

# **EXTRA READING TEXTS**

## **~FOR L5 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!**

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## Compare & Contrast

### 1. The Psychology of Happiness

Happiness is a universal aspiration, but what truly makes people happy? Psychology offers insights that challenge common misconceptions: it's not just about wealth or status. Research shows that strong social connections, a sense of purpose, and simple daily practices contribute more to well-being than material wealth. People who invest in meaningful relationships — friends, family, or communities — tend to experience greater fulfillment and emotional resilience, even when life is difficult.

Another key factor is mindset. Practicing gratitude, for instance, has been shown to improve mental health; individuals who regularly reflect on what they are thankful for report lower levels of anxiety and depression. Similarly, engaging in “flow” activities — those that fully absorb your attention, whether painting, writing, or playing sports — can boost your sense of meaning and satisfaction. These activities promote a state of focused immersion, providing both challenge and reward.

Physical well-being also plays a role in happiness. Exercise, good nutrition, and adequate sleep contribute not only to health but also to a positive mood. When people feel physically strong, they are more likely to approach life with energy and optimism.

Finally, resilience matters. Life inevitably brings challenges — financial difficulties, personal loss, or unexpected change — but happy people tend to bounce back. They cultivate adaptive coping strategies, such as seeking social support or reframing negative experiences in a constructive way.

In sum, happiness is less about chasing external markers of success and more about nurturing relationships, purpose, and mental habits that sustain growth. A fulfilling life, research suggests, is built on connection, gratitude, balance, and resilience.

**Reference:** Harvard Health Publishing – Positive Psychology

## 2. Climate Change and Our Future

Climate change represents perhaps the greatest environmental crisis of our time. Over the last century, human activities — most notably burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes — have released vast amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat, raising global temperatures and disrupting natural weather patterns. As a result, glaciers melt, sea levels rise, and extreme weather events become more frequent. This is not just a distant problem; communities around the world are already experiencing flooding, droughts, and heat waves, threatening both human life and ecosystems.

Addressing climate change is a complex challenge that requires both global cooperation and individual action. On a governmental level, policies must encourage the transition to renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power, while also investing in sustainable infrastructure. International agreements, like the Paris Agreement, aim to unite countries in limiting global warming — but progress can be slow, and commitments may not always be fulfilled.

Individuals, too, have a vital role to play. Reducing daily carbon footprints can make a real difference: using public transportation, recycling, minimizing waste, and supporting sustainable products all contribute to a healthier planet. Education is critical as well; when people understand how climate change works and why it matters, they are more likely to take responsible actions and support environmental policies.

Furthermore, technology offers hope. Advances in battery storage, carbon capture, and clean energy innovation provide powerful tools for reducing emissions. Scientists are also exploring ways to restore natural carbon sinks like forests and wetlands, and engineers are designing “smart cities” that optimize energy use. However, technological solutions must be paired with social equity: poorer communities often suffer the worst effects of climate change, so mitigation and adaptation strategies must be inclusive and fair.

In the end, the fight against climate change is about protecting our planet and securing a future where human prosperity and ecological balance go hand in hand. It calls for bold

decisions, international solidarity, and everyday habits that reflect a deep respect for the Earth.

**Reference:** National Geographic – Climate Change

### **3. Being an Only Child in a Family**

Growing up as an only child can shape a person's character, habits, and worldview in unique ways. Without siblings, an only child often becomes the center of attention at home. Parents usually invest more time, emotional energy, and financial resources into a single child, which can lead to a strong sense of security and confidence. Many only children grow up feeling deeply supported, encouraged, and understood by their parents because they receive one-to-one communication on a daily basis.

This environment allows only children to develop independence early. They often learn to entertain themselves, manage their own time, and become comfortable with solitude. Spending a lot of time alone can also lead to creativity — many only children turn to books, art, music, or imaginative play to fill their free hours. As a result, they may develop strong problem-solving skills and a rich inner world.

Socially, being an only child can have both benefits and challenges. Because they interact more with adults than with peers at home, many only children become articulate and mature in their communication. They learn to express their thoughts clearly and are often good at forming relationships with teachers and elders. However, they may sometimes struggle with peer conflict or group dynamics, simply because they have fewer opportunities to negotiate, share, or collaborate within the family environment.

The close bond between parents and an only child can also create certain pressures. Some only children feel a strong expectation to succeed academically or professionally because they represent their parents' sole hope and investment. Others may worry about future responsibilities, such as caring for aging parents without the support of siblings. These concerns can shape their sense of duty and long-term planning from a young age.

Despite these complexities, being an only child can foster confidence, independence, and a strong sense of identity. With adequate social opportunities outside the home — such as school, clubs, or sports — only children thrive emotionally and academically.

Reference: Psychology Today

#### **4. The Importance of Financial Literacy**

Financial literacy is the fundamental understanding of how money works: how to earn, save, invest, spend wisely, and plan for the future. Yet, despite being essential, personal financial education is often overlooked in schools. Without proper guidance, many young adults find themselves struggling with debt, living paycheck to paycheck, or making poor investment decisions. Building financial literacy skills early in life can have a profound impact on long-term stability and success.

People who are financially literate are more likely to create and follow a budget, build emergency funds, and avoid high-interest debt. They understand the benefits and risks of different investment options — from stocks and bonds to retirement accounts — and they know how to diversify to reduce risk. Additionally, financial literacy empowers individuals to navigate credit wisely, negotiate loans, and recognize predatory financial practices.

Governments and educational institutions around the world are increasingly recognizing the importance of this skill set. Some countries have even made financial education mandatory in secondary schools, teaching students how to manage money responsibly before they enter adulthood. Non-profit organizations also offer workshops and online courses that simplify complex financial topics.

In today's global economic landscape, where financial products are becoming more complex and digital, being financially literate is more critical than ever. It helps people protect themselves against economic shocks, make better life decisions, and achieve long-term goals like home ownership or retirement. Ultimately, financial literacy isn't just about making more money — it's about using money in a smart, sustainable way.

**Reference:** Investopedia – Financial Education

## 5. Online Learning in Modern Education

In recent years, online learning has transformed the educational landscape, offering unprecedented access and flexibility to students worldwide. Thanks to the internet and powerful platforms, individuals can now enroll in courses from top universities, participate in virtual classrooms, and even collaborate with peers across continents. This shift was especially accelerated by global events like the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many traditional schools to adopt remote learning almost overnight.

One of the most significant advantages of online learning is its adaptability. Students can learn at their own pace, revisit recorded lectures, and engage with interactive exercises whenever it suits them. For working professionals or busy parents, online courses offer a rare chance to continue education without sacrificing other responsibilities. Moreover, digital tools like discussion forums, virtual whiteboards, and peer review systems foster active engagement and social interaction.

However, online education comes with its challenges. Self-discipline and time management are crucial — without them, some students may fall behind. Access to reliable internet and suitable devices is another barrier, particularly in developing regions. In addition, the lack of face-to-face interaction can affect motivation and reduce the opportunities for social learning. Not all subjects are equally suited for online formats, especially those that rely heavily on hands-on, practical experience.

To overcome these obstacles, many institutions are now creating hybrid models that combine the strengths of both online and in-person learning. Educators are designing blended curricula, where students attend physical classes part of the time and complete online work the rest. This mix encourages better interaction, accountability, and flexibility. Finally, with constant improvement in educational technologies — such as AR (augmented reality) simulations and AI tutors — the potential of online learning to provide high-quality, personalized education is greater than ever.

**Reference:** EdTech Magazine – Digital Education

## Argumentative

### 1. Urbanization and City Life

Over the past century, the world has experienced a dramatic shift from rural to urban living. Today, more than half of the global population resides in cities. Urbanization offers many benefits: better access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. Cities are often the centers of innovation, creativity, and economic growth. For many people, moving to an urban area represents a path toward improved quality of life and prospects for the future.

However, city life also brings serious challenges. High population density can lead to overcrowding, increased costs of living, and significant environmental pollution. Traffic congestion, air quality concerns, and noise pollution place a strain on both infrastructure and residents' well-being. Housing affordability can become a critical issue, contributing to social inequality as lower-income individuals struggle to find adequate accommodation.

To address these problems, modern urban planners are reimagining how cities should function. Concepts like “smart cities” emphasize sustainable infrastructure, green spaces, efficient public transport, and renewable energy. Technology also plays a role: sensors, data analytics, and AI monitor energy consumption, waste management, and traffic patterns, optimizing resources in real time. Green roofs, community gardens, and urban agriculture help cities become more environmentally friendly while improving quality of life.

Social initiatives are equally important. City governments and non-profit organizations encourage community-building through shared public spaces, affordable housing, and cultural programs. By combining technology, policy, and social engagement, cities can evolve into places that are not only efficient but also liveable and equitable.

**Reference:** UN Habitat – Urban Development

## 2. The Influence of Advertising on Consumer Behavior

Advertising is a powerful force that shapes consumer habits, perceptions, and even identity. From television and social media to billboards and sponsorships, companies deploy sophisticated strategies to influence how people think and feel about their products. Advertisers often use emotional appeals — happiness, success, belonging — along with social proof, celebrity endorsements, and behavioural psychology to persuade consumers.

One common technique is the creation of aspirational lifestyles: ads suggest that buying a certain product will elevate you into a more attractive, confident, or socially admired version of yourself. This tactic can create desire, especially among teenagers and young adults who are forming their identities. With digital advertising, personalization takes things further: companies use data analytics to tailor ads to individual preferences, increasing the likelihood of purchase.

However, there are drawbacks. Constant exposure to advertisements can lead to overconsumption, materialism, and unrealistic expectations. People may equate self-worth with the ability to buy, rather than with personal qualities or relationships. There's also a risk of manipulation: if ads are misleading, exploitative, or overly persuasive, consumers may make decisions that are not in their best interest.

To mitigate these issues, consumers need to develop critical media literacy. Understanding how advertising works empowers individuals to make informed choices: recognizing persuasive techniques, comparing products objectively, and questioning whether a purchase aligns with real needs rather than emotional impulses. Additionally, regulation plays a role: governments and watchdog organizations can enforce transparency, limit misleading claims, and ensure responsible advertising practices.

In today's media-saturated world, advertising will continue to evolve — but so can consumers, becoming more aware, critical, and intentional in how they respond.

**Reference:** American Marketing Association – Consumer Psychology

### 3. The Rise of Remote Work

Remote work has become a defining trend of the 21st century, transforming how and where people perform their jobs. Driven by advances in technology and changing workplace cultures, working from home or from remote locations offers flexibility, freedom, and a better work-life balance for many. Employees save commuting time and expenses, and they can design their workdays around personal commitments. Employers may benefit too, reducing overhead costs and accessing talent beyond geographic boundaries.

But remote work comes with its own set of challenges. Without clear boundaries, work and personal life can blur — people may work longer hours or feel like they are never “off.” Isolation can be a serious problem, especially for workers who thrive on collaboration and in-person interaction. Maintaining motivation and productivity also demands self-discipline; distractions at home can erode focus, and not everyone has an optimal workspace.

Organizations are addressing these issues by developing support systems. Some companies offer remote workers access to co-working spaces, mental health resources, and regular team-building activities. Managers are encouraged to set clear expectations, regular check-ins, and promote “virtual watercooler” spaces to preserve social interaction. Technology is also advancing: tools for video conferencing, project management, and asynchronous communication make remote collaboration smoother than ever.

Looking ahead, hybrid models — where employees split time between home and office — seem likely to dominate. This arrangement may offer the best of both worlds: flexibility and social engagement, productivity and well-being. As remote work evolves, it’s crucial for both workers and companies to find healthy practices, clear communication, and sustainable routines that support long-term success without sacrificing personal life or team cohesion.

**Reference:** Forbes – Future of Work

#### 4. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer just a concept of science fiction — it is now deeply integrated into many aspects of our daily lives. From voice assistants like Siri and Alexa to advanced algorithms that recommend songs, movies, and even potential friends, AI is everywhere. In the business world, companies use AI to analyze massive datasets, predict customer behavior, and automate repetitive tasks. Healthcare systems rely on AI to detect diseases such as cancer early, interpret medical images, and personalize treatment plans. Meanwhile, in education, AI tutors can provide individual feedback to students and tailor exercises to their specific needs.

Yet the rise of AI brings significant ethical dilemmas and societal challenges. As automation becomes more capable, there is an obvious concern that many jobs could be replaced — particularly those that involve repetitive or data-focused tasks. This could lead to economic inequality if adequate retraining programs are not implemented. Another issue is bias: if AI systems are trained on biased data, they may perpetuate or even amplify discrimination. Privacy is also at stake, since AI often requires access to large amounts of personal data to function effectively.

Governments and organizations around the world are beginning to regulate AI, demanding transparency, accountability, and fairness. Some advocate that AI systems should be audited regularly, while others call for “explainable AI,” which means users can understand how decisions are made. On the technical side, researchers are working on “ethical AI” frameworks and robust programming standards.

Despite these challenges, the potential of AI remains transformative. When used responsibly, it can improve efficiency, solve global problems, and enhance human capabilities. For instance, in climate science, AI can model environmental changes and predict natural disasters. In global development, AI can optimize resource distribution to

poorer regions. The key is balancing innovation with responsibility, ensuring that AI develops in a way that benefits all of humanity without compromising ethics or equality.

**Reference:** MIT Technology Review – Artificial Intelligence

## 5. Space Tourism: The Next Frontier

Space tourism, once a sci-fi dream, is steadily becoming a reality. Thanks to private aerospace companies, civilians now have the opportunity to travel beyond Earth's atmosphere. These commercial flights don't come cheap — tickets can cost hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars — but they mark a monumental shift in our understanding of travel and exploration. Wealthy individuals have already made suborbital trips, and companies are racing to develop more sustainable, affordable routes for the future.

Beyond its novelty and thrill, space tourism presents significant engineering and environmental challenges. Launching a rocket requires vast amounts of energy, which currently relies heavily on fossil fuels. As the industry grows, its carbon footprint may worsen. However, advances in rocket technology and fuel sources are underway, and researchers are developing greener propulsion systems to minimize environmental impact. Safety is also a critical concern: ensuring that missions are reliable, passengers trained, and contingencies in place is essential for the industry's long-term viability.

Despite these obstacles, space tourism has the potential to accelerate scientific research and public interest in space. Tourists may help fund future expeditions, space stations, or lunar bases. Their journeys could yield data on microgravity's effects on the human body or contribute to the development of space habitats. Moreover, experiencing Earth from orbit often inspires a deeper appreciation for our planet's fragility, potentially motivating passengers and observers back home to support environmental and scientific efforts.

In the long term, space tourism may reshape humanity's relationship with space, turning it from a remote domain for astronauts and scientists into a new realm for commerce,

public participation, and discovery. Although the path ahead is steep, the future holds exciting possibilities — ones that could redefine where and how we travel.

**Reference:** NASA – Commercial Spaceflight