

Speed Reading Practice for Eiken Pre-1: No. 9

Total: 12 minutes (Passage 1: 4 min / Passage 2: 6 min / Review: 2 min)

Target Score...Passing Target: At least 5 out of 7 correct...High Score Target: At least 6 out of 7 correct

Read each passage and choose the best answer from among the four choices for each question.

Rethinking School Start Times

In many countries, the school day begins early in the morning, often at a time that has long been accepted without much question. However, in recent years, some researchers and educators have begun to argue that this schedule may not suit all students equally well. In particular, teenagers are often said to have biological sleep patterns that make it difficult for them to fall asleep early and wake up fully rested at dawn. As a result, some people believe that later school start times could improve both learning and well-being.

Supporters of this idea point to studies suggesting that students who start school later may sleep longer, feel more alert in class, and show better mood and concentration. Some also argue that a later start could reduce tardiness and even support physical health by allowing students to get enough rest. From this perspective, changing the timetable is seen not as making school easier, but as adjusting it to fit how adolescents actually function.

Even so, changing school start times is not always simple. School schedules affect transportation systems, after-school activities, family routines, and teachers' working hours. Critics therefore argue that even if later start times benefit students, schools must consider how such changes would affect the wider community. There is also debate about whether extra sleep would always be gained, since some students might simply stay up later at night.

For this reason, many specialists suggest that later start times should be considered seriously, but not introduced without careful planning. In their view, changing the school day may help many students, yet it should be part of a broader effort to improve sleep habits and student health rather than treated as a complete solution by itself.

Questions

(1) Why do some people support later school start times?

1. Because they believe earlier starts are easier for teachers to manage.
2. Because they think teenagers' natural sleep patterns may not fit very early schedules.
3. Because they want students to spend fewer hours in school.
4. Because they believe all students perform better in the evening.

(2) According to the passage, what is one possible advantage of later start times?

1. They guarantee that all students will achieve higher test scores.
2. They may help students feel more alert and focused during class.
3. They eliminate the need for after-school activities.
4. They allow schools to reduce transportation costs immediately.

(3) What is the author's main point in the final paragraph?

1. Later start times should be introduced in all schools as soon as possible.
 2. Later start times are ineffective unless students also study less.
 3. Later start times may be helpful, but they should be part of a wider plan.
 4. Later start times create too many problems to be worth considering.
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Storing Energy Underground

As countries increase their use of solar and wind power, one major challenge is how to store energy for times when the sun is not shining or the wind is weak. Batteries are often discussed as one solution, but they are not the only option. In some places, engineers are developing systems that store energy underground. These methods may involve pumping air into underground spaces, storing heat in deep rock formations, or using excess electricity to move water between different levels below the surface. Although the details vary, the goal is the same: to save energy when supply is high and release it later when demand rises.

Supporters of underground storage argue that it could help make renewable energy more reliable. Because weather conditions change, electricity from solar panels and wind turbines is not always available at the moment it is needed. If large amounts of energy can be stored efficiently, power systems may become more stable and less dependent on fossil fuels. Some researchers also suggest that underground systems may be suitable for large-scale storage in ways that ordinary batteries are not.

However, underground energy storage also raises concerns. Building such facilities can be expensive, and suitable geological conditions are not available everywhere. In addition, local communities may worry about safety, environmental impact, or the long-term effects of using underground spaces for industrial purposes. Critics therefore argue that even promising storage methods must be examined carefully before they are widely adopted.

Because of these issues, many experts believe underground storage should be viewed as one possible part of future energy systems rather than as a single answer to the challenges of renewable power. Its usefulness will depend on cost, geography, and how well it works alongside other technologies.

Questions

- (4) What problem is underground energy storage meant to address?
1. The excessive cost of producing electricity from coal.
 2. The difficulty of using renewable energy when supply changes with the weather.
 3. The lack of public interest in solar and wind power.
 4. The inability of engineers to build modern batteries.
- (5) Why do some people support underground energy storage?
1. Because it may help renewable energy systems become more dependable.
 2. Because it completely removes the need for batteries.
 3. Because it can be installed easily in every location.
 4. Because it guarantees lower electricity prices for all consumers.
- (6) What concern does the passage mention about underground energy storage?
1. It always requires more fossil fuels than battery storage.
 2. It can only be used for small amounts of electricity.
 3. Suitable underground conditions are not available in all places.
 4. It is already known to be ineffective in most countries.
- (7) What does the author suggest in the final paragraph?
1. Underground storage should replace all other energy technologies.
 2. Underground storage may be valuable, but only as one part of a larger system.
 3. Underground storage is less useful than any battery technology.
 4. Underground storage should be avoided until renewable energy disappears.