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Level 4 – 31st August 2026

Companies destroying books to train AI models

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2608/260831-destroying-rare-books-4.html>

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Please try Levels 5 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2608/260831-destroying-rare-books-4.html>

Consumer groups in the US want the government to look at AI companies. The groups claim that AI companies are digitizing rare books to train their large language models (LLMs). The process includes breaking the spines of the books, scanning the pages, and then destroying them. Some books may be the last copies of the original texts. Critics say such books are historically important. One critic said we needed to preserve old books.

The bulk buying of books is creating a problem for book stores. They are getting large orders for valuable books, but are also questioning the ethics of destroying books.

Booksellers are getting unusually large orders for valuable books. Some of these books are apparently being bought not to be read, but to be scanned. The Washington Post reported that AI companies are spending lots of money on millions of books to help train AI assistants.

Sources: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ftc-ai-companies-destroying-books/>
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/ais-need-for-content-has-put-rare-book-dealers-in-a-bind-1ac5a053>
<https://novaramedia.com/2026/08/21/hidden-airtag-exposes-amazon-destroying-rare-books-in-bulk-to-train-ai/>

PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2608/260831-destroying-rare-books-4.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Consumer | a. texts |
| 2. companies are | b. models |
| 3. train their large language | c. preserve old books |
| 4. breaking the spines | d. the pages |
| 5. scanning | e. important |
| 6. the last copies of the original | f. digitizing rare books |
| 7. such books are historically | g. groups in the US |
| 8. we needed to | h. of the books |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. the bulk buying | a. of destroying books |
| 2. creating a problem | b. lots of money |
| 3. They are getting large | c. for book stores |
| 4. valuable | d. assistants |
| 5. questioning the ethics | e. books |
| 6. not to be read, | f. of books |
| 7. AI companies are spending | g. but to be scanned |
| 8. help train AI | h. orders |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2608/260831-destroying-rare-books-4.html>

(1) _____ the US want the government to look at AI companies. The groups claim that AI companies (2) _____ books to train their large language models (LLMs). The process includes (3) _____ of the books, scanning the pages, and (4) _____. Some books may be the (5) _____ the original texts. Critics say such books are historically important. One critic said we needed (6) _____ books.

The (7) _____ books is creating a problem for book stores. They are getting large orders (8) _____, but are also questioning (9) _____ destroying books. Booksellers are getting unusually large orders for valuable books. Some of these books (10) _____ bought not to be read, but to be scanned. The Washington Post reported that AI companies are (11) _____ money on millions of books (12) _____ AI assistants.

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

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BOOKS SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2608/260831-destroying-rare-books-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about books in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

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WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2608/260831-destroying-rare-books-4.html>

Write about **books** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner's paper.

[illegible]