

If you're able to get your child to check you're a better man than me! There is such resistance to the simple task of reading back your own work that often I ask them to read their story aloud to demonstrate how little time it takes. One side of A4 paper can be read in 2 minutes. I suspect the reason kids are so reluctant to read back their own homework is that they're just glad to have finished it and keen to go and do something they enjoy more.

I have no cure I'm afraid. There are strategies I have heard mentioned in the past. Reading the story backwards from the end to the beginning was one suggestion. If the sentences didn't make sense then the idea was that you could concentrate on the spelling of the words. I'm not sure about that one.

Often if checking did take place it wasn't very well done and obvious mistakes were missed. Often a person's mind corrects words in their head as they are reading so you miss errors on the page – like a kind of mental autocorrect.

These worksheets should help. They each contain a task that needs to be completed. Ideally you should spot all the mistakes first time around – well at least that's what you're aiming for. Remember it's not just spelling, but grammar you're watching out for, and each worksheet should not take more than 5 minutes to complete, which is the maximum time you should take to check in the exam.

Good luck!

John Hopkins' Letter

John Hopkins was a notorious thief who died in prison over 30 years ago. Hopkins had three passions in life: theft, his beloved wife Eliza and his perfect spelling!

His most famous crime was robbing Windsor Castle one night all on his own - Police claimed it was the most ingenious crime they had ever investigated - Hopkins spent three days hidden inside a display case disguised as a stuffed fox. Anyway, he was finally tracked down in a field and cornered before being set upon by dogs. He was put on trial and imprisoned but Police never uncovered his stash of the Queen's jewellery, although there were some rumours they had been sold abroad.

Recently, however, a letter has come to light, written by Hopkins to his wife, in which he gives away the location of the jewels in a special code (prison letters are always read by the authorities.) Hopkins deliberately made 23 errors in his letter knowing that Eliza could work out the location of the jewels by joining up the mistakes.

Can you work out where the jewels are hidden?

Dearest Eliza,

It has now been six months since we last saw each other and I confess that there are moments when I don't think I can live with this infernal separation much longer. You will remain true to me, won't you? My love for you has not dimmed in all this time and I know that one day we shall be together again.

Life here is utterly dull but I do have a job in the laundry room. Every day is the same and I rise at dawn to wash all the bedding in Sector B (that is over 100 prisoners). I keep to myself - here are some dark and shady characters in here, but I take great solace in my visits to the library and I have befriended the young reading tutor who visits on Wednesdays.

Oh what a world I have found for myself in books! It is the escape for me, I know that it is only that and when I put the book down I am still in this drab cell.

I spend many hours staring through the bars at the courtyard below. If I strain

my neck I can see a distant Sycamore Tree in which lives my whole world, I love watching the birds and the squirrels as they go about their daily tasks.

Eliza my love, I know that you appreciate what this letter means. 't forget me. I want you to be happy, I wish ever so much that you never suffer poverty or desperation again. I want you to live like a queen. Be sure to give my love to the boys. Are they remembering to clean their teeth? Keep faith my love until I am with you once more. Eternally yours,

John

Enter the letters of the code here: _ _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ _ /
_ _ _ _ _

A Letter from Greece

Your new Greek penfriend Thanasis Kokaliaris has written you an introductory letter.

This is the first time Thanasis has written a letter in English and so his English is not perfect. In fact, his letter is littered with mistakes. You weren't going to mention this, but this morning you received a second letter from Thanasis in which he has corrected every single one of your mistakes in your own introductory letter to him.

Offended by his attack on your Greek you vow to identify every single spelling and grammatical mistake in his letter. Write the corrections neatly in the space below each line.

Dear Freind,

How are you? My name is Thanasis Kokaliaris and I am your new penfreind. I look

forward to knowing you but first I would like to say you all about me.

I am ten years old and I habitate in Thessaloniki in Northern Greece. I live with my

parents and my two sisters Eleni (12) and Melissa (14). In much ways I have a very

ordinary life; I like to skateboard and swum and I love football. My two sisters are

not so much interested in football unfortunately so I have to play a lot by myself

Do you like football?

Thessaloniki is the second largest cities in Greece with a population of over

300,000. It is at the coast and has the largest university I Greece. I love living here

and have lot s of friends, especially my best friend Theo.

I also enjoy school and my favorite subject is History. I love reading about the

Greek Empire and all the exiting stories and legends. I also like Maths and

Science but I find my English is not so good and I am making many mistakes. I am

apologize for my English.

I would like one day to visit England and maybe meet you. I would be very

interesting to hear all about you.

Yours faithfully,

Thanasis

King Minos

King Minos of Athens was waging war, which is something he often did.

Unfortunately his son was killed, and perhaps understandably Minos became very angry and vowed revenge. Less understandably he compelled the people of Athens to draw lots, and whichever name was drawn, that person had to enter the labyrinth and face the Minotaur, a vicious creature with the head of a bull and the body of a man. No one ever came back. Lost in the labyrinth they had no chance. If your name was called, it was a death sentence.

Heroic Theseus, undeterred by the odds, decided to end the cruel tyranny of the Minotaur and enter the labyrinth. Ultimately Theseus was successful. The key to his success was in a present that his girlfriend Ariadne had given him prior to his departure. This gift allowed him to navigate the labyrinth. Theseus, however, did not want King Minos to know of the method so he passed it on in code in a letter to the people of Athens. Ariadne's gift is hidden in the mistakes Theseus made in the following letter. The letter has, naturally, been translated from the original Greek.

My Dear Fellow Athenians,

You need for no more for I have slain the Minotaur. Of this there is no doubt, I held his fiendish head in my own arms and I left carrying his bullish horns in my knapsack. I dedicate this triumph to the people of Athens and of course, my dear, beloved, Ariadne, without whom this enterprise would not have been possible.

It was Ariadne who gave me the courage to continue when I questioned my resolve. It was the beautiful face of Ariadne that I kept in my mind's eye when I first saw the hideous face of the creature. But most importantly, it was Ariadne who lent me the method of navigation that brought me safely home. Without her I would be lost.

People of Athens, I hope my victory, which is a victory of all Athens, will give you the courage to overcome King Minos. We are all in a labyrinth, and we all must face down the hideous might of our oppressor, from whose wicked tyranny we were led to presume there was no escape. I tell you, I have found the way, and escape we will.

Your noble kinsman,

Theseus.

Can you tell what Ariadne's gift was? _ / ____ / _ / _____