

English

Comprehension – Making Inferences

What do I do?

In a comprehension assessment, you will be given a text to read, followed by questions. This text could be from a wide range of styles. It could be a story, poem or a non-fiction passage, such as an information text. Depending on the style of exam paper, you may be asked to write a full answer or choose from a number of multiple options.

Top Tips!

- Read the passage first to get a feel of the text.
- Try to imagine the text in your head and picture what it might look like.
- If you have read the text before (it might be a famous story), try not to rely on what you have read previously. Just answer the questions given and rely only on the text in front of you.

What skills do I need to improve?

Doing lots of practice questions will help with becoming familiar with question types but what else can you do to improve in this area?

- READ, READ, READ! Reading a variety of different materials will help to prepare you for the exam.
- Try to include newspaper articles, poetry and pre-19th century texts in your list of materials to read.
- When you've read a chapter, ask someone to ask you questions about it - discussion about what you've read will help you to understand it better and will enable you to understand other opinions and ideas.
- Why not see if you can continue the story by writing your own ending?

Rush Hour

Freya experiences her first trip on a busy commuter train with her Uncle Mo.

A bustle of busy commuters filled the air with a buzz and chatter, one smoggy Monday morning. London's King's Cross Station was heaving. Freya and Mo fought their way through the army of passengers, eagerly waiting for the 08:06 to Welwyn Garden City, standing in a small space, tucking their suitcases and backpacks out of the way as much as they could.

5 "Do you think we'll make it?" fretted Freya nervously, checking her coat pockets for the tickets.

Uncle Mo gave her a comforting smile and a silent nod, the busy day was clearly on his mind, but Freya felt secure in the knowledge that Uncle Mo appeared to know what he was doing.

A laboured chug and a heavy scratch of heaving wheels, anticipated the train's arrival. Its slow and steady approach into the platform, tired and reluctant almost, sidled in and came to a controlled stop.

10 Almost instantly, the fraught rabble elbowed and squeezed their way through the sliding doors and onto the train.

It was packed, with barely a pocket of open space to breathe, but Freya and Mo were on, bags in tow.

Clinging onto a nearby rail, Freya watched Mo steady his legs, waiting for the jolt of the train to pull away.

Mirroring him, she followed his every move, like a duckling, learning to swim in this pond of people.

Fancy a challenge? See if you can rewrite the scene along a futuristic theme.

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The following questions are all inferential. You will need to search in the text for clues and use your background knowledge to find the answer. Sometimes a question will require you to think from the perspective of the author, one of the characters in the story or yourself, as a reader.

Questions

1

"Freya and Mo fought their way through the army of passengers, eagerly waiting for the 08:06 to Welwyn Garden City..."

What do you think the author is trying to portray by describing the passengers as an *army*?

1. There are a large number of passengers
2. They are ready to fight
3. They are tightly packed together, in formation
4. They are making a lot of noise

- A. 1, 2 & 3
- B. 2 & 3
- C. 1 & 4
- D. 2 & 4
- E. 1 & 3

2

Why do you think that Freya and Mo tucked their belongings out of the way?

- A. They didn't want anyone to steal anything
- B. There wasn't a lot of room on the platform
- C. They didn't want their backpacks to get dirty
- D. Their bags were too heavy to carry
- E. They were too hot on the station platform

3

How did Freya feel when she was standing with Mo on the platform?

- A. anxious
- B. excited
- C. hot
- D. exhausted
- E. elated



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Questions

4 Which best describes atmosphere on the station platform change at line 10?

- A. It becomes a little more animated and lively
- B. It becomes frantic and unruly
- C. It becomes calm and quiet
- D. It becomes tranquil and serene
- E. It becomes stressful and dangerous

5 How best describes Mo's character throughout the extract?

- A. Nervous and agitated
- B. Ambitious and diligent
- C. Joyful and upbeat
- D. Experienced and composed
- E. Forceful and fearless

6 Why do you think Freya was imitating Mo at the end of the extract?

- A. Freya was too frightened to move, so she decided to copy Mo instead
- B. Freya echoed Mo's movements because she loved to dance
- C. Freya had never ridden on a commuter train before and was trying to learn what to do
- D. Freya looked up to her uncle
- E. Freya was remembering how to behave on a train



Did you try the challenge?
Share it with us!



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Answers

1 "Freya and Mo fought their way through the army of passengers, eagerly waiting for the 08:06 to Welwyn Garden City..."

What do you think the author is trying to portray by describing the passengers as an *army*?

E. 1 & 3

2 Why do you think that Freya and Mo tucked their belongings out of the way?

B. There wasn't a lot of room on the platform

3 How did Freya feel when she was standing with Mo on the platform?

A. anxious

4 Which best describes atmosphere on the station platform change at line 10?

B. It becomes frantic and unruly

5 How best describes Mo's character throughout the extract?

D. Experienced and composed

6 Why do you think Freya was imitating Mo at the end of the extract?

C. Freya had never ridden on a commuter train before and was trying to learn what to do

