

### The One-Pound Cell Phone

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Word Count: 274

Cell phones seem to be our constant companions these days. Today there are more cell phone subscribers than there are wire line phone subscribers.

In the world of wireless communication, how did we get from the telegraph to the cell phone? In 1842, Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph, had something to prove. He wanted to show that an underwater cable could transmit signals just as well as copper wires on poles. But when a passing ship pulled up the cable, Morse chose to carry out the experiment without the cable. He sent telegraph signals through the water itself. He was able to achieve this because water conducts electricity.

This gave inventors ideas, and they began alternating between experiments with wire line and wireless telegraphs. In 1865, a dentist transmitted telegraphic messages a distance of 18 miles. He used Earth's atmosphere, instead of water, as a conductor of electricity by launching kites enclosed with copper screens. These were linked to the ground with copper wires.

The basic foundation for wireless communication had been set. Now all that was needed was someone with a vision. That someone was Martin Cooper, who developed the first portable handheld police radios. In 1973, he placed the first wireless telephone call from the streets of New York City.

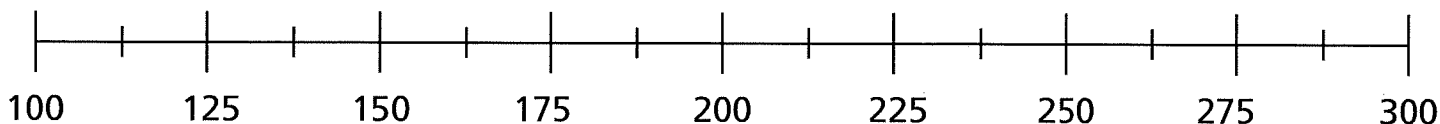
It took another ten years to develop the first cell phone for the public, which weighed a pound and cost \$3,500! Seven years later, a million people in the United States had cell phones. The system uses many stations with towers, and the service areas are divided into cells. Calls are sent from station to station as the phone user travels.

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Although Beryl Markham was born in England, she grew up and spent a majority of her life in Africa. She was a famous racehorse trainer when she became enchanted with the thought of flying planes.

Markham began taking flying lessons, and after only eight hours of lessons, she flew her first solo flight. She went on to earn her pilot's license, which allowed her to carry passengers in her plane. Markham delivered mail and supplies in her plane and flew sick patients to the hospital. She flew thousands of miles over African jungles. A pilot friend called her "a fine pilot with great courage who could find her way in a plane to any spot."

Markham soon decided to strive for something no woman had yet accomplished—flying solo across the Atlantic from east to west. Amelia Earhart had made a solo flight across the Atlantic from west to east with the wind behind her plane. Markham wanted to fly in the opposite direction with the winds against her, making the crossing lengthier and much more dangerous than Earhart's flight.

In 1936, Markham took off from England in a plane with no radio. Soon after she left England, however, the wind swept her map out of her hands and into the ocean. She flew "blindly" for 19 hours through darkness and stormy weather.

At one point, as the weather got worse and lightning flashed, Markham realized that she was flying upside down. She was able to turn the aircraft right side up. Finally, when a fuel line froze, Markham crash-landed in Nova Scotia, Canada. She did not fly all the way from England to America, according to her original plan. However, Markham became the first woman to make a solo nonstop flight from east to west across the Atlantic.

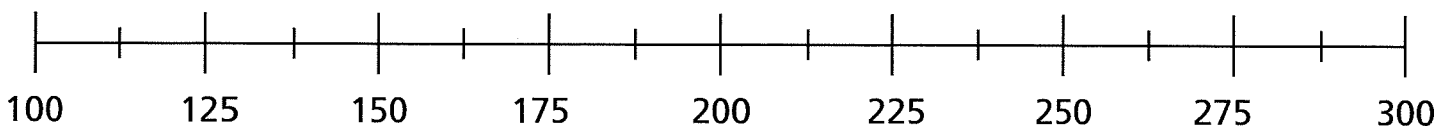
Number of Errors 

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%): 

--

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



Natural-Born Drummer

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Word Count: 211

Travis had a habit of drumming on surfaces with his fingers, with pencils, and even with chopsticks. Several times a day, Travis’s parents, teachers, and friends commented about his constant drumming.

Therefore, Travis’s parents were astonished that on the day before Travis was to try out for the school band, he was uncertain about which instrument he wanted to play. So Travis and his father went to a local music store to generate some ideas. Travis browsed the selection of rental instruments, picking up a flute and handling the keys, then examining a trombone. On impulse, he chose a saxophone and tried blowing into it. But the sound that emerged was a pitiful honk, like a wounded goose. Then Travis asked to try another instrument—the drums. He had never played drums before, but he’d certainly had plenty of drumming practice.

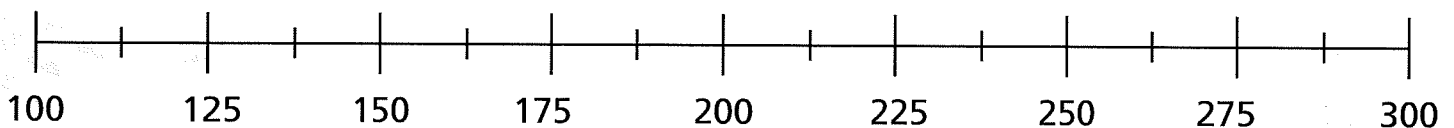
The next morning at school, Travis appeared at the doorway of Mr. Blee’s classroom for the tryout. Mr. Blee called on Travis and pointed to a drum set in the corner of the room. He listened carefully as Travis experimented with different beats and rhythms on the drums. When Travis had finished, Mr. Blee smiled. “You’re a natural-born drummer,” he said, “and you’ve got a spot in the school band.”

Number of Errors 

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%):

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):



*Part 1*

Kevin and his family had left for Grandma’s extra early, because the weather looked bad. By the time they got there, it was nearly a blizzard.	12 26
Mom and Dad had to head right back out to get Uncle Bob, who was stuck in a ditch on the turnpike. That left Kevin alone in Grandma’s house with nothing to do but listen to her stories.	41 55 64
“Some weather for Thanksgiving, huh Kevin?” she said. Kevin shrugged.	74
“When I was a girl, we had a Nor’easter like this. It must have been twice as bad as this one.”	90 95
As if disagreeing with her, the wind pounded against the house. Kevin could see the snow swirling under the streetlamp.	107 115
“You’ve heard of a storm swell,” Grandma continued. “It’s a huge dome of water. If it comes in at high tide, you’ve got flooding like you can’t imagine. This storm swell came in at evening tide. First the spray came across the road and began to wet the paint on the McIntosh’s house. Then the water was at the top of their foundation. We heard the wave slap, slapping against our house.”	127 142 155 169 183 187



Part 2

Grandma cleared her throat and continued. "The waves kept rising, and one by one our windows smashed out. From upstairs, we could hear the furniture bumping into things as it floated around. Father was about to take us up to the attic when we heard an awful crashing. The McIntosh's house had been ripped right off its foundation. It spun and tipped over, crash! I was friends with the McIntosh girl, Amy. She and her mother grabbed the couch and ended up on the beach in Tonset, alive. They never saw her father or brother again."

Kevin looked out the window. The only thing visible was the snow under the streetlamp. He imagined that just outside that bit of light, waves were beginning to crawl up the shore, toward the house.

There—he was sure he saw the white edge of a wave on the road, splashing into flecks of spray. His heart pounded as the shape grew, and just before he screamed, he realized what he saw: snow in his parents' headlights. Kevin laughed at himself and ran to the door to welcome them in from the storm.



*Part 1*

Abraham Lincoln, one of the most famous American presidents, is 10  
 remembered for his dedication to freedom. Lincoln led the United States 21  
 during the Civil War, 1861 to 1865, when the northern and southern 33  
 states fought to decide the future of the country. He is known as the 47  
 "Great Emancipator" because he freed the slaves. After the war, the 58  
 United States became one nation, pledged to freedom and democracy 68  
 for all. 70

His belief was simple: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a 87  
 master. This expresses my idea of democracy." 94

Abraham Lincoln was born to Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln on 105  
 February 12, 1809, on a small log-cabin farm near Hodgenville, 116  
 Kentucky. When Abe was seven, the family moved to Illinois, hoping 127  
 for a better life. Two years after Tom built a new log cabin, Nancy 141  
 became ill with "milk sickness" and died. Abe and Sarah mourned the 153  
 death of their hard-working, loving mother. 160

Abe went to school for only a few weeks in the winters, walking 18 174  
 miles daily. Mostly he educated himself by borrowing books and 184  
 newspapers from neighbors and travelers. 189



One of the last  
 photographs taken  
 of Lincoln,  
 February 1865

*Part 2*

Lincoln was in Congress as the northern and southern states became more divided over the issue of slavery. Slavery was outlawed in the northern states. The South, whose economy revolved around “king cotton” grown on large plantations, used slave labor. Black African slaves were owned as property. Most lived under very poor conditions and were treated inhumanely.

On November 6, 1860, Lincoln was elected president of the United States. Even before Lincoln’s inauguration, seven southern states voted to secede from the United States. By February, the pro-slavery states had established a government, the Confederate States of America, and prepared for war.

Lincoln was finally convinced that as president, he had the authority to order abolition, or the end of slavery, in the South. On January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, freeing “thenceforth and forever” all the slaves in the South.

The Civil War ended on April 9, 1865, four years after it began, and cost 600,000 lives. The northern states were victorious, and the union was preserved. But only six days later, President Abraham Lincoln lay dead from an assassin’s bullet.



President Lincoln with General McClellan and a group of officers, Antietam, Maryland, October 3, 1862.

Part 1

The Vikings lived about a thousand years ago. They were as harsh and 13  
rugged as the coastal lands from which they came—lands such as present- 26  
day Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. It was natural that many took to the 39  
oceans and became great sailors. Their ships were fast and could carry 51  
many warriors. Some of their ships even carried horses. Using their sailing 63  
skills, thirst for adventure, and bravery, the Vikings conquered many lands. 74

Most of what we know about the Vikings comes from the people they 87  
defeated. These views aren't always accurate. It's hard to be fair when 99  
writing about the people who just beat you up, took your money, and 112  
burned down your house. It also seems fair to say that the stories told by the 128  
Vikings themselves are a bit larger than life. Like most warriors, the Vikings 141  
liked to talk about their feats. They often sat around celebrating after a 154  
battle. They shared flattering stories of their bravery and fighting skills. Like 166  
many war stories, the truth became more and more stretched each time 178  
stories were told. 181





**Reading Passage**    **Vikings • Z-2**

*Part 2*

Perhaps the most famous Viking of all was Leif (LEAF) Ericson. While in 12  
 Norway, Leif heard about a trader whose ship had been blown off course 25  
 in a storm. The trader's ship was the first to have spotted the North 39  
 American coast. 41

Leif bought the trader's ship and retraced the voyage to this far-away land. 55  
 He finally stopped at a place where the land looked welcoming. He called 68  
 the place Vinland because of all the grapes growing there. Vinland may 80  
 have been along the eastern edge of Canada or the northeastern 91  
 United States. 93

After spending the winter in Vinland, Leif and his crew returned to 105  
 Greenland. Leif's brother, Thorvald, asked to borrow Leif's ship. He wanted 116  
 to see what Leif had discovered. Thorvald and his men sailed along the 129  
 Vinland coast for two years, exploring the new continent. 138

One day they came under attack from Native Americans. The battle was 150  
 tough, and the natives had the advantage of knowing the land. Leif's 162  
 brother was killed in this conflict, and his body was buried at Vinland. 175  
 He was the first European known to have died and been buried in 188  
 North America. 190

