

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 14–26**, which are based on Reading Passage 2 on the following pages.

Questions 14–18

Reading Passage 2 has five sections, **A–E**.

Choose the correct heading for each section from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, **i–vii**, in boxes 14–18 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i** The desire to make expensive jewellery
- ii** The clues that indicate ancient items were decorative
- iii** Querying the changes in the value of traded items
- iv** A natural human talent
- v** How status can be gained from ownership of goods
- vi** Recent finds alter theories about when consumerism started
- vii** Changes in research methods

14 Section A

15 Section B

16 Section C

17 Section D

18 Section E

Born to Trade

Long before our ancestors had any trappings of civilisation, they had a taste for material goods. Kate Douglas discovers where this ancient obsession has led us.

- A Humans are born to trade and we don't need shops or money to do it—the heart of commerce is an instinctive ability for what anthropologists call “reciprocity”. This is an ability to exchange goods of equal worth, and it evolved as the brains of our ancient ancestors and societies became more complex, allowing individuals to keep a running tally of their interactions with others. Evidence from modern hunter-gatherers leaves little doubt that the exchange of food and favours is innate, as is the ability to keep track of the credits and debits that accrue as a result. Combine this skill for mental book-keeping with even the most basic material culture, and trade inevitably follows.
- B Once trade gets off the ground, the economic benefits quickly make it irresistible. But exchanging tools, food and other essentials of life in a barter economy is a far cry from the shopping mall. Modern consumerism extends beyond subsistence and utilitarianism to encompass everything from Gucci handbags and BMW convertibles to valuable paintings. Clearly, the worth of such goods is not inherent but resides in certain intangible qualities that we invest in them. When did humans start holding these goods in such high esteem?
- C All the archaeological evidence for the flowering of consumer culture has up to now pointed to a date of around 40,000 years ago. That's when early modern humans started making increasingly intricate bone and stone tools, carving patterns into rocks and creating representational art such as carved figurines, jewellery and cave paintings. However, discoveries in Africa are pushing the origins of consumerism much further back into human prehistory.

A few years ago, reports began to emerge of discoveries made at the Blombos Cave, a site of ancient human habitation in South Africa. Christopher Henshilwood and colleagues from the University of Bergen in Norway dated thousands of pieces of ochre from the cave, and many of them proved to be more than 100,000 years old — before the time that early humans moved out of Africa. Ochre, a coloured clay that comes in various shades from red to black, does not occur naturally around Blombos and must have been imported from quarries at least 30 kilometres away, either directly by Blombos residents or through trade. Although ochre can be used to dry and preserve (cure) animal hides, the researchers are convinced the Blombos ochre had a symbolic purpose. For a start, it is predominantly red—any of the other colours available would have done for curing—and the surfaces of the clay had been scraped in a way that indicates they were used to yield pigment for dyes.

- D An even more intriguing discovery from Blombos was of 41 beads dating from 76,000 years ago, found in clusters and made from the shells of a tiny mollusc. These cannot be natural deposits, argue the researchers, as each cluster contains shells of a similar size and colour with consistently placed holes. What's more, all the beads display a pattern of wear suggesting friction from rubbing against thread, clothes or other beads.

The previous oldest find of beads in Africa dates back to just 45,000 years ago. And it seems the Blombos people's taste for beautiful items was not an isolated phenomenon. Jessica Thompson of Arizona State University in Tempe has described finding shell fragments from a site in Tanzania that she believes may represent debris from bead manufacture. They are at least 45,000—and possibly 280,000—years old. Although there is no evidence of how the ancient beads were used, their modern counterparts are often traded. So it looks as though our taste for jewellery and art is much older than we thought.

- E But why did we come to value these objects in the first place? In many animal species, individuals signal their genetic fitness by showing off with attention-grabbing adornment. Some researchers think that in humans, consumer products play a similar role. Archaeologist Aimee Plourde, from the University of California, also argues that even in egalitarian societies, some people are more successful than others. Among our ancestors, superior skills in areas such as hunting, crafts, environmental knowledge and contact with neighbouring groups would have brought respect—in other words, prestige.

And because prestige brings social benefits, people would want to show off their talents. The best way to do this would be through demonstrating possession of material items that are hard to fake. 'A good hunter, for instance, could advertise his skills by wearing the tooth of an animal that is elusive or dangerous,' says Plourde. The benefits of prestige would also lead to competition to acquire it. As a result, the value and variety of prestige goods would spiral and there would be a parallel increase in the ranking of social systems.

If Plourde is correct, prestige goods form a direct link between our innate drive for trade and the development of structured, hierarchical societies. They are arguably the first step on the road to modern civilisation, paving the way for agriculture and urbanisation. We may not be impressed by beads any more, but their modern equivalents have the same fascination. Nobody believes the guy who spends €670,000 on a Bugatti Veyron car does so because he needs to travel at 250 mph. We all know in today's consumer society he's buying an exclusive status symbol.

Questions 19–21

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

Write the correct letter in boxes 19–21 on your answer sheet.

19 In section A, ‘reciprocity’ refers to our ancestors’ ability to

- A** keep written records of different goods traded
- B** monitor the balance between goods given and received
- C** produce more materials for trading purposes
- D** make money from trading goods and services

20 What is said about the ochre found at Blombos Cave?

- A** It is of a type only found in this particular area.
- B** It has all been dyed to give the same shade of red.
- C** It has been perfectly preserved despite its age.
- D** It appears it was selected for its colour.

21 What made the researchers realise the purpose of the beads found at Blombos Cave?

- A** They are of many different shapes and sizes.
- B** They were found in large numbers, clustered together.
- C** They have patterns in many different colours.
- D** They have holes and markings suggesting they were joined together.

Questions 22–26

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 22–26 on your answer sheet.

Why certain objects are valued?

Some researchers argue that we may use ownership of desirable goods to demonstrate our strength and fitness as other 22 _____ use their attractive physical features.

Showing off one's superiority is not a new phenomenon and even in ancient times successful people would have gained 23 _____ from this. A desire for status could have led to an increase in the worth of prestige goods and to 24 _____ among people wishing to achieve this status.

It is thought that our natural desire to trade provided a basis for organised farming and 25 _____ development and finally resulted in the complex societies which can be seen today. Whilst we do not value things such as beads nowadays, other items hold the same appeal for us and bring the same status as owning beads did for our 26 _____.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| A competitiveness | B exploration | C trade | D settlements |
| E stability | F respect | G appearance | H ancestors |
| I species | J city | | |

Disclaimer

Compiled, formatted, and lightly proofread by ZYZ Reading Walks.

All copyright in the underlying works remains with the original authors and publishers.

No affiliation with or endorsement by any rights holder (including IELTS® owners).

For non-commercial educational use only. This notice must remain intact in all copies.

Available free of charge from ZYZ Reading Walks. Resale or any paid distribution is prohibited.

14–18: 段落匹配 (List of Headings)

| 题号 | 答案 | 题干翻译 | 精确定位 (关键句) | 解释 |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 14 (Section A) | iv – A natural human talent | 为每个段落选择合适的标题。A 段的标题是“人与生俱来的才能力量”。 | “the heart of commerce is an instinctive ability for what anthropologists call ‘reciprocity’... keep a running tally... keep track of the credits and debits” (第 A 段) | A 段整段都在说“互惠 (reciprocity) 是一种本能/天赋”，能记账、能对等交换 → “自然的人类才能”。 |
| 15 (Section B) | iii – Querying the changes in the value of traded items | B 段的标题是“质疑/探问交换物品价值的变化”。 | “Modern consumerism extends beyond subsistence... Clearly, the worth of such goods is not inherent... When did humans start holding these goods in such high esteem?” (第 B 段) | 先对比“以物易物”与现代消费，再直接发问“人类何时开始如此看重这些东西？”——正是对“价值变化”的追问。 |
| 16 (Section C) | vi – Recent finds alter theories about when consumerism started | C 段标题“新发现改变了消费主义起源时间的理论”。 | “All the archaeological evidence... pointed to... 40,000 years ago... However, discoveries in Africa are pushing the origins of consumerism much further back...” (第 C 段) | 先给“4万年前”的旧共识，后以非洲新发现把时间大幅提前 → “新发现改变起源时间”。 |
| 17 (Section D) | ii – The clues that indicate ancient items were decorative | D 段标题“指向古物为装饰品的线索”。 | “beads... found in clusters... shells of a similar size and colour with consistently placed holes... pattern of wear suggesting friction from rubbing against thread, clothes or other beads.” (第 D 段) | 一串串“证据/线索”：成簇、同尺寸同颜色、打孔位置一致、磨损痕迹 → 表明是穿缀佩戴的“装饰”。 |
| 18 (Section E) | v – How status can be gained from ownership of goods | E 段标题“通过拥有物品如何获得地位”。 | “showing off with attention-grabbing adornment... would have brought respect —in other words, prestige... prestige... lead to competition... link... to structured, hierarchical societies... buying an exclusive status symbol.” (第 E 段) | 论证“炫耀性物品 → 尊重/声望 → 地位与等级社会”，并以豪车为现代例证，完全对应“拥有物品如何获得地位”。 |

19–21: 单选题

| 题号 | 答案 | 题干翻译 | 精确定位 (关键句) | 详细解释 |
|----|----|--------------------------------|--|---|
| 19 | B | 在 A 段中，“reciprocity”指祖先具备哪种能力？ | “keep a running tally... keep track of the credits and debits that accrue as a result.” (第 A 段) | “reciprocity”被解释为能监控给予与回报的平衡 (记账/借贷往来)，对应 B monitor the balance...。不是书面记录 (A)，也非生产更多商品 (C) 或赚钱 (D)。 |
| 20 | D | 关于在布隆博斯发现的赭石 (ochre)，文中说了什么？ | “it is predominantly red... surfaces... scraped... used to yield pigment for dyes.” (第 C 段) | 研究者认为这些赭石主要呈红色且被刮削出颜料，说明看重其颜色/颜料用途，对应 D。A 与文意相反 (赭石并非本地天然产，系运入)，B “都被染成同一红色”文中未述，C “完好保存”亦无据。 |
| 21 | D | 研究者如何意识到珠子的用途？ | “similar size and colour with consistently placed holes... pattern of wear suggesting friction from rubbing against thread, clothes or other beads.” (第 D 段) | 关键证据是规则打孔 + 摩擦磨损痕迹，显示曾被串联 / 穿戴，对应 D。B “成簇”只是产状，不能直接推用途；A、C 与文证不符。 |

22–26：摘要填空（每空一词；本题提供词表）

Why certain objects are valued?

一些研究者认为，我们通过拥有受人青睐的物品来展示力量与体能，就像其他 22 ____ 借助其外在吸引力一样……古代成功者因此能获得 23 ____……对地位的追求会抬高声望物品的价值，并引发 24 ____……这种天生的交易欲为有组织的农业与 25 ____ 发展奠基……如今的物品与古时珠子一样，为我们的 26 ____ 带来同样的地位。

| 题号 | 答案 (填入词) | 题干翻译 | 精确定位 (段落 E 关键原句) | 详细解释 |
|----|---------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| 22 | I – species | “像其它 ____ 借助外在吸引力一样” | “In many animal species, individuals signal their genetic fitness by showing off with attention-grabbing adornment. Some researchers think that in humans, consumer products play a similar role.” | 先说“许多动物物种”会用显眼装饰展示适应度，后转到人类以商品完成相同功能——与题干“attractive physical features”完全对应。 |
| 23 | F – respect | “古代成功者会因此获得 ____” | “...superior skills... would have brought respect —in other words, prestige.” | “展示优越”带来别人对你的“尊重/声望”。词表给出 respect ，与原文同义词组“prestige”并列印证。 |
| 24 | A – competitiveness | “并引发人们之间的 ____” | “The benefits of prestige would also lead to competition to acquire it.” | 原文用 competition ；词表提供抽象名词 competitiveness 。语义一致：追逐声望 → 竞争上升。 |
| 25 | J – city | “为有组织的农业与 ____ 发展奠基” | “...paving the way for agriculture and urbanisation.” | urbanisation = 城市化/城市发展，填入 city 形成自然搭配“city development (城市发展)”。(比 settlements development 更地道，也与“urbanisation”严格同义。) |
| 26 | H – ancestors | “带来与古时珠子对我们 ____ 相同的地位” | “We may not be impressed by beads any more, but their modern equivalents have the same fascination.” (同段前文) “ Among our ancestors , superior skills... would have brought respect...” | 段落先对比“我们如今不再看重珠子”，再提“祖先”时代的地位由此而来；题干“as owning beads did for our ____”指向祖先，与选项 ancestors 完全匹配。 |