

Easy English NEWS



December 2023

Cloze Exercises, Short-answer Tests, and Critical-thinking Questions

To the Teacher

Cloze Exercises

Replanting Our Forests
U.S. Citizenship
Hanukkah
Prepare for Winter
New Year's Eve
Move Those Muscles!
A Visit from Saint Nicholas

Which Word Does not Belong?

Short-answer Tests

Replanting Our Forests
U.S. Citizenship
Events in December (two pages)
Move those Muscles!
Clement Clarke Moore and America's Most Famous Poem (two pages)

Critical-thinking and Creative-thinking Questions

Answers

To the Teacher

Thank you for downloading the free supplementary tests for *Easy English NEWS*. I hope these will save you many hours of work each month and will help expand your students' reading skills, vocabulary, and retention of important information.

Each month's *Cloze Exercises and Short-Answer Tests* will be posted at the website by the first of the month, if not earlier. Many of the tests are useful with or without *Easy English NEWS*.

There are dozens of ways to use the tests. Experiment to see the methods that work best for your classes. Some techniques will be better for students with less command of English, and others appropriate for those with greater fluency. You can alternate the ways you use them to provide more variety in lessons.

CLOZE EXERCISES

The purpose of the cloze exercises is to present a small amount of important material in another format to enhance comprehension and retention, and reinforce vocabulary.

- The cloze exercises may be used before or after reading the article. The exercises are taken directly from articles in the paper so students can check their own or others' work by referring back to the articles.
- If you assign a cloze exercise before reading the article, it serves as an introduction to reading the full article. Use this with students with better reading ability.
- To increase the challenge, cut off the word bank at the bottom of the page before duplicating the cloze exercises. Students can work individually, or in pairs or small groups. They can use their newspapers or not.
- As a spelling test (and listening exercise): Dictate the sentences including the missing word for the students to write in.
- As copy practice: Students can copy the entire selection, filling in the missing words.
- As capitalization practice: Words in the word bank

are intentionally not capitalized unless it is a proper name. Students can practice capitalization by adding capital letters where it is necessary.

WHICH WORD DOES NOT BELONG?

Vocabulary, logic, and discussion practice. Students read the four words in each row, and decide how three of the words go together and one does not. There might be more than one possible answer in each group of words.

- Have students circle their choices, and then discuss them. Students should be able to give their reasons for choosing a word that doesn't belong. *Any good reason makes their answer correct.*
- Students can work in small groups to discuss the reasons for their answers. They can write out their reasons for the decision.
- Teach the patterns:
A, B, and D are all _____.
C is not a _____.
Or: B, C, and D are all kinds of _____. A is not.
Or: You can find A, B, and C in a _____. And so forth.

SHORT-ANSWER TESTS

These tests focus on fact-gathering.

- You may give these tests as pre-tests to learn what students already know about the topic and again as post-tests to see what they have learned.
- After reading the article, students can read the questions aloud in class and give the answers orally.
- You can let the students do the tests as open book (newspaper) tests.
- Students can work in pairs or groups to come up with the answers after having read the article.
- Students can use the Answer Page to correct their own or others' answers.
- You can give the same test a week or more later to evaluate students' retention of the information.

Name _____ Date _____

Replanting Our Forests

Every year, _____ burn in forests across the world. They **destroy*** _____ of acres of land. The fire _____ houses, buildings, trees, and plants. People and animals _____ their homes.

Forests help keep the world _____. The trees take in _____ and make oxygen. They help filter and control the water we _____ from the ground. More than _____ of all land animals live in forests. It is important to replant forests that have been _____. But it is _____ easy, and it is expensive.

WORD BANK

healthy	burns	carbon dioxide	millions	not
wildfires	lose	destroyed	half	get

Name _____ Date _____

U.S. Citizenship

Citizenship means that a person is a _____ of a country. Each country has _____ rules and benefits for its citizens. The U.S. Constitution _____ citizenship in the United States. It lists the _____ and responsibilities American citizens have.

Rights

American citizens have the right to live and work in _____. They can leave the country and come back _____ they want. They can also stay away for as _____ as they want to. They have the right to vote in _____ and to run for political offices. A person must be a U.S. _____ to get most jobs with the federal government.

Responsibilities

U.S. citizens also have responsibilities. They must pay _____ and state taxes.

WORD BANK

defines	elections	whenever	different	long
member	citizen	America	federal	rights

Name _____ Date _____

Hanukkah

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday that lasts _____ days. This year, it begins the _____ of Thursday, December 7. It ends Friday, December 15. During this time, Jewish people _____ the “Miracle of the Lights.” They light a _____ and say special prayers. They use a shamash (helper) candle to light one other candle the _____ night. On the second night of _____, they light two candles. On the third night, they light three candles, and so _____.

Families get _____ for a big dinner. _____ play a special Hanukkah game with a dreidel. They receive Hanukkah _____.

WORD BANK

evening

menorah

Hanukkah

forth

gelt

children

remember

together

eight

first

Name _____ Date _____

Prepare for Winter

December 21 is the first day of _____. It is the _____ day of the year.

Are you from a warm _____? Is this your first winter in the _____ States? Are you _____ in a northern state? If the answers are *yes*, get _____ for cold weather. It may surprise you.

Ask your teacher or your neighbors about the weather you can _____ this winter. Be sure that you and your family have warm coats, _____, scarves, hats, boots, and gloves for the cold days in December, January, and February.

It _____ a lot of money to heat a home. Older windows _____ cold air in and warm air out.

WORD BANK

sweaters

United

ready

expect

now

shortest

winter

country

costs

let

Name _____ Date _____

New Year's Eve

December 31 is New Year's Eve.

Many people have _____ in their homes with family and friends.

Restaurants, bars, and _____ also have special New Year's Eve parties.

The _____ New Year's Eve party in the U.S. is in Times Square, New York City. Thousands of people come to 42nd Street and _____.

Many popular singers and bands _____ them. People wait for _____. Ten seconds before 12 a.m., a large ball of _____ starts to slowly drop from a tower at One Times Square.

As the ball comes down, people count down: *ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one*. When the ball reaches the _____ of the tower, everyone shouts "_____ New Year!"

They hug and kiss their _____ and even strangers. There is a lot of noise from fireworks, noisemakers, and bells.

WORD BANK

biggest	Broadway	entertain	parties	midnight
nightclubs	friends	happy	lights	bottom

Name _____ Date _____

Move Those Muscles!

Dr. Majid Ali

Muscles make up 30 to 45 percent of your body _____. You can _____ some of your muscles. These are _____ muscles. You _____ these muscles to stand up, walk, run, pick things up, rock a baby, smile, type on a keyboard, work, and play.

Other muscles are controlled by our _____ stem. These are involuntary _____. You don't have to _____ about breathing or making your _____ beat.

Some muscles are _____ voluntary *and* involuntary. You can slow down or speed up your breathing. You can stop breathing for a _____ time when you swim underwater.

WORD BANK

short

both

weight

brain

think

control

use

muscles

heart

voluntary

Name _____ Date _____

A Visit from Saint Nicholas

'Twas the _____ before Christmas,

When all through the _____

Not a creature was stirring,

Not _____ a mouse;

The _____ were hung by the chimney with care,

In hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be _____;

The children were nestled all _____ in their beds,

While visions of sugar-plums _____ in their heads;

And Ma in her kerchief, and I in my _____,

Had just settled our brains for a long _____'s nap.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,

I sprang from my bed to see what was the _____.

WORD BANK

stockings

house

night

danced

snug

winter

even

matter

there

cap

Name _____ Date _____

Which Word Does Not Belong?

Three words in each row go together. One word does not belong with them. Draw a circle around the word that does not belong. Be able to explain your reasons.

	A	B	C	D
1.	pine	fir	spruce	grass
2.	lightning	campfire	rain	arson
3.	fishing pole	tree climber	potato gun	drone
4.	hike	swim	run	walk
5.	birthright	acquisition	naturalization	immigration
6.	right	responsibility	application	benefits
7.	menorah	stocking	dreidel	gelt
8.	flip flops	hat	scarf	boots
9.	inn	stable	mall	manger
10.	tree	stocking	presents	ball
11.	placemats	champagne	Auld Lang Syne	toast
12.	lungs	carbohydrates	heart	brain

Name _____ Date _____

I. Replanting Our Forests

1. What burns in forests across the world every year? _____
2. What do trees make with carbon dioxide? _____
3. What filters and controls the water we get from the ground? _____
4. What is it called when someone sets a wildfire on purpose? _____
5. What starts wildfires by striking trees and plants? _____
6. What makes wildfires worse? _____ and _____
7. How many fires burned from January to October this year? _____
8. How many acres were burned in these fires? _____
9. Where do pine, fir, cedar, and redwood seeds come from? _____
10. What is the best way to harvest cones from trees? _____
11. What are the baby trees called? _____
12. What groups are trying to train new climbers? _____
and _____
13. What do governments hope to slow down by replanting U.S. forests? _____

Name _____ Date _____

II. U.S. Citizenship

1. What defines citizenship in the United States? _____

2. What two things do all U.S. citizens have? _____ and

3. What are rights of U.S. citizens? Mark your answers.

a. live in the U.S.

b. work in the U.S.

c. break U.S. laws

d. leave the country

e. come back to the U.S.

f. vote

g. own a house

h. own a car

i. hold political office

4. What are responsibilities of U.S. citizens? Mark your answers.

a. pay taxes

b. travel

c. serve on a jury

d. sing the national anthem

e. respond to the census

f. open a bank account

5. What two ways can someone become a U.S. citizen? _____ and

6. What is it called when someone gets citizenship at birth? _____

7. What is the application for U.S. citizenship called? _____

8. How much does it cost to apply for U.S. citizenship now? _____

Name _____ Date _____

III. Events in December

1. For how many days do Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah? _____
2. What does a menorah hold? _____
3. What do Jewish children play with on Hanukkah? _____
4. What is the name for chocolate covered in shiny gold paper? _____
5. What is the first day of winter? _____
6. What should be in a car's radiator in very cold weather? _____
7. On what day did the Wright brothers fly the first heavier than air flying machine?

8. Who flew the plane 852 feet in 59 seconds? _____
9. What is the Celsius temperature when it is 32 degrees F.? _____
10. What is the Celsius temperature when it is 212 degrees F.? _____
11. On what day is Christmas? _____
12. According to the Bible, where was Jesus born? _____

Name _____ Date _____

III. Events in December (continued)

13. How do people celebrate Christmas? Mark your answers.

- a. give gifts b. send cards c. bake cookies d. go fishing
- e. watch football f. decorate trees g. hang stockings

14. What holiday begins on December 26? _____

15. How do people celebrate it? Mark your answers.

- a. light candles b. make crafts c. go caroling d. have a feast

16. On what day is New Year's Eve? _____

17. Where is the biggest New Year's Eve party in the U.S.? _____

18. What traditional song do people sing at midnight on New Year's Eve?

19. How many time zones are in the United States? _____

20. Is drunk driving a big problem on New Year's Eve? YES NO

Name _____ Date _____

IV. Dr. Majid Ali: Move Those Muscles!

1. What percent of your body weight is muscle? _____

2. What controls our involuntary muscles? _____

3. Are these actions voluntary, involuntary, or both?

a. standing _____ b. breathing _____

c. beating heart _____ d. smiling _____

e. working _____ f. blinking _____

g. raising your hand _____ h. playing _____

4. What does your blood bring to your muscles? _____ and

_____.

5. What does blood take away from muscles? _____ and

_____.

6. Where do muscles get energy during a short race? _____

7. What do muscles burn during slow, continuous activities? _____

Name _____ Date _____

V. Clement Clarke Moore and America's Most Famous Poem

1. Where did Clement Clarke Moore live? _____
2. What was his job? _____
3. For whom did he write *A Visit from St. Nicholas*? _____
4. What does 'twas mean? _____
5. Where were the stockings hanging? _____
6. Where were the children? _____
7. What did the man hear? _____
8. What did he see? _____
9. What were the names of the reindeer?
_____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____,
_____, _____
10. Who came down the chimney? _____

Name _____ Date _____

V. Clement Clarke Moore and America's Most Famous Poem (continued)

11. What was he dressed in from his head to his foot? _____

12. What was his nose like? _____

13. What did St. Nicholas hold in his teeth? _____

14. What color was his beard? _____

15. What shook when he laughed? _____

16. Did St. Nicholas speak to the writer? YES NO

17. What did he fill? _____

18. After he gave a nod, what did he do? _____

19. To whom did he whistle? _____

20. What did he say before he drove out of sight? “ _____

_____”

Name _____ Date _____

Critical-thinking and Creative-thinking Questions

Choose one or more of these questions. Work with a partner or a small group to discuss or research these questions and report to the class.

1. Foresters have tried different ways to harvest cones from trees without hurting the trees. They have found that tree climbers work the best, but there are not enough tree climbers. Imagine you are responsible for figuring out how to harvest cones from these trees. What ways would you try to harvest cones from the trees? How do your solutions keep the trees safe? How do they keep the cones and seeds safe? How much would your solutions cost? How would you convince the government to use your solutions?
2. Our article focused on replanting forests with pine, fir, cedar, and redwood trees whose seeds come from cones. Many trees do not grow their seeds in cones. These trees also lose their leaves every year. Research how companies replant these types of forests. How do they collect seeds? How do they grow saplings? How do they plant the saplings?
3. Birthright citizenship means that babies born in the United States are U.S. citizens even if their parents are not citizens. Some people say the rules for birthright citizenship should be changed so that undocumented immigrants' babies born in the U.S. should not get citizenship automatically. What do you think? Do you think anyone born in the United States should be given citizenship? Why or why not?
4. The Wright Brothers invented the first airplane. What invention would you create that would change people's lives? What would it do? How would someone use it? How would it change the world?
5. What's your favorite holiday? Why? Write a story or poem about that holiday.
6. Invent a holiday. When would it be? What is the holiday's purpose? Who would celebrate it? Would there be any special clothing, food, or prayers? What activities would people do each year?

December 2023
Answers to *Easy English NEWS*
Short-Answer Tests

I. Replanting Our Forests

1. wildfires
2. oxygen
3. trees
4. arson
5. lightning
6. droughts and high temperatures
7. 50,015 fires
8. 2,539,627 acres
9. cones
10. tree climbers
11. saplings
12. state programs and non-profit organizations
13. climate change

II. U.S. Citizenship

1. the U.S. Constitution
2. rights and responsibilities
3. a, b, d, e, f, i
4. a, c, e
5. acquisition and naturalization
6. birthright citizenship
7. N-400 form
8. \$725

III. Events in December

1. eight
2. candles
3. dreidel
4. gelt
5. December 21
6. antifreeze
7. December 17, 1903
8. Wilbur Wright
9. 0 degrees
10. 100 degrees
11. December 25
12. Bethlehem or a stable
13. a, b, c, f, g
14. Kwanzaa
15. a, b, d
16. December 31

17. Times Square, NYC
18. Auld Lang Syne
19. six
20. YES

IV. Move Those Muscles

1. 30 to 45 percent
2. brainstem
3. a. voluntary b. both
 c. involuntary d. voluntary
 e. voluntary f. both
 g. voluntary h. voluntary
4. oxygen and nutrition
5. carbon dioxide and waste matter
6. glucose
7. fat

V. Clement Clarke Moore and the Visit from St. Nicholas

1. New York City
2. college professor
3. his children
4. it was
5. by the chimney
6. in bed
7. clatter
8. a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer
9. Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen
 Comet, Cupid, Donder, and Blitzen
10. St. Nicholas
11. fur
12. a cherry
13. (the stump of) a pipe
14. white (as the snow)
15. his belly
16. NO
17. all the stockings
18. rose up the chimney
19. to his team (of reindeer)
20. "Happy Christmas to all
 and to all a good night!"

