

Speed Reading Practice for Eiken Pre-1: No. 3

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.

Restoring Urban Rivers

For much of modern history, many cities treated rivers mainly as tools for industry, transportation, or waste disposal. As a result, riverbanks were often covered with concrete, waterways were redirected, and natural habitats were damaged or destroyed. In some cases, rivers became so polluted that local
5 residents avoided them completely. Over time, however, attitudes began to change. City planners, environmental scientists, and community groups started to argue that rivers should be valued not only for practical purposes but also for their ecological and social importance.

This shift in thinking has led to efforts to restore urban rivers in many
10 parts of the world. Such projects may involve removing concrete walls, replanting native vegetation, and creating spaces where water can flow more naturally. Supporters say that these changes can improve water quality, attract wildlife, and reduce the risk of flooding. In addition, restored rivers can provide recreational spaces for local people, giving them places to walk,
15 cycle, or simply relax near the water.

However, river restoration is not always simple or universally welcomed. Large-scale projects can be expensive, and some business owners worry that construction work may disrupt traffic or reduce customer access. Others point out that restoring rivers in wealthier neighborhoods may increase
20 property values and make those areas less affordable for long-term residents. Critics therefore warn that environmental improvement should not come at the cost of social inequality.

For this reason, many experts argue that successful river restoration requires more than ecological planning alone. They emphasize the need to
25 balance environmental goals with economic realities and local community needs. When done carefully, river restoration can improve urban life in several ways at once, but when planned poorly, it may create new problems even as it solves old ones.

Questions

- (1) What does the passage say about how cities viewed rivers in the past?
1. They were mainly seen as useful for practical purposes rather than as natural spaces to protect.
 2. They were usually protected because people understood their ecological value.
 3. They were considered too dangerous to use for transportation or industry.
 4. They were mostly left unchanged because city governments lacked technology.
- (2) According to the passage, what is one possible benefit of restoring urban rivers?
1. It guarantees that local businesses will earn more money.
 2. It can help reduce flooding and create better spaces for recreation.
 3. It prevents all forms of pollution from entering city waterways.
 4. It makes property values fall in nearby neighborhoods.
- (3) What is the author's main point in the final paragraph?
1. Ecological concerns should always come before economic or social ones.
 2. River restoration is effective only when it is limited to wealthy areas.
 3. River restoration can be valuable, but it must be planned with multiple factors in mind.
 4. Most river restoration projects fail because community groups oppose them.

The Return of Night Trains

In recent years, night trains have attracted renewed interest in parts of Europe and elsewhere. For many years, they had been seen as old-fashioned and were gradually replaced by budget airlines and high-speed daytime rail services. However, growing concern about climate change has led some travelers and policymakers to reconsider them. Since trains generally produce less carbon dioxide per passenger than airplanes, night trains are now being promoted by some as a more environmentally responsible way to travel medium and long distances.

Night trains also offer practical advantages. Because passengers travel while sleeping, they can save time during the day and avoid paying for a hotel for one night. For people traveling between major cities, this can make rail travel both efficient and appealing. In addition, some passengers say that night trains provide a calmer and more comfortable experience than air travel, especially when airports are crowded and security procedures are stressful.

Still, the revival of night trains faces several obstacles. Operating them can be costly because sleeping cars require more space, staff, and maintenance than ordinary train seats. International routes may also be difficult to manage because railway systems, ticketing rules, and schedules differ from country to country. As a result, even when public interest is strong, launching or expanding night-train services can be complicated.

Because of these challenges, some experts believe that night trains should not be seen as a complete replacement for air travel. Instead, they argue that night trains are most useful on routes where rail travel can compete reasonably well in time, price, and convenience. In that role, night trains may not transform transportation on their own, but they could still become an important part of a more sustainable travel system.

Questions

- (4) Why have some people become interested in night trains again?
1. Because airplanes no longer operate between major cities.
 2. Because night trains are now widely regarded as faster than all daytime transport.
 3. Because concern about the environment has made them seem more attractive.
 4. Because hotels in Europe have become too expensive for most travelers.
- (5) What is one advantage of night trains mentioned in the passage?
1. They allow passengers to travel and sleep at the same time.
 2. They eliminate the need for railway staff and maintenance.
 3. They always cost less than airplanes on international routes.
 4. They guarantee a more luxurious experience than hotels.
- (6) What problem does the passage mention regarding night trains?
1. They are unpopular with policymakers.
 2. They are difficult to operate, especially across national borders.
 3. They produce more pollution than expected.
 4. They are unsuitable for travel between large cities.
- (7) What does the author suggest in the final paragraph?
1. Night trains will soon replace almost all air travel.
 2. Night trains are useful in certain cases, though they are not a complete solution.
 3. Air travel should be banned on routes where trains already exist.
 4. Governments should support only the cheapest forms of transportation.