

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

Drive inland from Sibu in Sarawak and the road runs for hours between rows of oil palm. The palm came from West Africa, reached Malaysia as an ornamental plant, and now yields more oil per hectare than any other crop grown anywhere. That oil is in biscuits, soap, instant noodles and lipstick, and roughly two fifths of the planted area in Malaysia belongs not to large companies but to smallholders working a few hectares each.

A smallholding is a difficult business. A young palm gives nothing for three or four years, then produces for about twenty-five before the palm grows too tall to harvest safely and must be felled and replanted, which means another lean spell. Fruit cut from the palm has to reach a mill within about a day or the oil inside begins to spoil, so a grower far from a mill has little bargaining power over price. Certification schemes, which buyers in Europe increasingly demand, require records, boundary maps and training that cost money and time a family farm often cannot spare, even though the premium they pay is modest.

Campaigns against palm oil usually picture a burning forest and a plantation company, and that picture is not wrong. It is incomplete. Switching to another vegetable oil would need several times the land for the same output, and the people squeezed hardest by a boycott are the smallholders with the least choice about what they plant on their few hectares. The useful question is not whether the palm should be grown at all, but who is made to carry the cost of growing the palm well.

Tally here - one mark per palm

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. Where did the oil palm originally come from, and what is its main advantage as a crop?

Q2. Why does a grower far from a mill end up with weaker bargaining power?

Q3. Why might a small grower delay replanting ageing trees for as long as possible?

Q4. What does the writer say is wrong with the usual campaign picture of palm oil?

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 4. Write the total in the box only when you have finished the whole grid.

82	38	69	19	15	82	63	37	26	33	93	81	13	63	80	67
43	87	77	45	63	73	86	17	18	74	55	95	30	89	44	21
92	37	42	54	47	25	11	92	50	11	39	38	53	33	23	67
35	83	37	44	92	40	97	66	45	15	93	50	27	77	83	25
93	24	53	29	42	75	67	64	25	23	94	63	50	77	39	76
46	52	10	98	46	41	61	77	68	81	94	37	43	71	76	66
78	48	44	97	54	58	17	88	67	79	77	17	24	94	41	93
15	93	82	85	22	59	95	68	37	48	23	34	63	86	80	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
2 8 7		
7 7 6		
6 8 2		
8 6 7		
9 7 6		
7 7 9		
2 1 6		
6 1 2		
3 2 3		
4 3 4		
6 5 4		
4 6 8		

4 Bridging - answer in a sentence each

Where this shows up outside the sheet.

Q1. Which of the two tasks faltered first, and what was happening in the text at that moment?

Q2. When you read something you disagree with, what happens to the rest of your attention?

Q3. How would you explain to a younger student why counting while reading is so tiring?

Answer key

Task 1 · tally
palm

8

Task 2 · crossed out
multiples of 7

15

Task 2 · counted
ending in 4

13

Task 3 · final total
middle digits

61

Task 1 - suggested answers

- Q1. It came from West Africa and produces more oil per hectare than any other oil crop.
- Q2. Cut fruit spoils within about a day, so the grower must sell quickly to whoever is near.
- Q3. Replanting means several years with no income at all before the new palms begin to yield.
- Q4. It is true but incomplete: alternatives need far more land, and boycotts hit the smallest growers hardest.

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.