

IELTS
PRACTICE READING TEST 5

Time allowed: 60 minutes
Number of questions: 41

Instructions

WRITE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER SHEET

The test is in 3 sections:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| - Reading Passage 1 | Questions 1 – 13 |
| - Reading Passage 2 | Questions 14 – 28 |
| - Reading Passage 3 | Questions 29 – 41 |

Remember to answer all the questions. If you are having trouble with a question, skip it and return to it later.

READING PASSAGE 1

You are advised to spend about 15 minutes on **Questions 1 – 13** which are based on Reading Passage 1.

Building houses out of earth

On every continent, one can find houses or other buildings made of the clay-bearing soils dug up from the ground. In some places, earth building technologies have been around for a very long time. In the southwestern United States, for example, American Indian tribes such as the Pueblo people have been building earth houses and other earth structures for thousands of years. And in China's Xinjiang Province, archaeologists have found entire earth villages dating back over 2500 years. While building houses out of earth is certainly not new, it has never been very common because of the preference for other materials.

In some parts of the world, however, there has been renewed growth in the popularity of earth building. Two such places are Australia and New Zealand, where the practice did not exist until the relatively recent arrival of European settlers. It is estimated that there are now over 2100 houses made of earth in Australia, and 35% of them were built within the past decade. An equal proportion of the 550 earthen structures in New Zealand were built in the last five years. This trend appears to reflect growing earth construction in North America and Western Europe.

Why the renewed interest in earth building? The building material itself is probably the reason. Earth is available virtually anywhere, literally under our feet. And unlike many other building materials that typically require treatment with chemical preservatives, earth is non-toxic. This cannot be said for commercially sold timber and brick products.

Another well-known characteristic of earth houses is their passive solar capacity – their ability to retain warmth in the winter and keep cool in the summer without the need for dedicated solar panels, plumbing or fossil fuel energy sources. This comes entirely from the effective way in which the earthen walls act to store heat.

Some people claim that earth buildings are cheaper to build than conventional brick or wooden houses, the two most common types in Australia and New Zealand. This appears to be true, according to data from the New Zealand Construction Quarterly. Assuming walls make up 15% of the cost of building a house, then the use of earthen walls would bring a total saving of 10% over timber frame construction and 38% over brick.

But perhaps most attractive of all is the unique atmosphere provided by earth houses, with their natural colours, their acoustic properties and thick, solid walls.

Not all earth building is done the same way. The technologies used vary from region to region, depending on the types of earth available and local building traditions. They are also undergoing constant study and improvement, with a view to bettering resistance to earthquakes and weather.

In New Zealand, stabilisers such as cement, sand, straw, even cow dung, have been found to make a stronger and longer-lasting material when added to earth. The downside of using particularly effective stabilisers like cement is that they can be expensive and their manufacture may create much pollution. Thus their use should be kept to a minimum.

Those who choose to build with earth should also be careful about using paints or other coatings on the surface of the earth walls. Some coatings have the effect of preventing the walls from ‘breathing.’ When this happens any water that gets absorbed into the walls may not have a way of escaping and so gets trapped. This may lead to cracks or other signs of early deterioration of the earthen material.

Question 1

Choose the appropriate letter (**A – D**) and write it in box 1 on your answer sheet.

1. In ‘Building houses out of earth’, the writer’s main aim is to ...
 - A** provide an overview of earth building.
 - B** promote the building of earth houses.
 - C** review the history of earth building.
 - D** examine the variety of earth buildings.

Question 2 and 3

2. Name **TWO** places where earth building practices have existed for a long time.

Write the names of the places in box 2 on your answer sheet.

3. Name **THREE** places where earth building is becoming more popular.

Write the names of the places in box 3 on your answer sheet.

Questions 4 – 7

In ‘Building houses out of earth’, the writer mentions several reasons why some people prefer earth houses. Read the list of reasons below and choose **FOUR** that are referred to in the passage.

Write your answers in boxes 4 – 7 on your answer sheet.

- A** cost of construction
- B** resistance to earthquakes
- C** stability of earth

- D heat storage capacity
- E availability of materials
- F construction technology
- G appearance and character

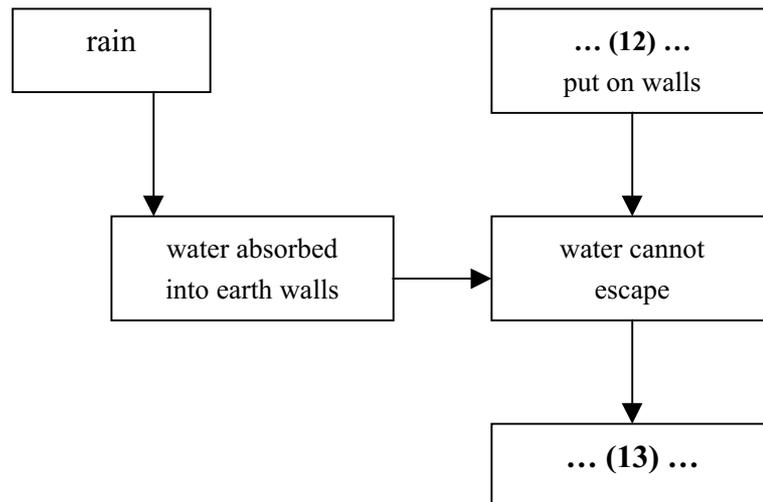
Question 8 – 11

Using a **NUMBER** or **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**, answer the following questions. Write your answers in boxes 8 – 11 on your answer sheet.

8. What percentage of earth buildings in New Zealand were constructed in the past 5 years?
9. Name **ONE** building material that contains chemical preservatives.
10. Name the feature of earth houses that enables them to keep temperatures low in summer.
11. Name **TWO** substances that can lengthen the life of earth as a building material.

Question 12 and 13

Complete the flow chart below. Choose **ONE** or **TWO** words from the passage for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 12 – 13 on your answer sheet.



READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 25 minutes on Questions 14 – 28 which are based on Reading Passage 2.

Book-carrying behaviour

Psychologists have long observed that women and men perform certain physical actions in different ways. One such action is the carrying of books. Howard and White (1966) maintain that there is a 'masculine' style and a 'feminine' style of book-carrying and that one's sex determines which of these styles one will use.

In observations of over 3600 university students in North and South America, Howard and White recorded five styles of book-carrying. These styles, labelled 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', and 'E', were then categorised into two main types: Type I and Type II. Howard and White's categorisations are given in detail in the box on the next page.

Type I

- A. The books cover part of the front of the body. The books' short edges are parallel to the ground and rest against the body. One arm is wrapped around the books, with the elbow bent and the fingers wrapped around the books' long edges.
- B. The same as A above, except both arms are wrapped around the books, which are usually more centred in front of the body.

Type II

- C. The books are held at the side of the body and so do not cover any part of the front. The arms are kept straight and the books are held, in one hand, from above. The books' long edges are parallel to the ground.
- D. As C above, but the books are held from below, with the fingers wrapped around the lower edges.
- E. As D above, except the elbows are bent and the books are raised along the side of the body.

Other

Positions characteristic of neither Type I nor Type II.

Howard and White's findings were that men and women differ markedly in the way they carry books. They reported that some 82% of females use Type I methods, while 16% use Type II. For men, Type II methods were used by 96% whereas only 3% used the 'feminine' style.

A smaller study in the UK by Haldern and Matthews (1969) confirmed the distinction

in book-carrying styles, and went on to explain this difference in terms of male and female body shape and strength. The researchers claimed morpho-anatomical features, such as hip and shoulder width, as well as the strength of the fingers and hands, were the main determinants of carrying styles for males and females.

Subsequent research into the relationship of age to carrying behaviour (Namimitsu & Matthews, 1971) found that there was little or no difference between the sexes among kindergarten children, and that a large majority of children of either sex carried books in the manner of Type II. Wilson (1972) found that by primary school, differences began to emerge along the lines of Howard and White's 'feminine' and 'masculine' styles – that is, girls' carrying positions began to diverge from boys'. Children in the 14 –16 age group were found to display the greatest difference in book-carrying behaviour, with some 91% of girls using Type I methods (Agfitz, 1972a). In his review of the research done up to that time, Wilson (1976) stressed that in all the studies into developmental aspects of the behaviour, male carrying behaviour remained broadly consistent throughout the age groups, including the university students who were the subjects of Howard and White's (1966) study. Studies of older adult age groups showed a decreasing, yet enduring, gap in styles as people aged. With increasing age, increasing numbers of women were shown to abandon Type I in favour of Type II (Agfitz, 1972b).

Looking at other possible explanations for these differences, Agfitz (1973) offered the notion of social pressure on children to conform to behaviours 'typical' of their sex. This is especially the case in the context of secondary school, where children are pressured by their fellow students to conform to behaviours that society considers normal.

In the early 1990s, this notion of book-carrying behaviour as gender-specific came under review. Vilberberg and Zhou (1991), in making the first large-scale observational study since Howard and White (1966), found that women of university age and older were as likely to use Type II methods as Type I. Observing some 3750 university students and adult public-library users in Holland and Belgium, the researchers found that while 92% of males exhibited Type II behaviour, only 52% of females used Type I methods. Some 47% carried books in the manner of Type II. Most interestingly, of this latter proportion, more than three-quarters used style 'E'.

The notion of 'feminine' and 'masculine' book-carrying styles was suddenly thrown into doubt, as Chadamitsky (1993) and others argued that carrying behaviour could not be claimed to be gender-specific if females were not consistent in the styles they displayed. Male carrying behaviour, even in the Vilberberg and Zhou study, remained a virtual constant, and so could be labelled 'typical' for males. But because this style was well shared by females, it could not be called 'masculine'. Chadamitsky went on to argue that the original interpretation of Howard and White's (1966) study – that there were clear 'feminine' and 'masculine' styles – set the course of subsequent

research in that direction. Future research, he argued, should look not at why females and males display different book-carrying behaviours, but why males are uniform and females are more apt to vary.

gender-specific: particular to either males or females

Question 14 – 17

Classify the following book-carrying styles as:

- A Style 'A'
- B Style 'B'
- C Style 'C'
- D Style 'D'
- E Style 'E'

OR

- O Other

Write the appropriate letters **A – O** in boxes 14 – 17 on your answer sheet.

Question 18 – 24

Below is a list of research conclusions mentioned in Reading Passage 2. Indicate which researcher(s) was/were responsible for each research conclusion by writing their **NAMES AND PUBLICATION YEARS** in boxes 18 – 24 on your answer sheet.

Research conclusions

Example

Types I and II can reasonably be labelled 'feminine' and 'masculine' behaviours, respectively.

Answer: Howard and White (1966)

18. The influence on children to fit into socially accepted roles may contribute to differences in carrying behaviour.
19. Young teenage girls were most likely to use Type I methods.
20. 'Feminine' and 'masculine' carrying styles may be accounted for by anatomical differences in female and male bodies.
21. There is no consistent male-female difference in book-carrying behaviour in early childhood.
22. Males of all ages appear to be consistent in their carrying behaviour.
23. Close to half of women carry in such a way that books cover no part of the front of their body.
24. Older women are less likely than younger women to display Type I methods.

Questions 25 – 28

Do the following statements reflect the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 2? In

boxes 25 – 28 write:

- YES** if the statement reflects the writer's claims
NO if the statement contradicts the writer
NOT GIVEN if there is no information about this in the passage

25. Researchers in the 1990s suggested the notion that social, rather than physical, factors better explain differences in book-carrying style.
26. In the Vilberberg and Zhou (1991) study, the majority of women using Type II methods used style 'E'
27. Vilberberg and Zhou's (1991) findings weaken Howard and White's (1966) conclusions about gender-specific book-carrying behaviour.
28. Chadamitsky (1993) suggested that, in the future, research ought to be directed at why both male and female book-carrying behaviours vary.

READING PASSAGE 3

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes on **Question 29 – 41** which are based on Reading Passage 3.

Television News

Critics of television news often complain that news programs do not make enough of an effort to inform the viewer, that the explanations they give of events are too short, too simple, lacking depth, or misleading. Critics say that when a person wants to get a comprehensive report of an event, he or she must turn to a newspaper; television news offers only simplified stories rather than denser and more detailed accounts.

Television news, argue the critics, concentrates mostly on stories of visual interest such as transport disasters or wars, leaving important but visually uninteresting stories such as government budget and legislation stories with little or no coverage. This leads to the claim that the selection of stories to be presented on television news tends less toward information and more toward entertainment. Thus, television news, according to this view, presents an image of the world that is quite subjective.

The reporting of political stories on television, in particular, is often criticised for failing to be either comprehensive or fair to the viewer. The main complaint is not that the news is politically biased, but that the limitations of the medium cause even important stories to be covered in as little as 60 seconds of broadcasting time. A politician is seen on the news to speak for between 10 and 30 seconds, for example, when in fact he or she may have been speaking for many times longer. Critics complain that viewers get used to seeing such abbreviated stories and thus become less inclined to watch longer, more thorough discussions of issues. Indeed, politicians, now long accustomed to speaking to television cameras, adjust their words to suit short news stories, because making long, elaborate arguments no longer works. Thus television not only reports on politics, but has become a major influence on it.

Such views stand in contrast to those of US political scientist Ronald Butcher, who believes that television news is too complex and that it provides too much information. According to Butcher, the complexity of the presentation of television news programs prevents half of the audience from truly understanding many news stories. Moreover, it is assumed by news broadcasters that the viewer already knows much of the information that underlies particular stories. But this assumption, says Butcher, is inaccurate. The same can be said about how well viewers are able to interpret the importance of events.

Shoemaker and Lvov (1986) carried out research that showed that the ordinary television viewer 'fails to understand the main points in two-thirds of all major TV news stories'. Accounts of political events appear to offer the most difficulty for viewers because they make references to connected events and use terminology that

only some people could readily comprehend. The researchers recommend that news programs make a greater effort to aid the viewer in understanding the events, no matter how many times the stories have been told before.

Regardless of how one feels about television news, research has left no doubt that it is the primary source of information for the vast majority of people in societies where television sets are widely available. In Australia, studies have shown that not only do most people get their news from television (see figure 1), but an increasing number of people regard television news as ‘accurate and reliable.’

By what criteria, then, does the viewing public determine its level of confidence in television news?

In Australia, Johnson and Davis (1989) surveyed people’s feelings about television news, as compared to newspapers and radio news. Although radio was believed by most people to be fastest in the delivery of the latest news, television news was rated first for such criteria as comprehensiveness of reporting and clarity of explanation. Similar research dating from 1966 put trust in newspapers ahead of television news for most of the same criteria.

The growing acceptance of television news as an information source that is reliable and trustworthy is reflected in the declining sales of newspapers in most modern societies. In Australia, newspaper circulation had dropped to 400 per thousand of population by 1992 from 576 per thousand some 26 years earlier, when the first television broadcasts were made in that country. Similar effects have been felt in the United States, where marketing surveys have revealed that working women – an important demographic group – have overwhelmingly embraced television news and rarely seek information from newspaper.

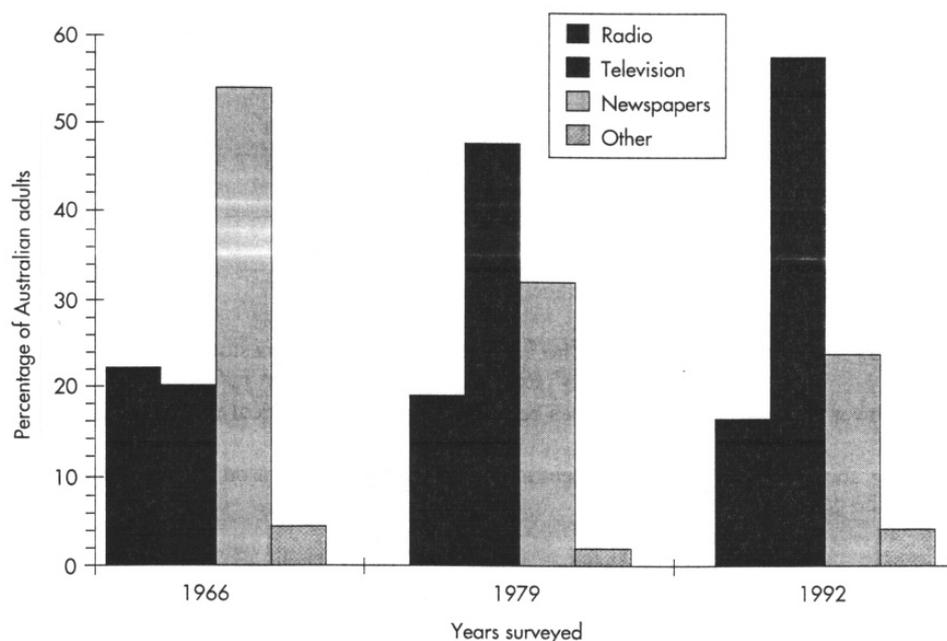


Figure 1: Survey question asked of Australian adults: ‘What is your main source of news?’ (Source: AdJournal Australia)

Questions 29 – 34

Complete the partial summary of 'Television News' below. Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from Reading Passage 3 for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 29 – 34 on your answer sheet.

Critics of television news believe that newspapers are superior because they offer ... (29) ... versions of events. Indeed, news stories that cannot be presented in a ... (30) ... way are largely ignored by television news, which focuses primarily on events that have ... (31) ... However, research clearly shows that the public is turning increasingly to television as an information source, and that more people believe it offers better coverage of events in terms of such factors as ... (32) ... and ... (33) ... Indeed, one significant segment of the population moving away from printed news and toward televised news is ... (34) ...

Questions 35 – 38

'Television News' discusses several ways in which the TV viewer relates to news broadcasts. Decide which of the people (A, B or C) hold the views expressed below.

- A Ronald Butcher
- B Shoemaker and Lvov
- C television news critics

Write your answers in boxes 35 – 38 on your answer sheet.

Example

The viewer is presented with too much information.

Answer: A

- 35. The viewer is unlikely to seek comprehensive political coverage.
- 36. The viewer is often unfamiliar with the background of certain news stories.
- 37. The viewer may not understand stories because of unfamiliar political vocabulary.
- 38. A story about a motor vehicle accident is more likely to be shown on television news than a story about the passing of a nes law.

Questions 39 – 41

Complete the sentences below with words taken from Reading Passage 3. Use **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD** for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 39 – 41 on your answer sheet.

- 39. The influence of television news has changed the way _____ express themselves.
- 40. Australians rely on _____ for the most up-to-date news.
- 41. The proportion of Australians who considered _____ their main source of news

dropped by more than half from 1966 to 1992.