Exercise 1: understanding paragraph headings

There are four alternative headings (i-iv) for each paragraph in the reading passage below. Analyse each alternative and decide what the content of the paragraph would be in each case.

Paragraph A

i. Argument against control of world food supply by genetic engineering industry
ii. Argument for control of global food supply by genetic engineering industry
iii. GM technology companies are fortunately allowed to own all our food
iv. Genetic engineering industry doesn't want us to know they are trying to control the global food supply

Paragraph B

i. Arguments used to support GM technology
ii. Scientists used to support GM technology
iii. Author supports arguments for GM technology
iv. GM crops improve consumer choice

Paragraph C

i. Miracle cure for global hunger?
ii. Over-hyped miracle cure
iii. GM crops not science
iv. GM sweet potato success in Kenya

Paragraph D

i. Some GM food trials successful
ii. Most GM food trials successful
iii. GM food trials help feed the world
iv. GM food trials are acceptable

Paragraph E

i. Food surplus doesn't help poor
ii. Biotech industry aims to help the poor
iii. Poor people can afford food if they earn more
iv. Surplus food out of reach of poor

Paragraph F

i. Patent-free GM foods v. the corporate model
ii. Patent-free GM foods are better
iii. Corporate model pushed for richer countries
iv. Patent-free foods for rich countries

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Paragraph G

i. The truth about GM crops
ii. GM crops are not for humans but animals
iii. GM crops in Britain used for animals
iv. GM crop in Britain creates food shortages

Paragraph H

i. Profit aim of biotech companies
ii. Control through deception
iii. Making money is aim of biotech companies
iv. Deception through control

For further practice See **IELTS Testbuilder** Pages 114-117

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Exercise 2

Read the passage below and choose appropriate headings for each paragraph from the alternatives in Exercise 1. Note that more than one heading may be suitable.

Reading Passage

A. The question is as simple as this: do you want a few corporations to monopolise the global food supply? If the answer is yes, you should welcome the announcement that the commercial planting of a genetically modified (GM) crop in Britain can go ahead. If the answer is no, you should regret it. The principal promotional effort of the genetic engineering industry is to distract us from this question. GM technology permits companies to ensure that everything we eat is owned by them. They can patent the seeds and the processes that give rise to them. They can make sure that crops can't be grown without their patented chemicals. They can prevent seeds from reproducing themselves. By buying up competing seed companies and closing them down, they can capture the food market, the biggest and most diverse market of all.

B. No one should welcome this, so the corporations must persuade us to focus on something else. At first they talked of enhancing consumer choice, but when the carrot failed, they switched to the stick. Now we are told that, unless we support the deployment of GM crops in Britain, our science base will collapse. And that, by refusing to eat GM products in Europe, we are threatening the developing world with starvation. Both arguments are, shall we say, imaginative, but in public relations all that matters is that you spin the discussion out for long enough to achieve the necessary result. And that means recruiting eminent figures to make the case for you. Last October 114 scientists, many of whom receive funding from the biotech industry, sent an open letter to the prime minister claiming that Britain's lack of enthusiasm for GM crops "will inhibit our ability to contribute to scientific knowledge internationally". Scientists specialising in this field, they claimed, were being forced to leave Britain to find work elsewhere.

C. But GM crops are not science. They are technological products of science. To claim, as Tony Blair has done, that those who oppose GM are "anti-science" is like claiming that those who oppose chemical weapons are anti-chemistry. But the sight of the men in white coats isn't much of a tearjerker. A far more effective form of emotional blackmail is the one deployed in the Guardian recently by Lord Taverne, the founder of the Prima PR consultancy. "The strongest argument in favour of developing GM crops," he wrote, "is the contribution they can make to reducing world poverty, hunger and disease." There's little doubt that some GM crops produce higher yields than some conventional crops, or that they can be modified to contain more nutrients, though both these developments have been over-hyped. Two projects

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have been cited everywhere: a sweet potato being engineered in Kenya to resist viruses and vitamin A-enhanced rice. The first scheme has just collapsed. Despite $6m of funding from Monsanto, the World Bank and the US government, and endless hype in the press, it turns out to have produced no improvement in virus resistance, and a decrease in yield. Just over the border in Uganda, a far cheaper conventional breeding programme has almost doubled sweet potato yields. The other project, never more than a concept, now turns out not to work even in theory - malnourished people appear not to be able to absorb vitamin A in this form. However, none of this stops Lord Taverne, or George Bush, or the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, from citing them as miracle cures for global hunger.

D. But some trials of this kind are succeeding. Despite the best efforts of the industry's boosters to confuse the two ideas, however, this does not equate to feeding the world.

E. The world has a surplus of food, but still people go hungry. They go hungry because they cannot afford to buy it. They cannot afford to buy it because the sources of wealth have been captured by landowners and corporations. The purpose of the biotech industry is to capture and monopolise the sources of wealth.

F. Now in some places governments or unselfish private researchers are producing GM crops that are free from patents, and these could well be of benefit to small farmers in the developing world. But Taverne and the other propagandists are seeking to persuade us to approve a corporate model of GM development in the rich world, in the hope that this will somehow encourage the opposite model to develop in the poor world.

G. And here we encounter the perpetually neglected truth about GM crops. The great majority are not being grown to feed local people, but to feed livestock, whose meat, milk and eggs are then sold to the world's richer consumers. The GM maize approved in Britain is no exception. If in the next 30 years there is a global food crisis, it will be because the arable land that should be producing food for humans is instead producing feed for animals.

H. The biotech companies are not interested in whether science is flourishing or whether people are starving. They simply want to make money. The best way to make money is to control the market. But before you can control the market, you must first convince the people that there's something else at stake.

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Exercise 3

Answer the questions below on the reading passage.

Questions 1- 5

Do the following statements agree with the writer's opinion in the Reading Passage?
Write:

Yes	if the statement agrees with the writer's opinion
No	if the statement contradicts the writer's opinion
Not Given	if there is no information about the writer's opinion in the passage

1. We should regret the planting of a GM crop in Britain on a commercial basis.

2. The GM industry does not want the public to know about their efforts to control the global food supply.

3. Companies that stop seeds from reproducing themselves need to be closed down.

4. The food market is the most varied of all.

5. If people do not support the use of GM crops in Britain, the science base will collapse.

Questions 6 - 10

Choose one phrase (A - G) from the list of phrases to complete each key point below. Write the appropriate letters (A - G) in boxes 6-10 on your answer sheet.

The information in the completed sentences should be an accurate summary of the points made by the writer.

NB There are more phrases A - G than sentences, so you will not use all of them.

You may use each phrase once.

6. Scientists backed by the biotech industry claim that….

7. Apparently, GM crop…

8. Rather than being science,…

9. It is claimed by Lord Taverne that…

10. One project that is quoted everywhere in support of …

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List of phrases

A. GM crops are not technological products of science.

B. Britain's lack of support for GM crops will affect its contribution to science internationally.

C. GM crops is a sweet potato being engineered in Kenya to resist viruses.

D. developing GM crops has little effect on reducing world poverty, hunger and disease.

E. specialists have had to leave Britain to find work elsewhere.

F. developing GM crops can decrease poverty, hunger and disease in the world.

G. GM crops are technological products of science.

Questions 11- 15
Complete the following sentences with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage:

11. In Uganda, a conventional breeding programme has increased _____.

12. Even though the world has a surplus of food, still people _____.

13. Most GM crops are not being produced to _____.

14. People are not able to buy the world's surplus food, because the sources of wealth are under the control of _____.

15. Companies involved in biotechnology are only interested in _____.

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Exercise 4: checking and correcting your answer sheet

In the answer sheet below there are some errors. Look at the questions and the text and correct the mistakes in the Student's Answer Sheet below.

Student's Answer Sheet

1.	No
2.	Yes
3.	Not Given
4.	Yes
5.	Yes
6.	E
7.	B
8.	A
9.	F
10.	C
11.	sweet potatoe yeilds
12.	hungry
13.	feed people
14.	of landowners and corporations
15	make money

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Exercise 5: pre-reading exercise

Read the following extracts from the reading passage below.

A. If in the next 30 years there is a global food crisis, it will be because the arable land that should be producing food for humans is instead producing feed for animals.

B. A far more effective form of emotional blackmail is the one deployed in the Guardian recently by Lord Taverne, the founder of the Prima PR consultancy.

C. They simply want to make money.

D. They cannot afford to buy it because the sources of wealth have been captured by landowners and corporations.

E. But Taverne and the other propagandists are seeking to persuade us to approve a corporate model of GM development in the rich world, in the hope that this will somehow encourage the opposite model to develop in the poor world.

F. Both arguments are, shall we say, imaginative, but in public relations all that matters is that you spin the discussion out for long enough to achieve the necessary result. And that means recruiting eminent figures to make the case for you.

G. They can prevent seeds from reproducing themselves. By buying up competing seed companies and closing them down, they can capture the food market, the biggest and most diverse market of all.

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Insert the texts A – G above in the appropriate place in the passage below.

The question is as simple as this: do you want a few corporations to monopolise the global food supply? If the answer is yes, you should welcome the announcement that the commercial planting of a genetically modified (GM) crop in Britain can go ahead. If the answer is no, you should regret it. The principal promotional effort of the genetic engineering industry is to distract us from this question. GM technology permits companies to ensure that everything we eat is owned by them. They can patent the seeds and the processes that give rise to them. They can make sure that crops can't be grown without their patented chemicals. _____**(i)**_____**.**

No one should welcome this, so the corporations must persuade us to focus on something else. At first they talked of enhancing consumer choice, but when the carrot failed, they switched to the stick. Now we are told that, unless we support the deployment of GM crops in Britain, our science base will collapse. And that, by refusing to eat GM products in Europe, we are threatening the developing world with starvation. _____**(ii)**_____**.** Last October 114 scientists, many of whom receive funding from the biotech industry, sent an open letter to the prime minister claiming that Britain's lack of enthusiasm for GM crops "will inhibit our ability to contribute to scientific knowledge internationally". Scientists specialising in this field, they claimed, were being forced to leave Britain to find work elsewhere.

But GM crops are not science. They are technological products of science. To claim, as Tony Blair has done, that those who oppose GM are "anti-science" is like claiming that those who oppose chemical weapons are anti-chemistry. But the sight of the men in white coats isn't much of a tearjerker. _____**(iii)**_____**.** "The strongest argument in favour of developing GM crops," he wrote, "is the contribution they can make to reducing world poverty, hunger and disease." There's little doubt that some GM crops produce higher yields than some conventional crops, or that they can be modified to contain more nutrients, though both these developments have been over-hyped. Two projects have been cited everywhere: a sweet potato being engineered in Kenya to resist viruses, and vitamin A-enhanced rice. The first scheme has just collapsed. Despite $6m of funding from Monsanto, the World Bank and the US government, and endless hype in the press, it turns out to have produced no improvement in virus resistance, and a decrease in yield. Just over the border in Uganda, a far cheaper conventional breeding programme has almost doubled sweet potato yields. The other project, never more than a concept, now turns out not to work even in theory - malnourished people appear not to be able to absorb vitamin A in this form. However, none of this stops Lord Taverne, or George Bush, or the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, from citing them as miracle cures for global hunger.

But some trials of this kind are succeeding. Despite the best efforts of the industry's boosters to confuse the two ideas, however, this does not equate to feeding the world.

The world has a surplus of food, but still people go hungry. They go hungry because they cannot afford to buy it. _____**(iv)**_____**.** The purpose of the biotech industry is to capture and monopolise the sources of wealth.

Now in some places governments or unselfish private researchers are producing GM crops that are free from patents, and these could well be of benefit to small farmers in the developing world. _____**(v)**_____**.**

And here we encounter the perpetually neglected truth about GM crops. The great majority are not being grown to feed local people, but to feed livestock, whose meat, milk and eggs are then sold to the world's richer consumers. The GM maize approved in Britain is no exception**.** _____**(vi)**_____**.**

The biotech companies are not interested in whether science is flourishing or whether people are starving. _____**(vii)**_____**.** The best way to make money is to control the market. But before you can control the market, you must first convince the people that there's something else at stake.

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Exercise 6: understanding paragraph headings

Decide why each paragraph heading below is incorrect and, if possible, correct it.

Paragraph A

- Support for control of world's food supply by genetic engineering industry

Paragraph B

- Writer in favour of GM technology

Paragraph C

- GM sweet potato success in Kenya

Paragraph D

- All GM food experiments failing

Paragraph E

- Biotech industry desperately wants to assist the poor

Paragraph F

- Patent-free foods for rich countries

Paragraph G

- GM crops are not for animals but humans

Paragraph H

- Profit not the aim of biotech companies

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Exercise 7: vocabulary development

In the list of words below decide which alternative has the same meaning as the word in the text.

1. **monopolise:** (a) make more open (b) dominate completely (c) modernise (d) improve

2. **principal:** (a) main (b) least important (c) significant (d) essential

3. **ensure:** (a) guarantee (b) promise (c) insure (d) attempt to make sure

4. **diverse:** (a) dissimilar (b) varied (c) uniform (d) different

5. **enhance:** (a) increase (b) improve (c) worsen (d) lessen

6. **imaginative:** (a) artistic (b) ingenious (c) intelligent (d) not very clever

7. **inhibit:** (a) slow up (b) hinder (c) ease (d) advance

8. **eminent:** (a) renowned (b) known (c) unknown (d) knowledgeable

9. **tearjerker:** (a) a sad film (b) something that makes you sad (c) something that makes you happy (d) someone who annoys other people

10. **deploy:** (a) use ineffectively (b) move away (c) argue (d) use effectively

11. **conventional:** (a) normal (b) unusual (c) out-of-date (d) tired

12. **cite:** (a) confirm (b) state clearly (c) mention as an example (d) hide

Now look again and see if any alternatives contradict the word in the text. Not all of the words have contradictions.

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