

HAST Year 10 Entry Reading Comprehension Practice Paper 1

Reading Comprehension

36 questions · 4 options each (A–D) · 45 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.
- You have 45 minutes for the 36 questions. You will not lose marks for wrong answers, so attempt every question.

TEXT 1 — NARRATIVE

Questions 1–6

The Inspector

This text is adapted from an original short story.

Mrs Valdis had run the bakery on Corner Street for thirty-one years, and in all that time she had never once been inspected by anyone who did not hold a clipboard. So when the young man in the grey coat came through the door on Monday, reading from his phone, she assumed that he was another salesman and prepared her usual courteous refusal.

“Mrs Valdis?” he said. “I’m from the Heritage Board. We’re reviewing the building.” Her stomach dropped. The bakery sat in a crooked old terrace with a leaking roof, a cracked oven flue and a front window that rattled in storms. She had been warned that someone would eventually come to condemn it.

He walked slowly through the shop, running a gloved hand along the counter and tapping the walls, and she followed him with her arms crossed, rehearsing a speech. He asked how old the oven was (older than she was), and whether the tiles on the floor were original (yes, though a few had cracked). When he reached the back room, he stopped, and for a long time said nothing.

Above the proving cupboard, on the brick, someone had scratched initials and dates with a nail: every apprentice, she explained, who had ever worked in the shop, going back to 1924. There were more than ninety. Hers was near the end, written in 1993, slightly crooked.

The young man looked at the names for so long that she began to feel awkward. “My grandfather’s here,” he said at last, quietly. He pointed to a line near the top, almost worn smooth: T. K. Aoki, 1951. “He never told me he’d worked in a bakery. I only know that he came here with nothing.”

Mrs Valdis uncrossed her arms. She did not say anything. She took a clean cloth from her apron, and, very gently, wiped the dust from the bricks around the name, and then went to put the kettle on.

1. Why does Mrs Valdis follow the inspector “with her arms crossed, rehearsing a speech”?

- A She wants to leave the building
- B She is eager to sell him bread
- C She expects to defend the shop.
- D She is bored of inspections

2. Why does the writer describe the building in such detail early in the story?

- A to praise the architecture
- B to prove she was careless
- C to describe the bakery’s products
- D to build her fear it will be condemned

3. What can be inferred from the inspector's silence in the back room?

- A He has found a personal connection.
- B He has found a serious defect
- C He is about to close the shop
- D He has lost interest

4. What does Mrs Valdis's final action show about her?

- A She is embarrassed by the dust
- B She wants him to leave quickly
- C She is trying to impress him
- D She is compassionate and respectful.

5. How does the mood shift between the beginning and the end of the story?

- A from suspicion to warmth
- B from warmth to suspicion
- C from boredom to fear
- D from joy to grief

6. Which idea is most strongly expressed by the story?

- A Old buildings should be demolished
- B Inspectors are always unkind
- C Places hold their workers' memory.
- D Bakeries are better than banks

READING COMPREHENSION — 36 QUESTIONS

Answers & worked solutions

Answer Key

1	C	2	D	3	A	4	D	5	A	6	C
7	D	8	C	9	B	10	C	11	C	12	A
13	D	14	B	15	C	16	C	17	B	18	D
19	B	20	A	21	D	22	A	23	A	24	B
25	D	26	B	27	B	28	D	29	B	30	A
31	A	32	D	33	B	34	C	35	C	36	D

1. Why does Mrs Valdis follow the inspector “with her arms crossed, rehearsing a speech”? [Inference]

Correct answer: C — She expects to defend the shop.

- What is the question asking? It asks why she behaves this way.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: “she followed him with her arms crossed, rehearsing a speech”
- Crossed arms and a prepared speech show she is braced for criticism.
- So the correct answer is C (She expects to defend the shop).
- Why the other options are wrong:
- A (She wants to leave the building): She follows to defend it.
- B (She is eager to sell him bread): She prepares to argue.
- D (She is bored of inspections): She feels fear.

LOS: Reading: inferring meaning that is not stated directly

KEY TAKEAWAY

An inference is a conclusion the clues force you to make: find the clue in the text, then ask what it must mean.

2. Why does the writer describe the building in such detail early in the story? [Language Effect]

Correct answer: D — to build her fear it will be condemned

- What is the question asking? It asks what the detail does.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: “She had been warned that someone would eventually come to condemn it.”
- The flaws make her fear believable.
- So the correct answer is D (to build her fear it will be condemned).
- Why the other options are wrong: