



English

Comprehension - Mixed Questions (Written Answers)

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?

The Great Race

The story of 'The Great Race' has been told for many centuries and is one of the most well-known Chinese zodiac legends. It originates from Chinese mythology when the Jade Emperor, the ruler of all gods within Chinese mythology, hosted the race.

One day, a long time ago in China, the Jade Emperor was celebrating his birthday. As he sat and pondered about life, he thought about how old he was and realised that he actually didn't know! It suddenly dawned on him that he needed a way to measure time. Jade Emperor decided that the best way was to have a race across the rapid river, and he summoned all of the animals to compete.

On the day of the race, the Emperor announced that the animals who made it over to the other side of the river would be rewarded by having a year named after them. All of the animals were excited about taking part, but the rat and the cat were feeling a little dubious, as neither of them were competent swimmers.

The rat had an idea and made his way cautiously over to where the ox was standing.

"Would you mind taking us over the river on your back?" he asked the ox, careful not to be trampled upon by his large, cloven hoof.

"Of course," the ox agreed, and both the cat and the rat jumped spritely onto his back.





It wasn't long before the race began and all of the animals ambushed towards the edge of the river bank. The ox took the lead, much to the rat's delight, and when they'd almost reached the other side, the rat, without a second thought, pushed the cat into the water!

The sneaky rat scrambled onto the opposite side of the river first, leaving the ox to slowly clamber out of the water.

"Congratulations rat," announced the Emperor, "the first year of the Zodiac will be named after you."

The ox heaved his heavy frame up onto the bank of the river, to take second place.

There were still ten places remaining and it wasn't long before the other animals followed.

In third place, the tiger, who arrived exhausted from his swim, splashing and panting to reach the Emperor. The river's current was strong, and the tiger found the swim challenging.

"Congratulations tiger, a gallant effort," Jade Emperor declared, "the third year of the zodiac will be named after you."

In fourth place, the clever rabbit, who gracefully hopped over the river onto stepping stones. He arrived on a floating log, which had carried him safely across the river.

Moments later, a silent swooping dragon glided to a halt on the opposite side of the river. The Emperor wandered over to him, he looked puzzled.

"Why did it take you so long to cross the river? You can fly!" exclaimed the Emperor.

"I needed to make some rain for the thirsty animals," he replied. "Then I saw a rabbit on a log, crossing the river, so I helped him along by gently blowing a puff of wind to get him to the other side."

The Jade Emperor congratulated the dragon on his generosity and kindness and awarded him fifth place in the race.

In the distance, the Emperor could hear the rhythmic sound of a horse's hooves, clip-clopping their way over the loose stones on the bank of the river. Just as the horse was about to cross the finish line, the sneaky snake slithered between the horse's legs, startling him, causing him to jump back.

As a result, the snake took sixth and the horse took seventh place in the race.

The monkey, rooster and goat had all worked together and travelled across the river on a raft. The Emperor was impressed, and the goat was awarded the eighth year, the monkey took the ninth and the rooster the tenth.

The dog arrived in eleventh place but when he was greeted by the Emperor, he was surprised he didn't arrive sooner.

"Why did you take so long? You're such a great swimmer!" exclaimed the Emperor, scratching his head.

"I decided to take a bath as the river was so clean," replied the dog, shaking off his fur to dry.

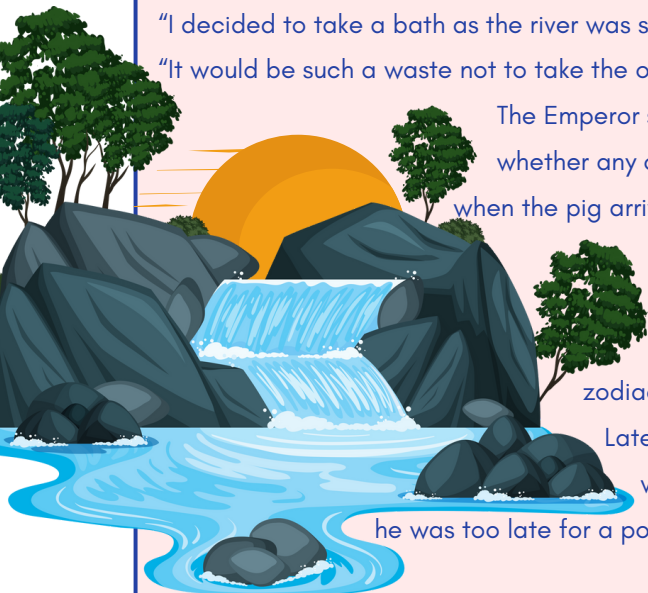
"It would be such a waste not to take the opportunity to bathe!"

The Emperor smiled, but with one place left in the zodiac, he was wondering whether any other animals were going to finish. He was just about to give up hope when the pig arrived.

"Sorry I'm late," announced the pig, "I stopped to have a bite to eat and then needed a sleep!"

The Emperor laughed and gave the twelfth and final year of the zodiac to the pig.

Later that evening, a very wet and tired cat emerged from the water. He was seething because the rat pushed him into the river and as a result, he was too late for a position. The cat and the rat have never been friends since.





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Read the following questions carefully and answer as best you can.

Questions

- 1 What were the Jade Emperor's reasons for the animals having a race? Use quotations from the text to support your answer.

2 marks

- 2 'Jade Emperor decided that the best way was to have a race across the rapid river, and he summoned all of the animals to compete.'

What is the underlined part of the sentence an example of?

1 mark

- 3 How were the rat and the cat feeling about taking part in the race? Use a quote to support your answer.

2 marks



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Read the following questions carefully and answer as best you can.

Questions

4

'It wasn't long before the race began and all of the animals ambushed towards the edge of the river bank.'
How does the author describe the animals at the start of the race?

1 mark

5

'The rat had an idea and made his way cautiously over to where the ox was standing.'
Write a synonym for the underlined word.

1 mark

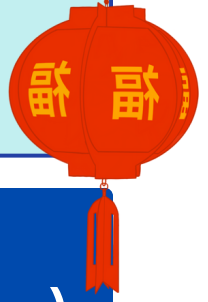
6

In the text, the horse is alarmed. Why is this and how does the reader know?

2 marks



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Answers

1

Answers could include:

- The Jade Emperor didn't know how old he was
- The Jade Emperor 'needed a way to measure time'.

2

The underlined part of the sentence is an example of **alliteration**.

3

Answers could include:

- The rat and the cat were 'dubious' meaning they were hesitant about taking part.
- The rat and the cat were not 'competent' swimmers, meaning that were not capable of swimming.
- The rat and the cat were afraid that they may drown, as they couldn't swim.

4

Answers could include:

- The verb 'ambushed' tells the reader that the animals were moving quickly towards the river, giving a sense of urgency and surprise.

5

Synonyms for 'cautiously' include:

Carefully, slowly, tentatively, warily, prudently, mindfully, heedfully, alertly, discreetly, judiciously, watchfully, vigilantly.

6

Answers could include:

- The horse was startled because the snake 'slithered' between his legs.
- We know the horse was alarmed because he jumped back.