

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

There is no lead in a pencil, and there never was. In the sixteenth century a storm uprooted a tree in the north of England and exposed a strange black rock. Shepherds found that it marked sheep well, and soon discovered it marked paper even better. The rock was graphite, though people then believed it was a kind of lead. The pencil has carried that wrong name ever since.

Pure graphite is soft and crumbly, so it must be held together. Early users wrapped sticks of it in string or sheepskin. Later a wooden pencil was made by cutting a groove in a slat of cedar. The graphite was laid in, and a second slat was glued on top. Then a French inventor ground the graphite up and mixed it with clay, and baked the mixture hard. More clay produced a harder pencil and a fainter line. That is why pencils today are labelled with letters and numbers.

The pencil we use now was settled by about 1800, and the design has barely changed since. A pencil needs no battery, works upside down and in the cold, and can be undone with a rubber. Sometimes an object survives not because it is clever, but because nothing has ever found a good reason to replace it.

Tally here - one mark per pencil or pencils

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. What did shepherds in England discover the black rock was good for?

Q2. Why did early users wrap the graphite in string or sheepskin?

Q3. Why does adding more clay change the line a pencil makes?

Q4. What idea about everyday objects does the writer leave you with?

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 4.

Second: count - silently, no marks - how many numbers end in 4. Write the total in the box only when you have finished the whole grid.

58	62	38	45	38	37	14	90	71	66	86	42	59	42	11	39
78	80	96	65	87	30	82	68	34	41	83	67	75	35	22	50
38	73	53	12	55	21	74	27	65	74	50	91	62	80	56	55
74	41	28	71	12	11	71	71	75	92	17	49	85	19	56	95
14	29	53	19	56	77	29	79	21	58	45	40	50	78	98	31
45	77	77	58	53	47	97	90	21	83	23	93	61	10	56	83
54	66	54	85	74	83	61	95	70	34	14	30	46	23	62	92
41	70	93	12	43	94	93	17	14	31	69	78	47	45	50	71

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

Numbers ending in 4

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

Second: add the middle digit 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
3 5 4		
8 5 7		
4 7 2		
4 4 6		
6 6 2		
2 7 9		
9 1 6		
5 2 2		
3 3 8		
9 6 7		
8 9 5		
3 4 4		

4 Bridging - answer in a sentence each

Where this shows up outside the sheet.

Q1. Of the two tasks you just held together, which slipped first, and what tipped it over?

Q2. Which of your school tools do you reach for without thinking, and why that one?

Q3. How do you get back on track after your attention splits in the middle of a page?

Answer key

Task 1 · tally
pencil or pencils

7

Task 2 · crossed out
multiples of 4

15

Task 2 · counted
ending in 4

13

Task 3 · final total
middle digits

59

Task 1 - suggested answers

Q1. They found it marked sheep well, and then realised it marked paper even better.

Q2. Pure graphite is soft and crumbly, so it needed something to hold it together and keep hands clean.

Q3. More clay makes the mixture harder, so it wears away more slowly and leaves a fainter mark.

Q4. Some designs last because they simply work, not because anything clever has replaced them.

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.