

Academic Reading Practice Test 54

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1. Switch off your mobile phone and electronic devices.
2. Manage your time strictly to **20 minutes** per passage, reading questions first to guide your skimming and scanning for answers, always paying close attention to word limits and matching synonyms.
3. Read the instructions thoroughly before answering the questions.
4. Read the questions carefully to avoid silly mistakes.

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The Nature And Aims of Archaeology

Section A

Archaeology consists in part of unearthing the relics of the past, in part through meticulous labor of a scientific analyst, and in part through exercise of creative imagination. It is laboring in the sun on an excavation in the Middle East, collaborating with the Inuit in the snows of Alaska, and examining Roman Britain's sewers. But there is also the laborious process of interpretation so that we may comprehend what these things entail for the human narrative. And it is the protection of the world's cultural heritage against theft and reckless destruction. Therefore, archaeology involves both physical exertion in the field and intellectual inquiry in a study or laboratory. That contributes to its strong allure. The appropriate platform for fiction writers and filmmakers, from Agatha Christie with *Murder in Mesopotamia* to Steven Spielberg with *Indiana Jones*, is its fascinating blend of danger and detective work. Even if these representations are far from the truth, they effectively convey the idea that archaeology is a fascinating journey for understanding our history and ourselves.

Section B

But what is the relationship between archaeology and disciplines like anthropology and history, which are likewise concerned with the human story? Is archaeology a science by itself? And what are the contemporary tasks of the archaeologist?

In its broadest sense, anthropology is the study of people—their physical traits as animals and their distinctive non-biological traits, which we refer to as their cultures. The anthropologist Edward Tylor defined culture in this sense as “knowledge, belief, art, morals, tradition and any other abilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” in 1871. When referring to the culture of a particular society, anthropologists also use the term “culture” in a more narrow sense to refer to the non-biological traits that set that society apart from other cultures. Thus, anthropology is a large field of study. Because of this, it is typically divided into three subfields: physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, and archaeology.



Section C

The study of human biology or physical features and how they arose is the subject of physical anthropology, often known as biological anthropology. Social and cultural anthropology, often known as cultural anthropology, studies human culture. Two of its subfields are ethnography (which involves studying certain living cultures firsthand) and ethnology (which sets out to compare cultures using ethnographic evidence to derive general principles about human society).

The “past tense of cultural anthropology” is archaeology. Archaeologists study past societies primarily through their material remains—the buildings, tools, and other artifacts that make up what is known as the material culture left over from former societies. Cultural anthropologists frequently base their conclusions on the experience of living within contemporary communities.

Section D

However, understanding how to interpret material culture in terms of humans is one of the most crucial issues facing archaeologists today. What did the pots do? Why are some homes square while others are round? Here, archaeology and ethnography use similar techniques. Recent years have seen the emergence of “**ethnoarchaeology**,” in which archaeologists, like ethnographers, live among modern tribes with the aim of understanding how these civilizations employ material culture—how they create their tools and weapons, why they build their towns where they do, etc. In addition, archaeology has a crucial part to play in the conservation movement. **Legacy studies** are a growing discipline where it is understood that the world’s cultural heritage is a finite resource with varying meanings for various individuals.

Section E

So how does archaeology differ from history if it deals with the past? In the broadest sense, archaeology is a component of both anthropology and history, which we define as the entire history of humanity going back over three million years. Archaeology, the study of ancient material culture, is the only reliable source of information for more than 99% of that enormous time period. In western Asia, where written records first appeared approximately 3,000 BC, and much later in the majority of other parts of the world, conventional historical sources only date back to that time.



Prehistory, or the era before written records, is frequently distinguished from history in the strict sense, or the study of the past using written evidence. The divide between history and prehistory is a useful dividing line for archaeology, which investigates all cultures and periods, whether they had writing or not. However, it does not diminish the significance of the relevant information found in oral histories.

Section F

Archaeology is a humanistic study that deals with the past of humanity, making it a historical field. Its goal is to understand humankind. However, it fundamentally varies from the study of written history. The archaeologist's findings do not provide us with clear instructions on how to think. Historical documents make assertions, express viewpoints, and render conclusions. On the other hand, the archaeologists' finds don't directly reveal anything to us. The practice of an archaeologist is similar to that of a scientist in this regard, who gathers data, conducts experiments, formulates a hypothesis, evaluates the theory against additional evidence, and, finally, develops a model that appears to best summarise the pattern seen in the data. Just as a scientist must provide a logical understanding of the natural world, an archaeologist must create a picture of the past.

The Nature And Aims of Archaeology – IELTS Reading Questions

Questions 1–6

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in Reading Passage?
In boxes 1–6 on your answer sheet write

- **YES** if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer
- **NO** if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer
- **NOT GIVEN** if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

1. Imagination and hard effort go hand in hand with archaeology.
2. Archaeologists need to be able to decipher texts written in languages from the distant past.
3. Archaeologists' work is well-represented in movies.
4. More than one definition of culture is used by anthropologists.
5. If you want to learn about the past, archaeology is the better option.
6. European history dates back to 3,000 BC.



Questions 7–8

Choose TWO letters A–E.

Write your answers in boxes 7–8 on your answer sheet.

The list below gives some statements about anthropology.

Which TWO statements are mentioned by the writer of the text?

- A. It's essential for government planners to know this.
- B. It's a field that's always expanding.
- C. Long stretches of time in the field are not uncommon.
- D. Studying it is made easier by dividing it into smaller parts.
- E. It focuses on how humans have evolved over time.

Questions 9–10

Choose TWO letters A–E.

Write your answers in boxes 9–10 on your answer sheet.

The list below gives some statements about archaeology.

Which TWO statements are mentioned by the writer of the text?

- A. exploring the food of ancient peoples by studying their excrement.
- B. investigating the meaning of cave art
- C. deciphering the causes behind the formation of home buildings
- D. the study of object-making and usage in many civilizations
- E. climatic change in the past is studied



Questions 11–14

Complete the summary of the last two paragraphs of Reading Passage.
Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.
Write your answers in boxes 11–14 on your answer sheet.

Archaeologists may conduct a lot of their job with written documents, but they still find
11. equally important.

The author describes archaeology as a **12.** and a **13.**

However, because archaeologists don't aim to change people's behaviour, the author
contrasts their working approach to that of a **14.**




[Click Here to Check Answers](#)



Answers for IELTS Academic Reading Practice Test 54

1. Yes	2. Not Given	3. No	4. Yes
5. Not Given	6. No	7. D	8. E
9. C	10. D	11. Oral histories	12. humanistic study
13. historical discipline	14. Scientist		

How many questions did you get right?

Correct Answers (Out of 14)	Your Next Step
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