
Reading Comprehension Quiz Passages

Reading Comprehension Quiz Passage 1

As summer comes near, many children are really happy to forget about school for a few months. However, they might be taking that goal too seriously. Studies have found that children typically forget between one and three months' worth of school learning during the summer months. Spelling and math abilities suffer the most, while reading is not really influenced by the time off. The most probable reason for this is that most children read at least occasionally outside of the classroom, whether newspapers, magazines, books, or video game guides. However, their math and spelling skills only get exercised in the school setting.

The original purpose of summer vacations was to let farm children have time off to help work in the fields in the high growing season, but this reason is no longer valid since fewer kids actually work on farms today. Some cities in the United States, such as Los Angeles, have moved to a year-round school calendar, which may help reduce the academic decline that occurs during the long summer vacation. Most cities maintain the normal nine and a half-month calendars. To improve skills and to maintain a good level of preparation, superintendents recommend trips to museums, summer camps, vacations with educational components, and visits to libraries to keep kids mentally alert and interested throughout the summer.

There are other educational systems that provide vacations while still keeping students' skills sharp. For example, in Japan students attend class for seven weeks consecutively, followed by two weeks of vacation. This continues throughout the year. In Italy, students attend class six days per week, but finish at 1:30 PM each day, so that school does not dominate their life the way that it does in America, where students attend high school from 7:45 AM until 3:00 PM each week day. In areas where there are not enough classrooms—in Afghanistan or Somalia, for example—older students attend classes in the morning while the younger kids go to school in the afternoon.

School administrators and educational specialists fear that the three-month summer vacation halts the continuity of learning. Just as students become accustomed to new math equations or new concepts in reading, writing, or critical thinking skills, they “shut down” for an extended period. When they go back to school after the long summer vacation, they take up to two months to return to their previous level of proficiency. And so the debate continues: whether to continue the status-quo in terms of vacations or to seek changes based on the Los Angeles or the Japanese models.

Part I. Answer the questions.

1. Which skills suffer the most over the summer vacation?
 - a. math and reading
 - b. math and spelling
 - c. reading and writing
 - d. history and math

2. Why is reading not so much of a problem?
 - a. Students read in the summer.
 - b. Their parents read to them.
 - c. They visit libraries often.
 - d. They receive reading homework in the summer.

3. In Japan
 - a. there is a long summer vacation
 - b. there is a short summer vacation
 - c. the school vacations are constant throughout the year
 - d. there is no vacation at all

4. In Italy
 - a. students attend classes in the late afternoon
 - b. students attend classes on Saturday
 - c. students have no summer vacation
 - d. students do not attend classes on Saturday

5. The original reason for summer vacation
 - a. is still valid
 - b. is no longer valid
 - c. was an urban phenomenon
 - d. was more for teachers than for students

6. The term *shut down* in the last paragraph means
 - a. stop learning
 - b. get sick
 - c. go on vacation
 - d. concentrate on their studies

7. According to the reading, countries without enough school facilities have
 - a. given longer vacations to students
 - b. divided the school day between older and younger students
 - c. built many new buildings
 - d. stopped some students from attending school

Part II. Answer the questions in one or two complete sentences.

8. What is the meaning of the second sentence of the passage: "However, they might be taking that goal too seriously."

9. According to the passage, how can students keep up their skills during summer vacation?

10. Describe two alternatives to the traditional nine-month school year with a long summer vacation.