# Year 5 reading comprehension: The Overland Telegraph

English · Reading comprehension
Level: Hard

Student: _____ Date: _____

**Instructions**
- Read the text first. There are 2 questions. Read each one carefully.
- Circle the best answer. Look back at the text to find the words that tell you.
- A grown-up can read the text aloud — that's fine.
- The answers are at the end. Check them together when you have finished.

## Questions

Read this, then answer questions 1–2.



### The Overland Telegraph

Before 1872, a letter from Australia to England took about two months to arrive by ship. A message sent along the new Overland Telegraph could arrive in a few hours. The line was planned by Charles Todd, who was South Australia’s Postmaster-General. Work began in 1870, and teams of men set up wooden and iron poles across about 3000 kilometres of bush and desert. Heat, floods and a shortage of water slowed the teams, and termites ate many of the wooden poles. In August 1872, the last wires were joined, and Australia was linked to the world by telegraph. The town of Alice Springs grew up near one of the stations, and it was named after Todd’s wife, Alice.

**1.** What does ‘linked’ tell us about Australia in the sixth line?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** It was cut off from other countries.
- ○ **B** It was joined to the rest of the world by the telegraph.
- ○ **C** It was moved closer to England by ship.

**2.** Which fact is true about the termites?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** They ate many of the wooden poles.
- ○ **B** They slowed the ships bringing letters.
- ○ **C** They carried messages along the line.

# Answer key

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**1.** B — It was joined to the rest of the world by the telegraph.

The text says: “In August 1872, the last wires were joined, and Australia was linked to the world by telegraph.” The text tells you how the word is used here.

**2.** A — They ate many of the wooden poles.

The text says: “Heat, floods and a shortage of water slowed the teams, and termites ate many of the wooden poles.” Read the whole sentence, not only the key word.