

IELTS READING

PRACTICE TEST

Building the Titanic: Constructing the 'Unsinkable' Ship

Claim: This article explains how the Titanic was built 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 writes about the ship like the approach of an explorer. The reason for the huge sinking of the Titanic on their accounts of how it was built. Bennister reserves the tragedy for the second half of the book so that during the early chapters, the reader can enjoy the excitement that accompanied 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 exploration 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 exploration of the huge pressure White Star's owners faced.

Chapter two explains the complex financial basis behind the Titanic's construction. Bennister uncovers the huge budget required by White Star, revealing 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 early 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 ship ever built. 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 time | | |

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Lei Shi



Ielts Reading Tests Exam English:

Ielts Reading Tests Exam English Book Review: Unveiling the Magic of Language

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

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