

IELTS General Training Reading

SECTION 1 Questions 1 -14

Read the text below and answer questions 1 -8

How to become a successful crime writer

British authors have always excelled in one genre in particular: that of crime fiction. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie for some are synonymous with the genre, attaining the same celebrity status as their fictional creations, the eponymous Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot, respectively. In the creation of such memorable characters, these two authors raised the bar for future crime fiction writers. So how can you, too, write gripping fiction that also will stand the test of time? Here are some simple tips that will help you on your way and improve your chances of getting to print.

Tip 1 The fiction world is awash 'With different types of crime novels. Before you put pen to paper, devour as many fiction novels as possible with varying storylines. In this way you will learn how to create credible fictional characters and plots. Of course the make-or-break in any crime novel is the ending. Surprise revelations or an unexpected turn-of events will delight readers. After all, even the experienced armchair detective likes to be kept guessing until the end.

Tip 2 We have established that a great cliff-hanger of a novel is the key ingredient to all crime novels. But how do we build up the suspense and throw the reader off the scent of the real culprit? Well, the answer is to use as many red herrings and sub-plots as possible without becoming too involved. The sub-plots and false clues should never obscure the main plot entirely; otherwise, the reader will become lost in all the intricacies and minutiae of the sub-plots.

Tip 3 It is important to establish your facts. If setting your novel in the past, beware of including modern-day devices or inventions that did not exist at the time you are writing. Many a Hollywood blockbuster has been spoiled by anachronisms, the wearing of a watch in 'Gladiator' set in the Roman era is one such example. The same holds true for the written word.

If, on the other hand, you are using a contemporary setting then ensure you are fully knowledgeable of modern hi-tech detection methods and forensic techniques. Internet search engines such as Google will help you get your head around the most up-to-date procedures. Your research should include:

- DNA analysis
- Forensic anthropology and pathology
- Forensic criminology, psychiatry and psychology
- Fingerprinting

- Interviewing techniques
- Computer forensics

Tip 4 Don't lose the plot! Keep a track of not just your leading but also minor characters and their actions. It is important to have good continuity throughout. Whilst people may not be so rational or consistent in real life, your fictional creations need to have a certain level of consistency in their thoughts and actions otherwise they may cease to maintain credibility with the reader. Sketching out a general overview of the plot before writing will also help to maintain structure to your novel.

Tip 5 Lacking inspiration? They say truth is stranger, than fiction so why not look to real-life events to inspire you? A rummage through a few local and national papers may uncover a potential story-line. After all, it worked for celebrated crime author Jeffrey Archer, so why not you? It goes without saying that a degree of fictional embellishment of real-life people is necessary to avoid being accused of libel and a sudden curtailing of an otherwise budding career.

Tip 6 Now you have written your best-selling novel all you need to do is find a publisher! Again, research on the Internet will reveal a list of publishers most likely to publish your literary genre. Should you fail to find a publisher keep trying. After all, some of the most celebrated authors were initially turned down on their first attempt!

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text? In the spaces given for questions **1 - 8**, write

- **TRUE** if the statement agrees with the information
- **FALSE** if the statement contradicts the information
- **NOT GIVEN** if there is no information on this

1. So famous were the fictional characters of Conan Doyle and Christie's crime novels, that they eclipsed the fame of their authors.....
2. The novels of Conan Doyle and Christie are less accomplished than those of modern crime writers.
3. It is more challenging to portray fictional than real-life characters in a novel
4. To write about modern crime detection techniques, some knowledge of forensics may be required
5. Would-be crime authors should always write about their own life experiences
6. Characters based on real-life people is a practice best avoided.
7. First-time crime authors may be turned down by publishers.

8. Seasoned crime novel readers like being able to guess the culprit in advance.

Questions 9 - 14

Read the texts below and answer Questions 9-14.

A Buttercup café

Enjoy the cosy atmosphere of this cafe and sample the good, 'no-frills' honest home-cooked food. If, however, you are looking for a light snack, then sample one of our delicious sandwiches filled with locally sourced, fresh ingredients. The cafe is not licensed but there is a large selection of teas and soft drinks available.

Cafe open: Mon-Fri 10am-5pm

Weekends: Sat 11am-6pm

Sundays closed

B Dolce Vita Restaurant

Antonio and Lucia are the proud owners of this small, authentic Italian pizzeria which has been recently awarded Trip Advisor's 'Certificate of Excellence'. Whilst Antonio is essentially responsible for front-of-house duties, he has been known to give a hand in the kitchen, turning out his own speciality pizza. His wife usually stays behind the scenes turning out simply delicious dishes, the recipes for which were handed down from her grandmother. For that special occasion, tailor-made private parties and large dinner groups can be accommodated. A striking function room, ideal for an intimate gathering is also available.

Restricted weekday opening (Please check our website for details). Open every weekend from 11am-midnight. Website: www.doicevita.com

C Chiquite Restaurant

Boasting an extensive menu, you really are spoilt for choice at Chiquito's, if Mexican is your thing. The kitchen team offers a first-rate experience for all diners, no matter what the occasion. With a variety of meat dishes ranging from succulent chicken served over fajita vegetables to beef chilli burgers or a full rack of lip-smacking ribs, whatever you choose, you can't go far wrong.

Opening hours: **Weekdays** 12pm-10pm

Weekends 11am-1pm

D Frankie and Benny's

A great little restaurant with plenty of atmosphere. This is a family-run restaurant where everyone in the family helps with the cooking in equal measure. All the delicious dishes have been created by the two head chefs, Dario and Alessandro and their highly trained team. Together they have created a menu of contemporary dishes which is quite regularly updated. Diners are encouraged to make use of the covered terrace for a spot of alfresco dining and people-watching.

E Gelato Gusto

Extending over two storeys this cafe is bright, stylish and down-to-earth. The sheer variety of ice-cream flavours available is impressive. Bespoke concoctions also on offer. You can also buy takeaway tubs of ice-cream to enjoy at your leisure.

Look at the five advertisements, **A-E**. Which venue offers the following? Write the correct letter, A-E, in boxes **9-14** on your answer sheet.

NB: You may use any letter more than once.

- 9.** Only non alcoholic drinks.
- 10.** Custom made orders.
- 11.** An outside seating area.
- 12.** A room especially designated for small parties.
- 13.** A constantly changing menu.
- 14.** Simply cooked food.

SECTION 2 Questions 15 – 28

Questions 15-21

The text below has seven sections, A—G. Choose the correct heading for each section from the list of headings below. Write the correct number, **i—x**, in boxes **15-21** on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i. Money can buy happiness.
- ii. It's what is inside, that counts more
- iii. Recipients of gifts are rarely grateful
- iv. A familiar feeling
- v. Practicality is the key
- vi. It is better to give than to receive
- vii. Romance need not come at a price
- viii. Present-giving has become more challenging
- ix. Recipients value inexpensive gifts and pricey gadgets alike
- x. Don't waste time and energy

	SECTION	HEADING
15.	Section A
16.	Section B
17.	Section C
18.	Section D
19.	Section E
20.	Section F
21.	Section G

The Art of Gift-Giving

A _____ Anticipation builds, the wrapping paper is ripped off in happy expectation... And then, our enthusiasm takes a down-turn as we extricate a jokey Christmas pullover, a pair of woolen socks or a knitted tea-cosy. Yes, we have all been there. However, recent scientific research on how to give the ideal gift could be set to change all that.

B _____ Yale researcher Novemsky, claims to have singled out the factor that determines if a gift will be well received or not. Perceived ease of use is apparently paramount in the eyes of the recipient. A non-user-friendly gift will therefore lead to disappointment, however expensive the actual gift might have been.

C _____ Another tip for successful gift-giving is to avoid giving unsolicited presents. We often try to second-guess the would-be recipient's taste, believing our personal effort will be appreciated. But this invariably results in disappointment for the recipient of the gift. Far better a gift that has actually been explicitly requested by the recipient than one chosen by the giver, according to a study conducted by researchers Francis Flynn and Francesca Gina (Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology 2011). So, best to save fruitless hours spent trawling the internet for gifts or pounding the high streets in vain and just be direct: ask the recipient what they want, then give it to them; simple as that!

D _____ A further tip which flies in the face of conventional thinking with regard to present-giving, is to err on the side of frugality. In accordance with a 2014 study by Flynn and Gabriella Adams, the receiver's happiness was not found to be directly proportional to the money spent on a gift. In the study, recipients were given cheaper and more expensive versions of a variety of items, ranging from an iPad to jewellery, wine and books. In all cases, the costlier gift was not valued more than the cheaper option. The thought, therefore, really does count.

E _____ An interesting extension to this study, is that this finding holds true for one of the most expensive and status-conscious gifts: that of the engagement ring. Whilst diamonds may be a girl's best friend, as the saying goes, they do not necessarily have to be top-of-the-range to win a girl's heart. Cheaper alternatives are just as valued as their costlier counterparts.

F _____ If you have successfully negotiated the mine-field of present-buying, then you still aren't home and dry yet. Another hurdle has yet to be overcome: present wrapping. Failure to appropriately wrap a present can undo all the effort you have put into buying the gift so far. A perfectly wrapped present is always more welcome than a hastily wrapped one; unless the gift is markedly less attractive than its outward wrapping, as found by Novemsky and Yale colleague, Ravi Dhar, since this creates a dissonance between the anticipated and real worth of a gift.

G _____ Should all the above advice seem bewildering, then never fear. According to the 2011 study by Flynn and Francesca Gina, gift recipients are more than happy to receive cash in place of an actual gift.

Questions 22 - 28

Read the text below and answer Questions 22-28.

- A Those who have not entertained the idea that research into family ancestry might reveal a blue-blooded relative or historical celebrity, must be few and far between. Most of us are intrigued with our origins and if genealogical research turns up a famous family member on the way, then so much the better.
- B Accordingly, there is a plethora of genealogy websites ready to be accessed on the internet to satiate the curiosity of those so inclined. Just type in the name of one of your ancestors into a search engine and you will be immediately inundated with genealogy sites. Whilst some sites may be free, others will be on a pay-as-you-go or subscription basis. Often the sheer number of websites can initially overwhelm the would-be genealogist.
- C So by what criteria do you select a website to aid your research into your family tree? Whilst free websites may seem the most attractive option, they may not adequately meet your needs. A fee-paying-website, however, might provide access to a wider range of resources, such as birth and death certificates, or at least indexes to the certificates, as well as census returns. Such resources and access to them are fundamental to your research.
- D When you access certificates, try to ensure that they are a digitised form of the original copy, since transcripts are usually poor substitutes for the original. Whenever possible, opt for the copies of the original thereby obviating the possibility of human error in copied or miscopied transcripts.
- E Having obtained or accessed, at least, essential documents, you can then proceed to more specialist websites providing military or employment information; Before paying for access to such sites, first establish if the site contains the records you are seeking. You shouldn't have to pay access to the site to do so.
- F Ideally, find out if there is a contact name or address for whoever is responsible for the site. A specialist on hand to answer more detailed queries is always a bonus.
- G Finally, if websites fail to uncover the information you are seeking you can always try good old fashioned archives. Not all information is available on websites, so, sooner or later you will probably find yourself doing research in an archive, anyway. Hopefully, a combination of websites and archives will deliver the information you require and uncover a fascinating heritage to boot.

Questions 22 and 23

Complete the sentences below. Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the text for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 22 and 23 on your answer sheet.

- 22.** There is such a wealth of genealogy sites available online, that at times you may feel.....information.
- 23.** It is preferable to.....in their original rather than transcribed form.

Questions 24 – 28

Complete the information-chart below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the text for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 24-28 on your answer sheet.

Many people are curious to find out about their family tree. Follow these steps to ensure you access the information you require.

First, enter the name of a family ancestor into **24**

Next, choose a website that will **25** providing sufficient information on your family tree.

When accessing a document from your chosen website, avoid **26** whenever possible, favouring instead the original version.

Once you have done the essential groundwork to obtain necessary documents to continue your search, you require access to more **27**This may require a financial outlay.

Finally, if your research still fails to turn up the information you require, then it is best to resort to **28**

SECTION 3 **Questions 29 - 40**

Questions 29- 35

Read the text below and answer Questions 29-35.

How a Humble Vegetable Changed the World

- A A fashionable adornment, aphrodisiac or cause of fever, leprosy and widespread famine? The perceived attributes of a humble tuber, otherwise known as the potato, have certainly varied over historical eras and with shifts in belief systems. Accordingly, attitudes towards the potato have ranged from curiosity and acceptance to fear and suspicion and even, downright hostility, as the British populous took to the streets in the 18th century to denounce the tuber in public protests, rallying under the cry 'No Potatoes, No Popery!'
- B So, why did a humble tuber excite so much suspicion and mistrust? One has but to look to the roots - if you will pardon the pun - of the controversial crop to understand how the potato managed to initially incite such distrust in many, despite saving millions from starvation in later centuries.
- C The potato, together with the eggplant (aubergine) and tomato, originates from the same family as the deadly belladonna (also known as deadly nightshade) and equally toxic, henbane. Common to all these plants is the presence of the lethal toxin solanine, a neurological poison. Ingestion of the toxin may lead to paralysis and death. In addition, the presence of another toxin, tomatine, in potatoes is similarly potentially deadly. One might be forgiven in thinking, therefore, that the potato is not an attractive item to have on the menu. Add to this the belief that the tuber was thought to be a source of leprosy too, then it is little wonder that the potato took time to win acceptance in European circles after its introduction in the 16th century.
- D Obviously, the potatoes we eat today bear little resemblance to the toxic-laden wild potatoes of Peru from where they originate. There, the potatoes in their natural form are so toxic they can only be ingested if accompanied by clay particles. As far back as the 16th century, Peruvian Indians were utilising such knowledge, dipping the bitter potatoes in a gravy mix of water and clay particles. The latter served to absorb excess solanine thereby rendering the potato edible. Nowadays, centuries of crossbreeding between species has greatly diluted the toxin and its lethal potential.
- E Today, the potato is hailed as a saviour. A French pharmacist named Parmentier is to be largely credited with the about-face in attitude towards the potato as a food source in the 17th century. Prior to

this period, public repugnance towards the vegetable as much as reluctance to use it other than as cattle fodder; prevented its appearance on the dining table. A prior ill-fated introduction of the tuber by Sir Walter Raleigh to the court of Elizabeth I had done the tuber no favours: the decision of the queen's cook to serve up the plant's indigestible leaves as opposed to the edible tubers had resulted in universal indigestion amongst court members on this occasion. Parmentier however turned public opinion regarding the tuber by encouraging its addition to the menus of Louis XVI's court. So successful was his personal campaign for the potato's introduction, that the queen, Marie Antoinette, enthusiastically adorned her hair with potato flowers, sparking off a fashionable trend amongst court circles.

- F Parmentier's intervention on behalf of the humble potato was timely and without doubt ultimately saved millions from starvation. Public acceptance of the potato however initially lagged significantly behind that of court circles. In fact, it took an edict from the Paris Faculty of Medicine in 1772, verifying that potatoes were edible, in addition to the famine of 1785 to bring the public around. Thereafter, the potato became a staple in the diet of the rich and poor alike.
- G So significant role is the potato have played in world history, with regard to staving off famine and aiding population increase, that historian W.H. McNeill has attributed the building of empires to the humble tuber. The potato, he argues, fuelled the rise of the West between 1750 and 1950 as European nations became no longer beholden to famine and were able to take dominion over other countries.
- H The rise of the potato from maligned tuber to worldwide food source, becoming the fifth most important crop globally after wheat, corn, rice and sugar cane, also had its downside. The over-dependence of European countries on the potato, arising in a virtual monoculture, led to the Irish Famine and mass emigration when crops failed in 1845. Subsequently, increased knowledge of pesticides and more stringent controls over crop production have largely warded off the significant crop failures that were so devastating in the past.

Questions 29- 35

The text has eight paragraphs, A - H. Which paragraph contains the following information? Write the correct letter, **A - H**, in boxes **29-35** on your answer sheet.

- 29.** deadly relations
30. the potato as a catalyst for change
31. the authorities intervene
32. pioneers meet with varied success
33. prejudices incite public action

- 34.** unsound agricultural practice brings about a demographic shift
.....
- 35.** historical and modern solutions to a common problem.....

Questions 36 – 40

Complete the summary below. Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **36 - 40** on your answer sheet.

The potato polarised public opinion from the outset. Whilst the potato won **36**..... with some, others reacted with extreme actions of prejudice.

Unwillingness to accept the potato was perfectly understandable. Coming from the same family as its deadlier counterparts, belladonna and henbane, the potato was believed to be poisonous and certainly not **37**..... Those who did eat potatoes in the wild state, had to neutralise the main **38**..... present in the tuber by the addition of clay particles.

Various attempts over the centuries were made by historical figures and authorities alike to try and encourage the public to eat potatoes. Only later did the potato become a **39**..... European foodstuff.

So important was the potato as a source of calories and nutrients to the Europeans that it is said to have sustained European populations to such an extent that they were able to build global empires.

Unfortunately, **40**..... on just one crop proved Ireland's undoing. Many died after the Irish famine whilst others were forced to migrate en masse in order to survive.