In the Academic Reading section of the IELTS exam, you might be asked to decide which person from the text holds a certain opinion. This is one type of ‘Matching information’ task. There will always be a specific reason in the text for each answer.

Read the following text about the Ebola virus and then mark statements 1-5 below with A, B or C:

The Ebola virus

The human Ebola virus, first noticed in Zaire (now called the Republic of Congo) and Sudan in 1976, is a deeply unpleasant disease causing haemorrhagic fever. Being both highly infectious and contagious, Ebola causes significant concern for public health and, in the case of some strains, it can have a mortality rate of up to 90%. It is believed to be carried by fruit bats, who then transmit the disease to other animals. Ebola hits in sporadic outbreaks and it is thought to be transferred to humans through hunters coming into contact with infected animal carcasses.

There is currently no vaccine against, or cure for, Ebola. Any outbreak of the virus is contained with the use of quarantine and travel restrictions to affected areas. Jeremy McDonald, professor of tropical medicine at Cambridge University, criticises this method of dealing with the disease as being ineffective and insufficient. He questions whether people in the West are doing enough to find appropriate treatments for Ebola. McDonald has stated ‘it’s simply wrong to say that new treatments could not both save people’s lives and reduce transmission’. He further argues that if Ebola were a threat to the developed world (it has so far only affected parts of sub-Saharan Africa) it would be the subject of far greater research.

Paul Heyman, a professor at the Berlin School of Tropical Medicine, disagrees. He points out that any Ebola drug could have possible side effects. Although the virus has a very high mortality rate, Heyman asks whether it is ethical to provide a treatment when you could be putting survivors at risk too. In his opinion it would be unethical to introduce any such drug too quickly for fear of any unintended consequences. This is strongly disputed by many, including Jeremy McDonald, who argues that doing nothing could lead to a spike in avoidable Ebola fatalities.

The medical director of U.S. pharmaceutical company BioDirect, Alistair Cummins, argues that a drug to treat Ebola ‘just would not be commercially viable to develop’ because the virus has, until now, affected relatively few people. He thinks that once pharmaceutical companies believe that it will be worth their while to develop drugs they will do so. According to Cummins, the U.S. government could be a potential client for any future Ebola drug due to national security concerns over potential bioterrorism.
Questions 1–5

Look at the following items (questions 1–5) and the list of names below.

Match each item with the person who holds that view.

Write the correct letter A–C on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

Who:

1. is sceptical of the current method of treating Ebola?

2. downplays the number of deaths caused by Ebola?

3. is concerned with more than just the medical effects of Ebola?

4. is concerned about curbing the spread of Ebola?

5. is concerned that treating Ebola in the wrong way could inadvertently cause problems?

Names:

A. Jeremy McDonald
B. Paul Heyman
C. Alistair Cummins

Answer sheet

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Please note:

This is not an extract from an official IELTS past paper or sample test. It is in the style of the questions you may be given in the exam.

In the real IELTS exam, the ‘Matching information’ task may not be the first question type in the Academic Reading test.
**Answers**

Justification from the text is also provided.

1. A. McDonald ‘criticises this method of dealing with the disease’.
2. C. Cummins argues that ‘the virus has, until now, affected relatively few people’.
3. C. Cummins mentions ‘national security’ as a concern.
4. A. McDonald believes new treatments could ‘reduce transmission’ of the virus.
5. B. Heyman is worried about ‘any unintended consequences’ of introducing an Ebola drug too quickly.