EXTRA READING TEXTS

~FOR L4 STUDENTS~

You are given **a set of 10 extension reading texts** on different topics to help expand your English skills, strengthen your reading comprehension, and explore new ideas. **One text** from each set is especially useful for **your in-class writing exam**. Reading them will challenge you, provide helpful background knowledge, and give you inspiration and ideas for your papers.

Enjoy reading and make the most of it!

**Erciyes University
School of Foreign Languages
2025-2026**

L4 Reading Passages in Class One (Opinion Essays)

1. Traveling Alone

Traveling alone is becoming increasingly popular among young people who want to discover the world on their own terms. Solo travel provides a unique opportunity to gain independence, confidence, and cultural awareness. When you travel alone, you are responsible for every decision, from choosing accommodation to managing your budget. This can be both challenging and rewarding. Without the influence of others, travellers can truly connect with locals, learn new languages, and better understand different cultures.

One major benefit of solo travel is the flexibility it offers. You can create your own schedule; visit the places that interest you the most, and move at your own pace. If you want to spend an entire afternoon exploring a small café or wandering through a local market, you can do so without needing anyone else's approval. This freedom often leads to unexpected discoveries that make the journey even more memorable. Many solo travelers say that some of their most meaningful moments occurred when they simply allowed themselves to follow their curiosity.

Another important aspect of traveling alone is the opportunity for self-reflection. When you spend time away from your usual environment, you begin to see your habits, thoughts, and goals more clearly. Long train rides, quiet mornings in a hostel, or peaceful walks through nature can create space for personal growth. For many people, solo travel becomes a way to understand who they are and what they truly want in life.

Of course, safety is an essential factor, especially when visiting unfamiliar places. Preparing in advance, sharing your itinerary, and staying aware of your surroundings are all important. Researching local customs, transportation options, and emergency contacts can make you feel more secure. It is also helpful to trust your instincts; if something doesn't feel right, it's always better to take precautions. While challenges may arise, most solo travellers say that careful planning helps them feel confident and prepared.

Solo travel can also help develop valuable social skills. While you may start the journey alone, you often end up meeting new people along the way. Hostels, group tours, and community events make it easy to connect with fellow travelers or locals. These interactions can lead to lifelong friendships, broaden your perspective, and make the experience richer and more enjoyable.

In the end, solo travel teaches valuable life lessons that go beyond any classroom experience. It encourages responsibility, resilience, and open-mindedness. By stepping outside your comfort zone, you learn to adapt, solve problems, and embrace the unexpected. Whether traveling for a short weekend trip or a long international adventure, the memories and personal growth gained from traveling alone can shape a person's character in meaningful ways.

Reference: ESL Fast (https://eslfast.com/)

2. The Importance of Sleep

Sleeping is not just a time when your body rests—it is an active process that supports your physical and mental health. During sleep, the brain organizes memories, repairs cells, and releases hormones that regulate growth and stress. People who consistently sleep less than seven hours a night often experience mood changes, poor concentration, and weaker immune systems. In our fast-paced world, many people sacrifice sleep for work or entertainment, but this habit can have long-term consequences. Experts recommend setting a regular sleep schedule, avoiding screens before bed, and creating a calm environment to improve sleep quality. Remember, good sleep is not a luxury—it's a necessity for productivity, happiness, and overall well-being.

Research shows that sleep occurs in several stages, including deep sleep and REM sleep, each serving a different purpose. Deep sleep allows the body to repair tissues and strengthen the immune system, while REM sleep supports learning, creativity, and emotional balance. When these stages are interrupted or shortened, the body does not function at its best. For students, insufficient sleep can lead to difficulty understanding new information, forgetting important details, and feeling overwhelmed during exams. Adults may struggle with decision-making, communication, and maintaining healthy relationships.

Another important role of sleep is regulating metabolism. Lack of sleep can affect appetite-related hormones, causing people to feel hungrier and crave unhealthy foods. Over time, this can increase the risk of weight gain and other health problems such as diabetes or high blood pressure. In addition, chronic sleep deprivation has been linked to anxiety and depression, as the brain becomes less able to manage stress and emotions effectively.

Despite knowing the importance of sleep, many individuals still find it hard to develop healthy habits. Busy schedules, late-night phone use, and stressful lifestyles make it challenging to relax before bedtime. Small changes, however, can make a big difference. For example, turning off electronic devices an hour before bed helps the brain prepare for rest. Creating a sleep-friendly environment—such as a dark, cool, and quiet room—also

improves sleep quality. Some people benefit from establishing a relaxing bedtime routine that might include reading, stretching, or drinking herbal tea.

Another helpful strategy is maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, even on weekends. Going to bed and waking up at the same time each day helps regulate the internal clock, making it easier to fall asleep naturally. Regular physical activity during the day can also improve sleep, as long as it is not done too close to bedtime. Moreover, reducing caffeine intake in the afternoon and evening prevents unnecessary stimulation that may interfere with falling asleep.

In the long term, prioritizing sleep can transform a person's overall well-being. People who sleep well tend to feel more energized, think more clearly, and handle challenges more calmly. They often experience better mood, stronger concentration, and improved physical health. In a world where everyone is constantly busy, choosing to protect your sleep is one of the simplest yet most powerful decisions you can make.

Good sleep supports the body, strengthens the mind, and enriches daily life. It is not a sign of laziness or wasted time; instead, it is an essential investment in your health. By treating sleep as a priority rather than an afterthought, you can create a healthier, happier, and more balanced lifestyle.

Reference: Breaking News English (https://breakingnewsenglish.com/)

3. Playing Video Games

Playing video games has become one of the most popular hobbies worldwide, enjoyed by millions of people of all ages. Video games offer a unique combination of entertainment, challenge, and social interaction that traditional pastimes often cannot match. From action-packed adventure games to strategy-based simulations, the variety available ensures that there is something for everyone. However, while video games have many benefits, they also carry potential risks if not played in moderation.

One of the primary advantages of video games is the cognitive development they promote. Many games require players to think critically, make quick decisions, and solve complex problems. Strategy games, for example, often involve careful planning and resource management, helping players improve their analytical skills. Puzzle games enhance logical reasoning and pattern recognition, while fast-paced action games can improve hand-eye coordination and reaction times. These mental challenges can provide a healthy and stimulating alternative to passive entertainment such as watching television.

In addition to cognitive benefits, video games can have a positive impact on social interaction. Multiplayer and online games allow players to connect with friends and meet new people from around the world. These games often require teamwork and collaboration, which can improve communication skills and foster a sense of community. For some individuals, especially those who are shy or have difficulty socializing in person, online gaming can provide a comfortable and engaging environment for social connection.

Despite these benefits, excessive gaming can have negative consequences. Spending too many hours in front of a screen can lead to physical problems such as eye strain, poor posture, and repetitive strain injuries. Mental health can also be affected if gaming becomes a way to escape from real-life responsibilities, potentially leading to anxiety, stress, or social isolation. Furthermore, certain online communities may expose players to toxic behaviour or cyberbullying, which can be harmful, particularly for younger players.

Balancing gaming with other aspects of life is essential. Setting time limits, taking regular breaks, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle with exercise and social activities can mitigate

many of the negative effects. Parents and guardians can help by monitoring game content and encouraging a variety of recreational activities. By approaching video games responsibly, players can enjoy the entertainment and educational benefits without compromising their well-being.

In conclusion, playing video games offers both cognitive and social benefits when approached with balance and moderation. While excessive gaming can present physical and psychological challenges, a mindful approach allows individuals to enjoy the fun, engagement, and learning opportunities that video games provide.

Source: Adapted from British Council LearnEnglish reading materials (learnenglish.britishcouncil.org)

4. Protecting the Environment

The environment is facing serious challenges such as pollution, deforestation, and climate change. Human activities are responsible for much of this damage, but people also have the power to make a difference. Simple actions like recycling, using public transport, and reducing plastic consumption can significantly reduce our ecological footprint. Governments and organizations are investing in renewable energy and sustainable development, but true change also depends on individual behavior. Education plays a key role in raising awareness and motivating people to act. Protecting the environment is not just a responsibility for scientists or activists—it's a shared duty for everyone who wants a healthy planet for future generations.

Environmental problems have grown more urgent over the last few decades. Air pollution from factories and cars affects human health and contributes to global warming. Water pollution harms marine life, making oceans and rivers unsafe for animals and people. Deforestation, often caused by agricultural expansion and urbanization, destroys natural habitats and reduces biodiversity. As forests disappear, so do countless species that rely on them for survival. These issues may seem overwhelming, but small daily changes can collectively make a big impact.

One of the most effective ways individuals can help is by reducing waste. Recycling paper, glass, and plastic helps conserve natural resources and save energy. Reusing containers, choosing products with minimal packaging, and avoiding single-use plastics can also reduce pollution. Many people are now turning to eco-friendly alternatives such as metal water bottles, cloth shopping bags, and biodegradable materials. Even simple choices—like repairing items instead of throwing them away—support a more sustainable lifestyle.

Energy consumption is another important factor. Using energy-efficient light bulbs, turning off unnecessary lights, and unplugging devices when not in use can reduce electricity waste. On a larger scale, governments are promoting renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. These cleaner alternatives help decrease dependence on fossil fuels, which are a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions. Individuals can

support these efforts by learning about sustainable energy and advocating for environmentally friendly policies.

Transportation also plays a crucial role in environmental protection. Cars release large amounts of carbon dioxide, so using public transport, biking, or walking can significantly reduce emissions. Carpooling is another simple way to cut down on pollution while saving money. In some cities, governments have introduced electric buses, bike-sharing programs, and expanded metro systems to encourage greener travel options. These changes benefit not only the environment but also the health and well-being of communities.

Education remains one of the strongest tools for environmental protection. When people understand how their actions affect the planet, they become more motivated to change their habits. Schools, media, and community programs help spread important information about sustainability. Teaching children to care for nature from a young age encourages lifelong environmental responsibility. Additionally, social media campaigns and documentaries reach millions of viewers and inspire global action.

Ultimately, protecting the environment requires cooperation from everyone—individuals, communities, businesses, and governments. Each person has a role to play, whether it's conserving water, supporting green initiatives, or simply making more thoughtful choices. The planet's future depends on today's actions, and every small effort contributes to a healthier world. By recognizing the importance of sustainability and acting with care, we can help ensure that future generations inherit a cleaner, safer, and more vibrant planet.

Reference: LinguaHouse (https://www.linguahouse.com/)

5. The Power of Music

Music has the unique ability to influence emotions, memories, and even physical health. It connects people across cultures and generations, providing comfort, motivation, and inspiration. Scientific research has shown that listening to music can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve memory performance. Many students use background music to help them focus while studying, while others find it useful for relaxation. In hospitals, music therapy is used to help patients recover more quickly. Whether you prefer classical, pop, or jazz, music remains one of humanity's most powerful tools for communication and emotional expression. It reminds us that despite our differences, rhythm and melody can unite us all.

In addition to emotional benefits, music plays a major role in daily routines. People listen to music while exercising to boost their energy, while commuting to make the journey more enjoyable, and while working to stay motivated. Certain types of music, such as slow instrumental pieces, can create a calm atmosphere that reduces anxiety and helps people focus better. On the other hand, upbeat rhythms are known to increase enthusiasm and improve physical performance, which is why many athletes rely on playlists to enhance their training sessions.

Music also has a strong connection to memory. A familiar song can instantly remind someone of a childhood moment, a vacation, or a special person. This powerful link between music and memory is used in therapy for individuals with Alzheimer's or dementia. Listening to songs from earlier years helps stimulate the brain and bring back forgotten experiences. For some patients, music becomes a way to reconnect with their identity and emotions.

Moreover, music reflects the cultural identity of societies. Every country and community has its own musical traditions, instruments, and styles. These traditions tell stories about history, beliefs, and social values. For example, folk music often represents the struggles and celebrations of a community, while classical music highlights creativity and artistic expression. Modern music genres like hip-hop and electronic music express the voices and

ideas of younger generations. Through music, people can learn about different cultures and appreciate diversity.

The process of creating music is another fascinating aspect. Composers, songwriters, and performers use melody, rhythm, and harmony to communicate ideas that sometimes cannot be expressed with words. For many musicians, creating music is a form of self-expression that helps them process emotions and share their experiences with others. Even people who are not professional musicians can enjoy singing, playing instruments, or simply tapping their feet to the beat. These small actions contribute to emotional release and personal satisfaction.

Technology has also transformed the way people interact with music. Today, streaming services allow listeners to access millions of songs instantly. Social media platforms help artists reach global audiences, and digital tools make it easier than ever to create and edit music. As a result, music has become an even more integral part of everyday life. People can explore new genres, discover artists from different countries, and personalize their listening habits based on their mood.

Ultimately, music is more than entertainment—it is a universal language that everybody understands. It expresses joy, sadness, hope, and love in ways that connect people regardless of age, language, or background. From traditional songs passed down through generations to modern hits shared across the world, music continues to shape human experiences. Its ability to heal, inspire, and bring people together makes it one of the most meaningful elements of human culture.

Reference: ReadTheory (https://readtheory.org/)

L4 Reading Passages in Class Two (Cause and effect)

1. Healthy Eating Habits

Eating a balanced diet is fundamental for good health. Consuming a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins provides essential vitamins and minerals that the body needs to function efficiently. When people eat a colorful and diverse selection of foods, they ensure that their bodies receive antioxidants, fiber, and healthy fats that support long-term wellness. Avoiding excessive sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats can help prevent chronic illnesses like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, which continue to rise around the world due to poor eating habits and sedentary lifestyles.

Healthy eating habits not only support physical health but also enhance mental performance, emotional stability, and overall energy levels. Studies show that individuals who eat nutrient-rich meals are more likely to stay focused, perform better academically or professionally, and manage stress more effectively. Brain function is closely linked to nutrition, meaning that what we eat influences how clearly we think, how well we remember, and even how positively we feel throughout the day.

Planning meals ahead of time can make it easier to maintain a healthy diet, especially for people with busy schedules. Preparing a weekly meal plan helps reduce impulsive food choices and encourages people to buy nutritious ingredients instead of relying on fast food. Cooking at home also allows individuals to control portion sizes, adjust ingredients, and explore new recipes that support healthier habits. Reading nutritional labels is another effective strategy for making informed decisions. Labels provide information on calories, added sugars, sodium levels, and the presence of artificial additives, helping consumers understand exactly what they are putting into their bodies.

In recent years, global awareness of healthy eating has increased, but many challenges remain. Processed foods are widely accessible and often cheaper than fresh alternatives, making it difficult for some families to maintain a nutritious diet. Additionally, advertising and social media trends sometimes promote unhealthy eating patterns, especially among young people. For this reason, education about nutrition is crucial. Schools, health organizations, and community programs play an important role in teaching individuals how to build balanced meals and understand their unique dietary needs.

Everyone's body is different, which means that nutritional needs vary based on age, activity level, and health conditions. For example, athletes may require more protein to support muscle repair, while children need additional calcium for growing bones. Individuals with food allergies or medical conditions must also pay close attention to ingredients and meal composition. Understanding these personal needs helps people make choices that truly benefit their health instead of following general trends that may not be suitable for them.

Sustaining healthy eating habits over time requires motivation, consistency, and often a supportive environment. Families can encourage one another by cooking together, sharing new healthy recipes, or setting goals such as reducing sugary snacks or increasing vegetable intake. Even small changes—like replacing sugary drinks with water or choosing whole-grain bread instead of white bread—can gradually lead to significant improvements in overall health.

In addition to physical and mental benefits, healthy eating contributes to a more balanced lifestyle. People who nourish their bodies properly tend to sleep better, feel more energetic, and remain active throughout the day. They are also more likely to avoid emotional eating, which can be triggered by stress, boredom, or negative feelings. By developing a positive relationship with food—seeing it as fuel rather than comfort—individuals can strengthen both their physical and emotional well-being.

Ultimately, building and maintaining healthy eating habits is a continuous journey rather than a temporary effort. With the right knowledge, planning, and mindset, anyone can create a diet that supports long-term health and happiness. Eating well is not about strict restrictions or sacrificing favourite foods; it is about balance, variety, and making mindful choices that help the body thrive. When people understand the importance of nutrition and actively work toward healthier habits, they invest in a better quality of life for themselves and future generations. Reference: ESL Fast (https://eslfast.com/)

2. Why Urban Green Spaces Matter in Modern Cities

As cities grow larger and populations increase, green spaces such as parks, gardens, and nature trails are becoming more important than ever before. Urban green spaces offer a peaceful escape from the noise, stress, and fast pace of city life. They improve the quality of air, support mental and physical health, and create a sense of community. Modern city planners now recognize that green areas are not luxuries—they are essential parts of a healthy urban environment.

Green spaces have a powerful impact on physical health. They encourage residents to walk, jog, cycle, and engage in outdoor activities. Access to nature helps people stay active, reduces the risk of obesity, and supports cardiovascular health. Children benefit greatly from parks, as they provide a safe place to play, explore, and develop motor skills. Elderly individuals also use green areas for gentle exercise and socialization, improving both mobility and emotional well-being.

Nature also plays a significant role in mental health. Studies show that spending time in green areas can reduce stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression. The natural environment helps calm the mind, improve concentration, and restore energy. In a world filled with screens, traffic, and constant stimulation, even a short walk in the park can have a positive effect on psychological well-being.

Environmental benefits are another reason why urban green spaces matter. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, and reduce the impact of air pollution. Green areas also lower urban temperatures by providing shade and cooling the air. This effect, known as the "urban heat island" reduction, is especially important in cities with large amounts of concrete and asphalt. Additionally, parks support biodiversity by offering habitats for birds, insects, and small animals.

Urban green spaces also strengthen communities by bringing people together. Festivals, outdoor classes, picnics, and family gatherings often take place in parks, creating opportunities for social interaction. When residents meet in shared public spaces, they build trust, form friendships, and develop a stronger sense of belonging. Community gardens,

where neighbours grow fruits and vegetables together, are becoming increasingly popular as a way to promote cooperation and sustainable living.

However, maintaining and expanding green spaces can be challenging. Limited land, high construction costs, and rapid urbanization make it difficult for cities to preserve nature. Despite these challenges, many urban areas are implementing creative solutions such as rooftop gardens, vertical forests, and pocket parks built in small unused spaces.

Urban green spaces will continue to play a crucial role in creating healthier, happier, and more sustainable cities. As populations grow, investing in nature is not a choice—it is a necessity.

3. Impact of Social Media on Society

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, influencing how people communicate, access information, and perceive the world around them. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow users to connect instantly with friends, family, and even strangers across the globe. While these networks offer significant benefits, including sharing ideas, raising awareness for causes, and fostering professional opportunities, they also present several challenges.

Excessive use of social media has been linked to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness. The constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyles can create unrealistic expectations and social pressure, especially among young people. Additionally, misinformation spreads quickly on social networks, affecting public opinion and sometimes even political processes.

Despite these drawbacks, social media can be a powerful tool for social change. Campaigns that gain traction online can raise awareness about important issues, mobilize communities, and generate real-world action. The key lies in responsible usage—understanding the limitations, verifying information, and maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline life. Ultimately, social media reflects both the potential and pitfalls of modern communication, demonstrating how technology can shape society in profound ways.

Reference: Breaking News English (https://breakingnewsenglish.com/)

4. The Importance of Financial Literacy in Young Adults

Financial literacy refers to the knowledge and skills needed to manage money effectively. In today's fast-changing world, financial literacy is becoming more important than ever, especially for young adults who are entering college, starting careers, or planning their future. Understanding basic concepts such as budgeting, saving, investing, and credit management can help individuals make informed decisions and avoid financial difficulties later in life.

Many young adults struggle with financial stress because they are not taught practical money-management skills in school. Without proper guidance, they may use credit cards irresponsibly, overspend on unnecessary items, or accumulate debt without realizing the long-term consequences. Learning how to create a budget is one of the first and most crucial steps. A budget helps track income, expenses, and savings goals. It also encourages people to distinguish between needs and wants, helping them spend money more wisely.

Saving money is another essential aspect of financial literacy. Experts often suggest following the "50/30/20 rule": spending 50% of income on needs, 30% on wants, and saving 20%. Even small amounts saved regularly can build financial security over time. Savings act as a safety net during emergencies, such as unexpected medical expenses or job loss. They also allow individuals to work toward long-term goals like buying a home, starting a business, or traveling.

Investing is another important topic that young adults should understand. While investing may seem complicated, learning the basics can make a significant difference in future financial stability. Investments grow over time due to compound interest, meaning that money earns additional money. Young adults have an advantage because they can start early and allow their investments to grow for many years. Whether through retirement accounts, stocks, or bonds, investing builds wealth more effectively than saving alone.

However, financial literacy is not just about earning or saving money—it also involves avoiding common financial traps. Many companies encourage people to spend impulsively through advertisements, credit offers, and online shopping discounts. Understanding how

interest rates, loans, and credit scores work helps individuals make smarter decisions. A good credit score can lower the cost of borrowing and increase opportunities, while a poor score can create financial obstacles.

Ultimately, financial literacy empowers young adults to live independently and confidently. By learning how to manage money wisely, they can reduce stress, achieve personal goals, and build a stable future. Financial education is not optional—it is a life skill that everyone should master.

5. Doing Regular Exercise

Regular exercise is one of the most important habits a person can develop for maintaining both physical and mental health. Across the world, health experts emphasize the benefits of consistent physical activity, including improved cardiovascular health, stronger muscles and bones, and better weight management. Beyond physical fitness, exercise is also known to boost mood, reduce stress, and improve sleep quality.

Exercise can take many forms, from structured workouts in a gym to outdoor activities and daily movements like walking or cycling. Aerobic exercises, such as running, swimming, and dancing, are particularly effective for strengthening the heart and lungs. Strength training exercises, including weightlifting and resistance exercises, help build muscle mass and support skeletal health. Flexibility exercises, such as yoga or stretching routines, contribute to overall mobility and prevent injuries.

The mental health benefits of exercise are equally significant. Physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that promote feelings of happiness and reduce perception of pain. Regular exercise has been shown to alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety and to improve overall mood. Additionally, being active can enhance cognitive function, including memory, attention, and problem-solving abilities. These benefits are particularly important for students and professionals who experience stress in their daily lives.

Despite its advantages, many people struggle to maintain a regular exercise routine. Common obstacles include lack of time, motivation, or access to facilities. To overcome these challenges, experts recommend setting achievable goals, choosing activities that are enjoyable, and incorporating exercise into daily routines. Simple changes, such as taking the stairs, walking or cycling instead of driving short distances, or scheduling short exercise sessions, can make a significant difference.

Another important aspect of exercise is safety and proper technique. Warming up before physical activity and cooling down afterward can prevent injuries. Maintaining correct form during exercises, gradually increasing intensity, and listening to the body's signals

are essential practices. For beginners, consulting with a fitness professional or following reputable instructional materials can provide guidance and reduce the risk of harm.

Regular exercise also has social benefits. Joining a sports club, participating in group fitness classes, or exercising with friends can increase motivation and create a sense of community. The social interaction associated with group activities adds enjoyment and accountability, making it more likely for individuals to stick with their routines.

In conclusion, doing regular exercise is crucial for maintaining physical and mental health. It offers numerous benefits ranging from improved fitness and cognitive function to enhanced mood and social connection. By adopting enjoyable, safe, and consistent physical activity, individuals can lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.