Year 6 reading comprehension: How We Hear

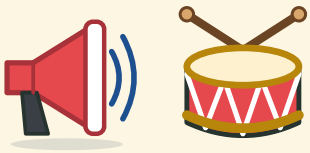
English · Reading comprehension
Level: Easy

Student: _____ Date: _____

Instructions
- Read the text first. There are 3 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 1–3.



How We Hear

Sound is made when something shakes, and the shaking travels through the air as waves. Your ear catches these waves and turns them into messages for your brain. First, the funnel-shaped outer ear collects the waves and sends them down a short tunnel. At the end of the tunnel the waves hit the eardrum, a thin skin that shakes like the top of a drum. The shaking moves three tiny bones in the middle ear, the smallest bones in your body. The smallest of them, the stirrup, is only about 3 millimetres long. The bones make the shaking stronger and pass it on to the inner ear. There the waves reach the cochlea, a tube curled like a snail shell and filled with fluid. Thousands of tiny hairs inside the cochlea move in the fluid, and each hair sends a signal along a nerve to the brain. Young people can hear sounds from about 20 shakes a second, which is a deep rumble, to about 20 000 shakes a second, which is a very high squeak. Many older adults cannot hear the highest sounds, because some of the tiny hairs wear out over time.

1. A child’s eardrum is torn and cannot shake properly. What is most likely to happen?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** The child would be able to hear only very high squeaks.

○ **B** The outer ear would stop collecting waves.

○ **C** Less of the shaking would reach the three tiny bones.

○ **D** The cochlea would stop having fluid in it.

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2. Why can many older adults not hear the highest sounds?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Some of the tiny hairs wear out over time.

○ **B** The cochlea has filled with too much fluid.

○ **C** The eardrum becomes too thick to shake.

○ **D** The three tiny bones grow too small to pass on the shaking.

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3. How many times as many shakes a second is the highest sound a young person can hear as the lowest?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** 10 000 times as many

○ **B** 100 times as many

○ **C** 19 980 times as many

○ **D** 1000 times as many

Answer key

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1. C — Less of the shaking would reach the three tiny bones.

The text says: “At the end of the tunnel the waves hit the eardrum, a thin skin that shakes like the top of a drum. The shaking moves three tiny bones in the middle ear, the smallest bones in your body.” The waves make the eardrum shake, and the shaking moves the three tiny bones. So: A torn eardrum shakes badly, so less shaking reaches the bones.

2. A — Some of the tiny hairs wear out over time.

The text says: “Many older adults cannot hear the highest sounds, because some of the tiny hairs wear out over time.” The words because and so point to the reason.

3. D — 1000 times as many

The text says: “Young people can hear sounds from about 20 shakes a second, which is a deep rumble, to about 20 000 shakes a second, which is a very high squeak.” 20 000 ÷ 20 = 1000. So the highest sound has about 1000 times as many shakes a second.