

What's the Remedy?

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The following vocabulary list has been taken from the note book of a Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Form 4 pupil.

strangeat
model.
froze.
strength.
crushed.
protecting.

wonderful.
example.
coagulated.
mighty.
breat.
aware.

mixture.
submarines.
decided.
experiment.
odd.
considered.
mingle.
divership.
sure.
try.
unusual.
weigh.

We shall discuss in our next issue what the remedy is for a teacher who allowed a pupil to produce such a list.

A New Way to Test Reading Comprehension

The method we are demonstrating here is not really a very new one, but it may be unknown to some of our teachers, and they may be interested to use the passages provided below to try it out. The technique is simple, it is reliable, it requires little preparation and even less marking.

First select your passage, and then simply delete every fifth word, whatever sort of word it is. In this testing procedure a blank is generally left to indicate the space — and sometimes the actual length of the space — where the deletion has been made, but in more sophisticated versions of the procedure the blank is not indicated at all. Another variety of the procedure deletes, for example, one word from each line of text, but with no indication of the place of deletion and without using a regular formula for it.

The advocates of this method of testing comprehension — among them is Mr John Anderson of the University of New England, Australia, whose article on it

appeared in *English Language Teaching* in February 1971 — say that it can also be used to test the readability of texts used by second language learners.

We give below three passages so that our readers may see three varieties of the procedure at work. The passages are of varying difficulty and might be assigned to Forms I, III and VI (English-medium). This testing procedure can be used on any type of reading material. It is claimed that it will test knowledge not only of grammatical structure but also of lexical meaning and, according to the subject of the passage, social-cultural meanings too.

Passage I

At each fire-station XXXXX are several firemen. Behind XXX building there is a XXXXX where firemen can practise. XXXX learn how to unroll X hose quickly. They learn XXX to fasten it to X fire hydrant. They practise XXXXXXXX up their ladders and XXXXXXXX

people from high buildings. XXXX learn how to keep XXXXX equipment clean and in XXXX order. Inside the fire XXXXXXXX there are some men XX duty. They do not XXXXXXXX with the other men. XXXX wait for the alarm XXXX to ring. The fire-engines XXX down-stairs so the men XXXX upstairs, where there is XXXX room. Sometimes they sit XX their beds and read X book or write a XXXXXX. They wear a vest XX shirt and a pair XX trousers.

Passage Two

Unlike tigers, leopards are ^ a certain extent scavengers, ^ they become man-eaters by ^ a taste for human ^ when unrestricted slaughter of ^ has deprived them of ^ natural food. The dwellers ^ the Indian hills are ^ Hindus, and they therefore ^ their dead. The cremation ^ takes place on the ^ of a stream or ^ in order that the ^ may be washed down ^ the River Ganges and ^ into the sea. As ^ of the villages are ^ high up on the ^, while the streams or ^ are, in many cases, ^ away down in the ^, it will be realized ^ a funeral entails a ^ tax on the man-power ^ a small community. This ^ particularly the case when, ^ addition to the

carrying ^, labour has to be ^ to collect and carry fuel needed for the ^ . In normal times these ^ are carried out very ^ but when disease in ^ form sweeps through the ^, the inhabitants die faster ^ they can be disposed ^ .

Passage Three

We have become suspicious this century of the who sells, whether he a manufacturer selling by of advertisements or a councillor who knows how get the streets or lighting into shape but also very sure that would like to be. We know that the major wars of this were prepared by publicists had learnt, whether deliberately not, the art of hypnosis. There has never a time when people been more suspicious of. And yet persuasion continues. is clear that when close your ears to and confident appeal you be caught unawares by insinuating whisper of the. There is some very and entertaining quiet advertisement be seen in newspapers heard on the air.

We are sure that all our readers will be able to fill in all the blanks, and so we shall hold over the answers until our next issue.