



# ASSESSING LEVELS OF COMPREHENSION

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Short Response Reading Questions



# LESSON 2

Read Jonathan's personal essay about why teenagers need to sleep more. Then answer questions about the story. Write the answer for Numbers 1 to 12.

## Why Am I So Tired?



When I was much younger, getting eight to ten hours of sleep each night was pretty easy to do. Now I'm lucky if I get six or seven hours of sleep on a school night. I always thought that as I got older I'd need less sleep, but now I'm not so sure if that's true. When I wake up at 6:30 in the morning, I have to drag myself out of bed so I can catch my bus and be at school at 8:00. Even then, it typically takes me until about

10:00 in the morning to finally feel like I'm awake, alert and ready to learn.

Is there a good reason why I feel so tired? The answer is yes; I'm fatigued because I'm simply not getting enough sleep. Between my time on the bus to and from school and my hours at school, about a third of my day is already gone. Add in my after-school activities, about two hours of homework or projects each school night, and some relaxing or hanging around with my friends, and you can see that there is little time for sleep. As a result, I'm starting to pile up a debt—a sleep debt.

Research has shown that teenagers need lots of sleep. To perform at my best, I'm supposed to sleep 9 hours and 15 minutes each night. Sleeping less than this each night puts me in a sleep debt. At seven hours of sleep each night from Monday to Friday, I'm more than ten hours behind on my sleep. My solution is to sleep late on weekends. That helps some, but according to sleep experts, more than three hours extra sleep on weekends doesn't help me. It just confuses my body's inner "alarm clock".

Our sleeping patterns are controlled by something called circadian rhythms. Your body is naturally programmed to sleep at night and wake in the morning. Your inner clock tells your body when it's time for bed and when it's time to get up. It also causes your body to release a chemical called melatonin, which makes you sleepy. As a teenager, my body releases this chemical later and later at night. I get sleepy later at night than I did when I was younger.

I'm tired in the morning for a good reason—my body wants to sleep, but I have to get up for school. My inner clock wants me to stay in bed and sleep a little while longer. Maybe someday my school will change its schedule to suit my inner clock and its sleeping schedule, but until then I've got to get out of sleep debt as soon as I can.

**FIND IT**

1. In the essay, how much sleep did Jonathan say he used to get each night when he was younger?

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2. According to Jonathan, what causes people to get sleepy at night?

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3. According to the essay, what do circadian rhythms control?

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# LESSON 10

Read this article about dolphins and porpoises. Then answer questions about the article. Write the answer for Numbers 1 to 12.

## Dolphins and Porpoises

Have you ever wondered whether dolphins and porpoises are different animals or whether it's just two names for the same animal? Many people do use the same name for both dolphins and porpoises, but there are differences between dolphins and porpoises. One thing is the same, though: both dolphins and porpoises are related to whales. All three kinds of animals—dolphins, porpoises and whales—are cetaceans. That means that they are mammals that spend their entire life in the water.

Some whales have baleen, or hairy strands in their mouths, which strain water from their food. Dolphins and porpoises do not have baleen. They have teeth instead, and they are often called toothed whales. Although dolphins and porpoises both have teeth, the teeth are different. Picture an ice-cream cone; that cone shape is a sign of a dolphin's teeth. Tooth shape is one distinguishing feature that can help you tell the difference between a dolphin and a porpoise. Whereas a dolphin's teeth are cone-shaped, a porpoise's teeth are flat and shaped like a spade, or shovel. Both animals eat fish and sometimes squid and other sea creatures, and both use their teeth to grab hold of their prey (not to chew it) before swallowing their prey whole.

Most of the time when you see a dolphin or porpoise in the water, you won't be looking at its teeth, so you need another way to tell the difference between

these animals. One way is as plain as the nose on your face—look for a beak, or lack of beak. Everyone is familiar with the bottlenose dolphin, which has a beak that is short and round like a bottle. That's how it got its name, of course. Most, but not all, dolphins have noticeable beaks like the bottlenose has. Most porpoises have no beak, so the front of a porpoise's head is more rounded than the head of most dolphins.

A third way to distinguish a dolphin from a porpoise is by looking at the dorsal fin. On a dolphin, the dorsal fin has a definite curve or hook, but the dorsal fin on a porpoise is shaped like a triangle. Looking at the fin on a porpoise or dolphin's back is one way to identify it.

The next time you see a porpoise or dolphin, you can astound your friends and family by using the animal's teeth, beak or fin to identify it.

