

Task 1.5

Imagine that you are preparing a project with your friend. You have found some interesting material for the presentation and you want to read this text to your friend. You have 1.5 minutes to read the text silently, then be ready to read it out aloud. You will not have more than 1.5 minutes to read it.

A female chimp has learned how to use the Arabic numerals, 1 to 9, to memorise the order of five numbers. She, unlike males, was able to remember the sequence of at least five numbers. This is the same or even more than pre-school children can do. It comes as no surprise to scientists who discover something else that chimpanzees can do every year, bringing them closer to us. People can normally remember a seven-digit number at first sight. This is our brain's "magic number". A chimp's brain is only

half the size of ours. Yet, they remember five digits. In an experiment, a chimp was shown five numbers on a computer screen. Her task was then to touch each number in the correct order. In order to perform the task successfully, she had to memorise all the numbers. And she did. She got the fourth number correct 90% of the time, and the fifth number correct 65% of the time.

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Human evolution is a lengthy process of change by which people originated from their apelike ancestors. The traits that we today recognize as human evolved over a period of approximately six million years. One of the earliest human traits was the ability to walk on two legs. This ability evolved some four million years ago. A large and complex brain, the ability to use tools and the capacity for language have developed more recently. Some studies lead us to believe that humans have some relationship to another group of primate species, the apes. Scientists say that humans and the great apes of Africa — chimpanzees and gorillas — share a common ancestor who lived between 8 and 6 million years ago. However, researchers do not all agree about how these species are related to the modern human. Genetic research into this relationship has produced some controversial results and more discoveries, perhaps sensational ones, are to be expected.

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Cheating in tests is becoming more sophisticated. These cases are referred to as exam-room cheating. The statistical findings show that between 3–5% of exam candidates are likely to be cheating with almost none of these pupils being caught. A recent trend has been for more friends, helping their peers to see questions in advance. This has been prompted by increasingly high demands on the learners to perform well. If the supervision in exam rooms becomes lax, cheating is always on the rise. Cheating appears to be a global phenomenon with little cultural variation. Originally it was thought that cheating was more typical for the so called “face-saving” cultures where the observable behaviour is not the same as unobserved actions. Wherever the stakes are high and there is an advantage and an opportunity to cheat, it seems to happen everywhere. Highly industrialised and poor nations think alike.

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Here is some advice about good manners and etiquette when eating food. If you are invited to dinner and you cannot eat a certain type of food, tell your host several days before the dinner party. If you are a guest, it is polite to wait until your host starts eating or when your host shows you in some way that you can start eating without waiting for him or her. Mind that is good manners to chew and swallow the food that is in your mouth and only then should you take a drink. Remember to show your appreciation of the food from time to time. It is a popular mistake that chicken can be eaten with your fingers. In fact, a piece of chicken or a slice of pizza can be eaten with your fingers if you are at a barbecue or in an informal company. Otherwise always use a knife and a fork. It is useful to note that when eating bread rolls, break off a piece of bread and only then use the knife for buttering the bread. If you are using the knife, do not lick or put your knife in your mouth even though there is something delicious on the blade. You will certainly not put your elbows on the table and you will never reach for food over somebody's plate. Always ask for something you need to be passed over to you. And, you had better not talk with food in your mouth to tell others something interesting.

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The less children play video games, or watch television, the less aggressive they become, suggests a scientific study. The American research looked at the effects of reducing the amount of computer games played, or television watched by third and fourth graders, who are aged approximately eight or nine. It was found that the more television and computer games the children had seen, the more aggressive they were. This means that television, and, more recently, games have a direct influence on such behaviour. There are potential benefits in reducing the amount of access children have to TV or computer games. This is supported by the findings of reductions in physical and verbal aggression in children who have limited exposure to television, video and computer games. Watching aggressive behaviour shapes the way children see the world and their behaviour. They learn that angry people do aggressive things and start to imitate if the circumstances prompt similar solutions.

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Every nation has its customs. Modern Americans are very serious about body hygiene while in the 19th century washing one's body frequently was considered bad

for health as it “removed protection from the skin”. Most Western people think it proper to enter a house without changing shoes, while in Korea it is a desecration of the house. An American, greeting a stranger by saying “Hi mate, great to meet you!” may not be favourably regarded in a country where more formal modes of address are usual. In the West, business cards are given a cursory glance. In Japan, they are regarded with respect. In Britain, most business presentations would include a joke, which is unheard of at conferences in Japan or China. Small talk and relationship building are considered important in the Arab world between a seller and a customer. British people prefer talking about the weather. The Japanese value silence while the Italians like to express emotions.

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People experience stress when they have much work to do, when they receive a promotion at work, when their car has a flat tire, when their dog gets sick, when they are worried about getting laid off their job or about having enough money to pay their bills, when their best friend and his wife come to stay at their house for a week and on many other occasions. If you are used to thinking that stress is something that makes you worry, you have the wrong idea of stress. Very hot or very cold climate can be stressful. Change of hormones in teenagers can cause stress. Taking responsibilities for other people is one of the major stressors in those who work as managers. Many people carry enormous stress and do not even realize it. To our body stress is synonymous with change. Anything that causes some change in your life causes stress.

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It's not at all easy to say what a fairy-tale is or why some stories are called fairy-tales. Fairy-tales do not have to be stories about fairies. Fairy-tales are part of folklore, but folktales are not necessarily fairy-tales. Fairy-tales are similar to myths and legends but are not myths and legends. Fairy-tales come from oral storytelling tradition but fairy-tales have been written down on paper by many authors. Sometimes a literary fairy-tale comes first on paper and only then it is taken back into oral tradition and becomes folklore. Simply put a fairy-tale is a story about magic with something supernatural and mysterious. Usually a fairy-tale is a story that happens in the past. If it happens sometime at the beginning of the world, then it is a myth. If this story names a specific person described as “real”, then it is a legend.