

TOPIC: BOOKS

Sample answers, useful vocabulary and resources for IELTS speaking exam

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1. SAMPLE ANSWERS

PART 1

1. Do you like reading books?

- **Absolutely.** I love reading books and find myself enjoying different genres, such as **fantasy, psychology, history** and **business**. My fascination with reading started when I was still in the primary school – my mum used to read me a lot of stories before bed.

2. What kind of books do you like to read? [Why?]

- I am into **fantasy books** because I think they are quite creative, and their authors definitely have a **great deal of** imagination. Take “The Lord of the Rings” or “Harry Potter” – entire magic worlds were created in these books!

3. Where do you like to read? [Why?]

- I usually read when I am travelling – on train or

airplane. It is calm there, and I can be focused on my book for a long period of time **without distractions**. Of course, reading at home is pleasant as well – I can enjoy some tea alongside.

4. Do others in your family read books too?

- My father is an **avid reader**. He constantly expands his expertise in different fields and likes to read books to gain more knowledge about subjects he is interested in. My younger sisters like fantasy books as well.

5. Do you usually buy your books from a special place? [Where?]

- No, I often **borrow books** from the local library or school, since I read a lot and otherwise my apartment would be just cluttered. This is more environmentally friendly as well, as long as less books need to be produced.

PART 2

Describe a book that you have read which you would like to read again.

- **Explain why you would like to read it again.**
- **What is it about?**
- **What genre of book is it?**
- **Is this your favorite genre of book?**

I would like to talk about a book that, I believe, has changed my life. It's called "Atlas Shrugged" and was written by Ayn Rand – a Russian-born woman who lived all her life in the US, because she had to move in the beginning of the 20th century due to the Russian revolution.

This is a **dystopia** that tells an extensive and complicated story of America, being on the verge of socialism and capitalism. **Antagonists of the story** pushed the country to the socialistic camp, because they despised rich and wealthy individuals who got to single-handedly rule major infrastructure like factories and railways. On the other hand, Atlants, those who earned their wealth by hard work and determination, believed that capitalism reflects the social desire to succeed the best and gives everyone an opportunity to exercise their skills to achieve any goals imaginable.

Therefore, the **conflict emerges** between two powerful layers of society, and brings to the front a few people, representing both camps. A handful of **protagonists** in the book are passionate dreamers who achieved their ambitions targets and earned abundant wealth being quite young, and I found that their values and personal views are closely correlated to mine. This was the first time in my life when I was reading a book and realizing that the thoughts written there were identical to my own thoughts that I had had on the course of my life.

Unfortunately, **it has been a couple of years since I first read it**, and I have forgotten some details, so it will be extremely interesting for me to refresh them and read it again. Although dystopias can be rather depressing, this one was extremely **gripping** and **kept me captivated** until the very end. Probably, it is one of my favourite genres in literature.

PART 3

1. Do children need to learn how to read while they are still young?

- **In my opinion**, it is better for children to start reading between 3 and 6 years of age. **(Explain)** During this time period, a **child's brain is flexible**, easily absorbing information and **adopting new skills**. Such practice makes the brain stronger from the early years. **(Example)** For example, those who started reading as early as 4, tend to have sharper memory, notice minute details easier, reflect on information with greater deal of precision and overall – learn faster.

2. Do you think there is a difference between reading habits in the past and present?

- Yes, I do believe there is a huge difference. **(Explain)** **To start with**, the main medium of reading has changed. Now we use **electronic-ink devices**, smartphones and laptops to read books and magazines. Some people do it because of convenience, some – because they strive to be eco-friendly **(Example)** **For instance**, cutting on a large number of newspapers people used to buy in the past to **keep up with the news** weekly, has allowed to decrease the wood usage for paper production.

3. What is the impact of e-books on reading habits?

- **In my opinion**, the most significant impact they have had on our reading habits is the opportunity to switch books easily if one does not like the current one. **(Explain)** An e-device is capable of storing hundreds of books simultaneously, which makes it possible to accommodate to any taste and change books frequently. **(Example)** **To illustrate this point**, in the past that would mean to buy or borrow a new book. However, now all is required is to push a couple of buttons and start a **fresh read**.

2. KEY VOCABULARY

GENRE / TYPES OF BOOKS

science fiction

a book with imaginative concept about advanced science and technology, time travel, and extraterrestrial life

“I, Robot” is one of the **science fiction** books that has a film adaptation.

adventure book

a story of adventures, such as travel, difficult quests and discoveries

Huck Finn is the protagonist in the **adventure book** entitled “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”.

romance novel / romantic novel

a story of a romantic relationship between two people

Martha Cecilia is one of the famous authors of **romance novels** in the Philippines.

horror book/novel

a scary story written in a form of a novel

“Dracula” is a **horror** novel written by Bram Stoker.

comic book / comic/ comic magazine

a magazine or a book that contains pictures rather than text

When I was young, I used to have a lot of **comic books**, and most of them were stories of my favorite superheroes.

self-help book / self-improvement book

a book with the intention of helping readers solve personal problems

My friend who used to be a chain-smoker was able to eventually quit because of reading **self-help books**.

e-book

an electronic version of a printed book **E-books** can be accessed conveniently.

TYPES OF READING

skimming / skim reading / skim-read

reading a text quickly to get the general idea

During reading tests, students usually **skim-read** to save time.

scanning

a type of reading wherein you only look for specific information such as the name of author, a particular event, telephone number or address

I think the most common type of reading is **scanning**, because we usually look for key facts, not the overall meaning.

intensive reading

reading intensively with full comprehension

To be able to arrange events from the story into chronological order, one must have done an **intensive reading**.

HOW TO DESCRIBE A BOOK

plot twist	an unexpected development in a book, film, television program, etc.	A perfect example of a good plot twist can be found in the movie “The Sixth Sense”, a 1999 film starring Bruce Willis.
title	a name of a book, composition, or another artistic work	The full title of the book is “Conversation Gambits – real conversation practices”.
author	a writer of a book / article	The original author is unknown .
best-seller	a book that sells in very large numbers	When you see that “ best-seller ” is written on the cover of a book that is most likely a marketing strategy.
cover	the first hard page of a book or magazine	Hard cover is intended to be rigid, since this protects the publication itself.
hard copy	a printed version of book	E-books are definitely eco-friendlier than hard copies .
review	a formal assessment of something with the intention of instituting change if necessary	He contributed his own book reviews to “The Torch”, a student magazine.
breathhtaking story	astonishing, so as to take one's breath away	Middlesex tells the breathhtaking story of Calliope, and three generations of the Greek-American Stephanides family.

event	an occurrence, a thing that happens	What is a better way to keep track of the plot, timeline, characters, geography and events when reading a book?
tale	a fictional story	I have an interesting tale to tell.
character	a person in a novel, play or film	The central character is a young boy.
chronicle	factual written account of important or historical events in the order of their occurrence	In this vivid chronicle the author recounts 52 bombing missions over the enemy territory.
atmospheric	creating a distinctive ambience	An atmospheric book, full of menace and secrets.
crime story	the literary genre that fictionalizes crimes, detection, criminals, and their motives	There is a whole book about the crime story which gave birth to the field of Cyber Security.
tension	feelings of excitement or apprehension	Different authors have different ways to creating tension and excitement.
compelling character	character evoking interest, attention, or admiration in a powerfully irresistible way	What makes Batman such a compelling character ?
beautifully crafted book	book that made in a skillful manner	It is a beautifully crafted book indeed, which encompasses thriller, interspersed with love and emotions.

3. WORD FORMATION

to read	verb	I usually read books at home because it is the coziest place for me.
a reader	noun	Some readers are easily affected emotionally by what they read.
readable	adjective	I think you should work on making your handwriting readable because I barely understood what you just wrote.
a fact	noun	Science books contains facts about the universe and all living things.
factual	adjective	The media should only provide factual information to the public.
a fact-finding	noun	Fact-finding is a crucial part of investigating criminal cases.
fiction	noun	Fiction are written by writers who has a wonderfully creative mind.
fictional	adjective	Scarlett Johansson played the fictional character Black Widow in “The Avengers” movie.
fictitious	adjective	She has been a victim of online scams because she can hardly recognize fictitious profiles.

4. COLLOCATIONS AND PHRASES

fascinating
printed
children's
picture

adjective +

book

avid
fluent
slow
young
voracious

adjective +

reader

famous
influential
aspiring
award-winning
freelance

adjective+

writer

COLLOCATIONS AND PHRASES

practice
teach
showcase
improve

verb

writing

but that's another...
it's a long ...
somebody's side of ...

phrase+

story

to cut the long story short...

phrase

5. USEFUL RESOURCES

THIS TOPIC ON IELTS BLOGS

- [IELTS Speaking practice: Books and Films \[ielts-up.com\]](#)
- [IELTS Speaking Part 3: 'reading' topic \[ielts-simon.com\]](#)

PODCASTS

- [Do we read to show off? \(mp3, pdf\) — 6 Minute English \[bbc.co.uk\]](#)
- [Self-help books \(mp3, pdf\) — 6 Minute English \[bbc.co.uk\]](#)
- [Ebooks \(mp3, pdf\) — 6 Minute English \[bbc.co.uk\]](#)
- [Reading the classics \(mp3, pdf\) — 6 Minute English \[bbc.co.uk\]](#)

- [IELTS Books and Films Vocabulary \[ieltspeaking.co.uk\]](#)

- [Reading Books to Learn English \[teacherluke.co.uk\]](#)
- [A Rambling Conversation with Mum \(Part 2\) + Vocabulary \[teacherluke.co.uk\]](#)
- [It's Aliiiiiive! This Year, Our Summer Reader Poll Is All About Horror \[npr.org\]](#)
- [Yes, Some Comics Are For Kids — And They're Big Business \[npr.org\]](#)

USEFUL RESOURCES

ARTICLES

- [READING LIST \[teacherluke.co.uk\]](https://www.teacherluke.co.uk)
- [What's your favorite book and author? \[quora.com\]](https://www.quora.com)

VIDEOS

- [7+ Vocabulary for Talking about Books, Novels and Stories \[IELTS Energy TV\]](#)
- [8+ IELTS Vocabulary about Books \[IELTS Energy TV\]](#)

- [CapRadio Reads- podcast and written book reviews \[npr.org\]](https://www.npr.org)

- [Lisa Bu: How books can open your mind | TED Talk - TED Talks \[ted.com\]](https://www.ted.com)

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