

Name _____ Date _____ Time taken _____

What this sheet trains

Divided attention - holding a second rule in mind while your main attention is busy elsewhere. This is the skill behind listening to a teacher while taking notes, or checking your working while solving the next step.

Strategy: anchor and sweep. Give the main task your focus and let the second task run as a quick, automatic check - do not swap your full attention back and forth.

1 Read and tally

Main task: read the passage once. Second task: the counting rule below.

Counting rule

Every time you read the word rubber, make one tally mark in the box at the foot of the page. Do not go back and re-read. One pass only.

Malaysia was the world's largest producer of natural rubber for most of the twentieth century and is now a minor one, overtaken by Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam. The trees did not fail. Smallholders, who hold most of the rubber land, simply stopped tapping them. Tapping is daily, pre-dawn, skilled work paid by the kilogram against a world price set far away, and when that price falls below the wage a worker can earn in a factory or on an oil palm estate, the rational response is to leave the latex in the tree. Hundreds of thousands of hectares were replanted with palm or left standing and unworked.

Yet Malaysia still dominates one part of the business. The country makes a large share of the world's medical gloves, and the thin, strong, elastic film a surgical glove needs is one of the few products for which natural rubber has no good synthetic substitute: the long polymer chains in latex crystallise under strain in a way that styrene-butadiene does not. Glove factories in Perak and Selangor therefore buy latex concentrate on a world market, increasingly from Thai suppliers, while the rubber trees outside their gates go untapped. Value moved downstream from the plantation to the dipping line, and employment moved with it.

Governments have repeatedly tried to pull smallholders back with replanting grants and guaranteed minimum prices, and such schemes read better as rural income support than as industrial policy. A subsidy large enough to make tapping worthwhile at a low world price becomes a permanent transfer, because the price is low for a structural reason: synthetic rubber caps what natural rubber can charge for every use except the handful where it is irreplaceable. The defensible aim is not to restore a tonnage figure but to keep enough skilled tapping capacity in the country to supply the industries that genuinely need natural rubber, which is a far smaller target than the rhetoric around it suggests.

Tally here - one mark per rubber

Make the marks as you read, then write your total before turning the page.

Total

1 Questions - cover the passage first

Answer from memory. Do not look back at the passage.

My tally total

From page 1

Q1. Why did Malaysian smallholders stop tapping their trees even though the trees were healthy?

Q2. Why can synthetic material not replace natural latex in a surgical glove?

Q3. Why do Malaysian glove factories import latex while local trees stand unworked?

Q4. What does the writer say a minimum price scheme is really doing?

2 Grid sweep with a running count

Main task: cross out targets. Second task: keep a count in your head.

Rules - read both before you start, then start the timer

Main: cross out every number that is a multiple of 7.

Second: count - silently, no marks - how many numbers end in 0. Write the total in the box only when you have finished the whole grid.

854	648	115	302	812	963	793	332	479	597	119	674
270	580	340	399	606	765	957	493	545	274	421	587
644	469	936	150	634	581	885	484	681	559	334	442
779	131	930	452	378	261	214	346	494	864	392	436
702	202	449	908	487	491	826	944	595	255	929	590
410	335	107	205	503	263	954	182	499	398	950	558
869	214	747	927	726	443	734	953	951	810	563	430
766	738	604	502	758	575	284	327	365	262	718	493

Stop the timer when the grid is finished, not when you write the total.

Numbers ending in 0

Write it once the grid is done

3 Copy and total

Main task: copy each row of digits. Second task: keep a running total.

Rules

Main: copy each four-digit group into the box beside it, in order.

Second: add the two middle digits of every row to a running total as you go.

Write the running total in the box at the end of each row - from memory, not by going back and adding up at the end.

	Copy here	Running total
7 6 5 4		
4 3 3 7		
5 8 1 2		
2 3 8 8		
3 5 1 4		
6 2 8 1		
4 7 9 4		
2 7 9 8		
7 4 3 5		
4 8 6 8		
7 9 3 8		
7 5 7 5		

4 Bridging - answer in a sentence each

Where this shows up outside the sheet.

Q1. Which of the two tasks slipped first for you, and what tipped it over?

Q2. In the last fortnight of coursework, which commitment do you drop first, and do you choose it deliberately?

Q3. When you revise with music, can you still follow an argument across a paragraph, or only recognise facts?

Answer key

Task 1 · tally
rubber

7

Task 2 · crossed out
multiples of 7

12

Task 2 · counted
ending in 0

10

Task 3 · final total
two middle digits

130

Task 1 - suggested answers

Q1. The world price fell below what they could earn in a factory or on an oil palm estate, so tapping was not worth the labour.

Q2. The long polymer chains in latex crystallise under strain, giving a thin film a strength that styrene-butadiene cannot match.

Q3. Tapping labour went elsewhere, so concentrate is cheaper to buy from Thai suppliers than to have cut locally.

Q4. Supporting rural incomes rather than rebuilding an industry, since the low price reflects synthetic competition that a subsidy cannot remove.

Notes for the parent or teacher

- Mark the two tasks separately. A student who scores well on the main task and loses the count has not failed - that is the normal pattern, and it is the thing worth discussing.
- Do not prompt or remind during a task. The reminder is the skill.
- An untimed run is a valid run. Record the time only if the student wants to beat it next week.
- Repeat the sheet after a week rather than straight away. Spacing is what makes the gain stick.
- This is attention practice, not an assessment. It does not diagnose anything, and no sheet of this kind should be read as a measure of ability.