

The Postbox Under the Sea

PASSAGE · NON-FICTION

SKILLS TRAINED

Working memory

Delayed recall

Comprehension

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET

About 12 minutes

- 1 Read the passage twice, slowly. Take about three minutes.
- 2 Turn to the next page and cover this one. No looking back.
- 3 Write what you remember, then mark it on the last page.

Vanuatu is a country of islands in the Pacific Ocean. It has something no other country has: a post office under the water.

The postbox stands on the sea floor, about three metres down, near a beach called Hideaway Island.

You cannot post an ordinary letter there. Paper would turn to mush.

Instead, visitors buy a special waterproof postcard. The words are pressed into the card, not printed with ink. Then they swim down and drop it in the box.

A postal worker in diving gear collects the cards. Each one gets its own stamp before it goes on its way.

The cards travel all over the world, still carrying a little sand.

Cover the passage before you start.

Looking back turns this into a copying exercise. Getting it slightly wrong from memory is what makes it work.

PART A Tell it back

Write down everything you can remember about the underwater post office.

PART B 4 questions

1 In which ocean is Vanuatu?

2 How deep is the postbox?

3 Why can you not post an ordinary letter there?

4 Who collects the cards from the box?

PART C Mark your own work

Now go back to the passage. Tick every answer you got right. You do not need the same words as the answer below — if you wrote the same idea in your own words, it counts.

- ☐ 1 · The Pacific Ocean.
- ☐ 2 · About three metres down.
- ☐ 3 · The paper would turn to mush.
- ☐ 4 · A postal worker in diving gear.

FACTS RECALLED IN PART A

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QUESTIONS CORRECT

— / 4

DATE

THE STRATEGY Tell it to someone else

When you have finished, explain the whole thing to someone without looking at the page. The spots where you go quiet are the spots you have not learned yet. Teaching is one of the strongest ways to remember.

WHERE YOU ALREADY DO THIS

Think of something strange or surprising you once told a friend about. Can you still remember the details?

FOR THE PARENT OR TEACHER · Let your child read the passage alone, but stay nearby. During Part A, do not prompt — the struggle to retrieve a half-remembered fact is exactly what builds the memory. Count the facts they recall and compare that number across several sets rather than worrying about any single score.