

B. READING

Exercise 1. In this unit, you will do IELTS Reading matching heading tasks and read a text on the topic of family history (also called *ancestry*).

What vocabulary do you already know on the topic of ancestry? Match the words with their definitions.

<i>a descendant</i>	<i>a generation</i>	<i>a record</i>	<i>a relative</i>	<i>a will</i>	<i>an</i>
<i>ancestor</i>	<i>birth certificate</i>	<i>family background</i>	<i>great - + noun</i>		
	<i>run in the family</i>				

1. a member of your extended family, for example, your aunt or uncle:

2. a person who is related to you but lived and died before you were born:

3. a person who is related to you and who will live after you in the future (e.g. your grandchildren's children): _____
4. a group of people who are all about the same age:

5. the history of your family, for example, where they came from, what jobs they had:

6. used with a word for a family member from an older generation (e.g. your mother's grandmother): _____
7. a piece of important information you write on paper or store on a computer:

8. a legal document that explains what a person has decided should be done with their money and property after they die: _____
9. a phrase that describes a feature, quality, ability or disease that people from the same family share: _____
10. a legal document that contains information about a new baby such as its name, the names of its parents and the time and place it was born:

Exercise 2. Read the information, then read the sentences from Paragraphs A–H.
Match the main ideas with the sentences from Paragraphs A–H.

The IELTS Reading matching headings task tests your understanding of the gist of a paragraph – this means how well you understand the **main idea** or **topic** of the paragraph.

It is often possible to quickly get a general understanding of the main ideas and topic of a text by reading **only**:

- The **final sentence** of the **introduction** (I.e. the first paragraph in the text)
- The **first sentence** of all the paragraphs in **the main body** (i.e. all the paragraphs between the introduction and the conclusion)
- The **final sentence** of the **conclusion** (i.e. the last paragraph in the text).

Final sentence of Paragraph A: *‘... It was also necessary for landowners to know their family background – so they could prove that a large castle or manor house really belonged to them, and not to another person further along a branch of the family tree who wanted it for themselves.’*

First sentence of Paragraph B: *‘An interest in knowing who your ancestors were and what they did is, of course, something which is common in all cultures.’*

First sentence of Paragraph C: *‘While some people are still interested in family trees as a way of making sure they can receive money or valuable items from a great-uncle or great-great grandparent, others have different motivations.’*

First sentence of Paragraph D: *‘Part of what makes family-tree research so fascinating is the sense of uncovering a mystery as you find more clues – just like a detective would.’*

First sentence of Paragraph E: *‘Before the age of the internet, if you wanted to find out about your family history, you would have needed to travel to different locations.’*

First sentence of Paragraph F: *‘Researching your family tree has now become an ever more popular activity, partly for the reason that it has become much easier, faster and more convenient.’*

First sentence of Paragraph G: *‘Despite the advances of modern technology, it can still be a challenge to find your distant ancestors.’*

Final sentence of Paragraph H: *‘... Rather than writing out the family tree in a book in the traditional way, they record stories, images and voices using audio and video recordings for their descendants to see one day.’*

<i>A description of how people feel about ancestry</i>
<i>A method of learning about ancestry</i>
<i>A method of storing information about ancestry</i>
<i>A reason why people enjoy researching their family history</i>
<i>A reason why people needed to know their ancestry in the past</i>
<i>Different reasons why people might be interested in ancestry</i>
<i>Problems in learning about ancestry</i>
<i>Reasons why more people are learning about ancestry now</i>

Paragraph A	
Paragraph B	
Paragraph C	
Paragraph D	
Paragraph E	
Paragraph F	
Paragraph G	
Paragraph H	

Exercise 3. Read the information. Then skim read the paragraph and choose the correct heading.

Remember! To skim read a text, focus only on the main information. To do this, focus on the **nouns, verbs and adjectives** (in **bold** in the paragraph below).

Ancestry in the UK

Paragraph A

Up until relatively recently, **English school children** were often obliged to **learn** the **names** of the **kings and queens** that **ruled** the **country** from the **8th century** to the **18th**, and **understand** how they were **related**. This was **no easy task**. Sometimes a **king** would **pass** his **kingdom** to his **son**, **but** very often would be a **much more distant relative** that **took over**. To **become king**, you would have to **show you had royal blood** in the **family tree**, and to do **this**, you would **need to know exactly who all** your **ancestors** were. It was **also necessary** for **landowners** to **know** their **family background** – **so** they could **prove** that a **large castle or manor house** really **belonged** to them, and **not** to **another person further along** a **branch** of the **family tree** **who wanted** it for **themselves**.

The correct heading for **Paragraph A** is:

- How knowing your family tree could bring power and property
- The kind of buildings that wealthy relatives used to live in
- Which academic subjects most students would prefer not to study

Exercise 4. Read the information. Then skim read the next paragraphs and answer the question.

In an IELTS Reading matching heading task, there will always be **at least** one more heading than the number of paragraphs. So, for example, if there are five paragraphs, you might have to choose from seven or eight headings.

Skim reading the text to get the gist of each paragraph can help you get a general idea of which headings might match one of the paragraphs.

Ancestry in the UK

Paragraph B

An interest in knowing who your ancestors were and what they did is, of course, something which is common in all cultures. Not all cultures, however, have a phrase which translates as family tree for when they want to describe earlier generations of the same family. We use this particular phrase because it was traditional in the past in some countries to put the oldest generations at the top of a drawing and the youngest generation at the bottom and narrower at the bottom – just like a tree.

Paragraph C

While some people are still interested in family trees as a way of making sure they can receive money or valuable items from a great – uncle or great – great grandparent, others have different motivations. Some people choose to research their family tree because they are simply curious about their origins. Or perhaps they have heard an unusual story about an ancestor and wish to discover the truth. They may even have a more serious and useful purpose, for example wanting to find out about a medical condition which runs in the family.

Choose the correct headings for the paragraphs. Look at the text again if you need to.

1. The correct heading for **Paragraph B** is:

- Practical and personal reasons for finding out about ancestors
- The appeal of making unexpected discoveries
- The problems people face in carrying out family-tree research
- Why we use ‘family tree’ to refer to our family background
- Traditional ways of researching family trees

2. The correct heading for **Paragraph C** is:

- The appeal of making unexpected discoveries
- Practical and personal reasons for finding out about ancestors

- The problems people face in carrying out family-tree research
- Traditional ways of researching family trees
- Why we use 'family tree' to refer to our family background

Exercise 5. Read the information. Then read the paragraphs again, this time with their headings. The key words in the headings have been underlined. Then do the exercise.

In IELTS Reading matching heading tasks, it is a good idea to underline key words in the headings and match them synonyms and paraphrases in the text. You can do this to check your answers

Paragraph B

Why we say 'family tree' to refer to our family background

An interest in knowing who your ancestors were and what they did is, of course, something which is common in all cultures. Not all cultures, however, have a phrase which translates as family tree for when they want to describe earlier generations of the same family. We use this particular phrase because it was traditional in the past in some countries to put the oldest generations at the top of a drawing and the youngest generation at the bottom and narrower at the bottom – just like a tree.

Paragraph C

Practical and personal reasons for finding out about ancestors

While some people are still interested in family trees as a way of making sure they can receive money or valuable items from a great – uncle or great – great grandparent, others have different motivations. Some people choose to research their family tree because they are simply curious about their origins. Or perhaps they have heard an unusual story about an ancestor and wish to discover the truth. They may even have a more serious and useful purpose, for example wanting to find out about a medical condition which runs in the family.

a more serious and useful purpose	motivations	origins
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perhaps they have heard an unusual story about an ancestor and wish to discover the

truth

to research we use this particular phrase

who your ancestors were and what they did

1. we say 'family tree'

2. our family background

3. practical (reasons)

4. personal (reasons)

5. reasons

6. finding out about

7. ancestors

Exercise 6. Choose the correct headings for the paragraphs.

i	<i>The problems people face in carrying out family-tree research</i>
ii	<i>How technology has helped people research their ancestors</i>
iii	<i>How businesses benefit from the growing interest in family trees</i>
iv	<i>Practical and personal reasons for finding out about ancestors</i>
v	<i>How ancestors are remembered and celebrated in different countries</i>
vi	<i>Traditional ways of researching family trees</i>
vii	<i>Creating family trees for future generations</i>
viii	<i>How knowing your family tree could lead to power and property</i>

ix	<i>Why we say 'family tree' to refer to our family background</i>
x	<i>What people enjoy about making unexpected discoveries</i>

Paragraph D

Part of what makes family-tree research so fascinating is the sense of uncovering a mystery as you find more clues – just like a detective would. This kind of process was shown in the hugely popular program ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’, which featured well-known TV personalities exploring their family origins. The show’s researchers often found surprising information. One person, interviewer Jeremy Paxman, was disinterested at first. He believed it was more important to be ‘forward-looking’ – and think about the future rather than the past. Then he learnt that his great-grandmother had managed to raise nine children by herself after her husband died, even though she was extremely poor. He soon wanted to know more. Certainly this kind of program has encouraged people to look for their own ancestors.

Paragraph E

Before the age of the internet, if you wanted to find out about your family history, you would have needed to travel to different locations. People used to visit churches to look at their records, for example of the names of people who were born and died in the area. Another way to investigate family history would be to look through old newspapers that were stored in the basements of libraries, or to search through birth and marriage certificates at the local town-council building. Not all of these visits, of course, would be successful. You needed to be very patient and have a lot of spare time to find out about your past.

Paragraph F

Researching your family tree has now become an ever more popular activity, partly for the reason that it has become much easier, faster and more convenient. Councils have uploaded many public records to their websites, including details of marriages, names of taxpayers and property owners, and the wills of people who have died. Many museums and libraries have also become involved and offer guidance about the best tools and apps to use when searching

for ancestors. One online company which helps people trace their ancestors was recently bought for over £2.4 billion – showing just how popular this method of research has become.

Paragraph G

Despite the advances of modern technology, it can still be a challenge to find your distant ancestors. Before the 11th century, a person would only sometimes share their parents' surname. This was because a surname usually showed the town or region where you came from, e.g. *John of Kent*, or your occupation, e.g. *John (the) Baker*. So, if a child was born in a different place to a parent or had a different job, they might have had different surnames. This system also meant that thousands of people had exactly the same surnames even when they were not related. For wealthy people, it would also have been possible to have two different surnames if they owned land or property in two different locations. Of course, many old records have also been lost or destroyed, too.

Paragraph H

Many people who are keen on producing a family tree are interested in looking forwards rather than back. They recognize their role as an ancestor of people who haven't even been born yet, and who may live in many different parts of the world. They want to create records for them – showing the different branches of the family today. Rather than writing out the family tree in a book in the traditional way, they record stories, images and voices using audio and video recordings for their descendants to see one day.

Exercise 7. Read the passage and answer questions 1-13

The burden of thirst

Millions of women carry water long distances. If they had a tap by their door, whole societies would be transformed.

A

Aylito Binayo's feet know the mountain. Even at four in the morning, she can run down the rocks to the river by starlight alone and climb the steep mountain back up to her village with