

Boost Free Lessons - Year 9 English

Lesson 11: Reading Informative Texts

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Read the article below carefully. The line numbers will help you refer to specific parts of the text in your answers.

The Quietest Room in Australia

1 In a basement in western Sydney there is a room in which almost no sound
2 survives. Its walls are lined with wedges of foam more than half a metre
3 long, arranged so that any noise entering the room is reflected into the
4 gaps between them and absorbed rather than returned.

5
6 Rooms like this are called anechoic chambers, from a Greek word meaning
7 without echo. They are used to test everything from hearing aids to car
8 engines, because they allow a sound to be measured without the walls
9 adding anything to it.

10
11 Most people find them unsettling. With no reflected sound at all, the ear
12 begins to pick up noises it normally ignores. Visitors report hearing their
13 own heartbeat, their breathing, and in some cases a faint ringing that is
14 produced inside the ear itself. The longer a person stays, the louder these
15 internal sounds seem to become.

16
17 This is not because the sounds have changed. It is because the brain, receiving almost nothing
18 from outside, increases its sensitivity until it
19 finds something to process. The silence is real. The discomfort is not the
20 room's doing at all.

21 The chamber is booked out months in advance, mostly by engineers. It is
22 also, occasionally, visited by musicians, who tend to leave sooner than
23 they expected to.



Worked Example 1

How does the writer make a technical subject accessible to a general reader?

1. Look for what the writer does with each technical term rather than listing the terms.
2. In line 6 the word *anechoic* is introduced and immediately translated as *without echo*.
3. The explanation of why visitors feel unsettled is given in everyday cause and effect, not in scientific vocabulary.
4. The writer also uses concrete detail, such as hearing your own heartbeat, which a reader can imagine without any expertise.

Model: The writer defines each technical term as it arrives, translating “anechoic” as “without echo” (line 6), and explains effects through concrete experiences such as hearing your own heartbeat rather than through scientific vocabulary.

Remember: For informative texts, look for **purpose**, **audience** and how technical material is made accessible. Notice where a writer defines a term, and where they trust the reader to work something out.



Question 1: Answer the following questions. Give the line numbers you used in your answers.

1. Where is the room described in the article?

2. What are the walls lined with?

3. What does the word *anechoic* mean?

4. Name two things the chamber is used to test.

5. What three sounds do visitors report hearing?

6. Who mostly books the chamber?



Question 2: Answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. What is the main purpose of this text? Give evidence for your answer.

2. Who is the likely audience? Explain how you can tell.

3. Explain why the writer says *the discomfort is not the room's doing at all*.

4. What is the tone of the final paragraph, and how is it created?

5. Summarise the article in two sentences.





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Answers and Model Responses: Reading Informative Texts**Question 1**

1. In a basement in western Sydney.
2. Wedges of foam more than half a metre long.
3. Without echo.
4. Hearing aids and car engines.
5. Their own heartbeat, their breathing, and a faint ringing produced inside the ear.
6. Engineers.

Question 2

1. Model: To inform. The article explains what an anechoic chamber is, how it works and why it affects visitors, and never asks the reader to do or believe anything.
2. Model: General readers rather than specialists. Technical terms are defined as they appear, and no prior knowledge of acoustics is assumed.
3. Model: The sounds visitors hear were always there. The brain raises its own sensitivity when it receives no external sound, so the discomfort comes from the listener rather than from the room.
4. Model: Lightly amused. The detail that musicians “leave sooner than they expected to” is understated, and the writer lets the reader work out why rather than explaining it.
5. Model: An anechoic chamber in western Sydney absorbs almost all sound, allowing engineers to measure noise without interference from the walls. Visitors find it unsettling because the brain compensates for the silence by amplifying sounds from inside the body.

