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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 make you 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 Circle the right picture to answer the question.

1. Which is more dangerous?



a hippopotamus



a zebra

2. Which is usually larger?



a crocodile



a Komodo dragon

3. Which is a more common pet?

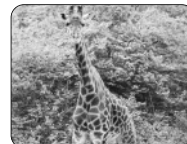


a hamster



a lizard

4. Which can run faster?



a giraffe



a human






B Choose the right word.

1. a (complicated / fully-grown) problem
2. the (natural / nervous) animal
3. (gentle / threatened) waves
4. a person's (disappointed / native) country
5. some (social / unusual) sounds
6. places (frequently / nearly) visited
7. (finally / typically) used tools
8. a (probably / surprisingly) fast animal

C Work with a classmate. Try to answer the following questions together.

1. Can you describe the male of some animal compared to the female? What makes one stand out from the other?
2. Do you know where the islands of Indonesia are? Do you know any animals that live there?
3. What kind of snacks does your or your relative's pet like to eat? Do you know any pets that eat peanut butter?
4. How does one kind of animal stand guard and watch for enemies? Does the leader of the group watch for enemies?
5. Do you know anyone who was bitten by an animal? How did he or she recover?

D Which word does not belong in the list? Circle it.

1.  Dog tricks: depend on roll over shake hands
2.  Jobs: director herbivore zoologist
3.  People: Los Angeles Zoo Peter Ouwens Sharon Stone
4.  What a cage does: attack protect separate
5.  When you are tired: yawn rest disappear

1 Humans

When you go to the zoo, you can see many kinds of animals. For example, our zoo has monkeys, giraffes, zebras, tigers, and lions. Our zoo also has snakes, different birds, and even a big white bear. Of course, when you go to the zoo, you also see another kind of animal. However, this animal is not in a cage. I am talking about humans! Humans are animals, just like horses or birds, but we often separate ourselves from other animals.

One reason humans think of themselves as special is because we have language. No other animals have language. They may have a message system, but they do not have language. This means that other animals do not talk about the future or about things that are not real. They cannot say things that are not true and they cannot describe a dream. Also, other animals cannot typically explain a new experience. Human language does these things very well. So, this makes humans stand out from other animals.

Of course, language is only one of the tools which lets humans do many things. There are many other tools that humans use and that make them special compared to other animals. While other animals use tools, they do not use them nearly as much as humans do. Some animals may use tools to get food, build a home, or protect themselves. Humans, on the other hand, use tools in many other ways. For example, we have all kinds of tools for making life easier and more convenient. Cars, telephones, and books are all examples of human tools that help us in our day-to-day lives. Typically, we do not find other animals developing these kinds of tools.

Feelings are another way that humans view themselves as different from other animals. We feel anger, sadness, joy, worry, excitement, and so on. While some scientists say that animals have feelings, they do not seem to have as many feelings. Also, animal feelings may not be as complicated. For example, we can feel many degrees of feelings (from not happy to mad to very angry). Humans can also feel two or more feelings at once. When we say we are disappointed, we probably feel some anger and some sadness at the same time. For this reason, humans often think in very complicated ways.

Humans like to think they are special. Clearly we are. However, we should not forget that we are also animals.



Time _____

Circle the right answer.

1. This reading is about:
 - a. different types of zoo animals
 - b. where humans live
 - c. things that make humans different

2. According to the passage, animals cannot communicate about:
 - a. danger
 - b. food
 - c. things that are not real

3. According to the reading, humans are different because:
 - a. they use language
 - b. they live in houses
 - c. they have dreams

4. According to the reading, which of the following is true?
 - a. Animals cannot explain experiences.
 - b. Humans do not talk about the future.
 - c. No other animals use tools.

5. The writer says that animals use tools for all of the following EXCEPT:
 - a. to get food
 - b. to find a way home
 - c. for protection

6. According to the reading, which sentence is true?
 - a. Animals are developing better tools.
 - b. Language is a type of tool.
 - c. Tools are not used to make life more convenient.

7. According to the reading, animals have:
 - a. no feelings
 - b. simple feelings
 - c. more feelings than humans

8. The writer says that:
 - a. humans are special and are not animals
 - b. humans are animals but are special
 - c. humans do not feel more than one emotion at one time

Score _____