

READING

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1-12** which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

SPOKEN CORPUS COMES TO LIFE

- A The compiling of dictionaries has been historically the provenance of studious professorial types - usually bespectacled - who love to pore over weighty tomes and make pronouncements on the finer nuances of meaning. They were probably good at crosswords and definitely knew a lot of words, but the image was always rather dry and dusty. The latest technology, and simple technology at that, is revolutionising the content of dictionaries and the way they are put together.
- B For the first time, dictionary publishers are incorporating real, spoken English into their data. It gives lexicographers (people who write dictionaries) access to a more vibrant, up-to-date vernacular language which has never really been studied before. In one project, 150 volunteers each agreed to discreetly tie a Walkman recorder to their waist and leave it running for anything up to two weeks. Every conversation they had was recorded. When the data was collected, the length of tapes was 35 times the depth of the Atlantic Ocean. Teams of audio typists transcribed the tapes to produce a computerised database of ten million words.
- C This has been the basis - along with an existing written corpus - for the Language Activator dictionary, described by lexicographer Professor Randolph Quirk as "the book the world has been waiting for". It shows advanced foreign learners of English how the language is really used. In the dictionary, key words such as "eat" are followed by related phrases such as "wolf down" or "be a picky eater", allowing the student to choose the appropriate phrase.
- D "This kind of research would be impossible without computers," said Delia Summers, a director of dictionaries. "It has transformed the way lexicographers work. If you look at the word "like", you may intuitively think that the first and most frequent meaning is the verb, as in "I like swimming". It is not. It is the preposition, as in: "she walked like a duck". Just because a word or phrase is