

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners

Book Two

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Teachers and staff of the English Language Institute at Victoria University of Wellington helped to proofread and trial these readings and gave valuable feedback and suggestions.

The materials in this book may be used in two ways. Students may work through the readings individually at home or in a self-access centre. The programme is best used, however, as a controlled classroom activity. The material contained in this book may be photocopied, provided that it is not sold at a profit and that its source is acknowledged.

Introduction

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners, Book Two was written at the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The programme contains twenty 400 word readings, each with ten comprehension questions. The readings are based on topics related to New Zealand and are written within the 2000 most frequently used words of English (West, 1954) plus the 570 words that appear in *An Academic Word List* (Coxhead, 1998).

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners, Book One is also available. Book One is written within the 2000 word list.

The readings were developed because teachers working on the English Proficiency Programme (EPP) at Victoria University felt a need for a speed reading programme suitable for students who intended to study at a tertiary institution in New Zealand. Quinn and Nation's (1974) series of speed readings is widely used on the EPP, but as this series is written within the first 700 most frequent words of English, a more challenging speed reading programme was needed. *Practical Faster Reading* (Mosback & Mosback, 1976) is used as a classroom resource for teaching strategies, and as a self-study resource, but here the vocabulary is not graded. Similarly, *Timed Readings* (Spargo, 1981) has been tried on the EPP but as this is a speed reading course for native speakers, the vocabulary levels are also not controlled.

The readings have mainly been used as a classroom activity. In addition to their use in the EAP classroom, they have been used for short courses for Japanese students, for ESP courses for Government officials from South East Asia, and for ESL students in high schools. However, they can also be used for self-study at home or in a self-access centre.

Controlled vocabulary

The readings are based on the 2000 most frequently used words in English plus the 570 words of the Academic Word List. The only exceptions are words that are explained in the text, the titles of passages, content words like country names and animal names, and some very common words like television, video and internet.

Principles of a speed reading programme

In using a speed reading programme it is important to isolate the skill that is being practised: increasing the speed of a student's reading. While this cannot be done in isolation from understanding, the main point is to increase speed. It is important not to confuse the purpose of the exercise with increasing vocabulary, improving reading comprehension or anything else. A speed reading programme is only a small part of an overall reading programme. Other reading skills and strategies are practised at other times and while success with the programme may lead to benefits such as increasing confidence and the effectiveness and enjoyment of reading, the focus is speed.

1. The readings should be easy. There should be no or very little unknown vocabulary and the grammar should be straightforward with no tricky constructions, for example confusing time sequences. There should be nothing to stop the readers in their tracks. If a student does not have a good receptive knowledge of the 2000 word list and the Academic Word List, do not use these readings. Use *New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners, Book One* or Quinn and Nation's 700 word level readings. Similarly the questions should test general understanding rather than detailed knowledge. Questions about specific details such as dates and figures will slow down reading.
2. The focus is speed. While reading without understanding would be pointless, the goal of speed reading is not to achieve perfect accuracy in answering the questions. If students are getting all the questions right, they are reading too slowly. The goal is the fastest time with about 70 percent accuracy.
3. The method of reading is important. Students should not use their fingers or pens to trace the words as this encourages slow word-by-word reading. By reading quickly, students are training themselves to process meaning chunks. Reading quickly encourages guessing from context and ignoring unknown words. Nuttall (1996) outlines some ways in which readers can practise reading in chunks by using cards, computers or OHPs which reveal the text at set rates. While activities like these may be fun, they are not essential for improving speed.
4. Gaining confidence is an important aspect of the programme. A lot of learning is getting past the "I can't do it" barrier. A speed reading programme can push the student through this barrier by setting individual and class goals and time limits. Success in speed reading engenders confidence, and confidence leads to enjoyment, motivation and more success.
5. A speed reading programme should be intensive. Once a daily routine is established, the speed reading activity should take under 10 minutes, including reading, answering questions, checking answers, recording progress on the graph and teacher feedback. Complete the set of twenty readings by doing them every day for four weeks and then forget about them.
6. Speed reading should be an isolated activity. If the programme is being done in class, scripts should be handed out and then collected back in as soon as the students have finished the activity. This saves paper and also de-emphasizes the activity. Sometimes students want to keep the scripts to write down the words they don't know, or to understand the passages completely. This reduces the value of the activity by placing too much importance on skills other than speed. In addition, these readings are not necessarily the best texts to use for developing other skills.
7. Recording the time and score is a very important part of the exercise as seeing daily progress is a very effective motivator for students. It is also a good way for the teacher to monitor progress, give feedback and encouragement, and set individual and class goals.

Instructions to teachers

Determine the level of vocabulary knowledge of the class. This can be done by administering Nation's Vocabulary Levels Test (Schmitt et al., 2001). If the class does not demonstrate a good receptive knowledge of the first 2,000 words of English plus the Academic Word List, the readings are not appropriate.

Photocopy class sets of the readings. These can be laminated or put in plastic sleeves to prolong life, or students can be trained not to write on them. The readings can be done in any order so it is not absolutely necessary for all students to be working on the same reading. You may like to save on photocopying by making only a few sets and then having students choose a reading they haven't done yet. However, for classroom management, it is preferable for everyone to be doing the same reading. In addition, if you introduce a prediction component to the exercise, everyone will need to be working on the same script. If two or three classes are using the readings, one set can be divided amongst the classes and rotated.

Introduce the programme to the class by explaining:

Over the next month you will be doing a daily speed reading exercise, which involves reading a short passage and answering 10 comprehension questions.

Speed reading is only one of the many ways that the class will be studying reading. The focus of the speed reading programme will be to increase reading speed. Accuracy in answering the questions is not the main consideration. Aim for the fastest time with about 70 percent accuracy.

Reading quickly is an important skill for native and non-native speakers and most people can double their reading speed with practice (Nation, 1991). This skill will be necessary at university to cope with heavy reading requirements and for tests. Reading quickly can help your understanding of a text because if you read slowly you will have forgotten what was said at the top of a page by the time you get to the bottom. Thus, the faster you read, the more effective and enjoyable it will be. In addition, research suggests that an improvement in reading leads to benefits across all other skills. An example is the Book Flood (Elley & Mangubhai, 1979).

The passages are all 400 words long and they are written in the first 2,000 words of English plus the Academic Word List. The topics relate to New Zealand and the passages and questions are not supposed to be difficult.

While reading, don't use a pointer or your finger to trace each word because this will make you read slowly word-by-word.

Don't write on the paper as the readings will be collected and reused for another class.

When you are answering the questions don't turn back and look at the passage.

Give out the answer sheet and the graph for recording times and comprehension scores then explain:

When you finish answering the questions, mark your own answers, then record your time and your comprehension score on the graph.

Write the times on the board:

1.00	2.00	3.00
1.10	2.10	
1.20	2.20	
1.30	2.30	
1.40	2.40	
1.50	2.50	

Then explain:

I will cross off the times. When you have finished reading the passage, look up at the board and make a note of the next time that has not been crossed off.

Give out the readings. Tell students not to start until you tell them to.

Stand by the board with a watch and cross off the times. As students finish answering the questions, marking them and recording their scores on the graphs, the teacher can walk around to check progress and collect the readings. If a student is scoring 8, 9 or 10 on the comprehension questions, encourage them to read faster next time. You can set individual goals by drawing a line on a student's graph. If a student does not finish reading the passage in the time allowed, they should still turn over and try to answer the questions. Their goal is to finish in the time allowed.

On the first day there is usually confusion. However, by day three everyone knows exactly what to do. After about half the readings have been completed, it is time to start reducing the maximum time allowed from 3 minutes to 2.50 to 2.40. While many students will already be working more quickly than this, there will be some who take as long as they are given and these students can be helped to push through the barrier. By the end of the course, the maximum time allowed should be well below two minutes.

After the routine has been established, it is a good idea to introduce a preview component into the exercise. Before giving out the papers, tell the class the topic and ask them what they think the passage will be about.

For example if the topic is *Earthquakes*, you could ask if anyone has experienced an earthquake. Do earthquakes occur in your country? What causes an earthquake? Where did a large earthquake occur recently? What sometimes happens after serious earthquakes? This develops the useful skill of predicting and sets the scene for the exercise.

Instructions to students

When the teacher says start, begin reading as fast as you can. Don't use your finger or a pen to point to the words as you read. When you finish reading the passage look up and note the next time that has not been crossed off on the board. Write this in the space for time on your graph sheet. Turn over the page and answer the questions from memory without looking back at the passage. After you have finished answering the questions, check your answers and record the score on your graph. Then look up.

Do not write on the papers. The teacher will come around to check your progress and collect the passages.

Self-study

If students are using the readings for self-study, they should follow the same procedure of timing their reading, answering the questions and recording their score on the graph.

Graphs

If the readings are not being done consecutively, students should write the passage number immediately under the # on the graph. After reading the passage, they record their time by drawing an X in the appropriate box and write the number of questions answered correctly in the boxes at the bottom. By looking across to the right-hand side they can see their words per minute.

Two graphs are provided at the back of the book, one for three minutes and another for four minutes. While it may be argued that students should start reading at their own pace and then build their speed individually, I have found that some students will take as much time as they are given, so it is suggested that you start with the three minute graph. If a student cannot finish the reading in this time their goal becomes to get to the bottom of the page. I have rarely found that a student who is familiar with the 2,000 word list plus the Academic Word List cannot work and improve within this time frame. If a student makes no improvement in time and continues to score below 6 correct answers, this is a signal to the teacher that they need additional reading help.

Once students get into a routine they will see their graphs going up and this will motivate them to go faster.

A model of a daily fluency programme incorporating speed readings

I have successfully used the following fluency programme at various proficiency levels and for a variety of classes, from conversation to English for Academic Purposes, over the last ten years. The 20-minute activity consists of three parts and is supplemented by a fluency or accuracy journal.

Each student buys a small exercise book (ideally size 1B4). In the front they write their weekly journal entries, and in the back they write their daily quickwrites. They tape the speed reading answer key and graph to the inside back cover for daily use. They bring the exercise book to class every day and the teacher collects it once a week.

1. Quickwrite

A quickwrite is five minutes writing on a topic generated by the students with emphasis on fluency and flow of ideas. The goal is to write as much as possible without the use of an eraser or dictionary. Students write in the back of their journals. The topics might include my best friend, weather, cats, my family, studying English, a graded reader, a media story, genetic engineering, independent study and so on. The topics become more sophisticated over the course of the programme and the students demonstrate an increasing willingness to tackle any topic.

2. Quickspeak

The quickwrite is followed by 2 or 3 minutes of speaking without pauses to a listening partner on the topic of the day. Then students change roles. It is good to number off students to form pairs as this ensures a different partner every day. It is also a good idea to have the students stand up while they are speaking. They should be speaking as fluently as they can and they shouldn't be reading their quickwrites. Quickspeaks provide a very useful opportunity for the teacher to give individual feedback on pronunciation, clarity and fluency. At the end of the activity, brief group feedback can also be given on a common problem such as subject verb agreement.

3 Speed Reading

These three activities should take no more than 20 minutes and may be combined with a fluency or accuracy journal depending on the level and needs of the students.

4. Fluency Journals

Students write 3 pages of free writing every week. They are encouraged to treat their journals as a quick writing exercise and take not more than 20 minutes per page. Topics can be set by the teacher or students can choose their own topics. Examples might be: one page about their independent learning, one about their extensive reading and the third page on their own topic. It can be helpful to start the programme with a brainstorm of possible topics. Journals are collected once a week, read and commented on for content by the teacher and returned to students.

5. Accuracy Journals

Students write two pages, double-spaced, on the left-hand pages of their journal. The writing should be as accurate as possible and they should use dictionaries and checklists. At the same time students are encouraged to focus on the grammatical structures which they find difficult, and to use their journal to practise these. Examples might be subject verb agreement, passives or tenses. The journals are collected once a week, marked for accuracy and returned. Students rewrite their work on the right hand page. In subsequent weeks, the teacher checks both the two rewritten pages and the two new pages.

Other uses for the speed readings

While the speed reading programme should remain a quick isolated activity, there are a number of other uses for class sets of short interesting passages with controlled vocabulary and grammar. Bamford and Day (2004) outline a range of activities for improving extensive reading.

Some examples are:

1. Dictations
2. Dictaglosses
3. Read aloud fluency activities
4. Pronunciation, stress and intonation practice
5. Listening activities
6. Question and answer activities

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners - Book Two

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- 17 Volunteers
- 18 Immigration
- 19 The Antarctic
- 20 The Education System in New Zealand

1 Votes for Women

On the 19 September 1893, New Zealand women received the right to vote. Although women in some states of the USA had been voting since the 1870s, New Zealand was the first country in the world to give women the right to vote.

Kate Sheppard was the leader of the group who fought for votes for women. She was born in 1848 in England and was an unusual person for her time. She was one of the first women to ride a bicycle and she believed in equality in marriage. She lived in Christchurch with her husband.

In order to get women the vote she had to have the help of men who were in Government, but the men in Government generally thought women voting was a joke and laughed at the idea. Others were angry and rejected the idea. Sir John Hall was one politician who used his influence to help her.

Kate Sheppard and many other women continued to fight for the right to vote. They believed that women were as intelligent as men and that men and women were equal. In 1879, men over the age of 21 were given the right to vote in New Zealand but it wasn't until 1893 that the government decided, by 20 votes to 18, to allow women the same rights.

The fight for women's rights first started in England in 1792. In that year, Mary Wollstonecraft argued that women should have the same education as men. This was the first time anyone had suggested that women should receive a formal education.

New Zealand was one of the first countries to allow women to go to university. In 1877 a New Zealand woman received a university degree. She was the second woman in the world to do so. The first was a Canadian two years earlier. Today, women make up about half of all university students. Women in most places in the world are able to vote and can now be voted into government. Some women have become the leaders of their countries. In the 21st century, women are leaders in government, business and education.

It is difficult to believe that only about a hundred years ago women all over the world were denied the right to vote and the right to a formal education. Courageous women like Kate Sheppard have led the way in improving the lives of all women.

Time _____

Score _____

Millett, S. (2005) *New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners*, Book Two. (ELI Occasional Publication 24). Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University of Wellington, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies.

1 Votes for Women

1. When did women get the vote in New Zealand?
 - a. 1793
 - b. 1893
 - c. 1993
2. What happened in the 1790s?
 - a. Some women in the USA got the vote.
 - b. Mary Wollstonecraft began the fight for women's rights.
 - c. The first woman received a university degree.
3. Where was Kate Sheppard born?
 - a. In Christchurch
 - b. In Canada
 - c. In England
4. Sir John Hall was:
 - a. a politician
 - b. a lawyer
 - c. a farmer
5. Who got the vote in New Zealand in 1879?
 - a. All men
 - b. Everyone over 21
 - c. All men over 21
6. Where did women first get the vote?
 - a. Some parts of the USA
 - b. New Zealand
 - c. England
7. Kate Sheppard was one of the first women to:
 - a. go swimming
 - b. ride a bicycle
 - c. drive a car
8. Kate Sheppard thought:
 - a. men were better than women
 - b. women were better than men
 - c. women and men were equal
9. When women wanted the right to vote, many men thought:
 - a. it was a good idea
 - b. women should be leaders
 - c. it was a joke
10. In universities today there are:
 - a. more men than women
 - b. more women than men
 - c. about the same number

2 *The Treaty of Waitangi*

In the 1830s the Maori population of New Zealand was 125,000. In addition, there were around 2,000 British settlers or Pakeha, the Maori name for people who are not Maori. However, the number of Pakeha settlers was growing rapidly and they wanted more and more land. The sale of land caused great conflict between the Maori tribes and the settlers. Because of this, the British wanted to sign an agreement with the Maori that would control the sale of land fairly, and offer protection to both Maori and Pakeha. The agreement was the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Treaty of Waitangi had three parts. The first part said the Queen of England had the right to govern New Zealand. The second ensured the Maori chiefs possession of their land and resources as long as they agreed to sell their land only to the Queen or her representatives. The third part of the Treaty said that the Maori had the same rights as British people.

The Treaty was signed at Waitangi by 45 Maori chiefs, Governor Hobson and some English residents on 6 February 1840. After this, it was taken around New Zealand and by the end of the year 500 Maori had signed the Treaty.

For some years the Treaty served its purpose in stopping uncontrolled and unfair land purchases. However, as the number of settlers increased year by year, there was pressure to acquire more land and this led to the New Zealand wars of the 1860s. During the New Zealand wars, Maori not only lost the land that they fought over, but the government also took other large areas of land to punish the Maori for fighting against them.

Although Maori have made representations to the government ever since 1840, the Treaty has largely been ignored. It is only in recent years that Maori calls for the Treaty to be honoured have been addressed. The Treaty forms the basis of claims for the return of land that was taken from Maori. In 1975 the Waitangi Tribunal was set up to advise the government about these cases and Maori have got back some of the land that was illegally taken from them by the government.

More than 150 years after it was signed, the Treaty of Waitangi is again being seen as a way to make New Zealand a better place for all people to live, both Maori and Pakeha.

Time _____

Score _____

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2 *The Treaty of Waitangi*

1. The population of New Zealand in the 1830s was:
 - a. about 1,000
 - b. about 125,000
 - c. about 1,000,000

2. At that time there were:
 - a. more Maori than Europeans
 - b. more Europeans than Maori
 - c. about the same

3. When was the Treaty signed?
 - a. 1800
 - b. 1840
 - c. 1975

4. How many main parts does the Treaty of Waitangi have?
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three

5. How many Maori signed the Treaty in total?
 - a. 45
 - b. 500
 - c. 3

6. Pakeha means:
 - a. Maori
 - b. Queen
 - c. other than Maori

7. Treaty means:
 - a. land
 - b. conflict
 - c. agreement

8. What happened in the 1860s?
 - a. War between Maori and the settlers
 - b. The Queen visited New Zealand.
 - c. An agreement was signed

9. After the Treaty was signed, the number of settlers:
 - a. increased
 - b. decreased
 - c. stayed the same

10. What was the cause of the New Zealand wars?
 - a. The Treaty
 - b. Land
 - c. Religion

3 *The New Zealand Economy*

New Zealand is an agricultural country which is dependent on trade with other countries. A large percentage of its exports is made up of meat, dairy products such as butter and milk, and wool. Dairy products and meat products together earn around a billion dollars for the New Zealand economy each year. There are 50 million sheep and four million cattle, and meat and dairy products are exported to 90 countries around the world.

Today New Zealand's main trading partners are Australia, the United States of America, China, Britain and Japan, although Korea, Malaysia and Germany are also important. In the past, most of New Zealand's trade was with Britain. New Zealand exported agricultural products to Britain and imported machinery and cars in return. However, when Britain joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, New Zealand faced a serious problem. It could no longer depend on Britain as a market.

New Zealand had to find new places to sell its products, and the new markets didn't always want the same things as Britain. In addition, people were becoming more health conscious. They didn't want to eat foods with a high fat content like dairy products, so New Zealand had to diversify its products to meet the needs of new markets. Today animal products are still important exports, but so are fruit, flowers, wine, wood, fish and light industrial products. Rather than exporting products in their natural state, New Zealand has developed ways of adding value to its products by processing them.

An increasingly large proportion of New Zealand's export earnings comes from service industries, for example tourism and education. Today tourism is a top foreign exchange earner, and tourism related industries are developing to provide facilities for the increasing numbers of overseas visitors. A further new development is the education industry. International students come to New Zealand to study in schools and universities. It is estimated that international education will continue to grow into a major industry.

While New Zealand is rich in agricultural products, there is little heavy industry and New Zealand must import machinery and cars as well as oil. Clothes and other manufactured products are also imported.

The New Zealand economy is dependent on trade. Increasingly New Zealand is developing trading relationships with the countries around the Pacific. In changing its markets, New Zealand must also diversify its products to attract business from the new markets.

Time _____

Score _____

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3 *The New Zealand Economy*

1. Each year New Zealand earns around one billion dollars from:
 - a. animal products
 - b. cars
 - c. oil

2. Today meat and dairy products are exported to:
 - a. only a few countries
 - b. about 90 countries
 - c. mainly Australia

3. What country was New Zealand's traditional market?
 - a. Australia
 - b. the USA
 - c. Britain

4. What does diversify mean?
 - a. Widen
 - b. Stay the same
 - c. Decrease

5. In New Zealand there are:
 - a. more cows than sheep
 - b. more people than sheep
 - c. more sheep than cows

6. New Zealand could be described as:
 - a. an industrial country
 - b. an agricultural country
 - c. a fishing country

7. Nowadays, dairy products are considered to be unhealthy because:
 - a. they have a high fat content
 - b. they come from animals
 - c. they are expensive

8. New Zealand lost its main export market because:
 - a. people became health conscious
 - b. tourism became more important
 - c. Britain joined the EEC

9. Today service industries are:
 - a. becoming more important
 - b. becoming less important
 - c. staying the same

10. To have a strong economy New Zealand must:
 - a. import more products
 - b. rely on traditional markets
 - c. diversify its products

4 Ernest Rutherford

Ernest Rutherford appears on the 100 dollar note, New Zealand's largest currency note. This indicates his place as one of the country's most famous people. He was famous as a great scientist who worked in the field of nuclear physics. Physics is the study of forces such as heat, light, sound and electricity, and their relationship to objects.

Rutherford was born in Nelson, New Zealand on 30 August 1871. He was the fourth child in a family of twelve children. His parents and grandparents were among the earliest immigrants from England and Scotland, arriving in New Zealand in the 1840s and 1850s.

He was educated at high school in Nelson and at university in Christchurch gaining his Masters degree in 1893. In 1894, he received a grant to study and carry out research at Cambridge University in England. In 1898, he was appointed to a position in Montreal, Canada which he held until 1907. He then returned to England where he taught physics and continued to do research.

Rutherford was most famous for his work on the atom. An atom can be described as the smallest part of an element, or the smallest amount of a substance. His greatest contribution to science was his discovery of the 'nucleus'. A nucleus is the very small space in the centre of an atom, which contains all the charge, energy or radioactivity of the atom.

His early work focussed on the intensity of the radioactive energy in the nucleus of an atom. He noticed that the intensity of the radioactivity in the nucleus decreased over time as the nucleus broke down. In this way, he discovered the idea of a half-life for radioactive substances.

Ernest Rutherford's work on the atom and the nucleus was the foundation of later work on splitting the atom. Splitting the atom allows energy to be released and this released atomic or nuclear energy is widely used today to provide electricity and power. A further result of splitting the atom was the atomic bomb. Atomic bombs were first exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in 1945.

During his life, Rutherford received many honours and prizes for his work in the field of physics. He received the Nobel Prize in 1908, and in 1914 he became Sir Ernest Rutherford. Rutherford married Mary Newton in 1900 and they had one daughter. He died in 1937 at the age of 66.

Time _____

Score _____

4 *Ernest Rutherford*

1. Which currency note does Rutherford appear on?
 - a. \$2
 - b. \$10
 - c. \$100
2. He was from:
 - a. a large family
 - b. a small family
 - c. an average sized family
3. Where were his parents and grandparents from?
 - a. Britain
 - b. America
 - c. Canada
4. Rutherford was interested in:
 - a. history
 - b. physics
 - c. art
5. How old was he when he died?
 - a. 33
 - b. 55
 - c. 66
6. What was Rutherford's greatest discovery?
 - a. The atom
 - b. The nucleus
 - c. The atomic bomb
7. Which statement is true?
 - a. An atom is bigger than a nucleus.
 - b. A nucleus is bigger than an atom.
 - c. They are the same size.
8. Rutherford spent most of his working life in:
 - a. Canada
 - b. New Zealand
 - c. England
9. Rutherford was:
 - a. famous only in New Zealand
 - b. famous in many countries
 - c. not very famous
10. Rutherford's work on splitting the atom had:
 - a. good results for people
 - b. bad results for people
 - c. good and bad results for people

5 *Endangered Species*

There are millions of species (different kinds of animals and plants) on the earth. Scientists have classified about 1.7 million of them. However, it is now thought that there are between ten million and one hundred million species in the world. Each one has its own unique part to play in keeping the natural balance of the world.

Over millions of years, countless animals and plants have died out and been replaced by others. Should we be worried about this? Isn't this a natural process? Why have people become so concerned about endangered species in recent years?

People are concerned about protecting endangered species because people are the reason why they are endangered. With rapidly increasing world population, people are taking land that animals once used. Consequently there is nowhere for some species to live and they become endangered. Think of the panda in China and the kiwi in New Zealand. Scientists believe that rain forests like the Amazon in South America may contain half of the world's species. However, every year large areas of rainforest are destroyed to provide land for farms and to produce wood for building. With every square mile of land destroyed, more plants and animals are lost.

Nobody knows how many species have died out recently, but they do know the reason why they have. Human beings. It is our responsibility to save endangered species.

There are four main reasons why people should save and protect endangered species. The first reason is that all species have a right to share the earth, not just humans. Another reason is that all species are unique and interesting and they make our world a richer and better place to live. Third, humans can make useful products from other species, such as medicines from plants so it is important for us to protect our own interests by protecting the environment we live in. The fourth reason is that we need other species. We cannot exist by ourselves. If we change the natural balance of the world, we may destroy ourselves.

People and governments are learning more about the importance of saving endangered species and are taking steps to solve the problem. For example the New Zealand Government has initiated programmes to help save the kiwi and other endangered species.

The world would be a much poorer place without kiwi and pandas. We should preserve our environment for future generations.

Time _____

Score _____

5 *Endangered Species*

1. How many species are there on the earth?
 - a. Millions
 - b. Thousands
 - c. Hundreds
2. The Amazon rain forest may contain:
 - a. a few of the world's species
 - b. half of the world's species
 - c. most of the world's species
3. How many of the world's species have died out recently?
 - a. Half
 - b. Quarter
 - c. Nobody knows
4. How much rain forest is destroyed every year?
 - a. A very large amount
 - b. Not much
 - c. Hardly any
5. Endangered means:
 - a. dangerous
 - b. may die out completely
 - c. concerned
6. How many reasons are stated for why we should save endangered animals?
 - a. Two
 - b. Four
 - c. Six
7. Why are kiwi endangered?
 - a. There are too many kiwi.
 - b. There is no place for them to live
 - c. People are concerned about kiwi.
8. Species started dying out:
 - a. recently
 - b. since the beginning of life on earth
 - c. since the evolution of people
9. Humans:
 - a. could live alone on the earth
 - b. couldn't live without kiwi or pandas
 - c. need other species to live
10. The main reason why species become endangered is:
 - a. increasing population
 - b. destruction of rain forests
 - c. government funded programmes

6 *The Karori Wild Life Sanctuary*

Before humans came to New Zealand, the country was covered with native forest and there were numerous kinds of native birds. Today many of these birds have almost disappeared and can't be found except in special bird sanctuaries. Others have died out completely. The reason why many kinds of birds have almost disappeared is this. Before people came to New Zealand there were no animals to kill them. Birds had no enemies so some native birds even lost the ability to fly. That all changed when people and their animals arrived and started hunting and killing birds.

The Karori Wild Life Sanctuary in Wellington attempts to recreate the environment as it was before people and their animals came to New Zealand so that native birds can have a chance to survive and reproduce.

The first step was to create an area without any animals that kill birds. A special 8.6 kilometre fence was built enclosing an area of one square mile. The fence around this area is animal proof, which means no animals can get through it, over it or under it. The second step was to get rid of animals that kill birds from inside the park. Poison was laid and traps were set to kill rats, mice and other animals and now the sanctuary is free from all the enemies of birds. The next step was to introduce birds into the sanctuary. Kiwi and other native birds have been set free in the sanctuary and they are living there successfully. However, introducing all the wild life back into the park will take a long time. It is estimated it will take about 500 years before the plants, trees and birds return to the way they were 1000 years ago.

It has taken years of hard work to develop the sanctuary. A lot of the work has been done by volunteers who have worked unpaid on developing the park. The sanctuary is now run by paid staff members who are helped by volunteers.

The park has three purposes: education, research and recreation. It is open to the public for tours but expect to have your bag checked before you enter to make sure no animals get back inside the fence. There are other sanctuaries for native plants and wild life around New Zealand. The Karori Wild Life Sanctuary is special because it is in the middle of a city.

Time _____

Score _____

6 *The Karori Wild life Sanctuary*

1. Before people came to New Zealand, the country was covered in:
 - a. farms
 - b. forest
 - c. flowers
2. The Karori Wild Life Sanctuary is in:
 - a. Wellington
 - b. Auckland
 - c. Hamilton
3. Before people came to New Zealand:
 - a. there were a lot of animals
 - b. there were no birds
 - c. there were a lot of birds
4. How big is the sanctuary?
 - a. One square metre
 - b. One square kilometre
 - c. One square mile
5. How long ago did people first come to New Zealand?
 - a. 1000 years ago
 - b. 200 years ago
 - c. 500 years ago
6. What does sanctuary mean?
 - a. A safe area
 - b. A place to see animals
 - c. A recreation area
7. Why did some birds lose the ability to fly?
 - a. They had no enemies.
 - b. They became too heavy.
 - c. There were too many trees.
8. Why has the sanctuary been made?
 - a. For tourists
 - b. To make money
 - c. To preserve birds and plants
9. The park is:
 - a. open to the public
 - b. closed to the public
 - c. only used by researchers
10. Why is the Karori Wild Life Sanctuary special?
 - a. It was developed by volunteers.
 - b. It is in the middle of a city.
 - c. There are no animals in it.

7 *Possums - Eating up New Zealand*

Possums are small furry animals with pointed noses, big ears and long, bushy tails. If you saw a picture of a possum you would think how lovely it looked. However, possums and other animals that have been introduced from other countries cause major problems in New Zealand. They are pests, which are defined as plants or animals which destroy food, plants or other animal species.

Problems occur when animals or plants are introduced into a new country, where they have no natural enemies to control their growth. The introduced species reproduce rapidly until they take over the food sources and the natural environment of the native species. This is where the problem starts. It can end with environmental destruction and native species being unable to survive. This has happened in New Zealand with possums.

New Zealand has a long history of introducing animals. Before people came to New Zealand there was a unique balance of birds, plants and forests which were adapted to the environmental conditions, but the balance has been destroyed by introduced species which have become pests. The first animals to become pests were rats and dogs introduced a thousand years ago. Since then many species of plants and animals have been introduced either accidentally or because people wanted them for their farms and gardens or for pets or for hunting. They didn't understand the effects that the new species would have.

Possums are natives of Australia. In Australia they are not pests because they fit into the environment and co-exist with other wild life. In fact, in Australia possums are a protected species. They were introduced into New Zealand in 1837 to start a fur industry. However, with the plentiful food supply and no enemies they quickly became pests. It has been estimated that there are over 70 million possums in New Zealand, over 20 for every person. Possums like to eat leaves and plants, but they will also eat insects, berries, birds eggs and baby birds. They can eat up to 6 kilograms of plants every day. That's three shopping bags full.

To stop possums eating up New Zealand and further destroying native wild life, the government has initiated programmes to control possum numbers. In the past, nobody realised how harmful pests could be but now people realise the danger of bringing new species into a country. Hopefully, we won't make the same mistakes again.

Time _____

Score _____

Millett, S. (2005) *New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners*, Book Two. (ELI Occasional Publication 24). Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University of Wellington, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies.

7 *Possums - Eating up New Zealand*

1. Possums look:
 - a. lovely
 - b. dangerous
 - c. frightening
2. Pests are:
 - a. harmful
 - b. harmless
 - c. useful
3. Possums are natives of:
 - a. New Zealand
 - b. Australia
 - c. China
4. The number of possums in New Zealand is:
 - a. much larger than the number of people
 - b. much smaller than the number of people.
 - c. about the same
5. Possums mainly eat:
 - a. birds
 - b. birds eggs
 - c. plants
6. Possums are protected in:
 - a. Australia
 - b. New Zealand
 - c. China
7. Why were possums introduced into New Zealand?
 - a. To start a fur industry
 - b. To control native species
 - c. Because they look lovely
8. How many species have been introduced into New Zealand?
 - a. Several
 - b. A lot
 - c. Very few
9. Pests can be:
 - a. animals
 - b. plants
 - c. animals or plants
10. Why are possums a problem?
 - a. They can't adapt to New Zealand life.
 - b. They destroy the natural environment.
 - c. They are a protected species.

8 *Dame Whina Cooper*

Dame Whina Cooper lived from 1895 until 1994. Throughout her life she was a respected leader of the Maori people. She became most well known as the leader of the Maori Land March from the far north of New Zealand to Wellington in 1975. For her life's work she became known as Whaea o te Motu, Mother of the Nation.

Whina was born the daughter of a Maori Chief, in the Hokianga in the far north of New Zealand. She was educated first at Whakarapa Native School and then at St Joseph's Maori Girl's College in Napier. In 1913 she became a trainee teacher and worked for 2 years before returning to her parent's home where she had a variety of jobs.

Whina's political involvement in land rights began in 1914 when she led a protest against a farmer who wanted to farm land traditionally used by Maori.

Whina married Richard Gilbert in 1917 and they had three children. During this time, Whina became a leading figure in church and community affairs. She worked at the local level to develop health and educational facilities, but her interests were wider than the local community. She supported legislation which enabled Maori to develop their land.

After the death of her first husband in 1935, Whina married William Cooper in 1941. They had four children. In 1949 William died suddenly and following this, Whina decided to leave the Hokianga and move to Auckland.

Whina Cooper's involvement in politics continued, and now she became a national leader. She became the founding president of The Maori Women's Welfare League, which was set up to deal with such issues as housing for Maori moving to cities, education, crime, employment and health, as well as issues of discrimination. She stood for government unsuccessfully in 1963 and her work continued until the early 1970s when her health declined. At that time she believed her life's work was over.

However, in the following year at the age of 80, Whina led the Maori Land March to protest against the loss of Maori land. Hundreds of thousands of people watched the march on television and it became the turning point in the fight for Maori land rights.

Whina devoted her life to improving life for her people. Her work was recognized by the government and she was made a 'Dame' in 1981. Whina Cooper died at the age of 98.

Time _____

Score _____

8 *Dame Whina Cooper*

1. Whina was born in:
 - a. 1795
 - b. 1895
 - c. 1995
2. Whaea o te motu means:
 - a. Hokianga region
 - b. North of New Zealand
 - c. Mother of the Nation
3. Whina's father was:
 - a. a Maori chief
 - b. a teacher
 - c. a doctor
4. How many times did Whina marry?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
5. How many children did she have?
 - a. Three
 - b. Four
 - c. Seven
6. Why did Whina Cooper lead a march in 1975?
 - a. To protest against Maori losing their land.
 - b. To stand for government
 - c. To develop health facilities.
7. The march finished in:
 - a. the far north of New Zealand
 - b. Wellington
 - c. Auckland
8. How many people watched the march on TV?
 - a. Thousands
 - b. Hundreds of thousands
 - c. Millions
9. Whina Cooper died when she was:
 - a. young
 - b. middle aged
 - c. very old
10. Dame means:
 - a. a Maori woman
 - b. an old woman
 - c. a woman who has contributed greatly to her country.

9 Earthquakes

Earthquakes occur all over the world and nobody knows when and where they will strike. Recent earthquakes in Europe, China and the Middle East show that nowhere is safe from the danger of earthquakes. However, some places experience earthquakes more often than others. Countries around the Pacific Ocean, for example Japan, the west coast of the United States and New Zealand frequently experience severe earthquakes.

Why do earthquakes happen so often around the edges of the Pacific Ocean?

The earth is made up of several layers. The outer layer is approximately 70 kilometres thick and consists of about twelve large plates of irregular size and shape. These plates are not stable; they slide over, under and against each other. Sometimes the movement is gradual but at other times the plates are locked together and immense pressure is built up at the points where they meet. When the pressure between the plates reaches breaking point there is a sudden movement and this causes an earthquake.

The Pacific plate, which roughly corresponds to the Pacific Ocean, and the adjacent Australian plate are moving towards each other at the rate of about 2 metres every year. New Zealand is on the boundary between these two plates and this is why New Zealand experiences so many earthquakes. It is also how the high mountain range that runs the length of the South Island has been formed. The increasing pressure caused by the plates moving together forces the land upwards. Each year Mount Cook, the highest mountain in New Zealand, gains 10 millimetres.

It is estimated that New Zealand experiences around 500 earthquakes every day. Most of these are too small to be felt but every few decades there is an earthquake big enough to cause serious damage to people and property. Less frequently, extremely severe earthquakes occur which change the face of the land. The 1855 Wellington earthquake, the largest recorded in New Zealand, raised the land by 1.5 metres. Prior to this, most of downtown Wellington was under the sea.

Much scientific research has gone into studying earthquakes. While no method of predicting them has been found, information about the probability of where and when they may occur has been compiled. For places with a high likelihood of earthquakes, progress is being made in designing earthquake-safe buildings. New Zealand has strict regulations governing the construction of new buildings and the strengthening of old ones.

Time _____

Score _____

9 *Earthquakes*

1. Earthquakes occur:
 - a. all over the world
 - b. only around the Pacific
 - c. only around the edges of plates
2. Why do earthquakes frequently occur in New Zealand?
 - a. It is mountainous
 - b. It is situated between two plates
 - c. It is in the Pacific
3. How many of the earthquakes that occur in New Zealand can be felt?
 - a. All of them
 - b. Many of them
 - c. Hardly any of them
4. Every year Mount Cook:
 - a. decreases in size
 - b. gets higher
 - c. stays the same height
5. A severe earthquake happened in Wellington:
 - a. about 150 years ago
 - b. 500 years ago
 - c. 10 years ago
6. The plates covering the earth move:
 - a. gradually
 - b. suddenly
 - c. both of the above
7. Earthquakes are caused by:
 - a. the release of pressure
 - b. pressure building up
 - c. the upward movement of land
8. The Wellington earthquake made:
 - a. the harbour
 - b. the city centre of Wellington
 - c. the mountains
9. Research into earthquakes has been successful in:
 - a. preventing earthquakes
 - b. predicting earthquakes
 - c. preparing for earthquakes
10. New Zealand has strict regulations about:
 - a. scientific research
 - b. the construction of buildings
 - c. where earthquakes can occur

10 Genetic Engineering

Genetic Engineering is a controversial issue in New Zealand. What is it?

Genetic comes from the word gene. A gene is an extremely small part of a cell and cells are what all living matter is made of. Children receive genes from their parents, and the genes control how the cells develop. For example, if both your parents have black hair, you will probably have black hair too. Here, engineering means changing something to make it better. So genetic engineering means modifying the composition of a gene to create an improved product. Many people, however, argue that it is not ethical or safe to engineer nature.

Today scientists are able to genetically engineer all kinds of things. They can produce food that tastes better and lasts longer. By creating stronger, disease resistant plants, farmers can dramatically increase the quality and productivity of their crops. It is possible to put animal genes into plants, and to 'clone', or make an identical copy, of an animal. In 1997, in Scotland, scientists cloned a sheep called Dolly by using genetic engineering. Human cloning technology continues to advance.

Many argue that genetic engineering is a good thing. Scientists predict that hunger will be eliminated from the world and that the effects of disease will be reduced through genetic engineering. They claim that genetic engineering is not new. Farmers from earliest times have controlled plants and seeds in an effort to produce better crops and increase productivity. Genetic engineering is a continuation of this improvement process.

However, many people argue that genetic engineering is dangerous. Very little is known about its long-term effects and once modified genes are released into the environment there is no way to control them or get them back again. Another argument against genetic engineering is the profit factor: government and multi-national companies are pushing genetic engineering to make money. People argue that there is enough food for all the people in the world if food is distributed fairly. There are also religious and ethical arguments against genetic engineering, and people who don't eat meat don't want animal genes in their food.

In 2001 an independent report was released by the New Zealand government which supported genetic engineering. The report stated that while there should be strict controls, genetic engineering could be developed for scientific and commercial purposes.

Despite government approval there is still widespread public opposition to genetically engineered food.

Time _____

Score _____

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10 Genetic Engineering

1. A controversial issue is one that:
 - a. people feel strongly about
 - b. people agree with
 - c. people disagree with
2. A gene is:
 - a. bigger than a cell
 - b. smaller than a cell
 - c. the same size as a cell
3. All living material is made of:
 - a. genes
 - b. cells
 - c. plants
4. What is a clone?
 - a. An animal gene
 - b. An improved copy
 - c. An exact copy
5. When did farmers start trying to improve their crops?
 - a. Recently
 - b. Last century
 - c. Since farming began
6. In this case, engineering means:
 - a. removing
 - b. improving
 - c. designing
7. If both your parents have dark skin, you are likely to have:
 - a. light skin
 - b. dark skin
 - c. black skin
8. Why do people argue that genetic engineering could be dangerous?
 - a. Not enough research has been done on it.
 - b. It could lead to cloning.
 - c. It was supported by the government.
9. Who will make money from genetic engineering?
 - a. People without enough food
 - b. The public
 - c. Multi-national companies.
10. In New Zealand:
 - a. most people agree with genetic engineering
 - b. most people disagree with genetic engineering
 - c. many agree and many disagree

11 Sun Sense

Until about thirty years ago, New Zealanders loved to go out in the sun. During the summer holidays, children played outside in the sun all day long and sometimes their skin got badly burnt. Today, all that has changed. Now people know that the sun can seriously damage their skin. It can cause a disease called skin cancer.

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, and according to the Cancer Society of New Zealand, the disease causes about two hundred deaths annually. One of the causes of skin cancer is ultraviolet (UV) light which is a kind of light from the sun's rays. Exposure to UV rays increases the risk of skin cancer.

Because the sun's UV rays are extremely harmful to people, we could not survive without protection against them. Nature provides this protection in the form of a layer of ozone gas which surrounds the globe and stops most of the sun's harmful rays reaching the earth. However, scientists have discovered that there is a hole in the ozone layer. As this hole is over the southernmost area of the world, there is less protection against dangerous UV rays in New Zealand.

The ozone layer hole is not only a problem for southern countries. The ozone hole is linked to global weather patterns and may affect and be affected by the warming of the earth's temperature.

Scientists believe that the hole in the ozone layer is caused or at least made worse by humans. Many kinds of chemicals are used in the manufacture of products for human use and some of these chemicals, called CFCs, destroy the ozone layer. When the use of these destructive chemicals increases, the hole in the ozone layer gets bigger. Since the problem was first recognised in the 1980s, there have been global agreements which aim to reduce the use of CFCs. Progress has been made in reducing the levels of CFCs and it has been predicted that if this trend continues the ozone hole might disappear completely by the year 2050.

To avoid exposing themselves to danger, New Zealanders avoid spending long periods of time in the sun. This doesn't mean you can't enjoy the outdoor life of New Zealand, but if you go out in the sun you should be sensible and cover up your skin, wear sun glasses and use sun block cream.

Time _____

Score _____

11 *Sun Sense*

1. In the last thirty years people have become more aware of:
 - a. the benefits of staying inside
 - b. the danger of the sun
 - c. the benefits of holidays
2. Skin cancer is:
 - a. a chemical
 - b. a gas
 - c. a disease
3. Compared to other countries, New Zealand's rate of skin cancer is:
 - a. high
 - b. moderate
 - c. low
4. Skin cancer is caused by:
 - a. too much UV light
 - b. too much ozone
 - c. too many holidays
5. The earth's protective covering protects us from:
 - a. ozone
 - b. the sun's rays
 - c. CFCs
6. Where is the ozone hole?
 - a. Over New Zealand
 - b. Over the Southern area of the world
 - c. Over the world
7. What do scientists predict might happen to the ozone hole?
 - a. It might get bigger
 - b. It might get smaller
 - c. It might stay the same
8. You should:
 - a. never go out in the sun
 - b. be careful when you go out in the sun
 - c. only go out in the sun in winter
9. The ozone hole is:
 - a. a global problem
 - b. a New Zealand problem
 - c. a problem for southern countries.
10. The ozone hole problem could be solved if:
 - a. people stopped using some chemicals
 - b. a cure was found for cancer
 - c. people stayed inside more

12 *The Pacific Ocean*

There are five oceans in the world and the Pacific Ocean is the largest, covering about 155 million square miles. It is about 20 times the size of Australia and makes up 28 percent of the surface of the globe. In other words, it is larger than all the countries in the world joined together. The Pacific got its name from early European explorers who found the waters peaceful compared to the rough seas of the Atlantic Ocean. Pacific means peaceful.

The region was first populated by the people of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia who sailed over the Pacific using the stars to guide their small boats. The first Europeans arrived in ships in the middle of the 16th Century. Three hundred years later, large numbers of Europeans settled in the larger Pacific countries such as New Zealand and Australia. During this time, Pacific Island nations became colonies of European countries. For example, New Zealand and Australia were claimed by Britain while France colonized smaller island groups.

The Pacific is a region of diversity. There are more than 5,000 islands and some of them are very small. For example, the island nation of Niue is only 260 square miles and has a population of 2,000 people. In contrast, Australia with an area of almost three million square miles and a population of 20 million is the largest Pacific nation. Many countries located on the borders of the Pacific Ocean experience severe earthquakes, for example Japan and New Zealand, so the area is called the 'Pacific Ring of Fire'.

The Pacific is rich in natural resources such as minerals, gas and oil. Other industries include fishing and tourism. It is estimated that over half of the world's fish is caught in the Pacific Ocean, and the natural beauty of the islands attracts tourists from all over the world.

Because of its colonial history and perhaps because there are so few people in relation to its land area, the Pacific was considered a convenient place to carry out nuclear testing. Britain, the United States and France have all carried out nuclear tests in the Pacific over the last 50 years. This has caused serious health problems for some Pacific people and is an ongoing issue for the people of the Pacific today.

European New Zealand once looked to its British colonial past, but increasingly New Zealand is seeing itself as a Pacific country.

Time _____

Score _____

12 *The Pacific Ocean*

1. How many oceans are there in the world?
 - a. Five
 - b. Two
 - c. Ten
2. Which of the following covers the largest area?
 - a. All the countries together
 - b. The Pacific Ocean
 - c. All the oceans in the world
3. Who was the Pacific Ocean named by?
 - a. People from Melanesia
 - b. Early European explorers
 - c. Early settlers
4. How many islands are there in the Pacific?
 - a. 1000
 - b. More than 5,000
 - c. Nobody knows
5. Where are earthquakes common?
 - a. In the Pacific Ocean
 - b. Around the Pacific Ocean
 - c. Under the Pacific Ocean
6. Early explorers called the ocean the Pacific because it was:
 - a. very large
 - b. beautiful
 - c. peaceful
7. What is a colony?
 - a. A group of countries
 - b. A country ruled by another country
 - c. A small country
8. Compared to its area, the Pacific has:
 - a. a small population
 - b. an average population
 - c. a large population
9. How did early Pacific Islanders sail around the Pacific Ocean?
 - a. They used maps
 - b. They used the stars
 - c. They relied on the Gods
10. Serious health problems have been caused by:
 - a. earthquakes
 - b. tourism
 - c. nuclear testing

13 *Tangata Whenua*

Tangata Whenua means people of the land or local people. The first people in New Zealand were Maori.

While there is much debate about dates, it is thought that the islands of New Zealand were first settled by peoples from the Eastern Pacific about 1000 years ago. Tens of thousands of years before that people, probably originating in Asia, migrated to the Pacific. Over thousands of years, the people, known as Polynesians, explored the Pacific in their long boats called canoes. They used the stars to find their way across the ocean as far as South America.

Maori history was spoken, not written. Stories were handed down from generation to generation, and in this way many Maori trace their beginnings back to the arrival of great canoes bringing people to the land, each canoe being associated with a different tribal area of the country.

New Zealand was colder than their former homes, but the Maori adapted well to the new conditions. They settled first around the coastal regions, especially the East Coast of the North Island where the weather was warmer, and then moved to other areas including the South Island. It is estimated that in the 1760s the Maori population was around 100,000.

Maori society was based on agriculture, fishing and hunting birds. There were numerous flightless birds including the moa which stood up to 3.7 metres high and could weigh 200 kilograms. Moa and other birds provided food, clothing from the feathers, and tools from the bones. While there were no metals for making tools, Maori developed a highly evolved culture based on using bone and stone to make implements for domestic and agricultural use, for religion and for war with other tribes. Art was also highly developed and prized.

Maori culture was based on land, which was jointly owned by the tribe, and on respect for the generations who had gone before. Meeting grounds stood at the centre of Maori communities. They were, and still are, the places where decisions are made and important events held.

The arrival of Europeans had a great impact on Maori, almost resulting in the loss of the culture and society. Today Maori are fighting back and claiming their rights.

Originally the name Tangata Whenua was used by one tribe in relation to visitors from other places. Today the words are also used to mean Maori, the original people of New Zealand.

Time _____

Score _____

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13 *Tangata Whenua*

1. Tangata Whenua means:
 - a. people
 - b. land
 - c. local people
2. The statement "Maori arrived in New Zealand 1000 years ago." is:
 - a. a fact
 - b. a theory
 - c. a lie
3. Maori population in the 1760s was about:
 - a. 100,000
 - b. 1,000,000
 - c. 1,000
4. What is a canoe?
 - a. A tool
 - b. A boat
 - c. A story
5. What were moa like?
 - a. Large and flightless
 - b. Medium size and heavy
 - c. Small and tasty
6. Maori may have originally come from:
 - a. Asia
 - b. South America
 - c. The Pacific
7. How did Maori record their history?
 - a. By writing it down
 - b. By older people telling younger people
 - c. In song
8. Who owned land in Maori culture?
 - a. The chief
 - b. The tribe
 - c. Individual people
9. What impact did Europeans have on Maori?
 - a. Great impact
 - b. Not much impact
 - c. Quite a lot of impact
10. Maori culture is based on:
 - a. land
 - b. canoes
 - c. implements

14 *Sir Apirana Ngata*

Apirana Ngata was born into the Ngati Porou tribe on the East Coast of New Zealand in 1874. He was educated at Te Aute Maori College, where he received a classical European education in preparation for university study. The head master of the college also encouraged pride in the Maori race and this was the time when Ngata developed a determination to help his people. In the late 1800s it was generally believed that Maori would lose their culture or even completely die out. Ngata devoted his life to ensuring this didn't happen.

Ngata gained a political science degree in 1893 and a law degree in 1896. He was the first Maori to receive a degree from a New Zealand university. In 1895 he married Arihia Tamati and they returned to the East Coast soon after. Eleven of their children survived into adulthood.

While Ngata could have become a lawyer, he decided instead to work to improve the social and economic situation of Maori. He realised that land was the basis of Maori society, culture and identity and he began to develop Maori land into productive farms using modern methods. Maori land was traditionally owned by the whole tribe and this meant it could be difficult to develop the land with so many people involved in making decisions. Ngata developed ways to solve these problems.

Ngata was also involved in Maori land ownership at a national level. He was angry that over many years the New Zealand government had taken land from Maori illegally, and that Maori land was still being lost to Europeans. In order to fight for justice, Ngata stood for government in 1905. He was elected and remained a government member until 1943. During these years he continued to work for Maori land rights and development.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, Ngata at 40, was too old to fight. However, he supported the many Maori soldiers who fought beside other New Zealanders.

Ngata continued to work for Maori land rights at the local level and in government throughout the 1920s. At the same time he became interested in social and cultural activities and he promoted Maori art, song and dance as well as sport. His commitment to the Christian Church continued throughout his life.

Sir Apirana Ngata died in 1950 having made a great contribution to the recovery of Maori culture and identity.

Time _____

Score _____

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14 *Sir Apirana Ngata*

1. In the late 1800s, it was thought that the Maori race might:
 - a. become successful farmers
 - b. die out completely
 - c. lose their land
2. How many university degrees did Ngata receive?
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. None
3. How many children did Ngata have?
 - a. A lot
 - b. Not many
 - c. An average number
4. How long did Ngata remain in government?
 - a. A few years
 - b. Not very long
 - c. A very long time
5. Why didn't Ngata fight in the First World War ?
 - a. He was too old
 - b. He didn't believe in war.
 - c. He was too busy
6. What did Ngata believe was the basis of Maori identity?
 - a. Land
 - b. The Christian Church
 - c. Cultural activities
7. Ngata worked mainly:
 - a. with his own tribe
 - b. at government level
 - c. at local and government levels
8. Ngata believed that singing and dancing was:
 - a. a waste of time
 - b. culturally important
 - c. against Christian ideas
9. Ngata was:
 - a. religious throughout his life
 - b. religious when he was young
 - c. not a religious person
10. During his life, Ngata achieved:
 - a. most of his ambitions
 - b. some of his ambitions
 - c. not many of his ambitions

15 *The Weather*

New Zealand is a long narrow country lying in a north south direction and therefore there is a wide variety of weather. The far north has high summer temperatures, occasionally as high as 30 degrees and mild winters, while the south of the South Island experiences severe cold and snow during winter. There may be a difference of 5 degrees in average temperatures between the far north and the far south, although regional variations also occur. For example, Christchurch in the south experiences a hot dry westerly wind that can raise summer temperatures to the highest in the country.

The coldest months are July and August and the warmest are January and February. In winter the days are short while in summer they are long. On the shortest day, June 22, there may only be eight hours of daylight, while on the longest day, 22 December, it will be light at 5.30 am and still light at 10.00 pm. The further south you go the bigger the difference. To make matters more complicated New Zealand has Daylight Saving, which means that twice a year the clocks are put forward or back to allow the best use of daylight hours.

New Zealand is a mountainous country and the high regions of both islands experience cold winters. The Southern Alps, which run the length of the South Island, cut the island in two. The westerly winds drop rain on the rainforests of the west coast before reaching the mountains, leaving the flat farmlands on the east drier.

In contrast to some Asian countries where the rains come with hotter weather, New Zealand's wettest season is winter, although rain falls throughout the year. Another feature of New Zealand's weather is its changeability. Overseas visitors are often surprised to experience four seasons in one day. You can get up in the morning to a beautiful sunny day and by evening it is pouring with rain after going through cloud, wind and more sunshine. Deciding what to wear can be a problem.

Because New Zealand is a small island nation it does not have the extremes of temperature that large land masses experience. Instead the weather is affected by the sea which has a moderating effect on temperatures. Generally New Zealand's weather is characterised by a lack of extreme temperatures, by regional variation, by rainfall throughout the year and perhaps most of all by unpredictability.

Time _____

Score _____

Millett, S. (2005) *New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners*, Book Two. (ELI Occasional Publication 24). Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University of Wellington, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies.

15 *The Weather*

1. Why does New Zealand experience a wide variety of weather conditions?
 - a. It is a long country
 - b. It is in the South
 - c. It is an island nation
2. High temperatures are experienced:
 - a. only in the far north
 - b. in all areas of the country
 - c. mainly in the far north
3. What causes the west of the South Island to be wetter than the east?
 - a. The Southern Alps
 - b. The ocean
 - c. The southerly wind
4. The shortest day is in:
 - a. winter
 - b. summer
 - c. spring
5. What is Daylight Saving?
 - a. Changing the temperature
 - b. Making the days longer
 - c. Changing the clocks
6. Where is most of the farming done in the South Island?
 - a. In the west
 - b. In the east
 - c. In the north
7. There are mountains:
 - a. in the South Island
 - b. in the North Island
 - c. in both islands
8. Large land masses often experience:
 - a. extreme temperatures
 - b. high rainfall
 - c. long daylight hours
9. In the South Island the wind usually blows from the:
 - a. south
 - b. west
 - c. east
10. What is a major characteristic of New Zealand weather?
 - a. It is extreme
 - b. It is unpredictable
 - c. High rainfall

16 Power Sources

New Zealand is a country of mountains and rivers and most of our electricity comes from these areas. About 75 percent of electricity for domestic and industrial purposes comes from water. The use of fast flowing rivers to turn machines called turbines to produce electricity is called hydroelectric power generation.

At first, the rapidly flowing rivers generated enough power. However, as the demand for electricity increased, the rivers couldn't meet the demand and large artificial lakes were constructed by damming (blocking) rivers. The water stored in these lakes could then be released as it was needed to run the turbines and generate power.

A number of problems are associated with hydroelectric power. Dams are expensive to build and the formation of artificial lakes destroys the natural environment. In New Zealand most of the power stations are in the South Island whereas most people live in the North Island. To get power to where it is needed it must be transported through expensive power lines. Furthermore, the major problem is that hydroelectric power is completely dependent on the weather. In times of low rainfall the water level in rivers and lakes drops and there is not enough water to generate power.

To deal with these problems, alternative power sources have been suggested. Power stations using fuels such as coal and oil have been proposed for use in times of low rainfall. However, the fuels are expensive and they cause pollution. Solar power is a renewable power source using heat from the sun. Solar heating units can be seen on the roofs of some New Zealand houses. Wind power is another option. Wind farms are being developed, where large wind driven turbines produce power that can supplement national power reserves.

Nuclear power is an option that some countries have used to solve the problem of electricity supply. However, nuclear power generation has never gained public approval in New Zealand which is proud of its nuclear free status.

Electric power cannot be easily stored in large quantities. It must be generated at the time it is needed. The demand for electricity is at its highest in winter when people need to heat their houses, but in recent years low rainfall has led to insufficient power being generated, and there have been power cuts to reduce electricity consumption.

To ensure a reliable, affordable, environmentally-friendly supply of power is a major challenge facing New Zealand.

Time _____

Score _____

16 Power Sources

1. How much of New Zealand's power is hydroelectric?
 - a. Most
 - b. Half
 - c. Less than half
2. Hydro means:
 - a. power
 - b. water
 - c. mountain
3. Artificial lakes are made by:
 - a. rivers
 - b. power lines
 - c. dams
4. A turbine is:
 - a. a machine for making electricity
 - b. a way of transporting electricity
 - c. a kind of electricity
5. Hydroelectric power is dependent on:
 - a. demand
 - b. the public
 - c. the weather
6. Nuclear power is:
 - a. used in New Zealand
 - b. popular in New Zealand
 - c. unpopular in New Zealand
7. Which of the following is a renewable resource?
 - a. Coal
 - b. Oil
 - c. Wind
8. Electricity:
 - a. can be easily stored in large quantities
 - b. cannot be easily stored in large quantities
 - c. cannot be stored
9. Lack of rain has caused power cuts in:
 - a. summer
 - b. spring
 - c. winter
10. Producing power from coal and oil is:
 - a. cheap
 - b. dirty
 - c. unreliable

17 *Volunteers*

Volunteers are people who work without being paid. They do the work because they want to. We need volunteers because there are many things that need to be done in society which the Government can't afford to pay for.

Volunteers are motivated by a desire to help others and to make the world a better place, and statistics suggest that more than one million people do voluntary work in New Zealand. Some volunteers do the kind of work that they are particularly interested in, but perhaps haven't had the opportunity to do during their working lives. Others make use of their professional skills and experience.

Volunteers contribute to society in a number of ways. Some give their time to help preserve the natural environment. While there are government run projects to maintain National Parks and forests, the projects would not succeed without volunteers. Similarly, programmes to preserve endangered species such as the kiwi rely heavily on voluntary workers. Other environmental organisations rely solely on voluntary labour.

Some volunteers give their time to help animals. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) receives no financial support from the Government and is run entirely on contributions from the public. The Auckland branch of the SPCA has 40 paid staff members and over 800 volunteers.

"Meals on Wheels" is a voluntary organisation run by the Red Cross, which delivers meals to elderly people who are unable to cook for themselves. Every year drivers deliver a million meals and this enables elderly people to remain in their own houses.

Some people give their time to help new New Zealanders, for example refugees. Refugees are people who are forced to leave their own countries because of war or food shortages. Refugees and other immigrants need help to learn English and to settle into life in a new country.

Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) was started in 1962 and sends volunteers to poor countries. To be a volunteer you should be between the ages of 25 and 77, of good health and have a skill or ability that is requested by the country. Volunteers spend two years helping the local people improve their lives. Two years is a long time, but when they return, many volunteers say: 'It was the best two years of my life.'

These are only a few of the many possibilities open to anyone who wants to become a volunteer.

Time _____

Score _____

17 *Volunteers*

1. Volunteers are people who:
 - a. get paid for their work
 - b. don't get paid for their work
 - c. don't work
2. How many people do voluntary work in New Zealand?
 - a. A lot
 - b. Not many
 - c. Hardly any
3. People become volunteers because:
 - a. they want to gain work experience
 - b. they want to travel overseas
 - c. they want to help other people
4. In the Auckland SPCA there are:
 - a. more staff than volunteers
 - b. more volunteers than staff
 - c. about the same numbers
5. VSA volunteers are:
 - a. mainly old
 - b. mainly young
 - c. almost any age
6. Which volunteer organisation helps animals:
 - a. VSA
 - b. SPCA
 - c. The Red Cross
7. How much environmental work is paid for by the government?
 - a. All
 - b. None
 - c. Some
8. Where does the SPCA get money?
 - a. The public
 - b. The government
 - c. Volunteers
9. Volunteers usually:
 - a. love their work
 - b. hate their work
 - c. quite like their work
10. How many kinds of work can volunteers do?
 - a. Five
 - b. Not many
 - c. Many

18 *Immigration*

New Zealand is a nation of immigrants. The arrival of Maori one thousand years ago has been followed by wave after wave of immigrants from different parts of the world all of whom have helped to produce the multi-cultural society that exists in New Zealand today.

In 1839, the population consisted of 100,000 Maori and 2,000 Europeans. However, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, which made New Zealand a British colony, saw the start of government assisted immigration from Britain. Twenty years later, the population of Maori and European was almost the same. The discovery of gold in the 1860s brought migrants from around the world flooding into the country. Many Chinese New Zealanders can trace their families back to the gold rushes of the 1860s.

Some parts of New Zealand have been associated with immigrants from particular countries. For example in the far north, migrants from Dalmatia arrived in the 1890s. They were farmers and they established wineries. Today some of the country's best known wines are produced by Dalmatian companies set up in the early 1900s. Dunedin attracted large numbers of Scottish immigrants and the city's buildings and customs reflect this influence. On the other hand, large numbers of Dutch migrants arrived in the 1950s and settled throughout the country. Around 100,000 New Zealanders have Dutch origins.

In the 1960s and 70s large numbers of Pacific Islanders migrated to New Zealand to fill a severe labour shortage. Today Pacific Islanders make up 5 percent of the total population, most living in Auckland which has the largest Pacific Island population of any city in the world.

The most recent wave has been from Asia. Over the last 20 years Asian immigrants from many countries have made significant contributions to the New Zealand economy especially in the areas of business and the professions. During the same period refugees from Africa and the Middle East have started new lives in New Zealand after leaving their countries because of war.

Here are some interesting statistics. One in twenty New Zealanders was born overseas. 80 percent are of European origin. 14.5 percent identify as Maori and the third largest group is Pacific Islanders. There are almost as many Asians as Pacific Islanders. Auckland has 191 different ethnic groups.

A recent trend is that increasingly people are recognising the complexity of their origins and are identifying with more than one nationality group.

Time _____

Score _____

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18 *Immigration*

1. In 1839 there were:
 - a. more Europeans than Maori
 - b. more Maori than Europeans
 - c. about the same

2. New Zealand is:
 - a. a mono-cultural country
 - b. a bi-cultural country
 - c. a multi-cultural country

3. The first Chinese immigrants came to New Zealand:
 - a. to dig for gold
 - b. as business people
 - c. as farmers

4. How many New Zealanders were born overseas?
 - a. About half
 - b. About 5 percent
 - c. Most

5. Auckland has the biggest population of Pacific Islanders:
 - a. in New Zealand
 - b. in the Pacific
 - c. in the world

6. In this reading, wave means:
 - a. successive increase
 - b. gold rush
 - c. ocean movement

7. A refugee is a person who:
 - a. has to leave their country because of war
 - b. chooses to come to a new country
 - c. comes to a country and then returns to their home land.

8. What was the most recent group to immigrate to New Zealand?
 - a. Asians
 - b. British
 - c. Pacific Islanders

9. How multi-cultural is Auckland?
 - a. Quite
 - b. Very
 - c. Not very

10. Recently people are beginning to:
 - a. identify with a nationality group
 - b. identify with more than one nationality group
 - c. not identify with any nationality group

19 *The Antarctic*

The Antarctic is the large area of land at the bottom of the globe. Extending over an area of 14 million square miles, almost twice the size of Australia, it is almost completely covered in ice sheets up to 4 kilometres deep. Over 70 percent of the world's fresh water is contained in the ice sheets.

The Antarctic is the coldest place on earth and because of its southern location it has two distinct seasons. From May to August, the winter months, there is no daylight. It is dark for 24 hours a day. On the other hand, in the summer months of December through February there is continuous daylight. The sun never sets. The Antarctic is extremely windy, with winds often reaching 70 miles an hour, although winds of up to 115 miles an hour have been recorded. A combination of wind and below freezing temperatures can reduce the temperature to -100C. Snow storms occur frequently and without warning and can reduce visibility to zero.

While it is too cold for plants or animals to survive on the ice, a rich wild life of birds and sea creatures lives in the coastal waters surrounding the Antarctic. A bird called the Arctic tern migrates over 20,000 miles each year to spend its summers in both the Antarctic and the Arctic Circle at the opposite end of the globe.

Because of the Antarctic's unspoiled environment many countries have established scientific research bases there. At Scott Base, New Zealand scientists carry out research on seismology, the scientific study of earthquakes, on the weather, on birds and on life under the waters of the Southern Ocean. Most of the scientific research is carried out in the summer months of continuous day light. During the summer there may be up to 80 people at Scott Base, including scientists and support staff, while in winter there may be only a quarter of that number. One of the tasks of the staff wintering over at the base is to look after the 25 dogs that help with transport on the ice.

With more countries becoming interested in establishing research bases and increasing numbers of tour companies operating adventure holidays to the Antarctic, some people believe that the region is becoming crowded and polluted. They would like to see the Antarctic become a world park so that its natural beauty and scientific significance will not be destroyed.

Time _____

Score _____

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19 *The Antarctic*

1. The Antarctic is:
 - a. the same size as Australia
 - b. twice the size of Australia
 - c. half the size of Australia
2. How much of the world's fresh water is locked up in the Antarctic?
 - a. Over half
 - b. Half
 - c. Less than half
3. How many distinct seasons does the Antarctic have?
 - a. Two
 - b. Three
 - c. Four
4. The Arctic Circle is:
 - a. in the south
 - b. in the north
 - c. in the west
5. Why are dogs useful in the Antarctic?
 - a. As guard dogs
 - b. For transport
 - c. As guide dogs
6. Why is most research carried out in summer?
 - a. It is light 24 hours a day
 - b. There are more people
 - c. It is warm
7. How many countries have research bases in the Antarctic?
 - a. Many countries
 - b. Only New Zealand
 - c. New Zealand and Australia
8. Because of the extreme cold, there is very little wild life:
 - a. on the ice
 - b. on the coast
 - c. in the water
9. There is concern that the Antarctic is getting:
 - a. colder
 - b. polluted
 - c. darker
10. Some people would like to see the Antarctic turned into:
 - a. a world park
 - b. a research base
 - c. a tourist attraction

20 *The Education System in New Zealand*

Education in New Zealand is compulsory between the ages of six and sixteen. This means that all children between these ages must attend school. Most children, however, begin their schooling at five. This period includes primary and secondary education and is free up to the age of 19. Before this, many children attend early childhood centres, and afterwards secondary school students may continue on to university, technical institutions or other forms of tertiary education.

Early childhood covers the period from birth to six years old and may include both care and education. There are a variety of options such as play centres and kindergartens. Kindergarten is a German word meaning children's garden. Most of these centres are taught in English although recently Kohanga Reo have begun to offer instruction in Maori. The value of early childhood education is being increasingly recognized and 60 percent of children under five participate in some form of pre-school education, rising to 90 percent of four year olds.

Children attend primary school for 8 years or up to the age of about 13, before progressing to secondary schools for a further 5 years, although some students may decide to leave school at 16.

The school year is divided into four terms and classes run from 9 am till 3 or 3.30 pm. Most government funded schools are co-educational although there are some single-sex schools at secondary level. There are also private schools, which receive some government funding but are run by religious or other special interest groups. Most schools use English as the language of instruction but there are also Kura Kaupapa Maori which are taught in Maori. The average teacher : student classroom ratio is around 1 : 22, but this can vary according to class level. While education at primary and secondary level is free in government run schools, parents are expected to pay for books, uniforms and extra costs such as sports. Private schools can be very expensive.

Tertiary education means any education or training that takes place after secondary school. In New Zealand this includes 8 universities, 30 technical institutes and colleges, and around 1,000 private or industry run training institutes. All educational facilities are controlled by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority which ensures the quality of educational programmes.

As New Zealand becomes more multi-cultural and welcomes more international students, the education system is adapting to meet the needs of different cultural groups.

Time _____

Score _____

20 *The Education System in New Zealand*

1. What does compulsory mean?
 - a. You have to do something
 - b. You can choose to do something
 - c. You must not do something
2. What age do most children begin school?
 - a. 7
 - b. 6
 - c. 5
3. What period of schooling is free in New Zealand?
 - a. Early childhood and primary
 - b. Primary and secondary
 - c. Secondary and tertiary
4. Kindergarten means:
 - a. children's garden
 - b. play centre
 - c. Kohanga Reo
5. How many New Zealand four year olds attend pre-school?
 - a. Not many
 - b. About half
 - c. Most
6. It is cheaper to send your child to:
 - a. a government school
 - b. a private school
 - c. a religious school
7. Co-educational means:
 - a. primary and secondary
 - b. girls and boys
 - c. English and Maori language
8. The average class size is:
 - a. about twenty
 - b. about thirty
 - c. about forty
9. The language of instruction in Kohanga Reo is:
 - a. English
 - b. German
 - c. Maori
10. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority controls:
 - a. the price of education
 - b. the quality of education
 - c. exam results

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners - Book Two

Answer Key

1.	1.b	2.b	3.c	4.a	5.c	6.a	7.b	8.c	9.c	10.c
2.	1.b	2.a	3.b	4.c	5.b	6.c	7.c	8.a	9.a	10.b
3.	1.a	2.b	3.c	4.a	5.c	6.b	7.a	8.c	9.a	10.c
4.	1.c	2.a	3.a	4.b	5.c	6.b	7.a	8.c	9.b	10.c
5.	1.a	2.b	3.c	4.a	5.b	6.b	7.b	8.b	9.c	10.a
6.	1.b	2.a	3.c	4.c	5.a	6.a	7.a	8.c	9.a	10.b
7.	1.a	2.a	3.b	4.a	5.c	6.a	7.a	8.b	9.c	10.b
8.	1.b	2.c	3.a	4.b	5.c	6.a	7.b	8.b	9.c	10.c
9.	1.a	2.b	3.c	4.b	5.a	6.c	7.a	8.b	9.c	10.b
10.	1.a	2.b	3.b	4.c	5.c	6.b	7.b	8.a	9.c	10.c
11.	1.b	2.c	3.a	4.a	5.b	6.b	7.b	8.b	9.a	10.a
12.	1.a	2.c	3.b	4.b	5.b	6.c	7.b	8.a	9.b	10.c
13.	1.c	2.b	3.a	4.b	5.a	6.a	7.b	8.b	9.a	10.a
14.	1.b	2.b	3.a	4.c	5.a	6.a	7.c	8.b	9.a	10.a
15.	1.a	2.c	3.a	4.a	5.c	6.b	7.c	8.a	9.b	10.b
16.	1.a	2.b	3.c	4.a	5.c	6.c	7.c	8.b	9.c	10.b
17.	1.b	2.a	3.c	4.b	5.c	6.b	7.c	8.a	9.a	10.c
18.	1.b	2.c	3.a	4.b	5.c	6.a	7.a	8.a	9.b	10.b
19.	1.b	2.a	3.a	4.b	5.b	6.a	7.a	8.a	9.b	10.a
20.	1.a	2.c	3.b	4.a	5.c	6.a	7.b	8.a	9.c	10.b

Progress Graph

Write your score in the box under the #. Then put an **X** in one of the boxes to show your reading time and words-per-minute reading rate.

time																				wpm
0.40																				540
0.50																				465
1.00																				400
1.10																				345
1.20																				300
1.30																				265
1.40																				240
1.50																				220
2.00																				200
2.10																				185
2.20																				170
2.30																				160
2.40																				150
2.50																				140
3.00																				135
	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	
score																				

Progress Graph

Write your score in the box under the #. Then put an **X** in one of the boxes to show your reading time and words-per-minute reading rate.

time																				wpm
1.00																				400
1.10																				345
1.20																				300
1.30																				265
1.40																				240
1.50																				220
2.00																				200
2.10																				185
2.20																				170
2.30																				160
2.40																				150
2.50																				140
3.00																				135
3.10																				125
3.20																				120
3.30																				115
3.40																				110
3.50																				105
4.00																				100
	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	
score																				

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