

# IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 149

## Reading Passage 1

*You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-13, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 149 Reading Passage Young Adult novels below.*

### Young Adult Novels

**{A}** Recent years have seen a barrage of dystopian Young Adult novels grow in popularity almost overnight- from *The Hunger Games* to *The Maze Runner*, *Divergent*, and *The Knife of Never Letting Go*. These novels, set in post-apocalyptic, totalitarian or otherwise ruthless and dehumanising worlds, have gained such momentum that the trend has seeped into the film and TV industry as well, with multimillion dollar movie adaptations and popular TV series gracing the big and small screen. But what is it about dystopian stories that makes them so appealing to readers and audiences alike?

**{B}** Dystopias are certainly nothing new. The word “dystopia” itself, meaning “bad place” (from the Greek *dys* and *topos*), has been around since at least the 19th century, and Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) and Orwell’s *1984* (1949), commonly regarded as the first dystopian novels that fit firmly into the genre, were published more than 75 years ago. Even the first Young Adult dystopian novel is older than 20 – Lois Lawry’s *The Giver*, which came out in 1993. While these are individual examples from previous decades, however, one would be hard-pressed to find a Young Adult shelf in any bookstore nowadays that isn’t stocked with dozens of dystopian titles.

**{C}** According to film critic Dana Stevens, it is the similarities that can be drawn between dystopian settings and the daily lives of teenagers that make Young Adult dystopian stories so captivating: the high school experience involves the same social structure as the *Hunger Games* arena, for example, or the faction-divided world of *Divergent*. Teenagers might not literally have to fight each other to the death or go through horrendous trials to join a virtue based faction for the rest of their lives, but there’s something in each story that connects to their own backgrounds. The “cutthroat race for high school popularity” might feel like an “annual televised fight”, and the pressure to choose a clique at school bears a strong resemblance to Tris’s faction dilemma in *Divergent*.

**{D}** Justin Scholes’s and Jon Ostenson’s 2013 study reports similar findings, identifying themes such as “inhumanity and isolation”, the struggle to establish an identity and the development of platonic and romantic relationships as alluring agents. Deconstructing a score of popular Young Adult dystopian novels released between 2007-2011, Scholes and Ostenson argue that the topics explored by dystopian literature are appealing to teenagers because they are “an appropriate fit with the intellectual changes that occur during adolescence”; as teenagers gradually grow into adults, they develop an interest in social issues and current affairs.

Dystopian novels, according to author and book critic Dave Astor, feel honest in that regard as they do not patronise their readers, nor do they attempt to sugar-coat reality.

**{E}** All of this still does not explain why this upsurge in Young Adult dystopian literature is happening now, though. Bestselling author Naomi Klein, offers a different explanation: the dystopian trend, she says, is a “worrying sign” of times to come. What all these dystopian stories have in common is that they all assume that “environmental catastrophe” is not only imminent, but also completely inevitable. Moral principles burgeon through these works of fiction, particularly for young people, as they are the ones who will bear the brunt of climate change. Young Adult author Todd Mitchell makes a similar point, suggesting that the bleak futures portrayed in modern Young Adult literature are a response to “social anxiety” brought forth by pollution and over consumption.

**{F}** The threat of natural disasters is not the only reason Young Adult dystopian novels are so popular today, however. As author Claudia Gray notes, what has also changed in recent years is humanity’s approach to personal identity and young people’s roles in society. Adolescents, she says, are increasingly dragooned into rigid moulds through “increased standardised testing, increased homework levels, etc.” Young Adult dystopian novels come into play because they present protagonists who refuse to be defined by someone else, role models who battle against the status quo.

**{G}** So, how long is this Young Adult dystopian trend going to last? If The Guardian is to be believed, it’s already been replaced by a new wave of “gritty” realism as seen in the likes of *The Fault in Our Stars*, by John Green. Profits have certainly dwindled for dystopian film franchises such as *Divergent*. This hasn’t stopped film companies from scheduling new releases, however, and TV series such as *The 100* are still on air. Perhaps the market for dystopian novels has stagnated, only time will tell. One thing is for certain, however: the changes the trend has effected on Young Adult literature are here to stay.

## Questions 1-7

*Reading Passage 1 has seven paragraphs, labelled A-G. Choose the correct heading for paragraphs A-G from the list of headings below.*

### List of Headings

- (I) Teens are increasingly urged to conform
- (II) The dystopian model scrutinised
- (III) Dystopian novels now focus on climate change
- (IV) The original dystopias
- (V) Dystopian literature’s accomplishments will outlive it
- (VI) A score of dystopian novels has taken over Young Adult shelves
- (VII) The roots of dystopia can be found in teenage experiences
- (VIII) Dystopia is already dead
- (IX) Dystopias promote ethical thinking

- (1) Paragraph A
- (2) Paragraph B
- (3) Paragraph C
- (4) Paragraph D
- (5) Paragraph E
- (6) Paragraph F
- (7) Paragraph G

### Questions 8-12

Answer the questions below with words taken from Reading Passage 1. Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

- (8) According to the writer, what was the first dystopian novel?
- (9) According to the writer, which author initiated the Young Adult dystopian genre?
- (10) How does Dave Astor describe dystopian novels?
- (11) According to Naomi Klein, which element is present in all dystopian novels?
- (12) According to Claudia Gray, things like increased standardised testing and homework levels are a threat to what?

### Question 13

Choose the correct Letter, A, B, C or D.

**Question 13** Which is the best title for Reading Passage 1?

- (A) A history of Young Adult dystopian literature
- (B) The wane of the dystopian phenomenon
- (C) How dystopian fiction has shaped the world
- (D) The draw of Young Adult dystopian fiction

## Reading Passage 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14-26, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 149 Reading Passage IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE below.

### IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE

#### *The search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence*

*The question of whether we are alone in the Universe has haunted humanity for centuries, but we may now stand poised on the brink of the answer to that question, as we search for radio signals from other intelligent civilisations. This search, often known by the acronym SETI (search for extraterrestrial intelligence), is a difficult one. Although groups around the world have been searching intermittently for three decades, it is only now that we have reached the level of technology where we can make a determined attempt to search all nearby stars for any sign of life.*

**{A}** The primary reason for the search is basic curiosity - the same curiosity about the natural world that drives all pure science. We want to know whether we are alone in the Universe. We want to know whether life evolves naturally if given the right conditions, or whether there is something very special about the Earth to have fostered the variety of life forms that we see around us on the planet. The simple detection of a radio signal will be sufficient to answer this most basic of all questions. In this sense, SETI is another cog in the machinery of pure science which is continually pushing out the horizon of our knowledge. However, there are other reasons for being interested in whether life exists elsewhere. For example, we have had civilization on Earth for perhaps only a few thousand years, and the threats of nuclear war and pollution over the last few decades have told us that our survival may be tenuous. Will we last another two thousand years or will we wipe ourselves out? Since the lifetime of a planet like ours is several billion years, we can expect that, if other civilisations do survive in our galaxy, their ages will range from zero to several billion years. Thus any other civilisation that we hear from is likely to be far older, on average, than ourselves. The mere existence of such a civilisation will tell us that long-term survival is possible, and gives us some cause for optimism. It is even possible that the older civilisation may pass on the benefits of their experience in dealing with threats to survival such as nuclear war and global pollution, and other threats that we haven't yet discovered.

**{B}** In discussing whether we are alone, most SETI scientists adopt two ground rules. First, UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects) are generally ignored since most scientists don't consider the evidence for them to be strong enough to bear serious consideration (although it is also important to keep an open mind in case any really convincing evidence emerges in the future). Second, we make a very conservative assumption that we are looking for a life form that is pretty well like us, since if it differs radically from us we may well not recognise it as a life form, quite apart from whether we are able to communicate with it. In other words, the life form we are looking for may well have two green heads and seven fingers, but it will nevertheless resemble us in that it should communicate with its fellows, be interested in the Universe, live on a planet orbiting a star like our Sun, and perhaps most restrictively, have a chemistry, like us, based on carbon and water.

{C} Even when we make these assumptions, our understanding of other life forms is still severely limited. We do not even know, for example, how many stars have planets, and we certainly do not know how likely it is that life will arise naturally, given the right conditions. However, when we look at the 100 billion stars in our galaxy (the Milky Way), and 100 billion galaxies in the observable Universe, it seems inconceivable that at least one of these planets does not have a life form on it; in fact, the best educated guess we can make, using the little that we do know about the conditions for carbon-based life, leads us to estimate that perhaps one in 100,000 stars might have a life-bearing planet orbiting it. That means that our nearest neighbours are perhaps 100 light years away, which is almost next door in astronomical terms.

{D} An alien civilization could choose many different ways of sending information across the galaxy, but many of these either require too much energy, or else are severely attenuated while traversing the vast distances across the galaxy. It turns out that, for a given amount of transmitted power, radio waves in the frequency range 1000 to 3000 MHz travel the greatest distance, and so all searches to date have concentrated on looking for radio waves in this frequency range. So far there have been a number of searches by various groups around the world, including Australian searches using the radio telescope at Parkes, New South Wales. Until now there have not been any detections from the few hundred stars which have been searched. The scale of the searches has been increased dramatically since 1992, when the US Congress voted NASA \$10 million per year for ten years to conduct a thorough search for extraterrestrial life. Much of the money in this project is being spent on developing the special hardware needed to search many frequencies at once. The project has two parts. One part is a targeted search using the world's largest radio telescopes, the American-operated telescope in Arecibo, Puerto Rico and the French telescope in Nancy in France. This part of the project is searching the nearest 1000 likely stars with high sensitivity for signals in the frequency range 1000 to 3000 MHz. The other part of the project is an undirected search which is monitoring all of space with a lower sensitivity, using the smaller antennas of NASA's Deep Space Network.

{E} There is considerable debate over how we should react if we detect a signal from an alien civilization. Everybody agrees that we should not reply immediately. Quite apart from the impracticality of sending a reply over such large distances at short notice, it raises a host of ethical questions that would have to be addressed by the global community before any reply could be sent. Would the human race face culture shock if faced with a superior and much older civilisation? Luckily, there is no urgency about this. The stars being searched are hundreds of light years away, so it takes hundreds of years for their signal to reach us, and a further few hundred years for our reply to reach them. It's not important, then, if there's a delay of a few years, or decades, while the human race debates the question of whether to reply, and perhaps carefully drafts a reply.

### Questions 18-20:

*Answer the questions below.*

*Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the passage for each answer.*



Write your answers in boxes 18-20 on your answer sheet.

(18) What is the life expectancy of Earth?

(19) What kind of signals from other intelligent civilisations are SETI scientists searching for?

(20) How many stars are the world's most powerful radio telescopes searching?

### Questions 21-26

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in Reading Passage 2?

In boxes 21-26 on your answer sheet, write

YES	if the statement agrees with the writer
NO	if the statement does not agree with the writer
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information about this in the passage

(21) Alien civilisations may be able to help the human race to overcome serious problems.

(22) SETI scientists are trying to find a life form that resembles humans in many ways.

(23) The Americans and Australians have cooperated on joint research projects.

(24) So far SETI scientists have picked up radio signals from several stars.

(25) The NASA project attracted criticism from some members of Congress.

(26) If a signal from outer space is received, it will be important to respond promptly.

### Reading Passage 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 27-40, which are based on the IELTSFever Academic IELTS Reading Test 149 Reading Passage *Endangered Languages* below.

## Endangered Languages

{A}. 'Never mind whales, save the languages', says Peter Monaghan, a graduate of the Australian National University. Worried about the loss of rainforests and the ozone. At linguistics meetings in the US, where is the layer? Well, neither of those is doing any worse than the

endangered-language issue has of late been a large majority of the 6,000 to 7,000 languages that are something of a flavour of the month, they remain in use on Earth. One-half of the survivors will show growing evidence that not all approaches to the almost certainly be gone by 2050, while 40% more preservation of languages will be particularly will probably be well on their way out. In their place, helpful. Some linguists are boasting, for example, almost all humans will speak one of a handful of more and more sophisticated means of capturing mega languages – Mandarin, English, Spanish.

**{B}**. Linguists know what causes languages to disappear, but less often remarked is what happens on the way to disappearance: languages' vocabularies, grammars and expressive potential all diminish as one language is replaced by another. 'Say a community goes over from speaking a traditional Aboriginal language to speaking a creole\*,' says Australian Nick Evans, a leading authority on Aboriginal languages, 'you leave behind a language where there's a very fine vocabulary for the landscape. All that is gone in a creole. You've just got a few words like 'gum tree' or whatever. As speakers become less able to express the wealth of knowledge that has filled ancestors' lives with meaning over millennia, it's no wonder that communities tend to become demoralised.'

**{C}**. If the losses are so huge, why are relatively few linguists combating the situation? Australian linguists, at least, have achieved a great deal in terms of preserving traditional languages. Australian governments began in the 1970s to support an initiative that has resulted in good documentation of most of the 130 remaining Aboriginal languages. In England, another Australian, Peter Austin, has directed one of the world's most active efforts to limit language loss, at the University of London. Austin heads a programme that has trained many documentary linguists in England as well as in language-loss hotspots such as West Africa and South America.

**{D}**. At linguistics meetings in the US, where the endangered-language issue has of late been something of a flavour of the month, there is growing evidence that not all approaches to the preservation of languages will be particularly helpful. Some linguists are boasting, for example, of more and more sophisticated means of capturing languages: digital recording and storage, and internet and mobile phone technologies. But these are encouraging the 'quick dash' style of recording trip: fly-in, switch on a digital recorder, fly home, download to the hard drive, and store gathered material for future research. That's not quite what some endangered-language specialists have been seeking for more than 30 years. Most loud and untiring has been Michael Krauss, of the University of Alaska. He has often complained that linguists are playing with non-essentials while most of their raw data is disappearing.

**{E}**. Who is to blame? That prominent linguist Noam Chomsky, Krauss and many others. Or, more precisely, they blame those linguists who have been obsessed with his approaches. Linguists who go out into communities to study, document and describe languages, argue that theoretical linguists, who draw conclusions about how languages work, have had so much influence that linguistics has largely ignored the continuing disappearance of languages. Chomsky, from his post at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been the great man of theoretical linguistics for far longer than he has been known as a political commentator. His

landmark work of 1957 argues that all languages exhibit certain universal grammatical features, encoded in the human mind. American linguists, in particular, have focused largely on theoretical concerns ever since, even while doubts have mounted about Chomsky's universal.

**{F}**. Austin and Co. are in no doubt that because languages are unique, even if they do tend to have common underlying features, creating dictionaries and grammars requires prolonged and dedicated work. This requires that documentary linguists observe not only languages' structural subtleties, but also related social, historical and political factors. Such work calls for persistent funding of field scientists who may sometimes have to venture into harsh and even hazardous places. Once there, they may face difficulties such as community suspicion. As Nick Evans says, a community who speak an endangered language may have reasons to doubt or even oppose efforts to preserve it. They may have seen support and funding for such work come and go. They may have given up using the language with their children, believing they will benefit from speaking a more widely understood one. Plenty of students continue to be drawn to the intellectual thrill of linguistics fieldwork. That's all the more reason to clear away barriers, contend, Evans, Austin and others.

**{G}**. The highest barrier, they agree, is that the linguistics profession's emphasis on theory gradually wears down the enthusiasm of linguists who work in communities. Chomsky disagrees. He has recently begun to speak in support of language preservation. But his linguistic, as opposed to humanitarian, the argument is, let's say, unsentimental: the loss of a language, he states, 'is much more of a tragedy for linguists whose interests are mostly theoretical, like me, than for linguists who focus on describing specific languages, since it means the permanent loss of the most relevant data for general theoretical work'. At the moment, few institutions award doctorates for such work, and that's the way it should be, he reasons. In linguistics, as in every other discipline, he believes that good descriptive work requires thorough theoretical understanding and should also contribute to building new theories. But that's precisely what documentation does, objects Evans. The process of immersion in a language, to extract, analyse and sum it up, deserves a PhD because it is 'the most demanding intellectual task a linguist can engage in'.

### Questions 27-32

*Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer In Reading Passage 3?*

*In boxes 27-32 on your answer sheet, write*

YES	if the statement agrees with the writer
NO	if the statement does not agree with the writer
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information about this in the passage



- (27). By 2050 only a small number of languages will be flourishing.
- (28). Australian academics' efforts to record existing Aboriginal languages have been too limited.
- (29). The use of technology in language research is proving unsatisfactory in some respects.
- (30). Chomsky's political views have overshadowed his academic work.
- (31). Documentary linguistics studies require long-term financial support.
- (32). Chomsky's attitude to disappearing languages is too emotional.

### Questions 33-36

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

**Question 33.** The writer mentions rainforests and the ozone layer

- (A). because he believes anxiety about environmental issues is unfounded.
- (B). to demonstrate that academics in different disciplines share the same problems.
- (C). because they exemplify what is wrong with the attitudes of some academics.
- (D). to make the point that the public should be equally concerned about languages.

**Question 34.** What does Nick Evans say about speakers of a creole?

- (A). They lose the ability to express ideas which are part of their culture.
- (B). Older and younger members of the community have difficulty communicating.
- (C). They express their ideas more clearly and concisely than most people.
- (D). Accessing practical information causes problems for them.

**Question 35.** What is similar about West Africa and South America, from the linguist's point of view?

- (A). The English language is widely used by academics and teachers.
- (B). The documentary linguists who work there were trained by Australians.
- (C). Local languages are disappearing rapidly in both places.
- (D). There are now only a few undocumented languages there.

**Question 36.** Michael Krauss has frequently pointed out that

- (A). Linguists are failing to record languages before they die out.
- (B). Linguists have made poor use of improvements in technology.
- (C). Linguistics has declined in popularity as an academic subject.
- (D). Linguistics departments are underfunded in most universities.

### Questions 37-40

*Complete each sentence with the correct ending A-G below.*

*Write the correct letter A-G in boxes 37-40 on your answer sheet.*

- (37). Linguists like Peter Austin believe that every language is unique
- (38). Nick Evans suggests a community may resist attempts to save its language
- (39). Many young researchers are interested in doing practical research
- (40). Chomsky supports work in descriptive linguistics

- (A). even though it is in danger of disappearing.
- (B). provided that it has a strong basis in theory.
- (C). although it may share certain universal characteristics
- (D). because there is a practical advantage to it
- (E). so long as the drawbacks are clearly understood.
- (F). in spite of the prevalence of theoretical linguistics.
- (G). until they realize what is involved

