

*School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*

# **New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners**

**Book One**

**(2000 word level)**

**Sonia Millett**

**English Language Institute  
Occasional Publication No. 19**

**ISSN 1173-535X**

**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.

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## **Introduction**

*New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners, Book One* 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). 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 the 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 One**

- 1 New Zealand Facts and Figures
- 2 New Zealand Culture
- 3 Where Did New Zealand Come From?
- 4 Auckland - City of Sails
- 5 Christmas in New Zealand
- 6 Kiwi
- 7 Rugby
- 8 Dunedin - City of Gold
- 9 Sir Edmund Hillary
- 10 Bungy Jumping
- 11 Trout Fishing at Lake Taupo
- 12 Wellington - Capital City
- 13 Katherine Mansfield
- 14 Tuatara
- 15 Whale Watching in Kaikoura
- 16 Netball
- 17 Christchurch - Garden City
- 18 Places to Stay in New Zealand
- 19 The Wellington Cable Car
- 20 New Zealand's Largest Neighbour



# **1     *New Zealand Facts and Figures***

New Zealand is a small country in the southern Pacific Ocean. There are two main islands, the North Island and the South Island, as well as many smaller islands. New Zealand is 268,000 square kilometres, about the same size as the United Kingdom.

Māori people arrived from the Pacific in the 13th century, and by the 14th century there were many Māori settlements along the coast of New Zealand. The Māori name for New Zealand is Aotearoa, which means 'The land of the long white cloud'. Six hundred years later, large numbers of Europeans started to settle in New Zealand. According to Government figures, the population of New Zealand in 2016 was nearing five million, and of these, about 80 percent lived in the North Island.

There are four main cities. Auckland, in the north, is the largest city, with a population of 1.5 million people. Auckland's population includes over two hundred different nationalities. There are large groups of European, Māori, Asian and Pacific Islands people. In fact, Auckland has the largest Pacific Islands population of any country in the world.

Although Wellington is the capital, the centre of government, it is smaller and quieter than Auckland with a population of 400,000. The main cities in the South Island are Christchurch, known as the Garden City, and Dunedin, which is often compared to a small Scottish city.

New Zealand is a mountainous country. A mountain range called the Southern Alps, runs the length of the South Island. In the centre of the North Island there are more high mountains, which are volcanic. The volcanoes are usually quiet, but sometimes they send smoke and rocks into the air. Another sign of volcanic activity is hot springs and mud pools. The city of Rotorua is famous for this kind of volcanic activity, and nearby Lake Taupo, the largest lake in New Zealand, was formed by volcanic activity.

The weather in New Zealand is not too cold and not too hot. However, because New Zealand is a very long country there are some differences between the south and the north. The South Island has snow in winter but the North Island rarely gets snow except on the mountains. Summer temperatures reach about 25 degrees. Winter temperatures reach about 10 degrees in the south, while an Auckland winter day may reach around 15 degrees.

These are some interesting facts and figures about New Zealand.

# 1 *New Zealand Facts and Figures*

1. New Zealand is:
  - a. 268,000 square kilometres
  - b. 268,000 square miles
  - c. 268,000 square metres
  
2. New Zealand is in:
  - a. the Atlantic Ocean
  - b. the Pacific Ocean
  - c. the Southern Ocean
  
3. Where were the first Māori settlements?
  - a. Along the coast
  - b. In the mountains
  - c. In the far north
  
4. The largest city is:
  - a. Wellington
  - b. Auckland
  - c. Christchurch
  
5. A volcano is:
  - a. a mountain which can explode
  - b. a mud pool
  - c. a hot spring
  
6. There are high snowy mountains:
  - a. in the South Island
  - b. in the North Island
  - c. in both Islands
  
7. The Māori name for New Zealand is:
  - a. Rotorua
  - b. Taupo
  - c. Aotearoa
  
8. Auckland is an interesting city because:
  - a. it is the hottest city
  - b. it is in the North
  - c. many different nationalities live there
  
9. A capital city is:
  - a. the centre of government
  - b. the biggest city
  - c. a garden city
  
10. Most New Zealanders live in:
  - a. the South Island
  - b. the North Island
  - c. Auckland

## **2     *New Zealand Culture***

Culture is what makes one group of people different from another. Each society has its own special ways of doing things and this is what makes each culture different and special.

The original people of New Zealand are Māori. Nobody knows exactly when they came to New Zealand, but it is thought the first Māori arrived about 800 years ago. Today, about 15 percent of the population is Māori. Māori customs, language and culture are special to New Zealand and make up an important part of who we are.

Over the last two hundred years other people have come: first British people, then Chinese, Indians and Europeans. More recently, people from the Pacific, Asia, Africa and the Middle East have made New Zealand their home. All these people add to what it means to be a New Zealander.

What makes New Zealand different? Tourists come to New Zealand for the beautiful natural scenery and nature plays a very important part in the lives of New Zealanders. We like to go to the sea, go for walks in the bush, and go camping in the holidays. We are proud of our beautiful country.

When you think of New Zealand, what do you think of? You might think of sheep. It is true that there are far more sheep than people. Wherever you drive in the country, sooner or later you will see sheep. You might think of rugby. New Zealanders are known for their love of sports. Or perhaps you will think of religion. New Zealand is mainly a Christian country. Our way of life reflects this, even if people don't go to church as often as they did twenty years ago. On the other hand, with different groups of people coming to live here, there are now Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu New Zealanders.

New Zealanders call themselves Kiwis. The kiwi, the national bird, can't fly and only comes out at night. However, human Kiwis love to spread their wings and travel to other countries, probably because New Zealand is a long way from anywhere else. Many Kiwis like to stay at home at night and go to bed early. Visitors, especially from Asian countries, are surprised that there is so little night life in New Zealand.

Many things make up the culture of a country. These are some of the things that make New Zealand's culture different and special.

## 2 *New Zealand Culture*

1. What is special to New Zealand?
  - a. European culture
  - b. Chinese culture
  - c. Māori culture
  
2. How did Māori come to New Zealand?
  - a. By plane
  - b. By boat
  - c. On foot
  
3. In New Zealand there are:
  - a. more sheep than people
  - b. more people than sheep
  - c. about the same
  
4. What is the main religion in New Zealand?
  - a. Hinduism
  - b. Islam
  - c. Christianity
  
5. How important is sport to New Zealand?
  - a. Very important
  - b. Important
  - c. Not very important
  
6. Why do tourists come to New Zealand?
  - a. For the night life
  - b. For the beautiful scenery
  - c. To go camping
  
7. Why do New Zealanders call themselves Kiwi?
  - a. They can't fly
  - b. They live in New Zealand
  - c. The kiwi is the national bird of New Zealand
  
8. Why do Kiwis like to travel to other countries?
  - a. To go sightseeing
  - b. Because New Zealand is far away from other countries
  - c. They like to fly
  
9. In New Zealand there is:
  - a. a lot of night life
  - b. not much night life
  - c. no nightlife
  
10. What makes one culture different from another?
  - a. Religion
  - b. Nature
  - c. A combination of things

### **3     *Where Did New Zealand Come From?***

The first people to settle in New Zealand were Māori. They tell many stories about how the world began, and about the people and their history. Māori had no written language, so telling stories and remembering them was very important. The stories were handed down from grandparents to parents to children. One well-known story explains where New Zealand came from.

Many years ago there was a young man called Māui who lived on an island in the Pacific Ocean called Hawaiki. He was the youngest child in a very large family, but he was very strong and clever. One day his brothers went fishing, but Māui wasn't allowed to go with them because he was too young. However, he wanted to go so he hid himself in the boat. When they were a long way out to sea, his brothers found him. They were angry with him and wanted to take him back, but it was too far to go.

After the brothers had caught a lot of fish, they decided to go back. Māui wanted to try fishing too, but his brothers said no. Suddenly he threw his fishing line into the water and immediately hooked a fish of great size. It was difficult to catch this great fish, so Māui had to say a special prayer. After a very long time and a hard fight, he was able to catch the great fish.

As soon as he had caught the fish, all the brothers jumped onto it and started to cut it up. This was very painful for the fish and it moved around trying to get away. When the sun rose the next day, the fish was still. It became the North Island of New Zealand and the deep cuts made by the brothers became the mountains and valleys. That is why Māori call the North Island 'Te Ika-a-Māui' which means the fish of Māui, and if you look at the North Island, you will see that it really does look like a large fish.

Some stories say that Māui later went fishing again, and caught the South Island too. Others say that the South Island was the boat that Māui and his brothers went fishing in. The Māori name for the South Island is 'Te Waka-a-Māui' which means the boat of Māui.

There are many Māori stories. This one tells us how New Zealand was formed.

### 3 *Where Did New Zealand Come From?*

1. Māori stories were handed down:
  - a. from father to son
  - b. from mother to daughter
  - c. from parents to children
2. Māui lived:
  - a. in a boat
  - b. on an island
  - c. on a fish
3. Māui was:
  - a. the oldest child
  - b. the middle child
  - c. the youngest child
4. Māui:
  - a. had a few brothers
  - b. had one brother
  - c. had a lot of brothers
5. Māori call the South Island:
  - a. the fish of Māui
  - b. the boat of Māui
  - c. little brother
6. Why was telling stories important?
  - a. Māori had no writing
  - b. Māori children liked stories
  - c. Māori liked history
7. Why wasn't Māui allowed to go fishing?
  - a. Because he was too strong
  - b. Because he was too young
  - c. Because he was too clever
8. When the brothers found Māui in the boat they were:
  - a. angry
  - b. happy
  - c. hungry
9. The fish was very difficult to catch so Māui:
  - a. sang a song
  - b. said a prayer
  - c. asked his brothers to help
10. How long did it take to catch the fish?
  - a. Not very long
  - b. Quite a long time
  - c. A very long time



## **4 Auckland - City of Sails**

Auckland is the biggest city in New Zealand with a population of 1.5 million, which means that almost a third of all New Zealanders live there. As well as having a large population by New Zealand standards, Auckland is also large in area. Greater Auckland covers 5,000 square kilometres, making it a large city by world standards as well. In fact, Auckland is made up of a number of smaller cities which all join together.

Auckland is built around two beautiful harbours and everywhere you go in Auckland you will see water. On a fine day, you will also see hundreds of boats sailing on the water and for this reason, Auckland is known as 'The City of Sails'. The city sits on seven hills which were formed 50,000 years ago by volcanic activity. At the same time, many islands were formed in the harbour. The most famous one is Rangitoto, which you can see from all over Auckland.

Māori have lived in Auckland for 800 years, and today Auckland has the largest population of Māori in New Zealand. In addition, many Pacific Islanders have moved to Auckland. Auckland now has the largest population of Pacific Islanders of any city in the world. More recently, Auckland has attracted people from Asia and many other countries. These influences make Auckland a truly multi-cultural city.

Auckland has many interesting things to see. The main business and shopping district is Queen Street where you can buy anything you want. The entertainment district is also on Queen Street. You can go to a show or a film, and then to a restaurant, club or bar. There is a big visitor's centre, which is a good place to start a tour of Auckland.

At the top of Queen Street you will find Karangahape Road. It is known as K Road and is full of small shops and colourful markets with cheap produce. You will see people, food and products from all over the world. On the other hand, Parnell is the expensive place to shop. For the young and fashionable, Ponsonby is the up-market place for restaurants, clubs and night life.

You can drive around the harbour which has many great places to swim and small villages with restaurants and shops. Auckland is a green city with twenty two parks. With its mild weather throughout the year, locals and visitors can enjoy an outdoor life.

## 4 *Auckland - City of Sails*

1. The population of Auckland is:
  - a. more than ten million
  - b. more than a million
  - c. more than a hundred thousand
  
2. By world standards the area of Auckland is:
  - a. large
  - b. average
  - c. small
  
3. Rangitoto is:
  - a. an island
  - b. a hill
  - c. a shopping street
  
4. What does 'Auckland is a green city' mean?
  - a. It is surrounded by water
  - b. It has a lot of parks
  - c. It is built on volcanoes
  
5. Auckland weather is usually:
  - a. hot
  - b. mild
  - c. cold
  
6. What percentage of New Zealanders live in Auckland?
  - a. 55 percent
  - b. 44 percent
  - c. 33 percent
  
7. Why is Auckland called the 'City of Sails'?
  - a. Because there are many islands.
  - b. Because there are many hills.
  - c. Because there are many boats on the harbour
  
8. Auckland is:
  - a. multi-cultural
  - b. bi-cultural
  - c. mono-cultural
  
9. Aucklanders:
  - a. enjoy an outdoor life
  - b. prefer to stay inside
  - c. don't like sailing
  
10. Which place in Auckland has the greatest variety of things to do?
  - a. Rangitoto
  - b. Queen Street
  - c. Ponsonby

## **5 Christmas in New Zealand**

Each country has its own religious festivals and Christmas is the most important one in New Zealand where many people are Christians. Christmas is the birth day of Jesus Christ and on this day, Christians attend church services, spend time with their families and think about their faith.

For others, Christmas is a chance to take a holiday in the middle of summer. Christmas falls on December 25 and is a public holiday. December 26 and the 1st and 2nd of January are also public holidays so many businesses and Government departments close for around two weeks. During this time, when schools and universities are also on holiday most people take a long summer break. The Christmas holidays are the time when New Zealand families go on holiday to the sea. Places near the sea are crowded with holiday-makers staying in camping grounds or small holiday houses.

Modern ideas about Christmas developed in countries in the northern part of the world. In England, Europe and North America, Christmas comes in the middle of winter so people have Christmas trees covered with snow and Father Christmas is dressed in warm winter clothes. A large Christmas dinner is eaten in the middle of the day. It is a time to stay inside and keep warm with family members and close friends.

These customs can seem strange in New Zealand where Christmas is in the middle of summer. While many people follow the old ways, increasingly people are giving Christmas a New Zealand flavour. For example, instead of having a big hot Christmas dinner in the middle of the day, people may have a picnic lunch outside. You will also see pictures of Father Christmas wearing summer clothes and going swimming.

Children love Christmas because they get presents. Children ask Father Christmas for special presents and they are told that if they are good, he will deliver their presents by coming down the chimney.

Another Christmas custom is sending Christmas cards. People keep in touch with their relatives and friends who live in far away places by sending cards. If you go into a New Zealand home in December, you will see Christmas cards around the living room. You will also see a Christmas tree with coloured lights and lots of presents underneath it.

Christmas is a time for singing Christmas songs and wishing for peace and happiness for everyone in the world.

## 5 *Christmas in New Zealand*

1. The most important festival in New Zealand is:
  - a. New Year's Day
  - b. birthday
  - c. Christmas
  
2. Christmas in New Zealand is in:
  - a. winter
  - b. summer
  - c. spring
  
3. Christmas is on:
  - a. 25 December
  - b. 3 June
  - c. 1 January
  
4. In the Christmas holidays, people often go:
  - a. to the mountains
  - b. to the sea
  - c. to other countries
  
5. Children love Christmas because they get:
  - a. money
  - b. coloured lights
  - c. presents
  
6. Why is Christmas important in New Zealand?
  - a. New Zealand is mainly a Christian country
  - b. Schools are on holiday
  - c. Christmas started in European countries
  
7. Why do people send cards?
  - a. Because Christmas is busy
  - b. To keep in touch with friends
  - c. To get a lot of presents
  
8. Father Christmas brings presents:
  - a. down the chimney
  - b. through the window
  - c. through the door
  
9. Where do people put Christmas presents?
  - a. In a church
  - b. In holiday houses
  - c. Under the Christmas tree
  
10. Why is Christmas important for Christians?
  - a. It is Jesus' birthday
  - b. Children get presents
  - c. It is a holiday

## 6 *Kiwi*

The kiwi is the national bird of New Zealand. You can see them on stamps, New Zealand products, and on the dollar coin. In fact, New Zealanders call themselves Kiwis. But what are kiwi like? Very few people have seen a kiwi in its natural surroundings, and there are three main reasons for this. The first is that kiwi are night birds. They sleep during the day and only come out at night to look for food. Secondly, they live in the forests far away from people.

The third reason why there are not many kiwi left is people. As the population of New Zealand increased, the forests were cut down to make way for farms. Kiwi almost disappeared because there was nowhere for them to live. Another reason why kiwi have almost disappeared is that when people came to New Zealand, they brought animals such as rats, cats and dogs which hunted and killed them.

There are five types of kiwi: the North Island Brown, the Little Spotted, the Great Spotted, the Totoeka and the Rowi. Kiwi are strange birds because, like several native birds in New Zealand, they can't fly. This is because before people came to New Zealand there were no animals to hunt them, so for thousands of years kiwi had no enemies and they didn't need to fly.

Kiwi have soft brown feathers and are about the size of a chicken. They have very small wings and long beaks, which they use to search for food. They have a very good sense of smell and they use their beaks to smell out their food which is mainly insects and worms as well as berries and seeds.

The female kiwi is bigger than the male and she lays one large egg which is almost one third the size of her body. The female gets very tired producing the egg so the male makes the nest and looks after the egg for the first 80 days until the baby kiwi comes out of the egg.

The name kiwi comes from the sound that they make: 'ki-wi'. They repeat this sound five or six times.

The kiwi is the national bird of New Zealand and yet every day more kiwi are killed.

However, the people and the Government of New Zealand have started to understand more about the problem and they have developed programmes to save the kiwi.

## 6 *Kiwi*

1. What coin does the kiwi appear on?
  - a. \$1
  - b. \$2
  - c. 50 cent
2. How many kinds of kiwi are there?
  - a. One
  - b. Three
  - c. Five
3. How big is a kiwi egg?
  - a.  $\frac{1}{3}$  the size of the mother
  - b.  $\frac{1}{4}$  the size of the mother
  - c.  $\frac{1}{2}$  the size of the mother
4. Who looks after the kiwi egg?
  - a. The father
  - b. The mother
  - c. Both parents
5. The name kiwi comes from:
  - a. a Māori word
  - b. its appearance
  - c. the sound that it makes
6. Why are kiwi strange?
  - a. They have long beaks
  - b. They can't fly
  - c. They have soft brown feathers
7. How many people have seen a kiwi in their natural surroundings?
  - a. A lot
  - b. Some
  - c. Very few
8. What do kiwi do at night?
  - a. Sleep
  - b. Fly around
  - c. Look for food.
9. Why can't kiwi fly?
  - a. They had no enemies
  - b. They have very large eggs
  - c. They live in the forest
10. Choose the true statement.
  - a. The male is bigger than the female
  - b. The female is bigger than the male.
  - c. They are about the same.

## **7     *Rugby***

New Zealand is well known for its love of the game of rugby. Rugby started in England and was first played in New Zealand in the 1870s. In 1884, the New Zealand team wearing blue rugby shirts travelled to Australia for their first international game.

There are 15 players in a rugby team and the object of the game is to get as many points as you can. There are three ways of getting points. The first is called a try. To get a try, a team has to touch the ball on the ground behind the other team's line. A try is worth five points. After a team has got a try, they have the chance to get another two points by kicking the ball over the goal, which looks like a very large 'H'. The third way to get points is to kick the ball over the goal from the field without getting a try first. This is worth three points.

Team members may kick, carry or throw the ball. To a person who doesn't understand the game it can be very confusing. Sometimes it looks like a big fight, but there are strict rules and if the players don't follow the rules, they may be sent off the field.

The national side was first called the All Blacks by an English newspaper in 1905. Some people say they were given this name because of their black sports clothes. Others say the newspaper made a mistake and meant to say 'All Backs', because a rugby team is divided into two groups of players, the backs and the forwards. Whichever story is true, to be an All Black is a great honour for a New Zealander.

Rugby is played at all ages starting from five or six. There are competitions between schools, universities, districts and countries.

But is it only men and boys who play rugby? No. Women and girls play too. The National women's rugby team is called the Black Ferns. Started in 1989, it is one of the best women's teams in the world.

There are many New Zealanders who would much rather read a good book, but for rugby fans there is nothing better than to go to the sports ground with thousands of other fans. Second best is to watch the game on television from a comfortable chair with friends while eating fish and chips.

## 7 *Rugby*

1. Rugby started in:
  - a. England
  - b. New Zealand
  - c. Australia
  
2. How many players are there in a team?
  - a. 25
  - b. 20
  - c. 15
  
3. How many ways can a player get points?
  - a. One
  - b. Two
  - c. Three
  
4. How old are children when they start playing rugby?
  - a. Five or six
  - b. Nine or ten
  - c. Thirteen or fourteen
  
5. The All Blacks got their name in:
  - a. the 1870s
  - b. 1905
  - c. 1954
  
6. Rugby can be:
  - a. easy to follow
  - b. confusing
  - c. gentle
  
7. New Zealand's first international game was played in:
  - a. Australia
  - b. England
  - c. France
  
8. Rugby is played by:
  - a. only males
  - b. mainly males
  - c. mainly females
  
9. Rugby:
  - a. has no rules
  - b. has strict rules
  - c. is just a big fight
  
10. According to this passage, a lot of Kiwis like:
  - a. movies
  - b. cooking
  - c. sports



## **8     *Dunedin - City of Gold***

On 20 May 1861, Gabriel Read discovered gold in the Tuapeka River, 70 kilometres from the small town of Dunedin. Gold is the most valuable metal in the world and many people have rings and other jewellery made of it. All of a sudden, Tuapeka and the surrounding areas became famous and people started arriving from all over New Zealand, as well as from Australia, China and many other countries. They came to search for gold and to get rich, and soon there were more than 11,000 people working the gold fields.

In 1861, Dunedin was a small town of about 3,000 people. However, as the news of gold spread, Dunedin's population doubled in six months. By 1870, Dunedin was the largest and richest city in New Zealand.

Dunedin's history started 13 years before Gabriel Read discovered gold. In 1848, the first ships arrived in Dunedin from Scotland with the first settlers. Dunedin was planned by a church group in Scotland and their dream was to build a perfect Scottish city based on the Christian Church. The discovery of gold helped early Dunedin settlers reach their dream.

The Scottish people who built Dunedin had two main loves. They loved their religion and they loved education. Their love of religion can be seen today in the beautiful churches that they built. Their love of education can be seen in the schools and universities of Dunedin. In 1864, the first high school for boys in New Zealand was opened. This was followed by the first university in New Zealand, Otago University, which opened in 1869. Closely following this, one of the first state-run high schools for girls in the world opened in 1871.

Situated in the south of the South Island amongst beautiful natural scenery, Dunedin is built on hills around a harbour. It is a lively university town with a population of about 120,000 people, of which 25,000 are students. The city centre is full of shops, restaurants, bars and theatres and there are many beautiful old houses and historic buildings. From Dunedin it only takes an hour or two to get to mountains, forests, lakes, rivers or the coast. All these things make Dunedin a popular place for tourists.

Dunedin is a small busy university town full of culture and history and all the conveniences of a modern city. Behind Dunedin there have been two great influences: Scotland and gold.

## 8 *Dunedin - City of Gold*

1. What happened at Tuapeka in 1861?
  - a. The city of Dunedin was built
  - b. Gold was discovered
  - c. A university was built
  
2. Dunedin's population increased:
  - a. suddenly
  - b. gradually
  - c. steadily
  
3. Dunedin had New Zealand's first:
  - a. church
  - b. university
  - c. school
  
4. Today Dunedin has a relatively high number of:
  - a. students
  - b. Chinese
  - c. gold miners
  
5. Dunedin is situated in the:
  - a. south of the South Island
  - b. south of the North Island
  - c. north of the South Island
  
6. The people who built Dunedin were:
  - a. English
  - b. Scottish
  - c. Australian
  
7. In 1870, Dunedin was:
  - a. a small town
  - b. a gold field
  - c. the largest city in New Zealand
  
8. Why did so many people come to look for gold?
  - a. To make jewellery
  - b. To find work
  - c. To get rich
  
9. Dunedin is:
  - a. a flat city
  - b. a hilly city
  - c. a large city
  
10. The Scottish settlers wanted to build a city based on:
  - a. gold
  - b. tourism
  - c. religion

## **9 Sir Edmund Hillary**

Sir Edmund Hillary is sometimes said to be the most famous New Zealander. He is famous because he, and his guide Tenzing Norgay, were the first people to climb Mt Everest, which at 8,848 metres, is the highest mountain in the world.

Hillary was born in Auckland in 1919. When he was young, he became interested in mountain climbing and he climbed mountains in New Zealand, Austria and Switzerland, and then in the Himalayas. The Himalayas, situated between Nepal and Tibet, are the highest mountains in the world. After climbing eleven different mountains over 6,000 metres in the Himalayas, he was ready to attempt the world's highest mountain, Everest.

Many people wanted to be the first to climb the world's highest mountain. Many had tried and failed, and some had died in the attempt to reach the top. In 1953, Hillary was asked to join a group of British climbers led by John Hunt. Some of the group, which originally started out with 400 members, reached the South Peak only 300 metres below the top of Mt Everest. However, only two were able to complete the last 300 metres and reach their goal. At 11.30 am on 29 May 1953, a New Zealander and a Nepalese reached the highest place in the world. Hillary and Tenzing had succeeded in climbing Mt Everest.

When they returned to England, there was a new Queen. Elizabeth II became Queen of England on the day after Hillary and Tenzing reached the top of Mt Everest. The new Queen gave Hillary and the other climbers new titles. Hillary became Sir Edmund Hillary.

Sir Edmund Hillary continued to explore new places. However, as time passed, he became more and more concerned about the people of Nepal. Nepal is a poor country where there are few schools and hospitals. In the 1960s Hillary returned to Nepal and helped develop hospitals and schools for the people of the country he loved. Sadly, in 1975, Sir Edmund Hillary's wife and daughter were killed in a plane crash in Nepal. Many years later he married again. He continued his work in Nepal and he helped to build 27 schools.

Hillary wrote several books about his life. One of his books is called 'Nothing Venture, Nothing Win'. This means that if you never try anything new, you will never succeed at anything. Hillary died in 2008 at the age of 88.

## 9 *Sir Edmund Hillary*

1. How high is Mt Everest?
  - a. Almost 3,000 metres
  - b. Almost 6,000 metres
  - c. Almost 9,000 metres
  
2. How many people wanted to be first to climb Mt Everest?
  - a. A lot
  - b. Two
  - c. 400
  
3. Tenzing Norgay was from:
  - a. New Zealand
  - b. Switzerland
  - c. Nepal
  
4. Edmund Hillary became Sir Edmund Hillary because:
  - a. he climbed Mt Everest
  - b. he built schools and hospitals
  - c. he met the Queen
  
5. Who became Queen of England in 1953?
  - a. Elizabeth
  - b. Mary
  - c. Victoria
  
6. How many people reached the top of Mt Everest in 1953?
  - a. One
  - b. Two
  - c. Four hundred
  
7. The highest mountains in the world are:
  - a. in Switzerland
  - b. in Austria
  - c. between Tibet and Nepal
  
8. Nepal is:
  - a. a poor country
  - b. a rich country
  - c. an average country
  
9. In the 1960s Hillary returned to Nepal to:
  - a. climb mountains
  - b. develop the tourist industry
  - c. build schools and hospitals
  
10. 'Nothing Venture, Nothing Win' means:
  - a. don't try anything new
  - b. try to climb mountains
  - c. if you don't try, you'll never succeed

## **10 Bungee Jumping**

If you want to experience exciting sports, New Zealand is a good place to visit. One exciting sport is bungee jumping. It is difficult to understand why anyone would want to do it, but they do. Every year thousands of people jump into the air with only a 'bungee', a rope, tied to their legs. They drop hundreds of feet and stop just before hitting the surface of a river.

Bungee jumping probably started on a small island called Pentecost in the South Pacific Ocean. The local people tell the following story. A long time ago a woman was running away from her husband who treated her badly. She climbed a tall tree but he followed her. To escape from him, she quickly tied a rope around her legs and jumped from the tree. Some people saw her jump and decided to try it. They built a tall tower made of wood and jumped from the top with a bungee rope tied to their feet. After a while it became a local custom and more recently a tourist attraction. Of course, they had to be very careful to make the rope exactly the right length. If they made a mistake, the jumper would die. The best jumpers could stop with their heads almost touching the ground.

In 1970, the first foreigner tried it. He jumped 25 metres from the top of a tower and soon people all over the world heard about his jump. Soon, other people started doing it too. For example in England, someone jumped 75 metres from the top of a bridge.

In 1987, a New Zealander called A J Hackett made a famous bungee jump from the Eiffel Tower in Paris. After the jump, he was arrested by the police, but when he got back to New Zealand, he started the world's first bungee company. After that, people in America and Europe started bungee companies too. It became the new thing in exciting sports.

Millions of people have bungee jumped, many of those in New Zealand. Now, there are several bungee places in New Zealand. You can jump in Taupo or Rotorua, or you can go to the world's original place near Queenstown. You can even jump off the top of the Auckland Harbour Bridge and the Sky Tower.

For a little extra money you can get a DVD to take home to friends and family.

## 10 *Bungy Jumping*

1. Bungy jumping started in:
  - a. New Zealand
  - b. Pentecost
  - c. Paris
  
2. Why did the woman climb up the tall tree?
  - a. To look at the view
  - b. To pick fruit
  - c. To get away from her husband
  
3. The first bungy jumpers jumped from:
  - a. trees
  - b. towers
  - c. B
  - d. bridges
  
4. After the first foreigner tried it:
  - a. the idea spread to other countries
  - b. it became a custom
  - c. it became a tourist attraction
  
5. How important was it to get the length of the rope exactly right?
  - a. Quite important
  - b. Very important
  - c. Extremely important
  
6. What happened after A J Hackett jumped from the Eiffel Tower?
  - a. He was arrested
  - b. He injured his head
  - c. Many people wanted to try it
  
7. The Eiffel Tower is in:
  - a. Paris
  - b. London
  - c. Auckland
  
8. In New Zealand you can go bungy jumping:
  - a. in one place
  - b. in several places
  - c. only in the South Island
  
9. Why do people like bungy jumping?
  - a. Because it is exciting
  - b. Because it is expensive
  - c. Because it is easy
  
10. After bungy jumping you can buy:
  - a. a book
  - b. a poster
  - c. a DVD

## **11 Trout Fishing on Lake Taupo**

People all over the world love fishing. Some people do it as their work and others do it in their free time. New Zealand lakes and rivers are full of trout, a kind of fresh water fish, and New Zealanders and visitors alike love to go to a lake or river to try their luck at catching trout.

There are two kinds of trout: rainbow trout and brown trout. Rainbow trout are smaller than brown trout, but they are both good to eat. Brown trout weighing up to 10 kilograms have been caught but usually you will catch trout of around 2 kilograms. In fact, it is against the law to catch trout which are less than 45 centimetres. If you catch a small fish you have to throw it back, dead or alive.

Trout are not New Zealand natives. They were introduced in 1867 for sport fishing. It is against the law to buy or sell trout in New Zealand, so you will never see them in shops or restaurants. The only way you can enjoy eating trout is to catch them yourself.

To go trout fishing you must have a licence. A fishing licence costs about \$20 a day, but it is cheaper if you buy a licence for a week or a year. There is a limit on the number of fish you can catch, three fish per day per person.

A good way to go trout fishing on Lake Taupo is to hire a fishing boat. It costs about \$120 an hour for a small boat that can take four to six people. The best time to go fishing is early morning or late evening as this is the time when the fish are looking for food. Plan to start your trip at 5 am and spend at least 3 hours on the water. Your fishing guide will take you to the best places to catch fish and you will be supplied with fishing lines and everything else you need.

After you have reached the best place to fish and thrown your line into the water there is only one thing to do. Wait. And keep on waiting until a fish bites. Sometimes this happens almost immediately. Sometimes you have to be patient.

Some people say the best part of fishing is pulling the fish in. Others say it is eating freshly caught fish for breakfast.

## 11 Trout Fishing on Lake Taupo

1. How many kinds of trout are there in New Zealand?
  - a. One
  - b. Two
  - c. Three
2. When were trout introduced into New Zealand?
  - a. 1867
  - b. 1967
  - c. 2007
3. To go trout fishing you must have:
  - a. a boat
  - b. a guide
  - c. a licence
4. A small boat costing about \$120 per hour can take:
  - a. one person
  - b. four to six people
  - c. more than twelve people
5. How many hours is recommended for a fishing trip?
  - a. At least three hours
  - b. A week
  - c. 30 minutes
6. Why were trout introduced into New Zealand?
  - a. There were few native fish
  - b. For sport
  - c. To develop the fishing industry
7. If you want to eat trout you:
  - a. can buy them in a shop
  - b. can eat them in a restaurant
  - c. have to catch them
8. It's cheaper to go on a fishing trip:
  - a. by yourself
  - b. with a friend
  - c. with a group
9. It's best to go fishing in the early morning because:
  - a. it's dark
  - b. there are fewer boats
  - c. the fish are looking for food
10. How many fish are you allowed to catch?
  - a. As many as you like
  - b. Three per person per day
  - c. Enough for breakfast



## **12 Wellington - Capital City**

Wellington is the capital city of New Zealand which means that Wellington is the centre of government. If you walk around Wellington, you may see a politician; you might even see the Prime Minister. The first capital was in Auckland, but Auckland was a long way from the South Island and it was feared that the South Island might try to become a separate country, so in 1865, the capital was moved to Wellington which at that time had a population of 4,900. Now there are 400,000 people.

Wellington had long been an important Māori settlement when the first Europeans arrived in 1840. They came on a ship called the Aurora and the trip had taken four months from Britain. This was the beginning of European settlement in Wellington.

Wellington is built on a beautiful harbour at the southern end of the North Island. It is a very hilly city. Many of the houses are built on steep hills and sometimes it looks as if the houses might fall off. There was a terrible earthquake in Wellington in 1855, and most of the flat land in the centre of Wellington was formed at this time. Now this area is home to shops, businesses and banks. Central Wellington is known for its coffee culture and there are many cafes where people can meet their friends or sit and read the newspaper. At night, Courtenay Place is alive with theatres, restaurants, bars and clubs until the small hours of the morning. There are also lots of historic buildings, wonderful parks and the beautiful harbour.

Ships called inter-island ferries connect Wellington to the South Island. The ferries go back and forth taking people and cars across Cook Strait. The journey takes about three hours and is a very pleasant trip as long as it's not too windy.

Wellington is famous for its wind and is often called Windy Wellington. On a really windy day, you have to be careful not to get blown over. Umbrellas are useless in Wellington as they often get broken in the wind. On the good side, the air is always clean and fresh.

While the weather is sometimes terrible, Wellington has plenty of good points. In fact, a popular newspaper recently judged Wellington the Top Town in New Zealand. It was reported that Wellington was the best place in New Zealand to live, work and raise a family.

## 12 Wellington - Capital City

1. A capital city is:
  - a. the centre of government
  - b. an important settlement
  - c. Top Town
  
2. Why was the capital moved from Auckland to Wellington?
  - a. Auckland was too hot
  - b. Wellington was bigger than Auckland
  - c. Wellington was closer to the South Island.
  
3. When Wellington became the capital it was:
  - a. a large city
  - b. a small town
  - c. a Māori settlement
  
4. What is a ferry?
  - a. A ship
  - b. A business
  - c. A hill
  
5. How long does it take to go from Wellington to the South Island by ship?
  - a. One hour
  - b. Two hours
  - c. Three hours
  
6. The downtown area of Wellington was formed by:
  - a. early settlers
  - b. an earthquake
  - c. the sea
  
7. Wellington is famous for:
  - a. entertainment
  - b. wind
  - c. historic buildings
  
8. In Wellington, umbrellas are:
  - a. useless
  - b. useful
  - c. essential
  
9. Where do people like to meet their friends?
  - a. At theatres
  - b. In cafes
  - c. At work
  
10. Wellington is:
  - a. a good place for children
  - b. too windy for children
  - c. too hilly for children

## **13**            ***Katherine Mansfield***

Katherine Mansfield is probably the most famous of New Zealand writers. She is best known for her short stories, many of which are set in her home town, Wellington.

Mansfield was born on 14 October 1888 and you can still visit her birth place at 11 Tinakori Road in Wellington. The family later moved to Karori. Today, Karori is part of Wellington city, but in the 1880s it was a country district where the Mansfields owned a large piece of land and kept animals on their property.

Mansfield started writing young. When she was eight, she won a prize for a story. She continued writing stories as she progressed through school in Wellington. In 1903, Mansfield sailed for London with her family because she and her two older sisters were going to a private boarding school for young ladies in London. At the school, she met Ida Baker who became her life-long friend. Throughout her three years in England, she continued to write and was introduced to the social life of London.

In 1906, Mansfield returned to Wellington, but she missed London and wanted to return to the excitement of her life as a writer. At first her father would not allow her to go, but in 1907, several of her stories were sold in Australia and this made her father change his mind. In the following year at the age of nineteen, Mansfield sailed for England again. She never returned to her native country.

Mansfield led rather a wild life after her return to London. She fell in love, got married, left her husband and travelled in Europe where she met a number of famous writers. She continued to write short stories. In 1911, she met and later married John Middleton Murry who supported her in her writing.

In 1918, Mansfield's health started to fail. She was suffering from tuberculosis, a serious disease which at that time usually resulted in death. Her doctors recommended that she live in Europe where the weather was warmer so she moved there with her friend Ida Baker. She continued writing as much as she could but in 1923 she died at the age of 35.

Even though Katherine Mansfield had left New Zealand never to return, much of her best work was based on her early life. 'The Garden Party' and 'At the Bay' were both based on her childhood memories of Wellington.

## 13 Katherine Mansfield

1. Mansfield is best known for her:
  - a. poems
  - b. love stories
  - c. short stories
2. What did she do when she was eight?
  - a. Won a prize for a story
  - b. Travelled to England
  - c. Became sick
3. In 1907 some of her writing was sold in:
  - a. England
  - b. Australia
  - c. New Zealand
4. How many times did she get married?
  - a. One
  - b. Two
  - c. Three
5. How old was Mansfield when she died?
  - a. 25
  - b. 35
  - c. 45
6. Mansfield grew up in:
  - a. Wellington
  - b. London
  - c. Europe
7. After London, Mansfield found Wellington:
  - a. exciting
  - b. quiet
  - c. windy
8. Her father finally let her go back to London because:
  - a. some of her writing was sold
  - b. she turned 19
  - c. she missed London
9. When she became sick, Mansfield moved to Europe with:
  - a. her husband
  - b. her father
  - c. her friend
10. Mansfield wrote many stories about:
  - a. Wellington
  - b. London
  - c. Europe

## **14 Tuatara**

Tuatara are only found in New Zealand and they are amongst the oldest creatures in the world. They were on the earth 220 million years ago. At that time there were a lot of tuatara all over the world, but in most places they died out about one million years ago because other stronger animals developed and these animals killed off the tuatara. At the same time, New Zealand became separated from the rest of the world so tuatara have continued to exist in New Zealand because there were no other animals to kill them.

Tuatara is a Māori word which means pointed back, because along their backs tuatara have a line of small points. Their skin looks hard but in fact it is quite soft to the touch. On the other hand, tuatara are cold-blooded animals so they feel cold when you touch them. They can grow up to 24 centimetres in length and weigh more than one kilogram. In fact, tuatara haven't changed very much in 220 million years.

Tuatara make their homes in holes in the ground. At night they come out of their holes, but they don't go very far because they catch most of their food right in front of their holes. They often share their holes with birds, which is not a good idea for the birds because tuatara like to eat eggs and baby birds. Actually, they will eat anything they can catch, but usually they eat insects.

The males are bigger than the females. Females lay eggs once every four years between October and December. They can produce about 12 eggs at a time and when the babies come out of the eggs, they take from nine to thirteen years to grow up. Tuatara can live for more than one hundred years. Because they are cold-blooded, tuatara are affected by the temperature. When the weather is cold, they don't move much, but as the weather gets warmer they come out, lie in the sun and become active.

The number of tuatara has dropped since people and their animals came to New Zealand. Today there aren't many left and they can only be found in the wild on islands off the coast of New Zealand. In order to save the tuatara, government programmes have been set up to protect, preserve and build up the numbers of tuatara again. Tuatara are a national treasure.

## 14 *Tuatara*

1. How long have tuatara been on the earth?
  - a. Millions of years
  - b. Tens of thousands of years
  - c. Thousands of years
2. Tuatara have continued to exist in New Zealand because:
  - a. the weather is warm
  - b. they had no enemies
  - c. they have pointed backs
3. Tuatara can live for:
  - a. about 20 years
  - b. about 50 years
  - c. about 100 years
4. Which statement is correct?
  - a. Males are bigger than females.
  - b. Females are bigger than males.
  - c. They are about the same size.
5. Tuatara are:
  - a. warm-blooded
  - b. cold-blooded
  - c. hot-blooded
6. Since they appeared on the earth tuatara have:
  - a. changed a lot
  - b. stayed the same
  - c. got smaller
7. When the weather is hot, Tuatara:
  - a. don't move much
  - b. become active
  - c. sleep a lot
8. Tuatara usually catch their food:
  - a. far away from their holes
  - b. inside their holes
  - c. near their holes
9. Tuatara means:
  - a. pointed back
  - b. very old
  - c. soft skin
10. It is not a good idea for birds to live in the same holes as tuatara because:
  - a. tuatara are too big
  - b. tuatara are cold blooded
  - c. tuatara eat birds' eggs

## **15    *Whale Watching in Kaikoura***

Kaikoura is a small town on the east coast of the South Island which looks out over the Pacific Ocean. If you keep going east from Kaikoura, you will reach South America. The population of the town is 3,500.

Kaikoura was first settled by Māori 900 years ago and the name comes from two Māori words: kai which means eat or food, and koura which means crayfish, a delicious kind of seafood. Originally, Kaikoura was best known for its seafood. However, today it is famous for the whales that visit the coast. Whales are the world's largest creatures and whale watching has developed into an important tourist attraction. People from all over the world come to see them.

During the mid-19th century, European settlers in Kaikoura built whaling stations which produced oil. The oil from whales was a valuable product. Now all that has changed. Whales are big business again, but now it is about watching them not killing them.

The waters off the coast of Kaikoura are so rich in food that some kinds of whales live there for many months of the year. Other kinds of whales swim up the coast from the cold waters in the south to give birth and raise their young in the warmer waters in the north. They pass Kaikoura on the way.

Whale watching tours are run throughout the year and even though there are a number of companies running several tours each day, it is best to buy a ticket in advance so you don't miss out. You can go whale watching on a boat or fly over the water in a small plane. Some companies will give you your money back if you don't see a whale.

Whales are not the only attraction in Kaikoura. Many other creatures live in the ocean and along the coast. You can go swimming with dolphins which are sometimes seen in groups numbering up to 800. You can see many kinds of ocean birds including the albatross, one of the world's largest flying birds. You can go fishing. The Kaikoura coast is home to about 200 kinds of fish and sea life.

In 2016, Kaikoura experienced a huge earthquake. One person died, buildings were damaged and roads into the town were closed. The people of Kaikoura worked together to support their community and rebuild their town. Soon the tourists returned. The whales never left.

## 15 *Whale Watching in Kaikoura*

1. Kaikoura is:
  - a. a small town
  - b. a medium sized town
  - c. a small city
  
2. If you go east from Kaikoura you will reach:
  - a. South Africa
  - b. South America
  - c. South East Asia
  
3. Kaikoura is most famous for:
  - a. dolphins
  - b. crayfish
  - c. whales
  
4. You can sometimes see groups of up to 800:
  - a. whales
  - b. dolphins
  - c. fish
  
5. Whales give birth to their young:
  - a. in Kaikoura
  - b. in the northern waters
  - c. in the southern waters
  
6. If you go on a whale watching tour you are:
  - a. very likely to see a whale
  - b. quite likely to see a whale
  - c. not very likely to see a whale
  
7. Kaikoura was originally:
  - a. a Māori settlement
  - b. a European settlement
  - c. a whaling station
  
8. In Māori Kaikoura means:
  - a. sleepy town
  - b. watch whales
  - c. eat crayfish
  
9. One of the world's largest flying birds is called:
  - a. a dolphin
  - b. an albatross
  - c. a creature
  
10. During the 19th century whales were important for:
  - a. tourism
  - b. food
  - c. oil



## **16 Netball**

While rugby is the national sport for men, netball is one of the national sports for women. Netball is a fast, exciting game where the players run and jump, and throw and catch the ball. They aren't allowed to hold the ball for too long. If they do, they must give up the ball to the other team. The aim of the game is to get as many goals as possible. To get a goal, players must throw the ball through a ring at the end of the court. In one game there may be over 100 goals. It is fun to play and exciting to watch.

The game is played on a court which is about 30 metres long and 15 metres wide. At each end of the court there are goals which are just over 3 metres high. There are seven players in a team and each player has to stay in her own part of the court.

Netball used to be called basketball and the first game played in New Zealand was in Auckland in 1906. The players were members of a church group, and there were nine people in each team. The first international game was played in Australia about thirty years later. At that time each country had different rules so it was difficult for countries to play against each other. In 1958 New Zealand adopted the international rules.

When the second World Netball Cup competitions were held in Australia in 1967, New Zealand won the Cup. However, there was very little news on radio or on television because nobody was interested in women's sport. Over the last 50 years, there has been a lot of competition between New Zealand and Australia. In 2015, the score in the Netball World Cup final was Australia 58 and New Zealand 55. Now international games are widely covered on television, radio, online and in newspapers.

Netball is very popular in schools throughout New Zealand. Every Saturday during the winter, school teams play each other in local competitions. It is also played at national level and more than fifty countries play netball at international level.

Until recently, netball was a women's sport, but it is becoming popular with boys. In primary school, girls and boys play together. Netball provides opportunities to keep fit, to play as a team and if you are an excellent player, to represent your country.

## 16 Netball

1. Netball is:
  - a. slow
  - b. exciting
  - c. uninteresting
2. How many players are there in a team?
  - a. Nine
  - b. Seven
  - c. Twelve
3. What happens if a player holds on to the ball too long?
  - a. They get a goal
  - b. They have to throw the ball
  - c. They lose it to the other side
4. What season is netball played in?
  - a. Winter
  - b. Spring
  - c. Summer
5. Netball is played by:
  - a. only females
  - b. mainly males
  - c. mainly females
6. At what levels is netball played?
  - a. Local and national
  - b. National and international
  - c. All of the above
7. The players must:
  - a. run all over the court
  - b. go where the leader tells them
  - c. stay in their own part of the court
8. New Zealand's first international game was against:
  - a. Australia
  - b. Canada
  - c. Britain
9. Fifty years ago, how much netball was there on radio and TV?
  - a. A lot
  - b. Some
  - c. Hardly any
10. Recently netball has:
  - a. become more popular
  - b. become less popular
  - c. stayed the same

## **17 Christchurch - Garden City**

In September 2010, Christchurch was hit by a severe earthquake. This was followed by another terrible earthquake in February 2011. While this shake was smaller, it caused more damage and one hundred and eighty five people were killed. February 22, 2011 has been described as one of the darkest days in New Zealand's history. It was the day that changed the face of Christchurch.

Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island, with a population of around 375,000. It is situated on the east coast of the South Island. It was originally a planned city. One hundred and fifty years ago, a church group in England decided to build a new city in New Zealand. They wanted to make a perfect English church town and its name tells us this: Christchurch. Sadly, the large church in the middle of the city was badly damaged in the earthquakes.

In 1997, Christchurch was judged 'Garden City of the World'. The city planners of 150 years ago made sure there were plenty of public parks and gardens for the people to enjoy. Today, there are many large public gardens such as Hagley Park and there are wonderful gardens beside the Avon River. Some of these places were damaged in the earthquakes but they have been redesigned and rebuilt to make them better than ever. In addition to the public gardens, the people of Christchurch are proud of the gardens around their own houses. You can walk around the city and admire the gardens that people have planted.

While many of the beautiful historic buildings in the centre of the city have gone, others have been repaired and exciting new buildings have been built in place of buildings which were pulled down. Christchurch is very flat so it is easy to walk or ride a bicycle around. The Avon River runs through Christchurch and walking or sitting beside the Avon is a popular way to spend an afternoon.

The area around Christchurch offers many interesting places to visit. Within an hour's drive, you can go swimming in the Pacific Ocean or skiing in the snow of the Southern Alps, depending on the season. Throughout the year you can go fishing in the rivers and lakes or visit the surrounding wine growing regions.

The people of Christchurch are building a new city that remembers the past but also looks forward to the future.

## 17 *Christchurch - Garden City*

1. Christchurch is the largest city in:
  - a. New Zealand
  - b. the North Island
  - c. the South Island
2. The first big earthquake was in:
  - a. 2010
  - b. 2011
  - c. 2012
3. Which earthquake caused the most damage?
  - a. The first
  - b. The second
  - c. Both of them
4. Christchurch:
  - a. was a planned city
  - b. developed from a Māori village
  - c. developed from a farming town
5. Christchurch was first established:
  - a. about 500 years ago
  - b. about 250 years ago
  - c. about 150 years ago
6. Christchurch is like:
  - a. an English city
  - b. an Australian city
  - c. an American city
7. In Christchurch there are many beautiful:
  - a. private gardens
  - b. public gardens
  - c. both of the above
8. How long does it take to go swimming in the Pacific Ocean?
  - a. Less than an hour
  - b. Less than two hours
  - c. Less than three hours
9. The earthquakes mainly destroyed:
  - a. the old buildings in the city centre
  - b. the gardens of the city
  - c. the areas surrounding the city
10. After Christchurch is rebuilt, it will probably be:
  - a. very different
  - b. almost the same
  - c. some things the same and some different

## **18 Places to Stay in New Zealand**

New Zealand is a great place to travel around. There are mountains, bush walks, lakes, rivers, fishing, the beautiful ocean and adventure sports. However, before you go, you should think about where you want to stay.

The first thing to decide is how much money to spend. If you are a student, you will have to find somewhere cheap and you will also have to think about services. Do you want to cook your own food or eat in restaurants? How long do you want to stay in each place? Sometimes it is cheaper if you stay a week. Let's look at the choices.

If money is not a problem, you may choose a hotel. The main centres and tourist centres have hotels offering many different services. The price of a room at a top class hotel is around \$500 a night, although the more you pay the more you get.

Another choice is a motel, which is like a small apartment. Everything you need to make your own meals is provided, except food. The motel will even supply tea, coffee and milk. An average motel costs about \$160 a night for two people.

Backpackers are very popular with young people who want to see the country but don't have much money. If you don't mind sharing a room, you can stay for about \$20. Backpackers are good places to meet other young people and exchange travel news.

You might like to stay in a private home or on a farm. You will stay with a Kiwi family and you might be asked to help out on the farm.

All over New Zealand you will find camping grounds. These are great for people who like to sleep in tents. You will pay about \$20 a night to put up your tent and there will be kitchens and bathrooms that you can share with other people.

Recently, campervans have become a popular way to see the country. A campervan is like a house on wheels. You can drive your 'home' around. You have everything you need and you can go anywhere you want.

There are many types of holidays to choose from. In the low season, you probably won't have to reserve a room. However, over Christmas and during school holidays, it is necessary to reserve a room in advance. Remember to do this on the internet. It can be cheaper.

## 18 Places to stay in New Zealand

1. If you are rich you will probably stay:
  - a. in a hotel
  - b. in a camping ground
  - c. in a motel
  
2. If you want to travel independently the best choice is:
  - a. a hotel
  - b. a homestay
  - c. a campervan
  
3. It is sometimes cheaper per night to stay:
  - a. one night
  - b. two nights
  - c. a week
  
4. The cheapest place to stay is:
  - a. a campervan
  - b. a camping ground
  - c. on a farm
  
5. To stay at a backpackers will cost:
  - a. \$20
  - b. \$50
  - c. \$100
  
6. In a motel you:
  - a. can only make tea and coffee
  - b. can cook your own meals
  - c. can't cook your own meals
  
7. In a backpackers you will mainly meet:
  - a. young people
  - b. older people
  - c. both young and old
  
8. In a camping ground you will:
  - a. sleep in a hotel
  - b. sleep in a tent
  - c. sleep in a bed
  
9. Campervans are like:
  - a. cars
  - b. boats
  - c. houses on wheels
  
10. It is best to book online because it is:
  - a. cheaper
  - b. more friendly
  - c. more modern

## **19    *The Wellington Cable Car***

One of the most famous tourist attractions in Wellington is the bright red cable car which moves up and down the steep hill between the city centre and Kelburn. As well as a tourist attraction, many Wellington people use the cable car to get to work every day, and students at Victoria University can get off at the third stop and from there it is only a short walk to the university.

Actually there are two cable cars. While one is going up, the other is coming down and they pass each other in the middle. A ride on the cable car is short, taking only about five minutes to go from the top to the bottom. However, it takes about 20 minutes to walk up the hill and it's very steep. The cable car is very convenient as it runs every 10 minutes. The first ride is at 7 o'clock in the morning and the last is at 10 pm.

At the top of the cable car there is a wonderful view over the beautiful city of Wellington including the mountains, the harbour and the central city. When you step out of the cable car you will find yourself in the beautiful Botanic Gardens. You can walk down the hill through the gardens and see many kinds of plants, trees and flowers.

In 2002 the cable car was 100 years old. Wellington is a very different place now than it was in 1902. At that time, Kelburn was a farm and the only way to get there was by horse and cart or on foot. The cable car was built so that new houses could be built in Kelburn.

Work began on the cable car track in 1901. They worked very hard day and night and it was opened in 1902. In the first weekend, 4,000 people rode on the new cable car and by 1912 one million people rode on it every year.

In 1978, the cable car was closed so that a new system could be built. The new cable cars are still running today. However, at first some people didn't like the new cable cars. Why? The old cable cars had seats outside and it was fun to sit in the open air on a nice day. The new cars only have seats inside. They are not as much fun, but they are a lot safer.

## 19 *The Wellington Cable Car*

1. The cable car is:
  - a. blue
  - b. green
  - c. red
  
2. How long does it take from the bottom to the top?
  - a. 5 minutes
  - b. 30 minutes
  - c. 15 minutes
  
3. The cable cars pass each other:
  - a. at the top
  - b. in the middle
  - c. at the bottom
  
4. The cable car runs from Kelburn to:
  - a. the Botanic Gardens
  - b. Victoria University
  - c. the central city
  
5. The cable car is:
  - a. very slow
  - b. very convenient
  - c. very expensive
  
6. The cable car was built:
  - a. about 120 years ago
  - b. about 90 years ago
  - c. about 20 years ago
  
7. Why was the cable car built?
  - a. As a tourist attraction
  - b. To develop a new housing area
  - c. To provide work for people
  
8. At the top of the cable car you can:
  - a. visit beautiful gardens
  - b. go shopping
  - c. go for a ride in a horse and cart
  
9. Some people liked the old cable cars better because:
  - a. they were safer
  - b. they were faster
  - c. they had outside seats
  
10. When the cable car first opened how many people rode on it?
  - a. A lot
  - b. Not many
  - c. Hardly any



Australia is New Zealand's neighbour. It is northwest of New Zealand and it takes three hours to fly from New Zealand to the east coast. To get to the west coast takes eight hours, which shows how big Australia is. Australia is the sixth biggest country in the world and at 7,686,850 square kilometres it is 25 times the size of New Zealand.

The population of Australia is 25 million and most of the people live along the eastern coast. Here you will find the big cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The capital, Canberra, is between Sydney and Melbourne. Europeans from many different countries make up 92 percent of Australians, while 5 percent are from Asia. Only about 3 percent are the original people of Australia. These people are called Aborigines and they are thought to have been in Australia for over 40,000 years. The first Europeans came to Australia in the 17th century, and in the 1780s large groups of Europeans started arriving. In the 1840s gold was discovered and large numbers of people arrived from all over the world. At this time the Aboriginal people started to lose their land to the settlers and many were killed.

Australia's economy is based on trade. The country is rich in minerals and metals which it sells to many countries along with agricultural products such as meat, wool and wheat. Most Australians enjoy a high standard of living.

Like New Zealand, Australia used to be a British colony and the Head of State of Australia is still Queen Elizabeth II of England. However, in Australia there is a very strong movement to become an independent republic.

Australia is a great country for travel because there are so many things to see and do. There are the wide deserts of central Australia, and the Great Barrier Reef which runs along the east coast. Here you can go diving and see brightly coloured fish and sea life, or go swimming in the clear blue water. There are exciting cities with crowds of people, restaurants, night life and tourist attractions. Or you can catch a train and travel to Perth on the west coast. For four days you may see only kangaroos. Australia is famous for its wonderful native birds and animals, such as kangaroos and koalas. A holiday in Australia would not be complete without a visit to a native wildlife park.

## 20 *New Zealand's Largest Neighbour*

1. Australia is:
  - a. a very big country
  - b. a middle sized country
  - c. a small country
2. How many Australians are Asian?
  - a. 92%
  - b. 5%
  - c. 1%
3. The population of Australia is:
  - a. about 5 million
  - b. about 50 million
  - c. about 25 million
4. Aboriginal culture is:
  - a. not very old
  - b. old
  - c. ancient
5. What happened in the 1840s?
  - a. The first Europeans arrived
  - b. Gold was discovered
  - c. The first kangaroos were sighted.
6. How long does it take to fly to the west coast from New Zealand?
  - a. About an hour
  - b. About three hours
  - c. About eight hours
7. The Australian economy is based on:
  - a. farming
  - b. trade
  - c. mining
8. In Australia the republican movement is:
  - a. strong
  - b. not very strong
  - c. unpopular
9. The centre of Australia has:
  - a. a large population
  - b. a small population
  - c. a very small population
10. The Great Barrier Reef:
  - a. is a tourist attraction
  - b. is important for the fishing industry
  - c. has many native animals

## New Zealand Speed Readings for ESL Learners - Book One

### Answer Key

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

# 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	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>		
<b>score</b>																						

## 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	
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3.10																					125	
3.20																					120	
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3.40																					110	
3.50																					105	
4.00																					100	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>		
<b>score</b>																						

## 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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