

Be prepared for the following:

1. In the following reports, consider whether the numbers given are technical measurements or orders of magnitude:

To date, about 45,000 people have been vaccinated with SPf66. On average, the results in Latin America show that the vaccine is 30% to 65% effective among adults. It seems to be much more effective among children under age five. The side-effects are apparently minor.

Out of 35,000 people vaccinated in Colombia, there were at most 5.6% who showed adverse reactions, and these were in any case minimal and required no medication.

A scientist in Australia reports that he has found evidence that the speed of light is slowing. . . . The measurements taken showed that a 12 billion-year-old stream of light had properties which appeared to violate accepted laws of physics. He said the only possible explanation for the unusual data was that the speed of light had been faster 6 to 10 billion years ago than its current speed of around 300,000 kilometers per second.

2. Make a recording of the following list of numbers, reading them out at moderate speed in Farsi. Then, play back the recording and try to interpret what you hear into English without falling behind. Record your performance and check it against the list.

20 80 90 60 70 62 72 82 92 7 17 77 50 55 65 75 85 67

68 78 160 170 110 280 290 260 270 277 298 278 297 777

666 555 24 80 80,000 80,880 90,000 90,880 99,824 97,670 678

678,424 678,480 4,888,677 80,777,167 88,675,177 98,675,110

167,767 67,177 76,771 188.2 276.7 359.98 458.22 329.99 787.87

484.84 988.8 98.9% 99.8% 48.8%

3. The extra effort required to interpret figures accurately sometimes distracts the interpreter's attention from the numerical concept, the unit of measurement, or the item to which the figure refers. To help overcome this problem, it is helpful to practice interpreting numbers in conjunction with their referents.

Make recordings of the following passages read out at a normal speed, then at progressively faster speeds. Play back the passages and practice repeating from memory as much of each passage at a time

Global Warming

In Uganda, record rains of 1997 destroyed 40 per cent of its 9,600 kilometre feeder road network. Between 1997 and 1998, a prolonged drought in the Seychelles led to the closure of the Seychelles Breweries and the Indian Ocean Tuna Company. . . . Emissions of carbon dioxide, the main global warming gas, have risen eightfold in Africa since 1950 to 223 million metric tons.

However, those are still less than the emissions of a developed country such as Germany or Japan. South Africa accounts for 42 per cent of these emissions, while Egypt, Nigeria and Algeria combined account for 35.5 per cent. (UN Chronicle, Issue 4, 2002)

Vehicle Sales

New vehicle sales jumped nearly one quarter last year to 376,362 units, latest figures from the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa show. New car sales rose 22.9% to 235,686, light commercial vehicle sales were 26% higher at 128,634, medium-sized vehicle sales were 23.1% up at 4,135 and heavy truck sales 34.9% up at 7,607. Higher sales, together with an average 8% price rise, boosted vehicle manufacturers' turnover 33% to 28 billion Rand. Sales not represented by NAAMSA would have added about 15,000 to the figures. December sales were also above average compared with the same month a year before. New car sales increased 15.5% to 17,015, LCV sales increased 13.9% to 9,028, while MCV and heavy truck sales increased 14.7% and 11.6% respectively over December 1994. (News Highlights from the South African Media, 11–16 January 1996, No. 03/96)

The Suez Canal

Opened to world navigation in 1869 (and nationalized in 1956), the Suez Canal has become one of the country's main foreignexchange earners, behind oil but ahead of tourism. 1992 and 1993 were excellent years in financial terms, with 1992 earnings reaching \$1.9 billion and 1993 earnings expected to exceed \$2 billion (the exact figure is not yet known), which is twice as much as the canal earned in the early 1980s. More than 17,000 vessels used the canal in 1993, representing a total of nearly 400 million tons. By way of comparison, 4,200 vessels totalling 25 million tons used the canal in 1945. Since then, the number of users has grown steadily, except for the years when the canal has been closed due to various local conflicts. The last closing was for eight years, from 1967 to 1974, during the war with Israel. . . .

With the exception of the "Sumed" Suez-Mediterranean pipeline across Egypt (a joint venture of Egypt, which holds 50% of the equity, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates, and Qatar), whose capacity is expected to grow from 80 to 120 million tons by 1994, the five pipelines in the region have gradually shut down. The Kirkuk-Haifa pipeline has been closed since 1948. The Kirkuk-Baniyas-Tripoli pipeline was closed in 1982 due to souring relations between Syria and Iraq. The Kirkuk-Saida pipeline, whose capacity had been doubled to make up for the closing of the previous pipeline, was closed by Turkey during the Gulf War. And the "Tapline" between Ras Tanura in Saudi Arabia and Tripoli in Lebanon has gradually shut down since 1983. . . .

Specialists foresee that Middle East production may rise from 880 million tons per year today to 1,450 million tons by the year 2000 and 1,600 million tons by the year 2005. Absent other solutions, there is no doubt that part of that production will reach the West through the Suez Canal.

The following are the major characteristics of the canal:

Length of canal: 195 kilometers

Width between buoys: 180 meters

Maximum draft allowed: 53 feet

Maximum weight allowed: 140,000 tons

Transit allowed day or night

Daily capacity: 55 vessels

Mode of transit: vessels go through daily in 3 convoys

Average duration of crossing: 15 hours

Speed permitted: 11 to 15 km per hour