Reading Practice – Unit 3

Crossrail crosses London

The £14.8 billion Crossrail project remains Europe's largest infrastructure project to date. Construction started in 2009 with a plan to build a modern railway line going across London from east to west that also connected with London's underground network. The Tube, as this network is known, was started in 1863 and is the world's oldest underground train system; it carries huge numbers every day in quite crowded conditions.

The Crossrail project added 42 km of tunnels, built ten new stations, modernised another thirty stations and created links to the existing transport system. The new state-of-the-art trains are much longer than the normal underground trains and are able to carry 1,500 passengers at a time. In total, London's rail capacity increased by 10 percent. This has encouraged more people to take public transport instead of driving and has helped to reduce pollution in the capital. Because the new trains are much faster than the old ones, an extra 1.5 million people are within 45 minutes of central London. The new line can carry 200 million passengers a year not only more quickly, but also in more comfortable surroundings.

The idea for a railway crossing London was first discussed over a hundred years ago and then again in the 1970s, but it was only in the new century that London decided to go ahead with this massive engineering project.

According to the company that ran the project, everything was completed on time and within budget. The project provided work for 55,000 people and offered 75,000 business opportunities to suppliers.

The new line opened in 2018 and is called the Elizabeth line. It links Heathrow and Reading to the capital. Although those living in and close to London see the benefits of this project, people in other parts of the UK are not so happy. They feel that London continues to grow and offer the best jobs and highest salaries, while the rest of the country falls behind and feels poorer.

1 **Read the article and complete the table with the correct numbers.**

1	Cost of project		6	Length of new tunnels	
2	Start of work		7	Capacity of new trains	
3	Opening		8	Increase in rail capacity	
4	Maximum journey time to central London		9	Jobs created	
5	Annual passenger capacity		10	Business opportunities	

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2 **Read the article again and choose the correct option.**

1 Crossrail was a project which built

- **a** a new railway system to replace the Tube.
- **b** a new tube line to replace the railway.
- **c** a train line crossing London which links to the Tube.

2 The London Tube is

- **a** very comfortable and up to date.
- **b** usually quite empty.
- **c** the oldest underground railway in the world.

4 The green benefit of the project is that

- **a** the lines are underground, not overground.
- **b** more people might take public transport instead of using their cars
- **c** the new trains are state-of-the-art.

5 The original idea for a railway crossing London

- **a** was discussed over a century ago.
- **b** was Queen Elizabeth's.
- **c** was thought about in the 1970s.

6 Although there are lots of benefits for London,

- **a** people from outside London have quite negative feelings.
- **b** people in other regions have better salaries.
- **c** the city is getting smaller.

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