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Introduction

Why is it good to read faster?

Most learners of English read very slowly, often less than 100 words per minute. They can easily read much faster if they read passages at the right level and if they have some practice in reading faster. These books will help you do this.

Why is it good to read faster? When you can read faster, you will find it easier to understand. You do not spend your time spelling out words, and so you can give more time to understanding. When you read faster, you can read more. Reading can be fun. It is more fun when you can do it easily at a good speed.

There are many kinds of reading: reading for study, reading for fun, reading to learn about the world (such as reading newspapers), and reading to follow instructions. When you become faster at one kind of reading, you will also be faster at these other kinds of reading.

You may also be able to listen a bit faster because you are used to working with English at a faster speed.

This part of your English course is different from other parts. In the other parts of your English course, you meet new words and new pieces of grammar and learn them bit by bit. This part of your English course, however, tries to have almost no new things to learn. It tries to make you use what you already know and use it as well as you possibly can. This is called “becoming fluent.” When you are fluent in a language, you can use what you know well.

The goal of this book is to help you become a fluent reader at all levels of your learning.

The passages in these books

The passages in these reading books are written to help you read faster. Most learners of English read slowly, but with a little practice, they can read as fast as many native speakers.

Most learners read slowly because they meet many unknown words in their reading. The passages in these books have been prepared so that there will be very few unknown words in them. First, the passages are written in familiar useful vocabulary. Second, the passages are about familiar things. Third, the passages are grouped into themes so that the five passages on the same theme will become easier as you read your way through them. The earlier passages will make the later ones more familiar. Fourth, difficult vocabulary is reviewed **before** you read the passages. All of these things are done so that you can read the passages quickly without meeting unknown words. The purpose of these books is to help you read faster.

Using the books

You should follow these steps when you read the books. Your teacher can help you with this.

- Step 1:* Do the exercises and learn the vocabulary at the beginning of each set of passages. Make sure you know these words well before you begin reading the passages.
- Step 2:* Before reading each passage look at the time. If you are reading in class, the teacher will tell you when to begin.
- Step 3:* Read the passage as quickly as you can while trying to understand the passage.
- Step 4:* As soon as you finish reading, write down how many minutes and seconds it took you to read the passage.
- Step 5:* Turn the page and answer the questions. When you answer the questions, do not look back at the passage.
- Step 6:* Check your answers to the questions using the answer keys in the back of the book.

Step 7: Write your speed and question score in one of the graphs at the back of the book. Every passage in the book has almost exactly the same number of words, so your reading time can tell you your reading speed.

Step 8: Look at your reading speed. You should try to read at around 250 words per minute. You may have to read many passages before you can get to this speed, but this should be your goal. When you read the next passage, try to go faster.

Some things to think about

These books are written to help you read faster. Your goal is not to be the fastest reader in the world, but you should learn to read at a normal, comfortable reading speed. For most people this is around 250 words per minute, but some read faster.

Reading faster is only good if you also understand what you read. That is why there are questions after each story. If you get an answer wrong, that is not a problem. Your main goal is to read faster. However, the questions are easy so that you can read faster and get all or most of them correct.

You check your own questions and measure your own speed. It is easy to cheat if you want to. However, if you cheat, your teacher cannot give you the help you need to read faster. If you cheat, you know that your speed and question score is not really your score. Use these books honestly and properly and you will see your reading get better.

If you like the idea of reading faster, you can help yourself by doing other easy reading. It is not possible to read faster if you are always meeting unknown words. You can add to the learning from these books by reading other, longer easy books as quickly as you can.

Animals



A Write the name under the right picture.

bear
monkey

crocodile
penguin

eel
shark

horse
starfish



1. _____



2. _____



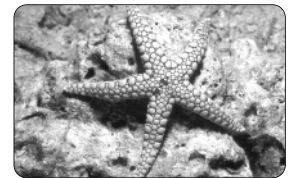
3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



8. _____

B Talk about these questions with your class.

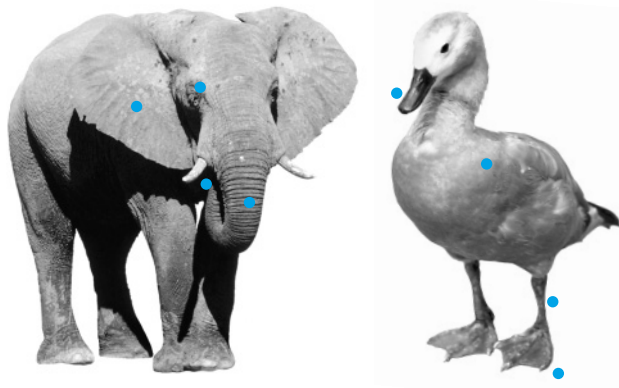
1. What animals have hair?
2. How many liters of water do you drink a day?
3. Do wild dogs live alone or in groups?
4. What baby animals come from eggs?
5. Which animals have green skin?

C Work with a classmate. Write the names of two (2) animals for each word or phrase.

- amphibians: _____, _____
- reptiles: _____, _____
- mammals: _____, _____
- eat plants: _____, _____
- eat animals: _____, _____
- live in Asia: _____, _____
- live in Africa: _____, _____
- backbone: _____, _____
- no backbone: _____, _____

D Draw lines to the right part of the animal.

ear
eye
mouth
trunk



bill
leg
feathers
foot

One way to learn about the millions of animals in the world is to put them in groups. By looking at animals in groups, we can see interesting points that are the same or are different about animals. In this way, we can say that some animals belong to certain groups.

5

People belong to a group that includes dogs, bears, horses, and monkeys. Animals in this group all have hair. Babies come out of their mothers, not out of eggs. And babies in this group of animals drink milk from their mother. Birds are another group of animals. Not all birds can fly, but all birds lay eggs. Baby birds come out of eggs, and their mothers give them food and care for them.

10

Some animals eat plants, some eat other animals, and some eat both. Many that eat plants eat only one kind of plant, or one part of a plant. In this way, different kinds of plant-eating animals can live together in the same place and have enough food.

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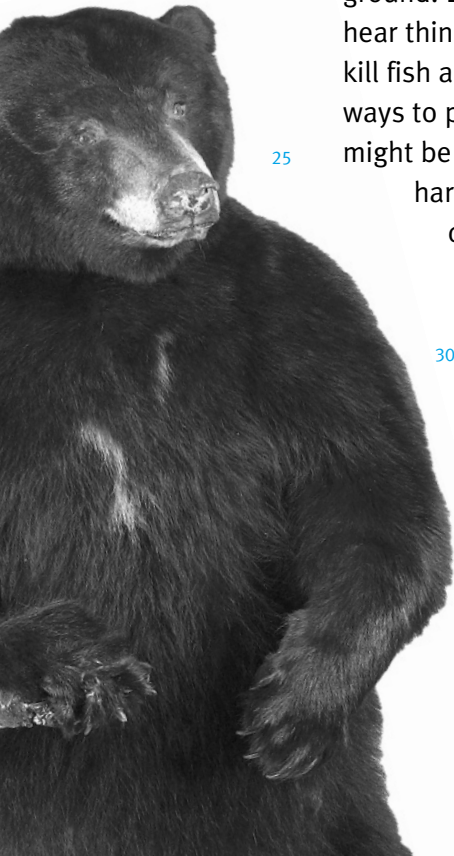
Animals come in all different shapes, sizes, and colors. Their bodies help them get food and keep them safe from other animals that want to eat them. Many birds have very good eyes. When they are flying, they can see fish in the water and small animals on the ground. Dogs have great noses and ears. They can smell and hear things that are far away. Bears are very strong. They can kill fish and other animals with their arms. Small animals have ways to protect themselves from bigger ones. Their bodies, for example, might be the same color as the ground around them. This makes them

20

25

hard to see. Also, some animals can make their bodies look bigger and stronger than they really are. Then other animals do not want to eat them.

30

**Time** _____

Circle the right answer.

1. What is the reading about?
 - a. The different types of animals
 - b. How groups of animals live together
 - c. The most common types of animals

2. According to the passage, which animal does NOT belong to the same group?
 - a. a dog
 - b. a horse
 - c. a bird

3. Which statement is NOT true about the human group?
 - a. All children have hair on their bodies.
 - b. All babies come from eggs.
 - c. All babies drink their mothers' milk.

4. Many plant-eating animals can live in one area because:
 - a. some plants are very large
 - b. plants grow very quickly
 - c. different animals eat different parts of plants

5. Birds have good eyes, so:
 - a. they can protect themselves
 - b. they can make themselves look bigger
 - c. they can see animals from high up

Score _____