

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

The thyroid gland cannot make its hormones without iodine, and iodine is distributed unevenly across the earth's surface. Rain and glaciers strip it from mountain soils, so inland and upland populations have historically eaten too little of it. The consequences range from goitre, a visible swelling of the neck, through sluggishness and poor hearing, to severe and permanent impairment of brain development in children whose mothers were deficient during pregnancy. In 1922 cantonal authorities in Switzerland began adding a trace of iodine to table salt, and the Alpine goitre belt thinned within a generation. The choice of carrier was the clever part. Salt is eaten by almost everybody, in small and fairly stable quantities.

Salt is also produced at a limited number of plants, and that is what makes the programme work, and where it strains. Fortifying at the plant means a handful of inspectors can cover a nation's supply, but artisanal producers and smuggled salt sit outside that net, and iodide decays in heat, so tropical countries must use the more stable iodate and must still test what reaches the kitchen. Programmes are monitored through urinary iodine in schoolchildren, which measures what was absorbed. There is also an awkwardness officials rarely discuss, which is that the same ministries urging people to eat less salt rely on salt as their delivery vehicle.

Iodisation is the strongest case there is for mandatory fortification, and it is strongest precisely where it is least consensual. The benefit is a few points of cognitive capacity spread across a population, invisible in any individual child, arriving years after the purchase, and conferred mostly on someone not yet born. No shopper, however well informed, could rationally choose it one packet at a time, and a labelled opt-in market would deliver it to the households that least need it. Consent is therefore the wrong frame for judging this policy, and critics who demand a choice between fortified and plain salt are asking for a right that cannot produce the result they want.

Tally here - one mark per salt

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 have upland and inland populations tended to be short of iodine?

Q2. Why is salt a more practical carrier for iodine than most other foods?

Q3. Why would a voluntary market in fortified salt likely miss the people who need it most?

Q4. What does the writer assume about individual choice when arguing that consent is the wrong frame here?

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 13.

Second: count - silently, no marks - how many numbers end in 8. Write the total in the box only when you have finished the whole grid.

944	200	927	378	637	919	411	977	829	611	389	220
351	451	861	767	662	329	868	126	355	929	508	500
403	253	446	961	513	975	412	377	544	773	534	371
845	855	755	580	347	482	623	688	436	231	354	437
729	219	683	533	333	269	192	523	726	525	273	369
530	970	132	873	557	453	453	921	396	686	978	245
127	859	831	688	163	863	261	307	967	358	668	836

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

Numbers ending in 8

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 five-digit group into the box beside it, in order.

Second: add the second and third 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
5 2 9 4 9		
6 5 5 9 1		
3 1 5 3 6		
7 5 9 2 9		
6 6 3 7 9		
1 2 6 9 3		
7 9 3 4 6		
8 5 1 7 6		
6 6 3 3 7		
7 5 5 5 3		
3 1 7 9 5		
3 9 2 2 5		

4 Bridging - answer in a sentence each

Where this shows up outside the sheet.

Q1. Which of your two tasks gave way first, and can you say what was happening in the passage at that moment?

Q2. In the final hour of a timed paper, what do you stop doing first without ever deciding to?

Q3. When driving or cycling a familiar route, which thought gets dropped the moment traffic demands attention?

Answer key

Task 1 · tally salt	Task 2 · crossed out multiples of 13	Task 2 · counted ending in 8	Task 3 · final total second and third digits
7	10	8	114

Task 1 - suggested answers

Q1. Rain and glacial action strip iodine out of mountain soils, so the local food grown on them carries very little.

Q2. Almost everyone eats it in small, steady amounts, and it is made at few enough plants for a small inspectorate to cover.

Q3. Informed, better-off buyers would seek it out, while deficient households would be least able to recognise or afford the choice.

Q4. That a rational individual cannot choose a diffuse, delayed, invisible benefit, so choice cannot deliver this particular good.

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.