



EduTest Year 8 Entry Reading Comprehension Practice Paper 1

Reading Comprehension

52 questions · 4 options each (A–D) · 30 minutes · No dictionary

How to use this booklet

- Read each text carefully, then answer the questions that follow it. Every question has four options, A, B, C and D: choose the one best answer.
- The last 16 questions are about grammar, punctuation, spelling and word choice. They do not have a passage.
- You have 30 minutes for the 52 questions. You will not lose marks for wrong answers, so attempt every question.

TEXT 1 — NARRATIVE

Questions 1–6

The Seventh Chime

This text is adapted from an original short story.

Every Saturday morning, Marnie climbed the two hundred steps of the town hall tower to help Mr Okafor wind the great clock. He called her his apprentice, though nobody had ever signed any papers, and the only wage she received was a thermos of sweet tea shared on the landing halfway up.

The clock was old, and it was moody. Some weeks it ran perfectly; other weeks it lost a minute every hour, and Mr Okafor would stand with his ear pressed against the iron casing, murmuring to it as if it were an ailing relative. Marnie, who preferred problems she could solve with a screwdriver, found this baffling.

One Saturday, the clock struck six chimes at seven o'clock. Mr Okafor said nothing. He simply opened the brass door, studied the tangle of wheels, and handed her the flashlight. "Find it," he said.

For an hour she crawled among the gears, her sleeves black with oil. She tested the pendulum, tightened the screws, and checked every tooth of every wheel for damage, but the fault stubbornly refused to appear. Her frustration swelled until she nearly threw the flashlight across the room. Then, in the quiet, she heard it: a faint, dry tick that did not match the others. Following the sound, she discovered a single cog whose tooth had worn smooth.

"It was never one big thing," she said, holding it up in triumph. "It was a tiny thing, hiding."

Mr Okafor nodded slowly. "Most trouble is," he said. "People keep hunting for the dramatic cause. The ones who listen find the real one."

That evening, as the repaired clock tolled seven times across the square, Marnie realised the old man had not been murmuring to the machine at all. He had been listening to it. The following Saturday, before they began to climb, Marnie pressed her ear against the iron casing and held her breath.

1. Why does Marnie find Mr Okafor's murmuring to the clock "baffling"?

- A She prefers to fix problems with tools rather than by talking to them.
- B She thinks he is speaking to her but cannot hear what he says.
- C She suspects he is hiding a secret about how the clock works.
- D She is worried that the noise will disturb people in the square.

2. In the sentence "the fault stubbornly refused to appear", the word "stubbornly" suggests that the fault was

- A deliberately hidden by Mr Okafor
- B difficult to uncover despite repeated effort
- C simple to locate once she had calmed down
- D caused by an unusually strong spring in the clock

3. What does Mr Okafor's response to the wrong chimes suggest about his attitude to Marnie?

- A He is annoyed that she did not notice the fault sooner.
- B He hopes she will fail so that she learns to respect the clock.
- C He believes she is capable of solving the problem herself.
- D He has forgotten how a clock mechanism is repaired.

4. The phrase “as if it were an ailing relative” suggests that Mr Okafor treats the clock with

- A amused scorn
- B nervous impatience
- C gentle, patient concern
- D strict authority

5. Mr Okafor says, “The ones who listen find the real one.” What idea does this express?

- A Careful attention uncovers causes that dramatic guesses miss.
- B Small faults are always harder to repair than large ones.
- C Experienced workers should avoid asking for help.
- D Noisy machines usually need only a simple adjustment to the moving parts.

6. Why does the writer end the story with Marnie pressing her ear against the casing?

- A To suggest that the clock will break down again next week.
- B To reveal that Marnie intends to leave the apprenticeship for another trade.
- C To show that she has begun to adopt Mr Okafor's way of working.
- D To explain how the cog became worn in the first place.

READING COMPREHENSION — 52 QUESTIONS

Answers & worked solutions

Answer Key

1 A	2 B	3 C	4 C	5 A	6 C
7 A	8 C	9 D	10 A	11 C	12 B
13 D	14 C	15 A	16 C	17 B	18 D
19 C	20 C	21 D	22 A	23 B	24 A
25 C	26 C	27 A	28 A	29 B	30 D
31 D	32 A	33 D	34 B	35 D	36 A
37 A	38 D	39 B	40 C	41 B	42 B
43 C	44 D	45 B	46 C	47 D	48 A
49 B	50 D	51 B	52 D		

1. Why does Marnie find Mr Okafor's murmuring to the clock “baffling”? [Character]

Correct answer: A — She prefers to fix problems with tools rather than by talking to them.

- What is the question asking? It asks for the reason behind Marnie's puzzlement.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: “Marnie, who preferred problems she could solve with a screwdriver, found this baffling.”
- The sentence that contains the word 'baffling' explains why: Marnie preferred problems she could solve with a screwdriver. Talking to a machine is the opposite of that approach.
- So the correct answer is A (She prefers to fix problems with tools rather than by talking to them).
- Why the other options are wrong:
 - B: The text says he murmurs to the clock as if it were an ailing relative, not to Marnie.
 - C: Nothing suggests a secret; her puzzlement comes from her own preference for practical fixes.
 - D: Neighbours and noise are never mentioned; the text gives her screwdriver preference as the reason.

LOS: Reading: character and motivation

KEY TAKEAWAY

Characters' motives come from what they want and what they fear: look at their choices under pressure.