Grass is coloured ... red?
Further sentence completion norms for children
during a working memory reading task.


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Overview

Eighty children were asked to complete a series of sentences as part of working memory reading span test, 65 of whom also contributed responses from a testing session one year earlier. Data are provided on the words used to complete the 180 stimulus sentences.
Experimental subjects, design and method

In order to provide a measure of children’s ‘reading span’ (a measure of immediate or working memory), we asked children to read to themselves a (varying-length) set of sentences and supply the missing (final) word. Sixty-five children participated at time 1 (see Towse, Hutton, & Hitch, 1997) and 80 children participated at time 2 (twelve months later). For the latter group, the mean age was 10 years 5 months, range 8 years 10 months to 11 years 9 months.

Sentences were presented in large type (48 point font) as ‘cards’ on the screen of an Apple Powerbook 5300c computer (controlling a 10.25” TFT colour screen). Concurrent with this sentence task, children were asked to remember the words which they supplied for a subsequent recall exercise. Initially, two sentences would be presented, after which recall of both sentence-terminal words was requested. If children were able to remember all the words (in their correct serial order) on 2 out of 3 occasions at this or subsequent levels, then span length was increased by 1 and testing was continued. Where children failed to reach this criterion, testing was terminated for that experimental condition. Therefore, the number of sentences presented to children varied as a function of children’s proficiency at remembering the set of target words they had produced.

All sentences were sampled without replacement from a total pool of 180 items. Further, where a sentence was selected that was either particularly short or long in length, its counterpart (where the same completion word was expected) was not used elsewhere in the test administration. However, we made no effort to exclude responses from time 1 that reappeared at time 2 - it was felt that a gap of one year was sufficient to make any repetition essentially a novel sentence (particularly in the context of the number of sentences used on a testing situation, making any one item less distinctive).

The reading task was introduced using three practice sentences written on paper cards and presented prior to computer administration of the task. The three sentences (and the target words in parentheses) were:

“An insect that buzzes is called a...” (bee)
“The cat sat on the...” (mat)
“The cow jumped over the...” (moon)

Children invariably understood these practice sentences and produced the expected target word.

Results

As the tabled information illustrates, the sentences as a whole were very successful in generating the predicted target word from subjects. Indeed, it is evident that some sentences produced target words on 100% of occasions. Some sentences were found to generate alternative answers which were quite acceptable (e.g. sentence 164, where “water” was often used instead of “sea”). Occasionally, children failed to produce a word at all, and this is entered as a “---” response. There were only a few examples where subjects produced bizarre words, such as “My teeth are in my ..... case”, where it is not obvious that the subject had properly read or comprehended the sentence. Overall, however, target word responses were elicited. Given this high level of target word production, we conclude that subjects were able to read the sentences appropriately, and we take this as evidence that the level of sentence complexity level was acceptable.

In addition to documenting norms for these sentences, the memorability of the sentences is described for the second testing session. That is, the likelihood that a child would correctly
remember the target word (regardless of where the sentence itself appeared within a particular trial) was determined.

References


1. 'Choo-choo' goes the .... train
   Target answers: 33
   Non target answers: 2 (kettle, bird)

2. 'quack quack' said the .... duck
   Target answers: 35
   Non target answers: 0

3. A baby dog is called a .... puppy
   Target answers: 31
   Non target answers: 0

4. A bicycle has two round .... wheels
   Target answers: 18
   Non target answers: 5 (tyres x 5)

5. A clown always has a big smile on his.... face
   Target answers: 37
   Non target answers: 0

6. A clown has a happy .... face
   Target answers: 20
   Non target answers: 8 (clown x 2, person x 2, mouth, joke, day, smile)

7. A cow eats .... grass
   Target answers: 44
   Non target answers: 6 (food x 3, hay, meat, straw)

8. A cow lives in a field and eats the long green.... grass
   Target answers: 33
   Non target answers: 1 (leaves)

9. A dog and a cat and a mouse all walk on four.... legs
   Target answers: 39
   Non target answers: 9 (feet x 6, miles, paws x 2)

10. A fire feels very... hot
    Target answers: 38
    Non target answers: 0

11. A giraffe has a long.... neck
    Target answers: 37
    Non target answers: 1 (tail)

12. A giraffe is a tall animal with a great long.... neck
13. **A joke makes me... laugh**
   Target answers: 30
   Non target answers: 1 (giggle)

14. **A kitten grows up to be a... cat**
   Target answers: 32
   Non target answers: 1 (adult)

15. **A man wearing a crown is called... king**
   Target answers: 28
   Non target answers: 0

16. **A postbox is coloured... red**
   Target answers: 35
   Non target answers: 0

17. **A snail takes a long time to move because it is very... slow**
   Target answers: 31
   Non target answers: 3 (fat, heavy, slimy)

18. **A square has four straight... sides**
   Target answers: 15
   Non target answers: 15 (lines x 10, edges x 4, corners)

19. **A whale swims in the... sea**
   Target answers: 18
   Non target answers: 5 (ocean, water x 4)

20. **A window is made of... glass**
    Target answers: 24
    Non target answers: 0

21. **A woman wearing a crown is called... queen**
    Target answers: 21
    Non target answers: 0

22. **Add some sugar and then stir the tea with a tea... spoon**
    Target answers: 21
    Non target answers: 9 (bag x 7, cup, pot)

23. **After the number one is two and after the number two is... three**
    Target answers: 27
    Non target answers: 0

24. **After winter comes the... spring**
    Target answers: 20
Non target answers: 12 (summer x 11, autumn)

25. **An elephant is very big and has two great big.... ears**
   Target answers: 16
   Non target answers: 12 (feet x 4, horns x 2, legs x 2, trunks, tusks x 3)

26. **Ann always likes to eat a big bowl of strawberries and.... cream**
   Target answers: 28
   Non target answers: 7 (berries, ice cream x 2, sugar x 4)

27. **Ann likes strawberries and.... cream**
   Target answers: 19
   Non target answers: 4 (apples x 2, bananas, cherries, ice cream x 2, raspberries x 2)

28. **At night I go to bed and fall.... asleep**
   Target answers: 23
   Non target answers: 1 (off)

29. **At school we were told how to sing a.... song**
   Target answers: 23
   Non target answers: 6 (carol x 2, dance, hymn x 2, rope)

30. **At the end of my hand I have four fingers and one.... thumb**
   Target answers: 29
   Non target answers: 2 (finger, five)

31. **Ben clapped his.... hands**
   Target answers: 16
   Non target answers: 0

32. **Ben ran fast and won the.... race**
   Target answers: 29
   Non target answers: 5 (cup, game, medal x 2, prize)

33. **Ben ran faster and faster so he could try and win the.... race**
   Target answers: 24
   Non target answers: 1 (medal)

34. **Birds flap and flap their wings and.... fly**
   Target answers: 25
   Non target answers: 3 (cheep, flap, sing)

35. **Birds use wings to.... fly**
   Target answers: 33
   Non target answers: 1 (swing)

36. **Cars drive on the.... road**
   Target answers: 33
   Non target answers: 3 (left, wheels x 2)
37. Chris drank his orange... juice
Target answers: 39
Non target answers: 6 (at, carefully, drink, aid, squash, ----)

38. Chris squeezed some oranges and had some orange... juice
Target answers: 27
Non target answers: 4 (left, orange, peel, too)

39. Do you think Mark likes to drink a glass of coca... cola
Target answers: 23
Non target answers: 10 (at, chocolate x 3, milk x 2, pops, yes x 3)

40. Eight and one makes... nine
Target answers: 44
Non target answers: 1 (yes)

41. Every day I comb my... hair
Target answers: 51
Non target answers: 1 (day)

42. Every day in the morning I comb and brush my... hair
Target answers: 21
Non target answers: 4 (teeth x 4)

43. Every week we go to the library to read a... book
Target answers: 33
Non target answers: 0

44. Four and one makes... five
Target answers: 21
Non target answers: 1 (cakes)

45. Goldilocks and the three... bears
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 1 (wolves)

46. Grass is coloured... green
Target answers: 28
Non target answers: 1 (red)

47. He crossed the river in a rowing... boat
Target answers: 34
Non target answers: 1 (---)

48. He went to the disco for a... dance
Target answers: 18
Non target answers: 15 (hour, night x 2, party x 12)
49. Humpty Dumpty had a great... fall
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 1 (banana)

50. I am going to drive a... car
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 3 (lesson, mile, motorbike)

51. I am thirsty and I want a... drink
Target answers: 20
Non target answers: 0

52. I am tired at the end of the... day
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 7 (game, lesson, play, race x 2, walk, week)

53. I can find a post box - a post box is coloured... red
Target answers: 23
Non target answers: 0

54. I can fly in a... plane
Target answers: 26
Non target answers: 4 (aero, sky x 3)

55. I can look around and see things with my... eyes
Target answers: 27
Non target answers: 0

56. I can tell what time it is when I look at my wrist... watch
Target answers: 28
Non target answers: 0

57. I cut my food with a... knife
Target answers: 24
Non target answers: 2 (fork x 2)

58. I don't have a coat so when it rains I will get... wet
Target answers: 22
Non target answers: 0

59. I drink tea from a tea... cup
Target answers: 26
Non target answers: 9 (bag x 2, mug, pot x 6)

60. I eat with a knife and... fork
Target answers: 39
Non target answers: 0

61. I go to sleep in my... bed
62. I go to the cinema and watch a funny.... film
Target answers: 24
Non target answers: 6 (movie x 5, show)

63. I have a tooth brush and some tooth paste to clean my.... teeth
Target answers: 35
Non target answers: 0

64. I have a tooth brush to clean my.... teeth
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 0

65. I have four fingers and one.... thumb
Target answers: 19
Non target answers: 2 (hand x 2)

66. I hear with my.... ears
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 2 (friend, mum)

67. I like to paint on paper with a paint.... brush
Target answers: 33
Non target answers: 0

68. I like to play hide and.... seek
Target answers: 28
Non target answers: 2 (run, seat)

69. I like to read a.... book
Target answers: 21
Non target answers: 3 (bike x 2, comic)

70. I put a hat on my.... head
Target answers: 25
Non target answers: 1 (coat)

71. I see with my.... eyes
Target answers: 23
Non target answers: 0

72. I sit down and eat my dinner with a knife and.... fork
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 0

73. I smell with my.... nose
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 1 (feet)

74. I tell the time with a wrist.... watch
Target answers: 36
Non target answers: 0

75. I wave goodbye with my.... hand
Target answers: 36
Non target answers: 2 (mum x 2)

76. I wear socks on my.... feet
Target answers: 28
Non target answers: 0

77. If I hear a funny joke it makes me smile and.... laugh
Target answers: 36
Non target answers: 1 (fire)

78. If it rains I will get.... wet
Target answers: 25
Non target answers: 0

79. If my hands are cold I wear my.... gloves
Target answers: 36
Non target answers: 1 (mittens)

80. If the sun is hot and bright I put a hat on my.... head
Target answers: 22
Non target answers: 4 (forehead, hat x 2, glasses)

81. If you eat too much you will get.... fat
Target answers: 12
Non target answers: 14 (ache, full, ill, indigestion, sick x 10)

82. In the middle of the fire it feels very.... hot
Target answers: 25
Non target answers: 4 (scared, warm x 3)

83. In the sky I can see the moon come out at.... night
Target answers: 34
Non target answers: 1 (dark)

84. In the spring leaves start growing on the big high.... trees
Target answers: 25
Non target answers: 2 (branches, hill)

85. In winter we wear a coat because it is so.... cold
Target answers: 23
Non target answers: 2 (hot, ---)
86. Jack and Jill went up the... hill  
Target answers: 31  
Non target answers: 0

87. Jane skips with a skipping... rope  
Target answers: 33  
Non target answers: 0

88. Jane went to the baker and he then made a loaf of... bread  
Target answers: 36  
Non target answers: 1 (mess)

89. Jim likes to eat fish and... chips  
Target answers: 39  
Non target answers: 1 (trout)

90. Just in time the football team scored the winning... goal  
Target answers: 19  
Non target answers: 2 (game, team)

91. Leaves blow in the... wind  
Target answers: 22  
Non target answers: 3 (air, autumn, tree)

92. Leaves grow on the big... trees  
Target answers: 27  
Non target answers: 0

93. Mark drinks coca... cola  
Target answers: 33  
Non target answers: 1 (---)

94. Mark heard the story of Goldilocks and the three... bears  
Target answers: 42  
Non target answers: 1 (geese)

95. Mark put the lights on the Christmas... tree  
Target answers: 33  
Non target answers: 4 (cake x 2, day, time)

96. Mary unlocks the door with her... key  
Target answers: 37  
Non target answers: 1 (hand)

97. Mum sat down in an arm... chair  
Target answers: 34  
Non target answers: 0
98. My dog wags his .... tail
Target answers: 25
Non target answers: 0

99. My feet are at the end of my .... legs
Target answers: 14
Non target answers: 6 (ankles, bed, body, toes x 2, walk)

100. My hand is at the end of my .... arm
Target answers: 21
Non target answers: 0

101. My pet barks - it is a .... dog
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 0

102. My teeth are in my .... mouth
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 4 (case, clean x 2, jaw)

103. On a bright sunny day the sky is coloured .... blue
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 1 (white)

104. One game for friends to play is hide and .... seek
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 1 (play)

105. Pam put on her socks and .... shoes
Target answers: 35
Non target answers: 8 (coat x 2, dress, morning, scarf, trainers, ---- x 2)

106. Pam was happy and put on her bright new socks and .... shoes
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 4 (dress, pants x 2, trousers)

107. Paul's dog can run very .... fast
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 0

108. Paul's dog plays in the park and it can run very .... fast
Target answers: 37
Non target answers: 2 (exhausting, muddy)

109. People with lots of money are called .... rich
Target answers: 28
Non target answers: 8 (king, millionaires x 6, ---)
110. Robert spent his money at the sweet.... shop  
Target answers: 23  
Non target answers: 0

111. Seven days make a.... week  
Target answers: 38  
Non target answers: 1 (cake)

112. Sometimes I go to a swimming.... pool  
Target answers: 27  
Non target answers: 7 (class, club, gala, lesson x 3, session)

113. Sometimes we go out and eat some fish and.... chips  
Target answers: 33  
Non target answers: 1 (tea)

114. Stir the tea with a tea.... spoon  
Target answers: 37  
Non target answers: 5 (bag x 5)

115. Sue has her own little room in a great big.... house  
Target answers: 29  
Non target answers: 5 (bed, bedroom x 2, mess, nan, room)

116. Sue lives in a.... house  
Target answers: 20  
Non target answers: 1 (flat)

117. Teacher told the class a.... story  
Target answers: 24  
Non target answers: 4 (lesson, poem, sentence, sum)

118. That shiny new bike in the bike shop has two round.... wheels  
Target answers: 18  
Non target answers: 6 (tyres)

119. The baker made a loaf of.... bread  
Target answers: 31  
Non target answers: 0

120. The cinema shows a.... film  
Target answers: 21  
Non target answers: 4 (movie x 3, picture x 6, play)

121. The colour of a banana is.... yellow  
Target answers: 23  
Non target answers: 0

122. The dog wagged his.... tail
123. The dog was very happy and so he wagged his.... tail
Target answers: 37
Non target answers: 0

124. The farmer lives on a.... farm
Target answers: 45
Non target answers: 2 (field, hill)

125. The farmer look after his animals down on his.... farm
Target answers: 27
Non target answers: 0

126. The fire engine came and the fire man put out the.... fire
Target answers: 30
Non target answers: 1 (smoke)

127. The fire man put out the.... fire
Target answers: 23
Non target answers: 1 (helmet)

128. The football team scored a.... goal
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 0

129. The hammer hit the.... nail
Target answers: 27
Non target answers: 9 (bat, door x 2, wall x 5, wood x 2)

130. The leaves on the trees are coloured.... green
Target answers: 27
Non target answers: 5 (brown)

131. The magician waves his magic.... wand
Target answers: 25
Non target answers: 1 (flag)

132. The moon comes out at.... night
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 2 (dark)

133. The next number after one and two and three is.... four
Target answers: 34
Non target answers: 0

134. The number which always comes after seven and eight is.... nine
Target answers: 32
135. The number which always comes after three and four is.... five
Target answers: 33
Non target answers: 2 (four, two)

136. The opposite of bad is.... good
Target answers: 35
Non target answers: 0

137. The opposite of black is.... white
Target answers: 35
Non target answers: 0

138. The opposite of dark is.... light
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 1 (on)

139. The opposite of fat is.... thin
Target answers: 23
Non target answers: 5 (skinny x 2, slim x 3)

140. The opposite of hot is.... cold
Target answers: 30
Non target answers: 0

141. The opposite of long is.... short
Target answers: 35
Non target answers: 4 (small)

142. The pirate found silver and.... gold
Target answers: 30
Non target answers: 0

143. The rabbit ran down his rabbit.... hole
Target answers: 23
Non target answers: 3 (burrow, friend, pen)

144. The rocket left earth and went up and up into outer.... space
Target answers: 52
Non target answers: 0

145. The rocket went up into outer.... space
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 0

146. The rubbish goes in a rubbish.... bin
Target answers: 27
Non target answers: 1 (bag)
147. The sky is coloured.... blue
Target answers: 34
Non target answers: 0

148. The speed of a snail is.... slow
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 0

149. The sun shines in the.... sky
Target answers: 15
Non target answers: 13 (afternoon, day x 7, house, morning x 2, north, window)

150. There are 7 days in a.... week
Target answers: 30
Non target answers: 0

151. There are 12 months in a.... year
Target answers: 41
Non target answers: 2 (week)

152. There are 60 minutes in an.... hour
Target answers: 29
Non target answers: 0

153. They played football with a foot.... ball
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 1 (at)

154. They washed the dirty dog until he was.... clean
Target answers: 33
Non target answers: 0

155. Three and one makes.... four
Target answers: 25
Non target answers: 0

156. To fetch some water, Jack and Jill went up the.... hill
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 0

157. To finish the story I turned the last.... page
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 1 (----)

158. To make a snowman you need.... snow
Target answers: 41
Non target answers: 0
159. To make the trick work the magician waves his magic... wand
Target answers: 26
Non target answers: 2 (stick)

160. Twinkle twinkle little.... star
Target answers: 37
Non target answers: 0

161. Two and one makes.... three
Target answers: 34
Non target answers: 1 (four)

162. We all sat down and the teacher told the class a funny.... story
Target answers: 18
Non target answers: 10 (class, joke x 8, trick)

163. We live on the planet.... earth
Target answers: 22
Non target answers: 2 (mars)

164. We went to the beach and we had a swim in the cold... sea
Target answers: 15
Non target answers: 27 (beach, water x 26)

165. When babies are hungry they.... cry
Target answers: 31
Non target answers: 4 (eat x 3, milk)

166. When David cleans he sweeps the.... floor
Target answers: 28
Non target answers: 3 (carpet, dust, kitchen)

167. When I have a cold I have to blow my.... nose
Target answers: 37
Non target answers: 2 (face, ----)

168. When I wake up I open my eyes and get out of.... bed
Target answers: 38
Non target answers: 0

169. When it snows every thing turns the colour.... white
Target answers: 20
Non target answers: 1 (around)

170. When Mary got home she unlocked the door with her.... key
Target answers: 37
Non target answers: 1 (hand)

171. When Mum is tired she likes to sit down in an arm.... chair
172. When you want to see in the dark you can turn on a... light
Target answers: 26
Non target answers: 4 (torch)

173. While sleeping I had a strange... dream
Target answers: 27
Non target answers: 3 (feeling, nightmare, noise)

174. Wool comes from... sheep
Target answers: 34
Non target answers: 0

175. Worms live under the... ground
Target answers: 30
Non target answers: 4 (earth, log, soil x 2)

176. You can build a house with... bricks
Target answers: 40
Non target answers: 0

177. You can see my white teeth when I open my... mouth
Target answers: 28
Non target answers: 0

178. You can see through a window when it is made of... glass
Target answers: 33
Non target answers: 0

179. You get hungry if you have no... food
Target answers: 30
Non target answers: 1 (dinner)

180. You paint with a paint... brush
Target answers: 32
Non target answers: 1 (pot)

Sentences ordered by rate of non-target word production

Sentences are sorted by the likelihood that the predicted (target) word will be produced, listing first those sentences with the lowest 'miss' rate (values in parentheses indicate the number of times each sentence was presented) - that is, the most consistent sentence frames are presented first. Due to the modest sample size, differences beyond the second decimal place are ignored here:
The rocket left earth and went up and up into outer space.

To make a snowman you need snow.

You can build a house with bricks.

I eat with a knife and fork.

A fire feels very hot.

When I wake up I open my eyes and get out of bed.

A clown always has a big smile on his face.

The dog was very happy and so he wagged his tail.

Twinkle twinkle little star.

I tell the time with a wrist watch.

The dog wagged his tail.

‘quack quack’ said the duck.

A postbox is coloured red.

I have a tooth brush and some tooth paste to clean my teeth.

The opposite of bad is good.

The opposite of black is white.

Mum sat down in an arm chair.

The next number after one and two and three is four.

The sky is coloured blue.

Wool comes from sheep.

Every week we go to the library to read a book.

I like to paint on paper with a paint brush.

Jane skips with a skipping rope.

They washed the dirty dog until he was clean.

You can see through a window when it is made of glass.

My pet barks - it is a dog.

The rocket went up into outer space.

To fetch some water, Jack and Jill went up the hill.

A baby dog is called a puppy.

Jack and Jill went up the hill.

Paul’s dog can run very fast.

The baker made a loaf of bread.

The opposite of hot is cold.

The pirate found silver and gold.

There are 7 days in a week.

I have a tooth brush to clean my teeth.

I sit down and eat my dinner with a knife and fork.

The football team scored a goal.

The speed of a snail is slow.

There are 60 minutes in an hour.

A man wearing a crown is called a king.

I can tell what time it is when I look at my wrist watch.

I wear socks on my feet.

You can see my white teeth when I open my mouth.

After the number one is two and after the number two is three.

I can look around and see things with my eyes.

Leaves grow on the big trees.

The farmer look after his animals down on his farm.

If it rains I will get wet.
My dog wags his tail
Three and one makes four
When Mum is tired she likes to sit down in an armchair
A window is made of glass
I can find a post box - a post box is coloured red
I see with my eyes
Robert spent his money at the sweet shop
The colour of a banana is yellow
I don't have a coat so when it rains I will get wet
A woman wearing a crown is called queen
My hand is at the end of my arm
I am thirsty and I want a drink
Ben clapped his hands
Eight and one makes nine
Every day I comb my hair
Mark heard the story of Goldilocks and the three bears
A cow lives in a field and eats the long green grass
A giraffe has a long neck
A joke makes me laugh
A kitten grows up to be a cat
Birds use wings to fly
Goldilocks and the three bears
Grass is coloured green
He crossed the river in a rowing boat
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
I smell with my nose
If I hear a funny joke it makes me smile and laugh
If my hands are cold I wear my gloves
In the sky I can see the moon come out at night
Jane went to the baker and he then made a loaf of bread
Jim likes to eat fish and chips
Mark drinks coca cola
Mary unlocks the door with her key
On a bright sunny day the sky is coloured blue
One game for friends to play is hide and seek
Seven days make a week
Sometimes we go out and eat some fish and chips
The fire engine came and the fire man put out the fire
The opposite of dark is light
They played football with a ball
To finish the story I turned the last page
Two and one makes three
When Mary got home she unlocked the door with her key
You get hungry if you have no food
You paint with a paint brush
At night I go to bed and fall asleep
Ben ran faster and faster so he could try and win the race
I put a hat on my head
The farmer lives on a farm
The fire man put out the fire.
The magician waves his magic wand.
The rubbish goes in a rubbish bin.
Four and one makes five.
I go to sleep in my bed.
I wave goodbye with my hand.
Paul's dog plays in the park and it can run very fast.
Sue lives in a house.
There are 12 months in a year.
When I have a cold I have to blow my nose.
When it snows everything turns the colour white.
'Choo-choo' goes the train.
A giraffe is a tall animal with a great long neck.
At the end of my hand I have four fingers and one thumb.
I hear with my ears.
The moon comes out at night.
The number which always comes after three and four is five.
I like to play hide and seek.
In the spring leaves start growing on the big high trees.
To make the trick work the magician waves his magic wand.
Cars drive on the road.
I cut my food with a knife.
In winter we wear a coat because it is so cold.
We live on the planet earth.
A snail takes a long time to move because it is very slow.
I am going to drive a car.
The number which always comes after seven and eight is nine.
While sleeping I had a strange dream.
I have four fingers and one thumb.
Just in time the football team scored the winning goal.
The opposite of long is short.
When David cleans he sweeps the floor.
Birds flap and flap their wings and fly.
Mark put the lights on the Christmas tree.
My teeth are in my mouth.
Pam was happy and put on her bright new socks and shoes.
When babies are hungry they cry.
A cow eats grass.
Leaves blow in the wind.
Stir the tea with a tea spoon.
The rabbit ran down his rabbit hole.
Worms live under the ground.
Chris drank his orange juice.
Chris squeezed some oranges and had some orange juice.
I can fly in a plane.
I like to read a book.
When you want to see in the dark you can turn on a light.
In the middle of the fire it feels very hot.
Teacher told the class a story.
Ben ran fast and won the race.
If the sun is hot and bright I put a hat on my head.
Sue has her own little room in a great big house.
Every day in the morning I comb and brush my hair.
The cinema shows a film.
The leaves on the trees are coloured green.
Ann likes strawberries and cream.
I am tired at the end of the day.
The opposite of fat is thin.
A dog and a cat and a mouse all walk on four legs.
Pam put on her socks and shoes.
Ann always likes to eat a big bowl of strawberries and cream.
I go to the cinema and watch a funny film.
At school we were told how to sing a song.
Sometimes I go to a swimming pool.
A bicycle has two round wheels.
A whale swims in the sea.
People with lots of money are called rich.
That shiny new bike in the bike shop has two round wheels.
The hammer hit the nail.
I drink tea from a tea cup.
A clown has a happy face.
Add some sugar and then stir the tea with a tea spoon.
My feet are at the end of my legs.
Do you think Mark likes to drink a glass of coca cola.
We all sat down and the teacher told the class a funny story.
After winter comes the spring.
An elephant is very big and has two great big ears.
He went to the disco for a dance.
The sun shines in the sky.
A square has four straight sides.
If you eat too much you will get fat.
We went to the beach and we had a swim in the cold sea.

The memorability of sentences

Sentences ordered by their memorability (the proportion of occasions when the produced word could not be remembered subsequently, where serial order of recall was not required). Values in parentheses denote the number of times the sentences were presented:

0 (18) Just in time the football team scored the winning goal
0 (16) Ann likes strawberries and cream
0 (16) Teacher told the class a story
.05 A cow lives in a field and eats the long green grass
.05 Do you think Mark likes to drink a glass of coca cola
.05 In winter we wear a coat because it is so cold
.06 Ann always likes to eat a big bowl of strawberries and cream
.06 I can tell what time it is when I look at my wrist watch
I have a tooth brush and some tooth paste to clean my teeth.
I have four fingers and one thumb.
Jack and Jill went up the hill.
The farmer lives on a farm.
We all sat down and the teacher told the class a funny story.
When you want to see in the dark you can turn on a light.
A woman wearing a crown is called a queen.
Every day in the morning I comb and brush my hair.
Mum sat down in an arm chair.
A window is made of glass.
An elephant is very big and has two great big ears.
Every day I comb my hair.
I am thirsty and I want a drink.
Paul's dog plays in the park and it can run very fast.
In the sky I can see the moon come out at night.
Sue lives in a house.
The rocket left earth and went up and up into outer space.
When I wake up I open my eyes and get out of bed.
When Mary got home she unlocked the door with her key.
When Mum is tired she likes to sit down in an arm chair.
I like to paint on paper with a paint brush.
I can find a post box - a post box is coloured red.
The number which always comes after three and four is five.
A giraffe is a tall animal with a great long neck.
I sit down and eat my dinner with a knife and fork.
Pam was happy and put on her bright new socks and shoes.
That shiny new bike in the bike shop has two round wheels.
The magician waves his magic wand.
To fetch some water, Jack and Jill went up the hill.
The fire engine came and the fire man put out the fire.
The fire man put out the fire.
The rocket went up into outer space.
A clown has a happy face.
Ben ran fast and won the race.
Mark drinks coca cola.
A snail takes a long time to move because it is very slow.
I eat with a knife and fork.
Pam put on her socks and shoes.
After winter comes the spring.
I go to sleep in my bed.
In the spring leaves start growing on the big high trees.
The dog wagged his tail.
The football team scored a goal.
The speed of a snail is slow.
A baby dog is called a puppy.
In the middle of the fire it feels very hot.
Mark put the lights on the Christmas tree.
One game for friends to play is hide and seek.
Sue has her own little room in a great big house.
Eight and one makes... nine
If it rains I will get... wet
Jim likes to eat fish and... chips
On a bright sunny day the sky is coloured... blue
Stir the tea with a tea... spoon
When I have a cold I have to blow my... nose
Birds flap and flap their wings and... fly
I like to read a... book
My feet are at the end of my... legs
The moon comes out at... night
The opposite of dark is... light
Worms live under the... ground
You can see my white teeth when I open my... mouth
Mark heard the story of Goldilocks and the three... bears
Sometimes we go out and eat some fish and... chips
A clown always has a big smile on his... face
Cars drive on the... road
If the sun is hot and bright I put a hat on my... head
People with lots of money are called... rich
To make the trick work the magician waves his magic... wand
We went to the beach and we had a swim in the cold... sea
Robert spent his money at the sweet... shop
A cow eats... grass
My pet barks - it is a... dog
The opposite of fat is... thin
You paint with a paint... brush
A kitten grows up to be a... cat
A whale swims in the... sea
Add some sugar and then stir the tea with a tea... spoon
I can look around and see things with my... eyes
The farmer look after his animals down on his... farm
The pirate found silver and... gold
We live on the planet... earth
He crossed the river in a rowing... boat
Jane went to the baker and he then made a loaf of... bread
The opposite of black is... white
The sky is coloured... blue
Three and one makes... four
Chris squeezed some oranges and had some orange... juice
He went to the disco for a... dance
I cut my food with a... knife
My teeth are in my... mouth
Paul's dog can run very... fast
Two and one makes... three
A fire feels very... hot
At night I go to bed and fall... asleep
Four and one makes... five
I have a tooth brush to clean my... teeth
If I hear a funny joke it makes me smile and... laugh
When it snows every thing turns the colour... white
A giraffe has a long... neck
After the number one is two and after the number two is... three
Chris drank his orange... juice
The cinema shows a... film
The leaves on the trees are coloured... green
The rabbit ran down his rabbit... hole
The next number after one and two and three is... four
The opposite of hot is... cold
Humpty Dumpty had a great... fall
I put a hat on my... head
The baker made a loaf of... bread
They washed the dirty dog until he was... clean
'quack quack' said the... duck
At the end of my hand I have four fingers and one... thumb
Wool comes from... sheep
You can see through a window when it is made of... glass
I am going to drive a... car
A dog and a cat and a mouse all walk on four... legs
A man wearing a crown is called... king
A postbox is coloured... red
I don't have a coat so when it rains I will get... wet
If my hands are cold I wear my... gloves
Leaves blow in the... wind
My hand is at the end of my... arm
At school we were told how to sing a... song
I wave goodbye with my... hand
The number which always comes after seven and eight is... nine
They played football with a foot... ball
When babies are hungry they... cry
Birds use wings to... fly
I go to the cinema and watch a funny... film
I hear with my... ears
If you eat too much you will get... fat
I drink tea from a tea... cup
The hammer hit the... nail
There are 7 days in a... week
The sun shines in the... sky
Twinkle twinkle little... star
The opposite of long is... short
Mary unlocks the door with her... key
The dog was very happy and so he wagged his... tail
Sometimes I go to a swimming... pool
The rubbish goes in a rubbish... bin
Jane skips with a skipping... rope
You get hungry if you have no food.
I see with my eyes.
I tell the time with a wrist watch.
You can build a house with bricks.
I am tired at the end of the day.
I can fly in a plane.
I smell with my nose.
My dog wags his tail.
A square has four straight sides.
Leaves grow on the big trees.
While sleeping I had a strange dream.
A bicycle has two round wheels.
A joke makes me laugh.
The colour of a banana is yellow.
The opposite of bad is good.
To make a snowman you need snow.
When David cleans he sweeps the floor.
I like to play hide and seek.
Seven days make a week.
I wear socks on my feet.
Ben clapped his hands.
‘Choo-choo’ goes the train.
There are 12 months in a year.
To finish the story I turned the last page.
There are 60 minutes in an hour.
Sample task. Complete the sentences below using words taken from the reading passage. Use NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer. Write your answers in boxes 1-3 on your answer sheet. 1) One positive outcome was that the inquiries into the Titanic disaster sought to improve safety procedures by initiating . How to approach sentence completion questions. Step 1: Read the instructions carefully. Note that in the sample task you must only use words from the reading passage, and that you may use no more than three words to complete each sentence. Step 2: Briefly read through all the incomplete sentences to get an idea of what information you will have to find in the text. Step 3: Read the first sentence more carefully. Decide what information you will need. IELTS sentence completion questions are very common in IELTS reading. This practice is to help you understand about the importance of paraphrasing. You need to learn which words can and cannot be paraphrased. Read the passage below and then answer the questions. Penguin Facts. This distinct coloring is thought to hide penguins from predators in the sea. Besides its coloring, a penguin’s body is designed for swimming, and includes tapering at both ends of the body for hydrodynamics, paddle-like wings and web-shaped feet. Questions 1-2 Complete the sentences. Choose no more than two words and / or a number from the passage for each answer. 1. The ostrich, emu, kiwi and penguin are from the same group of __________ birds.