Using cloze tests to assess the reading needs of EAL learners

Linda Todd
Introduction

The four tests contained in this booklet were devised and trialled by the author as a research project for MA in Applied Linguistics in 2006. Tests were devised to provide a valid and reliable measure of assessing EAL students’ reading skills to inform and monitor learning programmes.

Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to Mary Busch for her guidance in writing this as a publication suitable for teachers.

Linda Todd
Wellington
2008

Cover photo: Faduma Salad and Thary Trann, students from Wellington East Girls’ College, on a trip to Kapiti Island.
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Rationale

Cloze tests, where deletions have been specifically chosen, produce diagnostic information on a student’s integrated language skills. A reading passage must not be too difficult for a learner and be on a culturally familiar topic for a learner to engage with the text (Douglas 1998; Brown 2001; Sasaki 2002). Cloze tests are relatively easy to administer and provide valid and reliable information about a student’s language proficiency by deliberate deletion of targeted language features such as verb forms, prepositions and lexical items. (See Research notes.)

These tests

The four tests contained in this booklet were devised and trialled by the author as a research project for MA in Applied Linguistics in 2006. Deletions are specifically selected to test a range of linguistic knowledge including lexical and grammatical structures. Each test contains a range of deletions that are solvable and no deletions require complex technical knowledge. The tests follow an increasing level of complexity based on reading stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP).

The results provide a clear indication of a learner’s ability to interpret text at a particular level. Close analysis of a learner’s gapfill choices can reveal information about their vocabulary knowledge, knowledge of grammatical structures and syntax, and their ability to understand text without prior teaching. Analysis of results should provide a guide for programme planning for the learner and be used with other information about their proficiency and progress in all language skills, for example results from Nation’s Vocabulary Survey, Probe tests, asTTle, ELLP writing and oral language assessments.

Using the tests

The tests can be photocopied from pages 13 – 25.

Which test to start with?

Ask a learner to read aloud to you from any text you think might be at an appropriate level for example a graded reader or a school journal or use a vocabulary test score to assess a starting level for the learner.

Administering the test

- Allow 40 – 50 minutes for the test
- Test only one level at a time; this should include all the passages unless a learner is clearly out of their depth. Each passage should be on a separate page.
- Read the instructions to the class
- Suggest that it is possible to use the word bank as a guide, and that some learners may wish to make their own choices
- Remind learners to check that their choices make sense.
Scoring procedures

There are 45 or 50 items to mark for each test. These should be converted to a percentage.

- Accept as correct answers that indicate the learner has “understood” the context even if there are errors in spelling or minor grammatical errors.
- Be consistent when marking a group or class and decide whether you will accept switches in tense, incorrect pronouns, article or prepositional errors, or errors in verb form or word form choices.

In the research study that trialled these tests the following practice was consistently applied:

- missing ‘s’ on third person singular present tense verbs but “eat insects” was not accepted for “eating insects” (test 2.3)
- missing ‘s’ for plurals was accepted
- some leniency was allowed in prepositional use, e.g. “in, around” was accepted for “on” the islands; but for “in the bush”, “on the bush” was not acceptable (test 2.2); “between 2001 and 2005” “to” was not accepted, although commonly used by the students (test 1.4). However, in test 3.1 there were two contrasted headings, the first: “Some ways to save water in the home” (followed by inside examples); the second heading: “Some ways to save water outside the home” (followed by outside examples), “in” was not accepted for the latter example
- article usage: “an award”, “a” or “the” were accepted (test 1.4), other article errors (the/a) were accepted in most cases
- pronoun concordance: “our lives” where there were two instances of “we” in the same paragraph, “your” or “their” were not accepted (test 3.2)
- spelling was allowed considerable leniency as long as the target word was understood, “then” was accepted in the place of “more than eight”, “off course” was accepted for “of course” (test 3.2)
- punctuation: capital letters at the start of sentences, frequently missed by many students, was deemed acceptable
- subject – verb concordance was allowed some leniency, “A Hindu do not eat beef” (test 2.2) was deemed acceptable.

What can the scores tell us about the literacy proficiency of the learners?

Oller (1979) established the following guide for the readability of a text:

- Scoring below 44%, a learner is likely to experience frustration
- Scores between 44 and 57%, a text may be suitable for instructional reading use.
- Scores of 58 to 100% should allow a learner an increasing level of independence in reading the text.
Exemplar showing the application of the marking guide to a passage from Stage 3

**Why save water?**

We are having longer, drier, hotter summers. This means there will be less water to go around. It also means people will use more water to keep cool and keep their gardens growing.

The number of (1) **water** [ ] in the Wellington Region is growing. (2) **that** [ ] means more people are going to (3) **sea** [ ] water (ie higher demand). More demand and (4) **rain** [ ] water could lead to water shortages.

**Some ways to (5) **save** [ ] water in the home:**

- Don’t leave the (6) **water** [ ] running while you wash hands, dishes (7) **and** [ ] vegetables.
- Only use the washing (8) **hand** [ ] or dishwasher for full loads, never use (9) **water** [ ] for half loads. (A full load uses (10) **more** [ ] water than 2 half loads!)
- Turn the tap (11) **off** [ ] after you have wet your (12) **prash** [ ] when cleaning your teeth.
- Take short showers (less (13) **then** [ ] 5 minutes) rather than deep baths.
- Check (14) **your** [ ] leaks in water pipes around the (15) **home** [ ].

**Some ways to save water (16) **in** [ ] the home**

- Turn outside taps off properly (17) **after** [ ] check for leaks.
- Use a bucket of (18) **water** [ ] to wash cars instead of leaving the hose (19) **on** [ ].
- Sweep the path with a broom, (20) **or** [ ] a hose.
- Water plants in the cool of the day, (21) **once** [ ] or twice a week in summer. (Up to 80% of (22) **rain** [ ] water used during the heat of the (23) **summer** [ ] could evaporate.)
- Mulch around plants to prevent evaporation (mulch (24) **plants** [ ] prevent up to 70% of water loss from evaporation). Mulch can (25) **be** [ ] made from used paper, old carpet or garden wastes.

(15/25 = 60%)

Adapted from *Why Save Water?* Wellington Regional Council.
Why save water?  Stage 3.1

We are having longer, drier, hotter summers. This means there will be less water to go around. It also means people will use more water to keep cool and keep their gardens growing.

The number of (1) water [ ] in the Wellington Region is growing. (2) that [ ] means more people are going to (3) sea [ ] water (ie higher demand). More demand and (4) rain [ ] water could lead to water shortages.

Some ways to (5) save [ ] water in the home:
- Don’t leave the (6) water [ ] running while you wash hands, dishes (7) [ ] and vegetables.
- Only use the washing (8) hand [ ] or dishwasher for full loads, never use (9) water [ ] for half loads. (A full load uses (10) more [ ] water than 2 half loads!)
- Turn the tap (11) [ ] off [ ] after you have wet your (12) prash [ ] when cleaning your teeth.
- Take short showers (less (13) then [ ] 5 minutes) rather than deep baths.
- Check (14) your [ ] leaks in water pipes around the (15) home [ ].

Some ways to save water (16) in [ ] the home
- Turn outside taps off properly (17) after [ ] check for leaks.
- Use a bucket of (18) water [ ] to wash cars instead of leaving the hose (19) on [ ].
- Sweep the path with a broom, (20) or [ ] a hose.
- Water plants in the cool of the day, (21) once [ ] or twice a week in summer. (Up to 80% of (22) rain [ ] water used during the heat of the (23) summer [ ] could evaporate.)
- Mulch around plants to prevent evaporation (mulch (24) plants [ ] prevent up to 70% of water loss from evaporation). Mulch can (25) be [ ] made from used paper, old carpet or garden wastes.

Adapted from Why Save Water? Wellington Regional Council.
Analysing the scores

What can we learn about the learners’ reading strategies?

A cloze tests a range of reading skills that are integrated with one another. The level of difficulty of the passage and the learner’s background knowledge of the topic play a big part in determining their level of engagement and consequently their ability to fill the gaps correctly. Learners who are not familiar with the cloze format may not have developed strategies for solving gaps.

All learners use top down/bottom up processing. That is they apply their overall understanding of the topic as well as their knowledge of vocabulary (particularly the collocations of associated words), grammar and sentence structure.

- More capable readers respond to cues such as headings, the initial sentence or paragraph. They read “around” items and are not put off by unknown vocabulary. They check their gapfill choices as they go.
- Less capable readers become much more clause bound and choose words that collocate with the word prior to or immediately past the gap. They may appear to apply a scatter gun approach selecting words from the word bank that make no sense in the context if checked. They frequently ignore punctuation, even the use of capital letters at the beginning of a sentence.

What can we learn about a learner’s current level of language proficiency?

By looking carefully at a learner’s gapfill choices it is also possible to get some insight into their:

- control of vocabulary (word choices made correctly or incorrectly, did the student use their own word or choose from the word bank?)
- grammatical knowledge (consistent use of tense, pronouns, correct choices based on parts of speech, observation of plural, subject verb/ agreement)
- observance of punctuation
- accuracy of spelling
- ability to write neatly, form letters correctly.

Make observation notes on the learners’ responses under the categories listed above. See next page.
What do you eat? Stage 2.2

Some people eat everything. Some people do not eat everything. They will not eat some types of food because of what they believe, or because of their religion. Who are these people?

The (14) people [ ] who choose what they eat or (15) believe [ ] not eat because of (16) religion [ ] beliefs include teetotallers, vegans and vegetarians. (17) they [ ] do not drink alcohol, vegans eat only (18) fruit [ ] from plants and a vegetarian (19) eat [ ] food from plants, but also eggs, (20) and [ ] well as cheese, yoghurt and (21) other [ ] products.

Buddhists, Jews, Hindus and Muslims (22) does [ ] not to eat certain foods for (23) there [ ] reasons. A Buddhist does (24) not [ ] kill anything to eat. A Hindu (25) do [ ] not eat beef or pork. (26) Also [ ] Jew does not eat pork or shellfish. (27) Muslim [ ], Jewish people do not mix milk products (28) and [ ] meat. They eat kosher food. A Muslim does not (29) eat [ ] pork, or drink alcohol. They eat halal food.

After the test

- Conference learners when returning the marked tests. Question learners on some of their choices to more fully understand the strategies they were applying to the gap filling process and their engagement with the text as a whole. With the learner, identify key areas that they need to work on.

- Use test scores as a contributor to an individual and class profile. Administer a higher level test later in the year to track progress.

- Use test results to help to establish approximate ELLP reading levels. For example, Test Stage 3 is at ELLP Stage 3 and within the range of English Language Intensive Programme (ELIP) Stage 3.

Making your own tests

- Choose an appropriate text for your student group. It can be a text based on a subject already studied where the vocabulary and concepts are already familiar and could take the form of a post-test. If choosing text on an unfamiliar subject, care should be taken to select a text that has a familiar structure. For example a biography or information report is more likely to relate in some way to the learners’ general knowledge. Remember if a text is too hard less capable readers will be unable to engage with the text and are less likely to attempt to fill gaps with sensible choices. Use ELLP or ELIP to check the language features of texts at different levels.

- Make deletions to test a variety of language skills. The tests in this publication were designed to ensure there was a balance of items that could be solvable by reference:
  1. within the clause
  2. outside the clause within the sentence
  3. across sentences
  4. outside the text, (to a learner’s background knowledge)

  *Bachman (1985)*

  It is advisable, when testing reading comprehension, to select a higher proportion of items from categories 2 and 3.

- Note the distribution of vocabulary levels in your text. You can do this electronically using the Compleat Lexical Tutor website as follows:

  1. Save your text as a text file
  2. Go to [http://www.lextutor.ca/](http://www.lextutor.ca/)
  3. Select “vocab profile, English” from the home page of the website ([http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/eng/](http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/eng/)) and follow the instructions. There are guidelines in the ELLP document about the range of high frequency vocabulary expected in reading texts at each progressive level.
The Compleat Lexical Tutor website also has the facility to generate cloze tests for you as long as your text is saved as a text file. Go to the cloze generator which is accessible from the home page. At http://www.lextutor.ca/cloze/n_word/ select the rational deletion option. The method that works most successfully at the time of writing was:

1. Put an underscore after every word to be deleted.
2. Double click the words for the deletion box (word bank).
3. Put an underscore after every word in the word bank.
4. Select from the option of a paper format or an electronic copy complete with an audio feedback tool.
5. Choose ‘submit’.

Please note that this website is constantly being developed. One advantage of using this tool is the fact that you can also generate the cloze to be done online so that a learner can work independently and has immediate feedback on his or her word choices. There is also scope to insert an audio or video file option.

Research notes on clozes

Research carried out over the last 30 years has sought to examine what language skills cloze measures and how tests can be designed to ensure the validity and reliability of test results. Cloze tests were originally designed for the placement of EFL learners in university courses by researchers (Oller, 1973). Using fixed ratio deletion (1:5 or 1:7) results appeared to correlate well with TOEFL and could be used to assess reading comprehension and the readability of a text; it was regarded as an integrative language test. Results of further study raised questions about the reliability of tests because changing the deletion pattern could produce wide variation in results. Cloze was criticized for being too clause bound and was considered unsuitable to assess reading comprehension (Alderson, 1979).

Further studies were carried out that demonstrated cloze items do not carry the same amount or kind of information. It was found that deleting specific items such as cohesive devices, function words or lexical items required test-takers to move outside the clause and engage higher level strategies (Bachman 1982,1985; Jonz 1990,1991; Cohen 1998; Storey 1997; Yamashita 2003). The tests became known as rational cloze or gap-fill tests (Alderson, 2000).

If reading passages are too difficult, learners can’t activate their background knowledge and become clause dependent (Douglas, 1998). Therefore it is important to ensure a passage is of an appropriate level of difficulty for the learners being tested (Brown, 2001) and that it contains culturally familiar content (Sasaki, 2000).

Further information regarding this research can be obtained by reading Todd and Gu, (2007, p16-29).
References


Brown, J. D., Yamashiro, A. D., & Ogane, E. (2001). The emperor’s new cloze: strategies for revising cloze tests. In T. Hudson & J. D. Brown (Eds.), *A focus on language test development: Expanding the language proficiency construct across a variety of tests* (pp. 143-161), Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press.


Stage 1:  
Name:  
Date:  

In the following four passages some of the words have been left out.

First read over the whole passage and try to understand what it is about.

Then try to fill in the spaces. It takes only one word to fill in each space.

You may use the words in the text box at the bottom of the page to help you. Any word that makes sense in the space will be accepted.

Try to fill all the spaces.

Here is an example showing how to fill a space:

I can speak English ________ now.
I can speak English ________ now.

1.1  

The world

There are seven continents in the world – Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Africa, Australia and Antarctica. There are also ________ large oceans – Pacific, Atlantic, Indian and Arctic.

Asia is the largest ________ and Australia is the smallest. Africa has the ________ countries. It has 53 countries. Europe is a ________ continent with 25 countries. There are 22 ________ in North America and 13 countries in ________ America. Australia is a continent, a country ________ an island.

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1.2 Antarctica

Antarctica is the coldest, windiest and loneliest of all the seven continents. It also has high ________.

**Temperature**
In the coldest parts of Antarctica the ________ is usually between -40˚ and -70˚ Celsius ________ the winter.

**Amount of daylight**
In Antarctica, day and ________ are different from what we ________ used to. During the coldest time, ________ is dark all day as well as ________ night.

**Ice shelf**
Antarctica is so ________ that some of the oceans around ________ freeze as well. This is called an ________ shelf. Sometimes bits ________ the ice shelf break off. ________ are called icebergs.

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1.3 Sharks

Sharks are fish. They belong to the group called Elasmobranchii. ________ live in waters all around the ________. They live in every ocean and ________ some rivers and lakes.

Other ________ have bones but sharks don’t. Their skeletons ________ made from cartilage which is not ________ hard as bone.

Sharks have about 5 rows of ________. The front teeth are the biggest. Sharks ________ chew most food. They eat ________ in big pieces. Many people are ________ of sharks because of their ________ teeth. But sharks don’t usually attack ________.

All sharks are carnivorous (meat eaters) and they may ________ fish, squid, other sharks, marine mammals ________ other small animals.

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1.4  

**Tana Umaga**

Tana Umaga is a famous New Zealand rugby player. ________ was born in Lower Hutt in 1973. His parents came to New Zealand from Samoa.

In 1994 Tana first ________ for Wellington in the NPC competition. ________ was captain of the Hurricanes between 2001 ________ 2005.

He was first picked to play ________ the highest rugby team, the All ________, in 1997.

In 2003 he was given ________ award for outstanding sportsmanship. Umaga was made captain of the ________ Blacks in 2004.

In 2006 Umaga decided ________ to play for the All Blacks ________ more. He wanted to spend more ________ with his family. He still plays ________.

Tana Umaga is a popular and talented rugby player.

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Date: 

In the following three passages some of the words have been left out.

First read over the whole passage and try to understand what it is about.

Then try to fill in the spaces. It takes only one word to fill in each space.

You may use the words in the text box at the bottom of the page to help you. Any word that makes sense in the space will be accepted.

Try to fill all the spaces.

Here is an example showing how to fill a space:

I can speak English ________ now.
I can speak English ________ now.

2.1 Why do people do dangerous jobs?

Wherever people live together in a community, there are many different jobs to be done. People work to produce and sell goods or to provide services. Some people, however, must do dangerous jobs to help a community run smoothly.

Some people face danger in their ________ every day, but they take ________ to minimise the risks ________ face.

But why would people ________ themselves in danger to do a job?

________ workers, such as police officers and fire fighters, ________ dangerous jobs to help people ________ are in trouble.

Other workers, such ________ lion tamers, jockeys and racing car ________, do dangerous jobs because they ________ the excitement and the thrill. ________ do dangerous jobs because they are paid ________ to do their jobs. People may do ________ jobs for a combination of reasons.

Some like do dangerous put
as care help jobs Others
they well who drivers because

Some people eat everything. Some people do not eat everything. They will not eat some types of food because of what they believe, or because of their religion. Who are these people?

The ________who choose what they eat or ________ not eat because of ________ beliefs include teetotallers, vegans and vegetarians. ________ do not drink alcohol, vegans eat only ________ from plants and a vegetarian ________food from plants, but also eggs, ________ well as cheese, yoghurt and ________ products.

Buddhists, Jews, Hindus and Muslim ________ not to eat certain foods for ________ reasons. A Buddhist does ________ kill anything to eat. A Hindu ________ not eat beef or pork. ________ Jew does not eat pork or shellfish. ________, Jewish people do not mix milk products ________ meat. They eat kosher food. A Muslim does not ________ pork, or drink alcohol. They eat halal food.

| their choose | do A does | as Also religious food Muslim |
| Teetotallers People eat and eats |
| not Plants milk believe vegetable |

Glossary:

Kosher = according to Jewish law
Halal = according to Muslim law

2.3 Wax – eyes

About a hundred and thirty years ago, people at Waikanae, north of Wellington, saw great numbers of strange birds.

They were little green birds _______ a white ring of feathers round _______ eyes.

Scientists soon found out that these _______ had come all the way _______ the Tasman Sea by very strong _______.

The Maoris called the new bird “tauhou”, their _______ for “stranger”. Today they are also known _______ wax-eyes, white-eyes, or silver-eyes.

Because they can _______ all sorts of food, and _______ they can live in many different _______ of places, wax-eyes have _______ in numbers. They are now found _______ over New Zealand – along the coasts, _______ the islands, in scrub, in tussock country, _______ the bush, on farms and in city _______. There are probably more wax-eyes in New Zealand _______ any other kind of bird.

Usually, you _______ them in groups, hopping very _______ through bushes and trees. They _______ a high twittering noise most of the time as they work along, _______ insects, nectar and berries. Their _______ may help them to recognise each other and to keep the group together.

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Stage 3:

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

In the following two passages some of the words have been left out.

First read over the whole passage and try to understand what it is about.

Then try to fill in the spaces. It takes only one word to fill in each space.

You may use the words in the text box at the bottom of the page to help you. Any word that makes sense in the space will be accepted.

Try to fill all the spaces.

Here is an example showing how to fill a space:

I can speak English _______ now.
I can speak English ______ well now.

Using cloze tests to assess the reading needs of EAL learners
### 3.1 Why save water?

We are having longer, drier, hotter summers. This means there will be less water to go around. It also means people will use more water to keep cool and keep their gardens growing.

The number of _______ in the Wellington Region is growing. _______ means more people are going to _______ water (i.e. higher demand). More demand and _______ water could lead to water shortages.

**Some ways to _______ water in the home:**
- Don’t leave the _______ running while you wash hands, dishes _______ vegetables.
- Only use the washing _______ or dishwasher for full loads, never use _______ for half loads. (A full load uses _______ water than 2 half loads!)
- Turn the tap _______ after you have wet your _______ when cleaning your teeth.
- Take short showers (less _______ 5 minutes) rather than deep baths.
- Check _______ leaks in water pipes around the _______.

**Some ways to save water _______ the home**
- Turn outside taps off properly _______ check for leaks.
- Use a bucket of _______ to wash cars instead of leaving the hose _______.
- Sweep the path with a broom, _______ a hose.
- Water plants in the cool of the day, _______ or twice a week in summer. (Up to 80% of _______ water used during the heat of the _______ could evaporate.)
- Mulch around plants to prevent evaporation (mulch _______ prevent up to 70% of water loss from evaporation). Mulch can _______ made from used paper, old carpet or garden wastes.

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3.2 Are you getting enough sleep?

Nothing is worse than lying awake hour after hour, night after night, when all you really want to do is sleep.

‘Insomnia’ is the _______ used to describe the habit of sleeplessness. For some unlucky people, sleeping difficulties may continue not just for days, but for weeks, or even _______.

Being overtired can have a very _______ effect on every part of _______ lives. We may get angry easily _______ often marriages and friendships suffer. _______ can make us unhealthy and _______. We may catch colds easily or _______ more serious sickness. Our work or _______ suffers. Our judgement suffers – many fatal accidents are _______ by drivers falling asleep at the _______ of a car.

How much sleep _______ adults need? Most of us _______ about eight hours sleep a night, although, _______ course, some people need more and _______ need less. Children and teenagers need _______ ten hours. If you have a few _______ in a row of sleeping less _______ eight hours, you should try to _______ up for this by sleeping more _______ you get the chance. A 1959 American Cancer study _______ one million Americans showed that _______ who sleep about eight hours a night _______ likely to live longer than those _______ sleep less than seven hours. _______ studies agree with these findings.

| do | who | about | suffer | people |
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Stage 4:
Name: 
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In the following three passages some of the words have been left out.

First read over the whole passage and try to understand what it is about.

Then try to fill in the spaces. It takes only one word to fill in each space.

You may use the words in the text box at the bottom of the page to help you. Any word that makes sense in the space will be accepted.

Try to fill all the spaces.

Here is an example showing how to fill a space:

I can speak English ______ now.
I can speak English ______ now.

4.1 Why do I blush?

Don’t you just hate it when you feel awkward and your face turns red? It’s as though the whole world ______ exactly how you’re feeling – without you ______ them!

Blushing usually happens when you’re around ______ people because a group situation makes ______ more sensitive to what’s being ______ or done. Sometimes embarrassment causes the ______. Sometimes not telling the truth can ______ you blush – which can be very ______ for the person you’re talking ______ will have a pretty good idea that ______ not telling things the way ______ really are!

Blushing is connected to feelings, but ______ is actually happening to you physically, when ______ face does the horrible red thing? ______ a start your brain signals to your ______ that something’s wrong. In response, your ______ beats faster, you breathe more ______, and you start to overheat.

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Using cloze tests to assess the reading needs of EAL learners
4.2  

**Money Trees**

At last, scientists have been able to confirm that money really does grow on trees.

After six years of arduous research, Chris Anderson at Massey University emerged from his experimental greenhouse with a range of fast-growing herbs that can _______ minute gold particles from the soil.

Using a garden-variety mustard, Dr Anderson has been able to show that the _______ can pull tiny gold particles from the gold-_______ soil, along with the other soil-bound _______ they need to grow. So far the tests have been _______ on a small scale, _______ with a field trial in Brazil _______ this year. The next step is to do full-_______ field trials.

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4.3 The Gene Seekers

Years of tragic deaths from stomach cancer brought members of a Bay of Plenty whānau, medical specialists and genetic scientists together to seek a solution.

Hira had seen eight of ______ brothers and sisters die from ______ cancer. “In the space of ______ a few years, I ______ five brothers, three sisters, and several nieces and nephews. And one of ______ was only sixteen years old.”

Not ______ was the personal loss ______ to bear, so too was the fear the _____ constantly carried. “We were ______ thinking the worst,” says Hira. “______ would think - who is ______? Will it be my brother, my ______, or me? Every pain you get, you think – ______ it. And you become too frightened to go to the ______.”

Rates of stomach cancer differ around the ______, but in New Zealand, the chances of ______ from this disease ______ just over 6 per 100 000 for ______ of European descent. In the Maori and Pacific Islands ______, the rate is ______ at 22 per 100 000. However, in Hira’s whānau in the Bay of Plenty, the incidence was very much ______. Worse still was the _____ onset of ______ often fatal disease. Normally, stomach cancer strikes people ______ the age of sixty, but in the whānau, it was common for people in their twenties and thirties to be_______. Even teenagers were dying from the cancer.

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Glossary:
whānau = extended family


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