

IELTS READING

PRACTICE TEST

Building the Titanic: Constructing the 'Unsinkable' Ship

Claim: This article explains how the author John Bennister was able to do this on the infamous ship.

Building the Titanic by John Bennister offers readers a captivating history of the RMS Titanic – a ship that symbolises luxury, ambition, and eventual tragedy. The book is painstakingly researched, bringing together financial data, social insights, and developments in engineering, to explain why and how the Titanic was built. A major achievement is Bennister's ability to convey the emotions experienced by key participants at each stage of the Titanic's story. Bennister begins with the ship's design and construction, explaining the reasons for the major setbacks of the Titanic on their accounts of how it was built. Bennister resumes the tragedy for the second half of the book so that during the early chapters, the reader can follow the excitement that surrounded the construction of the ship.

Chapter one sets the stage in the early 20th century with an analysis of the socio-economic factors that led to the Titanic's conception. Bennister's explanation of the intense competition among the shipping companies of the day provides important insight into why the White Star Line, Titanic's owners, were so determined to build the world's largest passenger ship. Like in the book, when trying to make sense of decisions about the ship's construction and sailing that appeared risky or even foolish, I found it helpful to read the chapter's explanation of the huge pressure White Star's owners faced.

Chapter two explains the complex financial issues behind the Titanic's construction. Bennister outlines the huge budget required by White Star, including it as an astonishing £500 million, equivalent to approximately \$500 million today. Interestingly, when he investigates the role played by the International Mercantile Marine Company (IMM) in providing the necessary financing, Bennister draws a unique conclusion: the fund requires a sophisticated sequence of shares and bond issuing by both IMM and White Star. He then uses this to convincingly reject the widely reported idea that IMM financed the Titanic and argues instead that White Star financed IMM. It is an intriguing idea that warrants further exploration.

Chapter three details the design and engineering insights that defined the Titanic. Bennister provides a long list of specifics, such as the ship's length (in the centimetres), the number of rivets used and the precise amount of steel in the hull. Not being an engineering professional, I could admit my attention drifted a little here. Luckily, the chapter is saved by a fascinating discussion of how the premium materials used in the construction bolstered the infamous belief that the Titanic was 'unsinkable'.

Chapter four paints a vivid picture of what it was like to work on the construction of the Titanic at the inland and shipyard in Belfast. A staggering 15,000 workers were involved, and Bennister meticulously describes the diverse range of skilled professionals, including boilermakers, electricians, and plumbers, who contributed their expertise. An especially revealing aspect of this chapter is the inclusion of firsthand accounts from workers' letters and diary entries. Reading these, it becomes clear that while workers faced long hours, poor safety standards and low wages, they were also swept up in the excitement of constructing the largest and costliest ship. Bennister closes the first part of the book with an account of the ship's launch in 1911, watched by 100,000 spectators – a clear example of how Titanic had captured the public imagination.

Questions 27–30

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in the reading passage?

Choose **YES** if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer, choose **NO** if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer, or choose **NOT GIVEN** if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.

- 27 Information in chapter one helps the reader to understand later chapters.
- 28 At the time of construction, the Titanic was the most expensive ship ever built.
- 29 The detailed figures in chapter three lack interest.
- 30 Professional workers who constructed the Titanic were paid well for their skills.

Questions 31–33

Complete the summary using the list of phrases, A–J below.

Key words

At the start of the second part, Bennister describes the Titanic's sea trials, which were delayed due to 31 in the Irish Sea. The trials required the ship to perform 32 that tested its readiness for its first ocean voyage. A key part of the trials was measuring the distance needed to achieve a 33

Bennister challenges the view that the sea trials produced 34 He argues that the measurements taken were troubling, and should have led to a reduction in 35 that may have avoided the tragic consequences of the Titanic's collision with the iceberg.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| A specific measurements | B superior methods | C substantial failures |
| D unpredictable behaviour | E repeated tests | F tight construction |
| G impressive results | H poor conditions | I complete stop |
| J full test | | |

Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests

PT Brinkman



Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests:

Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests Book Review: Unveiling the Magic of Language

In an electronic era where connections and knowledge reign supreme, the enchanting power of language has become more apparent than ever. Its ability to stir emotions, provoke thought, and instigate transformation is actually remarkable. This extraordinary book, aptly titled "**Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests**," compiled by a highly acclaimed author, immerses readers in a captivating exploration of the significance of language and its profound impact on our existence. Throughout this critique, we will delve to the book's central themes, evaluate its unique writing style, and assess its overall influence on its readership.

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Table of Contents Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests

1. Understanding the eBook Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests User Reviews and Ratings
 - Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests and Bestseller Lists

5. Accessing Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests Free and Paid eBooks
 - Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests Public Domain eBooks
 - Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests eBook Subscription Services
 - Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests eBook Formats
 - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests Compatibility with Devices
 - Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Interactive Elements Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
8. Staying Engaged with Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Setting Reading Goals Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Academic Reading Example Ielts Practice Tests
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning

- Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
14. Embracing eBook Trends
- Integration of Multimedia Elements
 - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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