36-40** on your answer sheet.

When the first swimming pools were built, it was not common for **36**

Type correct answers here

 have access to them.

Awareness of the value of being able to swim grew after the **37**

Type correct answers here

 to which had not of a famous boat in London. Many of the people who drowned As time went by, men and did so because of the weight of their **38**

Type correct answers here

 women were allowed to swim together dressed in **39**

Type correct answers here

 been permissible before. Lidos were the most popular in the **40**

Type correct answers here

**D** Unfortunately, both regular swimming and other pool-based activities have become less accessible to those with lower incomes. It could also mean that those who want to swim will turn to less safe options, such as rivers, lakes and the sea, leading to an increase in accidents.

Although there are now fewer diving pools, new technology has brought some hope to divers. The adjustable swimming pool floor enables the same pool to change depth from as shallow as 2 feet (0.5 meters) to as deep as 13 feet (4 meters). This mechanism has been adopted by many sports centers keen to offer a wide range of activities to customers, while only needing to maintain one pool. Such pools offer a ‘depth timetable’, which lets swimmers know when it will be shallow enough for children and non-swimmers and when it will be deep enough to use the diving boards. For facilities very limited in space, the adjustable floor can be moved to maximum height to turn the pool into a dance floor or meeting space.

**E** Another innovation in swimming technology is the ‘endless pool’. Ideal for those who want to swim regularly, but don’t have the space for a full-sized pool, the endless pool is to swimming what a treadmill is to running. The current in the water is controlled by a propeller, which enables you to keep Swimming without turning in a very small pool. Not only is it a space-saver, it is also a good choice for athletes, who can adjust the current to increase resistance and give them a better work-out. Many professional swimmers choose these mini pools in preference to a regular pool.

There is no doubt that swimming will remain a popular pastime with all ages, and that swimming pools will continue to develop with changes in technology and lifestyles.

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