IELTS Practice Reading Test
(reference: IELTS.R13.ee)

Reading Passage 1. *You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-13, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.*

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 dehumanizing 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 YA 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 YA 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 YA 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 YA 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 patronize their readers, nor do they attempt to sugar-coat reality.

E All of this still does not explain why this upsurge in YA dystopian literature is happening now, though. Best-selling 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 YA 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 YA 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 molds through "increased standardized testing, increased homework levels, etc." YA 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 YA 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

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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 YA 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 YA 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 YA 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 standardized testing and homework levels are a threat to what? _____

Question 13. *Choose the correct Letter, A, B, C or D.*

13 Which is the best title for Reading Passage 1?

A A history of YA dystopian literature
B The wane of the dystopian phenomenon
C How dystopian fiction has shaped the world
D The draw of YA dystopian fiction

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading Passage 2. *You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14-27, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.*

Plant Wars

Mention the words "chemical warfare" or "deployed armies" in any conversation, and your interlocutor might immediately assume you're talking about wars between humans. In reality, however, there are other kinds of wars out there where these techniques are employed far more frequently and in a far more intricate manner: those waged in the plant kingdom.

We might not normally think of plants this way, but much like humans and animals, they too have to fight for survival on a daily basis. Nutrients, light and water are the three things any plant needs in order to grow; unfortunately, none of these is ample in supply, which means that the competition between plants can grow fierce. Some plants and trees are at an architectural advantage: taller trees have greater access to natural light, while plants with deeper roots have the ability to absorb more water and nutrients. Others, though, manage to defend their territory through "allelopathy", or chemical warfare.

So how does this chemical warfare work exactly? As Dr Robin Andrews explains, plants convert the nutrients they absorb from the ground to energy with the aid of a type of organic compound known as metabolites. These metabolites can be divided into two categories: primary and secondary. Primary metabolites are what allows a plant to live, playing a direct role in its growth and development, and are thus present in every plant. Secondary metabolites, on the other hand, can vary from plant to plant and often play the role of a defence mechanism against neighbouring competitors.

Out of these secondary metabolites, there are two that are incredibly interesting: DIBOA and DIMBOA. These two cyclic hydroxamic acids were at the forefront of a study conducted by Sascha Venturelli and colleagues in 2015, which found that once they are released into the soil by the plants that produce them, they degenerate into toxic substances that have the power to inhibit growth in nearby plants once they soak them up. As Dr Claude Becker notes, "the phenomenon itself has been known for years", but we now finally understand the "molecular mechanism" behind it – and its supreme intricacy would put to shame any chemical bombs created by humans.

But plants do not just fight wars against other plants; chemical warfare also comes into play in their defence against herbivores. As Brent Mortensen of Iowa State University describes, plants "actively resist" attacks made by herbivores through qualitative and quantitative chemical defences. What's the difference? Qualitative defences can be lethal even in small doses, and are often employed to protect "young" or "tender leaves or seeds". They can also be recycled when no longer necessary. Quantitative defences, in contrast, are only effective "in larger doses", but unlike qualitative defences, can protect the plant against all herbivores. Quantitative defences are also not as immediately lethal, as they usually lead to indigestion, pain, irritation of the mouth and throat, and inflammation or swelling in the skin.

And what about the "deployed armies" I mentioned before? Well, chemical attacks are not the only way plants elect to defend themselves against herbivores. Some plants, such as the African acacia, also recruit armies to assist them in their war. As Angela White of the University of Sheffield explains, the acacia tree has "hollowed-out structures" which invite ant colonies to build a home in them by providing not just shelter, but also food in the form of a special nectar. In return, ants protect them against herbivores – and this includes not just the small ones like bugs, but also the ones as big as giraffes.

At this point, of course, you might be wondering what all this has to do with you. The territorial nature of plants might be fascinating in its own right, but what is its application in real life? Well, Dr Venturelli of the 2015 study mentioned before has an answer for you: apparently, certain allelochemicals – the aforementioned chemical compounds that are responsible for stunting growth in plants – have been found to have an effect on human cancer cells, too. According to Michael Bitzer and Ulrich Lauer of the same

LIVEWORKSHEETS

study, "clinical trials at the University Clinics Tubingen currently assess the efficacy of these plant toxins in cancer patients". This means that comprehending the way plants defend themselves against the enemies in their environment might not just be of interest to plant biologists alone, but to medical researchers as well.

Questions 14-20. *Complete the sentences below. Choose* ***NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS*** *from Reading Passage 2 for each answer.*

14 Plants are very similar to _____ as they also struggle to stay alive every day.

15 The height of a tree or plant can affect how much _____ it receives.

16 Chemical warfare in plants also goes by the name of _____.

17 Water and nutrients are both taken from the soil, and the latter is later turned into _____.

18 Secondary metabolites are an _____ that functions as a defense mechanism for plants.

19 DIBOA and DIMBOA are two types of secondary metabolites that can _____ once absorbed by a plant.

20 The 2015 study by Sascha Venturelli and colleagues examined the _____ of chemical warfare in plants.

Plant Defenses against Herbivores

Qualitative

– can kill a herbivore in **21** _____

– can be recycled when no longer necessary

Secondary

– only works in larger doses

– effective against **22** _____

– causes a variety of symptoms, none **23** _____

Indirect

– uses the help of ant colonies that reside in its **24** _____

– ants can protect it against herbivores of all sizes, even **25** _____

Questions 26-27. *Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading 2? Write:*

TRUE *if the statement is true according to the passage*
FALSE *if the statement is false according to the passage*
NOT GIVEN *if the information is not given in the passage*

26 Allelochemicals are secondary metabolites.

27 Plant biologists and medical researchers are currently cooperating to assess the efficacy of plant toxins in preventing the growth of cancer cells.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading Passage 3. *You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 28-40, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.*

Deafhood

A At this point you might be wondering: what does 'deafhood' mean? Is it a synonym for 'deafness'? Is it a slightly more politically correct term to express the very same concept you've grown accustomed to – a person who lacks the power of hearing, or a person whose hearing is impaired? What's wrong with terms like 'hard of hearing' or 'deafness'? Have they not represented the deaf community just fine for the past few centuries? Who came up with the term 'Deafhood' anyway, and why?

B The term 'Deafhood' was first coined in 1993 by Dr Paddy Ladd, a deaf scholar in the Deaf Studies Department at the University of Bristol in England. First explored through his doctoral dissertation in 1998, and later elaborated on in his 2003 book, 'Understanding Deaf Culture – In Search of Deafhood', the idea behind Deafhood is twofold: first, it seeks to collect everything that is already known about the life, culture, politics, etc. of Sign Language Peoples (SLPs); secondly, it attempts to remove the limitations imposed on SLPs through their colonisation from hearing people.

C In order to understand what Deafhood represents, it's first important to understand what is meant by colonisation. To do that, we need to examine two terms: Oralism and Audism. Oralism is a philosophy that first emerged in the late 19th century, and which suggests that a reduced use of sign language would be more beneficial to SLPs, as it would allow them to integrate better to the hearing world. In that respect, sign language is dismissively regarded as a mere obstacle to listening skills and acquisition of speech – treated, in effect, in the same manner as the languages of other peoples who were oppressed and colonised, e.g. the Maori in New Zealand, or the Aborigines in Australia. Audism, however, is an even more sinister ideology: first coined in 1975 by Dr Tom Humphries of the University of California in San Diego, it describes the belief that deaf people are somehow inferior to hearing people, and that deafhood – or, in this case, we should say 'deafness' – is a flaw, a terrible disability that needs to be eliminated. It is the effect of these two ideologies that Deafhood seeks to counter, by presenting SLPs in a positive light, not as patients who require treatment.

D But even if we understand the oppression that SLPs have suffered at the hands of hearing people since the late 1800s, and even if we acknowledge that 'deafness' is a medical term with negative connotations that needs to be replaced, that doesn't mean it's easy to explain what the term Deafhood represents exactly. This is because Deafhood is, as Dr Donald Grushkin puts it, a 'physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, cultural and linguistic' journey that every deaf person is invited – but not obligated – to embark on.

E Deafhood is essentially a search for understanding: what does being 'Deaf' mean? How did deaf people in the past define themselves, and what did they believe to be their reasons for existing before Audism was conceived? Why are some people born deaf? Are they biologically defective, or are there more positive reasons for their existence? What do terms like 'Deaf Art' or 'Deaf Culture' actually mean? What is 'the Deaf Way' of doing things? True Deafhood is achieved when a deaf person feels comfortable with who they are and connected to the rest of the deaf community through use of their natural language, but the journey there might differ.

F Aside from all those questions, however, Deafhood also seeks to counter the effect of what is known as 'neo-eugenics'. Neo-eugenics, as described by Patrick Boudreault at the 2005 California Association of the Deaf Conference, is a modern manifestation of what has traditionally been defined as 'eugenics', i.e. an attempt to eradicate any human characteristics which are perceived as negative. Deaf people have previously been a target of eugenicists through the aforementioned ideologies of Audism and Oralism, but recent developments in science and society – such as cochlear implants or genetic engineering – mean that Deafhood is once again under threat, and needs to be protected. The only way to do this is by

LIVEWORKSHEETS

celebrating the community's history, language, and countless contributions to the world, and confronting those who want to see it gone.

G So, how do we go forward? We should start by decolonizing SLPs – by embracing Deafhood for what it is, removing all the negative connotations that surround it and accepting that deaf people are neither broken nor incomplete. This is a task not just for hearing people, but for deaf people as well, who have for decades internalized society's unfavorable views of them. We should also seek recognition of the deaf community's accomplishments, as well as official recognition of sign languages around the world by their respective governments. Effectively, what we should do is ask ourselves: how would the Deaf community be like, had it never been colonized by the mainstream world? And whatever it is it would be like, we should all together – hearing and Deaf alike – strive to achieve it.

Questions 28-34. *The reading passage has seven paragraphs,* ***A-G****. Which paragraph contains the following information?*

28 Examples of other groups treated the same way as deaf people _____

29 Why the word 'deafness' is no longer appropriate _____

30 The definition of the word 'deaf' _____

31 Why deaf people might sometimes think negatively of themselves _____

32 How one can attain deafhood _____

33 Where the word 'deafhood' came from _____

34 Why deafhood is currently imperilled _____

Questions 35-37. *Choose the correct letter,* ***A****,* ***B****,* ***C*** *or* ***D****.*

35 According to Dr Paddy Ladd, Deafhood

A is a more appropriate term than 'hard of hearing'.

B doesn't colonise SLPs as much as 'deafness' does.

C strives to get rid of the effects of colonisation.

D contributes positively to the life and culture of deaf people.

36 Oralism suggests that

A SLPs have no use for sign language.

B SLPs don't belong in the hearing world.

C hearing people are superior to SLPs.

D SLPs are unable to acquire speech.

37 Aborigines in Australia are similar to deaf people because

A eugenicists also tried to eradicate them.

B they were also considered inferior by their oppressors.

C their languages were also disrespected.

D their languages were also colonised.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions 38-40. *Answer the questions below with words taken from Reading Passage 3. Use* ***NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS*** *for each answer.*

38 What should deaf people use to communicate with each other, according to deafhood? _____

39 Who has used oralism and audism to attack the deaf community? _____

40 What does the deaf community strive to achieve for sign language worldwide? _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS