

MOCK TEST – IELTS READING

READING PASSAGE 1

READING COMICS IS GOOD FOR YOU

A. Since their first appearance on newsstands more than 75 years ago, comic books have been blamed for a range of social problems including juvenile delinquency and have been condemned and even censored. But in recent years comics have gained an extraordinary level of recognition, being transformed into Hollywood blockbusters, entering bestseller lists (as "graphic novels," the name for their more grown-up version) and receiving literary awards from the Pulitzer Prize (for Art Spiegelman's *Maus*) to the Guardian First Book Award for Chris Ware's *Jimmy Corrigan*. But have comic books and graphic novels truly shaken off their image as "low culture"? And if so, can they play a positive role in the development of young people's reading skills?

B. One common myth about comics is that reading them can replace the reading of other types of reading materials. Research shows that worry is mistaken. Boys who read comic books regularly also tend to read more text-based material and report higher levels of overall reading enjoyment, compared to boys who do not read comic books (Ujiie & Krashen, 1996). In fact, some evidence supports the idea that comic books provide a "gateway" to other types of reading material. For example, some researchers have argued that the language of comic books can help young people make the change from informal everyday language to formal written language (Krashen, 1993).

C. Another popular myth is that the visual element of comic books makes them more suitable for immature readers. In fact, comics can help readers develop a number of useful language and literacy skills. The extensive use of images in a comic book requires readers to develop two kinds of literacy: visual literacy and comics literacy. Visual literacy is the ability to interpret the meaning of various kinds of illustrations (Fenwick, 1998). Comics literacy refers to the ability to understand a sequence of events or images, to interpret characters' non-verbal gestures, to understand a story's plot and to make inferences (Lyga, 2006).

D. Comic books allow children to develop many of the same skills as reading text-based books such as connecting narratives to children's own experiences, predicting what will happen next and working out what happens between individual picture panels. Even before children are ready to read text, comic books can give them practice in making meaning from material printed on a page, tracking left to right and top to bottom, interpreting symbols, and following the sequence of events in a story (Edmunds, 2006).

According to L. Starr (2004), comic books have been shown to be useful for beginning readers, since the reduced text makes the language manageable. Comics expand children's vocabulary by giving contexts to words that the child would not normally have been exposed to (Grant, 2006). New readers can also learn story elements through reading comics. Like novels, comics have a beginning, middle and end, main characters that develop through conflicts and story climax. Comics thus introduce the concepts of narrative structure and character development (Grant, 2006).

E. Comic books can help children with learning or reading difficulties. Research highlights how a number of the features found in comics can be of benefit to those with dyslexia and similar challenges, particularly the left-to-right organization of comics' panels, the use of upper-case letters, and the use of symbols and context to help with comprehension. As well, the research indicates that learners who can read well and those with reading problems are equally attracted to comics.

Questions 1-5

The reading passage has five sections, A-E. Choose the correct heading for each section from the list below.

Write the correct number, next to the sections.

List of Headings

- 1. Section A _____
- 2. Section B _____
- 3. Section C _____
- 4. Section D _____
- 5. Section E _____

- i. Different skills children learn from reading comics
- ii. How children with learning problems can benefit from comics
- iii. An introduction to other types of reading through comics
- iv. The social problems caused by reading comics
- v. A change in attitude towards comics
- vi. The importance of prediction in reading comics
- vii. The positive effect of images in comics
- viii. How reading comics affects second language learners

Questions 6-10

Look at the following statements (6-10) and the list of names below. Match each statement with the correct name, A-E.

List of People

- A. Ujice & Krashen
- B. Krashen
- C. Fenwick
- D. Edmunds
- E. Starr

- 6. Comics help as an introduction to written texts. _____
- 7. Visual literacy means being able to interpret the meaning of different images. _____
- 8. It is possible that comics help children understand printed material before they can read text. _____
- 9. Fewer words in comics make the language easier for new readers. _____
- 10. Boys who read comics generally enjoy reading. _____

READING PASSAGE 2

European Settlement of Australia

European settlement of Australia began in 1788 when a British penal colony was established on the east coast. From this starting point Australia grew rapidly and continually, expanding across the entire continent.

A number of reasons contributed to Britain's decision to colonise Australia. The most important factor was Britain's need to relieve its overcrowded prisons. Several violent incidents at overcrowded prisons convinced the British government of the need to separate unruly elements from the rest of the prison populace.

Additionally, Australia was of strategic importance to Britain, and it provided a base for the Royal Navy in the eastern sea. Also, Australia could be used as an entry point to the economic opportunities of the surrounding region. All these points figured in the decision by Lord Sydney, secretary of state of home affairs, to authorise the colonisation.

To this affect, on May 13, 1787, Captain Arthur Phillip, commanding eleven ships full of convicts, left Britain for Australia. He successfully landed a full fleet at Botany Bay on January 18, 1788. However, they left the bay eight days later because of its openness and poor soil, and settled instead at Port Jackson, a few kilometres north. The ships landed 1,373 people, including 732 convicts, and the settlement became Sydney. Australia Day is now celebrated on 26 January each year, to commemorate this first fleet landing.

Vocabulary required:

- *settlement (n): the process of people making their homes in a place*
- *colony (n): a country or an area that is governed by people from another, more powerful, country*
- *incident (n): something that happens, especially something unusual or unpleasant*
- *convict (n): a person who has been found guilty of a crime and sent to prison*
- *commemorate (v): remind people of an important person or event from the past with a special action or object*

Complete the following statements using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**.

1. Australia was originally founded as a _____.
2. The major consideration in colonizing Australia was Britain's _____.
3. It was thought that _____ could be gained in that part of the world due to the access provided via Australia.
4. Lord Sydney took every factor into account when he gave official permission for the _____ of Australia.
5. Botany Bay was abandoned by the settlers due to the lack of cover and _____.