School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners

Book Two

(2000 word level plus AWL)

Sonia Millett

English Language Institute
Occasional Publication No. 22

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VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
TE WHARE WĀNANGA
O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

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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.

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 passages are written within the first 2000 words (Nation, 1996) plus *An AWL* (Coxhead, 1998). Exceptions are words that are explained in the text, titles of passages, content words like country names and animal names, and some common words like television, cell phone and internet.

Principles of a speed reading programme

A speed reading programme should isolate the skill that is being practised which is increasing the speed of a student's reading. 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 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 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 answers right, they are reading too slowly. The goal is the fastest time with about 70 percent accuracy.

2. The readings should be easy. There should be very little unknown vocabulary and the grammar should be straightforward. There should be nothing to stop the readers in their tracks. Similarly the questions should test general understanding rather than detailed knowledge. Questions about specific details slow down reading.

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 their eyes to process meaning chunks.

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. Teachers can help by setting individual and class goals and time limits. Success in speed reading engenders confidence, and confidence leads to enjoyment, motivation and more success. The virtuous circle. (Nuttall, 1996).

5. A speed reading programme should be intensive. Complete the twenty readings by doing them every day for four weeks.

6. Speed reading should be an isolated activity. Don't plan a follow up activity with the readings. When students realise they will be doing a follow-up activity, they will concentrate on comprehension and slow down.

7. Recording the time and score is important 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 for teachers

Determine the level of vocabulary knowledge of the class by administering a vocabulary levels test, for example Schmitt et al. (2001).

Photocopy class sets of the readings. These can be put into plastic sleeves to prolong life. The readings can be done in any order so that it is not necessary for all students to be working on the same reading. You could make a few sets and then have students choose a reading they haven't done yet.

Introduce the programme to the class by explaining the procedure and the reasons for doing a speed reading programme:

> 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. In addition, the faster you read, the more effective and enjoyable it will be. Research suggests that an improvement in reading leads to benefits across all other language skills. An example is the Fiji book flood (see Elley & Mangubhai, 1979).
>
> The passages are all 400 words long and the vocabulary is controlled. 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. Try to read in meaning chunks.
>
> Answer the questions from memory. Don't turn back and look at the passage.

Instructions to students

1. Give out the answer sheet and graph for recording times and comprehension scores.
2. Display an online stopwatch so that students can time themselves.
3. Give out the readings and say START.
4. Students read as quickly as they can.
5. When they reach the end of the passage, they look up and note down their time.
6. They then turn over the paper and answer the questions without turning back to the passage.
7. When they finish answering the questions, they check their answers.
8. They record their time and comprehension score on the graph.

As students finish recording their times and scores on their 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.

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 reading 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. 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 the next day.

Once students see their graphs going up, they are motivated to read faster each day. By looking across to the right-hand side they can see their words per minute. 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.

Speed Reading Booklets

Asian and Pacific Speed Readings for ESL Learners (1000)

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners 1000 Word List

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners, Book One (2000)

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners, Book Two (2000 plus AWL)

Speed Readings for ESL Learners 500 BNC (World stories)

Speed Readings for ESL learners 3000 BNC (General topics)

Speed Readings for ESL learners 4000 BNC (General topics)

Available from: http://www.vicbooks.co.nz and
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/sonia-millett

A model of a daily fluency programme incorporating speed readings

A daily fluency programme attends to the fluency component of Nation's four strands of a successful English programme (2007). Students use and practise the four skills of English: writing, speaking, reading and listening, by accessing the language they have stored in their heads. The focus is fluency so feedback on accuracy is not given.

Each student buys a small exercise book (ideally size 1B4). 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

Five to ten 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: myself, my family, my home town, my best friend, weather, cats, studying English, a graded reader, a media story, independent study and so on. The topics start at a very easy level and become more sophisticated over the course of the programme. The students demonstrate an increasing willingness to tackle any topic.

2. Quickspeak

Three to five minutes of speaking without pauses to a listening partner on the quickwrite topic. 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.

3. Quickread

Speed reading

4. Quicklisten

Each day students listen to a chapter (five to ten minutes) of the audio recording of a graded reader and simultaneously answer quick questions. Examples of quicklistens and worksheets are available from http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/sonia-millett

These activities should take about 40 minutes and may be combined with a weekly fluency journal depending on the level and needs of the students.

5. Fluency Journals

Students write three pages of free writing every week. They are encouraged to treat their journals as a quickwrite 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, not accuracy, by the teacher and returned to students.

New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners - Book Two

1 Votes for Women

On 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 the idea of women voting was a joke and laughed at the idea. Others were angry and rejected votes for women. 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, all men over the age of 21 were given the right to vote 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 120 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.

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 Wollstonecroft began to 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 claimed 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 Māori population of New Zealand was approximately 125,000. In addition, there were around 2,000 British settlers or Pākehā, the Māori name for people who are not Māori. However, the number of Pākehā settlers was growing very rapidly and they wanted more and more land. The sale of land caused great conflict between Māori tribes and the settlers. Because of this, the British wanted to sign an agreement with Māori that would control the sale of land fairly, and offer protection to both Māori and Pākehā. The agreement was called 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 Māori 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 Māori had the same rights as British people.

The Treaty was signed at Waitangi by 45 Māori 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 Māori 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, Māori not only lost the land that they fought over, but the government also took other large areas of land to punish Māori for fighting against them.

Although Māori have made representations to the government ever since 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi has largely been ignored. It is only in recent years that Māori 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 Māori. In 1975, the Waitangi Tribunal was set up to advise the government about these cases and Māori have got back some of the land that was illegally taken from them by the government.

More than 170 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 Māori and Pākehā.

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 Māori than Europeans
    b. more Europeans than Māori
    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 Māori signed the treaty in total?

    a. 45
    b. 500
    c. 3

6. Pākehā means:

    a. Māori
    b. Queen
    c. other than Māori

7. Treaty means:

    a. land
    b. conflict
    c. agreement

8. What happened in the 1860s?

    a. War between Māori 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 has a mixed economy and is dependent on foreign trade. A significant percentage of exports is made up of agricultural products such as meat, dairy products such as butter and milk, and wool. Dairy products and meat products together earn billions of dollars for the New Zealand economy each year. There are 30 million sheep and six 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.

Nowadays, 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 have been developed to provide facilities for the increasing numbers of overseas visitors. A further development is the education industry. Large numbers of international students come to New Zealand to study in schools and universities. It is estimated that these numbers will continue to grow.

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 these new markets.

3 The New Zealand Economy

1. Each year New Zealand earns billions of 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. Australia mainly

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 people

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 have:

    a. become more important
    b. become less important
    c. stayed 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 Master's 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 university position in Montreal, Canada which he held until 1907. He then returned to England where he taught physics and continued his 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.

4 Ernest Rutherford

1. What 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 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 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 crops like palm sugar. 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.

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 saving endangered species?

    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 earth
    b. couldn't live without kiwi and 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 Zealandia

Before humans came to New Zealand, the country was covered with 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 safe areas called 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 lost the ability to fly. That all changed when people and their animals arrived and started hunting and killing birds.

Zealandia is a wild life sanctuary in Wellington which is attempting to recreate the environment as it was before people and their animals came to New Zealand so that native birds and plants 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 800 years ago.

It has taken years of hard work to develop Zealandia. 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.

Zealandia 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. Zealandia is special because it is right in the middle of a city.

6 Zealandia

1. Before people came to New Zealand, the country was covered in:

    a. farms
    b. forests
    c. flowers

2. Zealandia 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 Zealandia?

    a. One square metre
    b. One square kilometre
    c. One square mile

5. How long ago did people first come to New Zealand?

    a. 800 years ago
    b. 200 years ago
    c. 500 years ago

6. What does sanctuary mean?

    a. A safe area
    b. A place for 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 was Zealandia set up?

    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 Zealandia 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 environments of the native species. This is where the problem starts. It ends 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 in New Zealand and no enemies they quickly became pests. It is estimated that there are approximately 30 million possums in New Zealand, 6 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. We must not make the same mistake ever again.

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. Indonesia

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 in New Zealand
    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. Indonesia

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 Māori people. She became most well known as the leader of the Māori 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 Cooper was born the daughter of a Māori 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 Māori Girl's College in Napier. In 1913, she became a trainee teacher and worked for two years before returning to her parent's home where she had a variety of jobs. Her political involvement in land rights began in 1914 when she led a protest against a farmer who wanted to farm land traditionally used by Māori.

Whina Cooper married Richard Gilbert in 1917 and they had three children. During this time, she 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 Māori to develop their land.

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

Cooper's involvement in politics continued, and now she became a national leader. She became the founding president of The Māori Women's Welfare League, which was set up to deal with such issues as housing for Māori 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, Cooper led the Māori Land March to protest against the loss of Māori land. Hundreds of thousands of people watched the march on television and it became the turning point in the fight for Māori land rights.

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

8 Dame Whina Cooper

1. Whina Cooper was born in:

    a. 1795
    b. 1895
    c. 1995

2. Whaea o te Motu means:

    a. Hokianga region
    b. North New Zealand
    c. Mother of the Nation

3. Her father was:

    a. a Māori chief
    b. a teacher
    c. a doctor

4. How many times did Cooper marry?

    a. 1
    b. 2
    c. 3

5. How many children did she have?

    a. 3
    b. 4
    c. 7

6. Why did Cooper lead a march in 1975?

    a. To protest against Māori 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. Cooper died when she was:

    a. young
    b. middle aged
    c. very old

10. Dame means:

    a. a Māori 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 20 centimetres 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 such as the large earthquake in 2016. The 1855 Wellington earthquake, the largest recorded in New Zealand, raised the land by 1.5 metres. Prior to this, most of central 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 very strict regulations governing construction of new buildings and strengthening of old ones.

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 was recorded in Wellington in:

    a. 1855
    b. 1755
    c. 1655

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 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 Modification

Genetic modification 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. Modification means changing something to make it better. So genetic modification means changing the composition of a gene to create an improved product. Many people, however, argue that it is not ethical or safe to change nature.

Today scientists are able to genetically modify 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 - make identical copies - of an animal. In 1997, in Scotland, scientists cloned a sheep called Dolly by using genetic modification. Human cloning technology continues to advance.

Many people argue that genetic modification 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 modification. They claim that genetic modification is not new. Farmers from earliest times have controlled plants and seeds in an effort to produce better crops and increase productivity. Genetic modification is a continuation of this improvement process.

However, other people argue that genetic modification 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 modification is the profit factor: governments and multi-national companies are pushing genetic modification 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 modification, and people who don't eat meat don't want animal genes in their food.

Independent reports have been released by the New Zealand government which support trials of genetic modification. These reports state that while there should be strict controls, genetic modification can be developed for scientific and commercial purposes.

Despite government support there is still strong public opposition to genetically modified food.

10 Genetic Modification

1. A controversial issue is one that people:

    a. feel strongly about
    b. agree with
    c. 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. Here, modification means:

    a. adding
    b. improving
    c. designing

7. If both your parents have black hair, you are likely to have:

    a. light hair
    b. black hair
    c. dark hair

8. Why do people argue that genetic modification 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 modification?

    a. People without enough food
    b. The public
    c. Multi-national companies

10. In New Zealand:

    a. most people agree with genetic modification
    b. most people disagree with genetic modification
    c. many agree and many disagree

11 Sun Sense

Until about fifty 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 five 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.

11 Sun Sense

1. In the last fifty years people have become 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. medium
    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 around 1,500. In contrast, Australia with an area of almost three million square miles and a population of 25 million is the largest Pacific nation.

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. The natural beauty of the islands attracts tourists from all over the world. Some say it is heaven on earth.

The Pacific region continues to face serious issues. Because of its wide area and low population, the colonial countries considered the Pacific a convenient place to carry out nuclear testing. Britain and the USA tested nuclear bombs in the Pacific from the late 1940s until the 1960s and France's last nuclear tests occurred in the 1990s despite worldwide anti-nuclear protests. Nuclear testing caused ongoing health problems for Pacific peoples. Global warming is another issue facing Pacific island nations. As sea levels rise and climate patterns change, land, the economy and the way of life are threatened.

European New Zealanders once looked to their British colonial past. Now, New Zealand is firmly established as a Pacific country.

12 The Pacific Ocean

1. How many oceans are there in the world?

    a. Five
    b. Two
    c. Ten

2. Which of the following cover 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. 1,000
    b. More than 5,000
    c. Nobody knows

5. Tourists sometimes say Pacific islands are:

    a. hell on earth
    b. heaven on earth
    c. not mentioned

6. Early explorers called the ocean the Pacific because it was:

    a. 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 Māori.

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 800 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.

Māori history was spoken, not written. Stories were handed down from generation to generation, and in this way many Māori 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 much colder than their former homes, but Māori 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 Māori population was around 100,000.

Māori 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, Māori 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.

Māori 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 Māori 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 Māori, almost resulting in the loss of the culture and society. Today Māori 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 Māori, the original people of New Zealand.

13 Tangata Whenua

1. Tangata Whenua means:

    a. people
    b. land
    c. local people

2. The statement ‘Māori arrived in New Zealand 800 years ago’ is:

    a. a fact
    b. a theory
    c. a lie

3. Māori 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. Māori may have originally come from:

    a. Asia
    b. South America
    c. Australia

7. How did Māori record their history?

    a. By writing it down
    b. By older people telling younger people
    c. In song

8. Who owned land in Māori culture?

    a. The chief
    b. The tribe
    c. Individual people

9. What impact did Europeans have on Māori?

    a. Great impact
    b. Not much impact
    c. Quite a lot of impact

10. Māori culture is based on:

    a. land
    b. canoes
    c. implements

14 Sir Āpirana Ngata

Āpirana Ngata was born into the Ngāti Porou tribe on the East Coast of New Zealand in 1874. He was educated at Te Aute Māori College, where he received a classical European education in preparation for university study. The head master of the college encouraged pride in Māori culture and this was the time when Ngata developed a determination to help his people. In the late 1800s, it was generally believed that Māori would lose their culture and language 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 Māori to receive a degree from a New Zealand university. In 1895 he married Arihia Tamati and they returned to the East Coast soon after their marriage. 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 Māori. He knew that land was the basis of Māori society, culture and identity and he began to develop Māori land into productive farms using modern agricultural methods. Māori 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 Māori land ownership at a national level. Over many years the New Zealand government had taken land from Māori illegally, and Māori land was still being lost to Europeans. In order to fight against this injustice, Ngata stood for government in 1905. He was elected and remained a government member until 1943. During these years he continued to work for Māori identity, 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 Māori soldiers who fought beside other New Zealanders.

Ngata continued to work for Māori 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 Māori art, song and dance as well as sport. His commitment to the Christian Church continued throughout his life.

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

14 Sir Āpirana Ngata

1. In the late 1800s, it was thought that Māori 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. Three

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 Māori 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 were:

    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 are only 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 farming land 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.

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 east

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 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. north
    b. west
    c. east

10. What is the main 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 when 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 are being used. Power stations using fuels such as coal and oil are used 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.

One of the problems associated with electric power is it cannot be easily stored. 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 times of low rainfall, insufficient power can be generated, and there may be power cuts to reduce electricity consumption.

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

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. not popular 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
    b. cannot be easily stored
    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 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 very little financial support from the Government and is run on contributions from the public. The Auckland branch of the SPCA has over 2,500 volunteers who donate their time to help animals in need.

"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 over 200,000 meals and this enables elderly people to remain living 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 healthy, between the ages of 25 and 77 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.

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. about 1,000 volunteers
    b. about 2,500 volunteers
    c. about 5,000 volunteers

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 mainly 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 Māori 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 Māori 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 populations of Māori and European were almost equal. 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 7 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. Auckland has over 200 different ethnic groups. One in four New Zealanders was born overseas; 74 percent are of European origin; 15 percent identify as Māori and 12% as Asian. Pacific Islanders are the fourth largest group. Increasingly people are recognising the complexity of their origins and identifying with more than one nationality group.

Some just say, 'I'm a New Zealander' or even 'I'm a Kiwi'.

18 Immigration

1. In 1839 there were:

    a. more Europeans than Māori
    b. more Māori 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 25%
    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
    b. chooses to leave their country
    c. visits a new country

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

Antarctica is the large area of land at the bottom of the globe. Extending over an area of approximately 5.5 million square kilometres, 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 100 kilometres an hour, although winds of up to 320 kilometres 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 70,000 kilometres 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 interested in establishing research bases and increasing numbers of tourists, it is feared the natural beauty and scientific significance of Antarctic will be lost.

In 2016, 1.55 million square kilometres of the Antarctic Ocean became the world's largest marine park. Many hope Antarctica itself will become a world park in the future.

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. Five

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 pets

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 Antarctica?

    a. Many
    b. Only New Zealand
    c. Only 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 the age of five. Compulsory education 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 both private and public.

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 (a German word meaning children's garden). Most of these centres are taught in English although Kohanga Reo (language nests) offer instruction in Māori. The value of early childhood education is increasingly recognized and 95 percent of children under five participate in some form of pre-school education, usually for about 20 hours a week.

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, while Kura Kaupapa Māori are taught in Māori. The average teacher: student classroom ratio is around 1: 27, 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 and trips. 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, more than 30 technical institutes and colleges, and around 1,000 private or industry run training institutes. 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.

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. boys and girls
    c. English and Māori language

8. The average class size is:

    a. about thirty
    b. about twenty
    c. about forty

9. The language of instruction in Kohanga Reo is:

    a. English
    b. German
    c. Māori

10. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority controls:

    a. the price of education
    b. the quality of education
    c. exams

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

Progr

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

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
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	
score																					

Progress Graph

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

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
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	
score																					

Progress Graph

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

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																					

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