**Comprehension Exercise:**

These comprehension exercises have been an adapted from an article

This comprehension exercise1 and 2 are the same article.

Comprehension exercise 1 has a reading age and comprehension level of about 12 years and comprehension exercise 2 had reading age and comprehension level of about 14 years.

Select the comprehension exercise that best suits your class.

**Comprehension Exercise 1:**

Read the article below and answer the following questions.

**Wild Animal Pests Causing Big Problems for NZ Farmers**

Wild animals like deer, goats, pigs, and possums are causing big problems in New Zealand. A 2021 report says these animals now live on 82% of conservation land – up from 63% in 2013. These pests don’t stay in one place. They move into farms, eating grass and damaging crops and trees.

Farmers like Dean Rabbidge from Southland are very worried. Wild pigs have dug up his paddocks, and deer are eating crops even far from the bush. Possum numbers, which were once under control, are growing again too.

Dean says it’s hard to stop the animals. He spends a lot of time trying to hunt them, but they mostly come out at night. Farmers don’t want hunters with dogs around during lambing season either, so it’s tough to manage.

Another farmer, Toby Williams from Gisborne, has about 200 wild deer on his land. The deer are eating grass meant for sheep and are ruining young native plants that help protect waterways.

Wild pigs are also a big problem. Some farmers kill 200 to 300 pigs a year. The pigs ruin soil and cause erosion, especially in winter. When hunters try to control them, the animals run back into nearby forests.

Farmers say everyone needs to work together – the government, DOC, and private landowners – to solve the pest problem. They believe this could also be an opportunity, such as using pest control for jobs or recovering wild meat.

**Comprehension Questions:**

1. What types of wild animals are causing problems for New Zealand farmers?
2. What percentage of conservation land is now affected by these pests?
3. Why is it hard for farmers to hunt the wild pigs?
4. What damage do deer cause on farms?
5. What’s happening to the number of possums in some areas?
6. Why is it difficult to control pests during lambing season?
7. What do farmers suggest as a better way to fight the pest problem?
8. What possible opportunity do farmers see in dealing with wild animals?

**Answers**

1. Feral deer, goats, pigs, and possums.
2. 82% of conservation land.
3. Because the pigs come out mostly at night (they are nocturnal), and it’s not safe to have hunters during lambing season.
4. They eat grass meant for sheep, ruin crops, and destroy young native plants.
5. Possum numbers are increasing again after being controlled in the past.
6. Farmers don’t want hunters with dogs on the property while lambs are being born.
7. They suggest a catchment-wide plan where everyone works together—farmers, DOC, and landowners.
8. They think pest control could create jobs, such as in the Jobs for Nature programme and wild meat recovery projects.

**Comprehension Exercise 2:**

Read this article and answer the following questions.

**Wild Animal Pests Causing Big Problems for NZ Farmers**

Feral animals like deer, pigs, goats, and possums are causing major problems across New Zealand. According to a 2021 Department of Conservation (DOC) report, these pests now roam 82% of New Zealand’s conservation land—up from 63% in 2013. Some experts think the real number could be even higher.

These wild animals don’t follow fences or boundaries. They move freely into farmland and forests, eating grass, damaging crops, and ruining native plants. This frustrates many farmers, especially those living next to DOC land or bush areas owned by local councils.

In Southland, farmer Dean Rabbidge says wild pigs and deer are becoming a serious threat to farming. He shared a video of his land, where wild pigs had destroyed two hectares of paddock by digging up the soil. He says some farmers lose that much land in just one night.

Hunting them is hard. "They’ve become nocturnal," Dean says. “You don’t want hunters with dogs on your farm during lambing season, so it’s hard to get rid of them.”

Dean believes the pest problem is not just on private land, but also in nearby conservation bush areas. He says many farmers are spending time and money on pest control themselves, but DOC isn’t doing enough.

Possum numbers are also increasing again. Years ago, possum control helped reduce the spread of TB (tuberculosis) in livestock. Now, Dean says, “you lose count of how many possums you shoot in the bush.”

Deer are another big issue. They are eating young tree seedlings and stopping the regeneration of native forests. Dean says he used to plant swedes for livestock, but deer eat them even if the paddocks are far from the bush.

“Fifteen years ago, seeing a deer was exciting,” he says. “Now hunting is just a chore. We’re no longer hunting for fun—it’s about controlling the damage.”

In Gisborne, Federated Farmers chair Toby Williams has similar problems. Around 200 wild deer roam his land in several groups. They eat the grass meant for sheep, and cause problems for native plantings along waterways. “They strip all the young natives overnight,” he says.

Wild pigs are also causing damage. Some farmers shoot up to 300 pigs a year. These pigs dig up fields, especially in winter, which leads to erosion and hurts new lambs.

Pests like these often escape into nearby forests when hunted. Some forestry companies work with farmers to control pests, but others keep their land locked up for private hunting, allowing pests to grow in numbers.

Toby says farmers, DOC, and landowners need to work together on this. “We need a proper plan that covers entire areas, not just separate efforts.” He suggests using government funding for pest control, like the Jobs for Nature programme, and even sees potential in using wild animals for meat recovery.

**Comprehension Questions:**

1. What four types of animals are causing problems for New Zealand farmers?
2. What percentage of conservation land is now affected by these pests?
3. Why is it difficult for farmers to hunt wild pigs?
4. What damage do deer cause on farms and in the bush?
5. What does Dean Rabbidge say about possum numbers today compared to the past?
6. How are wild pigs affecting the land, especially during winter?
7. Why is working separately not effective in fighting pest animals?
8. What opportunity do farmers see in dealing with these pest problems?

**Answers**

1. Deer, pigs, goats, and possums.
2. 82% of conservation land.
3. Because they are active at night (nocturnal), and farmers don’t want hunters on their land during lambing season.
4. They eat grass meant for animals, destroy crops like swedes, and prevent forest regeneration by eating young seedlings.
5. He says possums are returning in large numbers, even though they were nearly eliminated before.
6. They dig up the soil, causing erosion and harming the land, especially when the ground is soft.
7. Because pests move freely between lands, a combined approach is needed for real results.
8. They think wild meat recovery and pest control could create jobs and turn a problem into an opportunity.