Year 6 reading comprehension: Lightning and Thunder

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.



Lightning and Thunder

During a thunderstorm, you always see the lightning flash before you hear the thunder. This happens even though both are made at the same moment, in the same place. Lightning is a giant spark of electricity that jumps between a cloud and the ground, or between parts of a cloud. The spark heats the air around it to nearly 30 000 degrees Celsius, which is hotter than the surface of the sun. The air expands so suddenly that it sends out a shock wave, and we hear that shock wave as thunder. Light travels about 300 000 kilometres every second, so the flash reaches your eyes almost at once. Sound travels much more slowly, at about 340 metres every second in air. That means that sound takes about three seconds to travel one kilometre. So if you count the seconds between the flash and the thunder, you can estimate how far away the lightning struck. If you count nine seconds, the strike was about three kilometres away. If the gap is only a few seconds, the lightning is very close.

1. What does ‘estimate’ mean in the ninth sentence?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** write down in a record

○ **B** measure exactly

○ **C** work out roughly

○ **D** stay away from

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2. You count 15 seconds between a flash and its thunder. About how far away did the lightning strike?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** 1.5 kilometres

○ **B** 5 kilometres

○ **C** 15 kilometres

○ **D** 45 kilometres

Answer key

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1. C — work out roughly

The text says: “So if you count the seconds between the flash and the thunder, you can estimate how far away the lightning struck.” The sentence around the word tells you what it means here.

2. B — 5 kilometres

The text says: “That means that sound takes about three seconds to travel one kilometre.” 15 ÷ 3 = 5. So the lightning struck about 5 kilometres away.