

Reading Comprehension Part 1

First read the ten headlines a–j. Then read the five texts 1–5 and decide which text goes best with each headline.

Mark your answers on the answer sheet.

a **Accident fatal for 19-year-old**

b **Dangerous pets banned under new legislation**

c **Important decision? Head for bed!**

d **Life on earth at risk**

e **New regulations on problematic pets**

f **Research shows mice fear sleep**

g **Snake leaves home**

h **Unknown bee disease identified**

i **Unusual message for local authorities**

j **Years of silence finally end**

- 1** A man who has been in a coma for 19 years after a car crash woke up and started talking to his mother, who was sitting at his bedside. Terry Wallis began his return to consciousness slowly with just a few nouns, but gradually a flood of phrases came pouring out. 'He started out with 'mum', and then it was 'milk' and 'tree', said the director of the Arkansas rehabilitation centre where Wallis was being cared for.
- Terry, now 39, was driving home 19 years ago when his car left the road and plunged into a stream. He was found the next day under a bridge and was in a coma. Terry's daughter Amber, who was born shortly before the crash, is thrilled to now be able to build up a relationship with her father. According to Terry's father, his son talks almost non-stop now. 'It's so peculiar, it's going to take some getting used to!'
- 2** In an attempt to combat the rise in ownership of dangerous animals, the government has announced plans to introduce an addition to the law stating that all dogs must now be fitted with a microchip. Voluntary 'chipping' of animals is already a common practice and involves a small electronic device being implanted under the animal's skin. Each chip has a unique number that can be read by a scanner. Vets, the police or an animal welfare organisation can quickly and easily trace the animal's owner. There are an estimated eight million dogs in Britain, and four breeds are currently banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991). Critics of the plan say that it will do nothing to tackle problems with these banned breeds, since people who already own such dogs are likely to ignore the new legislation as they fear to lose their animals. However, owners who can prove that their dogs are not dangerous will be given a Certificate of Exemption.
- 3** Faced with a tough problem, the traditional advice is to 'sleep on it'. And, according to new research, 'sleeping on it' may be exactly the right thing to do: a good night's sleep really does help the brain get to grips with information and to act on it the following day. Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania studied how well mice absorbed or 'consolidated' new information and remembered it the next day. Scientists gave two groups of mice a small electric shock when they were put in a specific place to generate fear of that particular location. One group of mice was then allowed to sleep, while the other group was kept awake. Twenty four hours later, the two groups were tested to see if they 'froze' when put in this same area. Those who slept were four times more likely to show fear than those kept awake. Researchers concluded that sleeping during the five hours after learning was crucial for 'memory consolidation'.
- 4** After flourishing for millions of years, the last sixty years has seen a huge decline in the country's bee population. Some species have already disappeared completely from the British countryside and others are now considered endangered. Experts believe that the reduction in bee numbers is due to changing weather patterns, the increased use of insecticides in farming and gardening, and the loss of habitat as our cities expand. Albert Einstein, the physicist, said that if all bees became extinct, human society would follow within a few years. This statement was based on the fact that in our interconnected ecosystem, the production of food is almost entirely dependent on these useful workers, and yet many of us take the work they do for granted. While collecting nectar for themselves, bees transfer pollen from one plant to another, ensuring that, for example, fruit grows. Currently, bee keepers, scientists and conservation organisations are working hard to save our bee population.
- 5** A woman deliberately left her four-metre long python behind when moving home, and explained this to the council as she was dropping off the keys. The unnamed tenant of a council flat near Birmingham said to the council worker on duty, 'I'm catching a train to Norfolk and I'm not coming back. I've just fed my Burmese python and I'm leaving her in the flat.' Housing officers quickly rang the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which sent two inspectors to collect the 25-kilo snake, which they found curled up in the living room. The snake is now being cared for at a reptile centre in Birmingham while the RSPCA tries to trace its former owner. A spokesman for the district council said, 'Our housing department has heard some strange things from our tenants over the years, but this has to be the strangest.'