

## Reading Level 2: The 'supermoon'

May 6<sup>th</sup> 2012

**Topics:** science, nature

**Learning points:**

- Past Simple and Present Perfect
- will and going-to future
- vocabulary



1 Have you seen the supermoon yet<sup>1</sup>? Did you see the moon on Saturday night?  
2 Did it look different to normal? Recently<sup>2</sup> the full moon has been bigger than normal – it is a 'supermoon' at  
3 the moment. It is 10% larger and 3% brighter than an average<sup>3</sup> full moon. Have you heard about this?  
4 Do you know why?  
5  
6 The reason is that the moon has been closer to Earth than usual. It is – or was on Saturday night – at the  
7 closest point in its orbit to Earth, which is about 50,000km nearer than when it is furthest<sup>4</sup> away (and so 15%  
8 larger and 30% brighter than when it is at its most distant).  
9  
10 Supermoons happen about once a year. Yesterday the moon was brighter than it is going to be again in 2012,  
11 but another supermoon is going to happen in 2013. On March 19<sup>th</sup> 2011 there was a supermoon that was  
12 400km closer to Earth than this one.  
13  
14 Some people say that they can feel<sup>5</sup> the full moon. Have you been sleeping well recently? I haven't!  
15 On Sunday I woke up very early in the morning. However, there is no proven scientific<sup>6</sup> connection between  
16 full moons and illness or bad behaviour<sup>7</sup>. Did you know that the word 'lunacy'<sup>8</sup> (which means 'madness')  
17 comes from the Latin word for the moon?  
18  
19 One effect<sup>9</sup> was that the tide<sup>10</sup> in the sea was higher than normal, because the moon's gravity<sup>11</sup> was stronger,  
20 but it was only higher by about 2-3cm.  
21  
22 The sky has been cloudy where I live, so I haven't seen the 'supermoon' yet. If you haven't seen the  
23 supermoon yet, don't worry<sup>12</sup>. Lots of people have posted photographs of it on the internet, and for the next  
24 few nights it is going to be almost as big as it was yesterday. Perhaps you will see it tomorrow night, if the sky  
25 is clear. The moon will look biggest when it is low<sup>13</sup> in the sky, near the horizon, although<sup>14</sup> this is actually<sup>15</sup>  
26 only a trick of the eye – it is not real.

<sup>1</sup> yet = schon

<sup>2</sup> recently = in letzte Zeit, kürzlich

<sup>3</sup> average = durchschnitt

<sup>4</sup> furthest = am weitesten entfernte

<sup>5</sup> feel = fühlen, spüren

<sup>6</sup> scientific = naturwissenschaftlich

<sup>7</sup> behaviour = Benehmen, Verhalten

<sup>8</sup> lunacy = Wahnsinn

<sup>9</sup> effect = Auswirkung

<sup>10</sup> tide = Gezeiten, (Meer)Flut

<sup>11</sup> gravity = Schwerkraft

<sup>12</sup> don't worry = keine Sorge

<sup>13</sup> low = niedrig, tief

<sup>14</sup> although = obwohl

<sup>15</sup> actually = eigentlich

## Past Simple and Present Perfect

This is a good text to compare<sup>16</sup> the Past Simple and the Present Perfect tenses.

Look in Line 1:

- 'Have you seen the supermoon yet?' This is the Present Perfect.
- 'Did you see the moon on Saturday night?' This is the Simple Past

There are two things that tell us when to use them:

1. The Simple Past is finished. It is a fact about something that happened in the past. There is no connection to the present.

The Present Perfect started in the past, but it is not clear if it is finished or not. But - there is a link to the present. In fact, the effect on the present is more important than the action!

2. We must know when the Simple Past happened (the action is important). If you can ask the question 'When?' and there is a clear answer – then use the Past Simple.

For the Present Perfect, when the action happened is unclear – because it is not important. Words like 'yet?' or 'already' or 'recently' are used.

Look at Line 2.

- 'Did it look different to normal?' This is the Past Simple, so we need to know when. When? On Saturday night.
- 'Recently the moon has been bigger than normal'. When? Recently (no specific time). Is it finished? That is not clear, but there must be a link to the present, and that is made clear in the next part – 'it is a supermoon at the moment'.

## **Questions**

1. Go through the text and:
  - a. check your understanding of the difference by asking 'when?' for each past tense, and
  - b. if the tense is the Present Perfect, ask 'and now...?' to focus on the link to the present
2. Look in line 14. There is a Present Perfect Continuous tense ('have been sleeping'). Is it finished?

## Will and going-to future

Although the will-future and going-to future are used interchangeably by Native Speakers, there is a difference. The going-to future is more certain<sup>17</sup>; it is used for events that can't/won't change.

The will-future can be certain/fixed, but you can also use it for ideas about the future that might change.

Look at the future tenses in lines 11, 23, 24, & 25. Check your understanding by asking 'is it certain?'

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<sup>16</sup> compare = vergleichen

<sup>17</sup> certain = sicher, bestimmt