

Reading Grade 6 — Practice Paper 1 — Answers & Explanations

For a parent, tutor, or the student to mark the exam paper against.

The Keeper of the Light

1. C. Forty-one years

The opening sentence says "For forty-one years, Tomas had climbed the ninety-eight steps".

2. A. The routine had become deeply familiar through long repetition

Knowing individual steps by their sound and wear is the kind of knowledge that only comes from doing something thousands of times, which is the writer's way of showing the length of his service.

3. D. He accepted that the decision made financial sense

Arithmetic here stands for the cost calculation behind automation: a machine is cheaper than a keeper, and Tomas can see why the department decided as it did.

4. B. To suggest the decision was impersonal and he had little interest in Tomas

The precision of "exactly eleven minutes" makes the visit sound measured out in advance, which contrasts sharply with the forty-one years being ended by it.

5. B. He had also kept records and watched over the fishing boats

The paragraphs that follow list the other things he kept: the record book, the three-in-the-morning watch, and twice a man's life.

6. D. Noticed a light moving wrongly and saved a man's life

The text says "Twice he had kept a man alive by noticing... that a light on the water was not moving the way a light on the water should".

7. A. The act matters to him personally, as a way of saying goodbye

The text notes the machine "would have done it for him", so lighting it is not needed; he does it because it is his last chance to do the thing he has done for forty-one years.

8. C. Wistful

The text is quiet and looks back on something valuable that is ending, without bitterness or protest, which is what wistful describes.

The Truth About Sharks

9. D. Fewer than ten

The text states that "sharks are involved in fewer than ten fatal incidents a year" worldwide.

10. B. The hippopotamus

The text says "Hippopotamuses kill around five hundred people", far more than sharks.

11. C. We judge danger by how easily we can picture it rather than by the numbers

The writer explains it in the next sentences: a dramatic, well-reported event is easy to bring to mind, and "When something is easy to bring to mind, we assume it must be common".

12. A. To show how small the risk from sharks is by comparison

Setting sharks against three harmless-sounding everyday objects makes the true size of the risk clear more forcefully than a number alone would.

13. A. About a third

The text says "roughly a third of shark species are now threatened with extinction".

14. C. They mature slowly and produce few young

The text gives this as the reason: "Sharks mature slowly and produce few young, so their populations recover slowly or not at all".

15. B. To reverse the idea the article began with

The article opens with people fearing sharks and closes by turning that around, which sums up the writer's argument in a single line.

16. D. To correct a common misunderstanding about sharks

The whole text sets a widespread belief against evidence and explains why the belief persists, which is the shape of a corrective argument.

Let Us Choose What We Read

17. C. They stop reading and rely on class discussion

The text says some students "quietly stop reading by chapter four and rely on class discussion to fill the gaps".

18. A. They teach students to read closely

The writer concedes this directly: "We are told that set texts teach us to read closely, and that is true."

19. D. That teachers should offer several demanding novels and let students choose

The writer proposes offering "four novels instead of one, all demanding, all worth studying", with each student choosing.

20. B. Because those skills can be practiced on any demanding novel

The listed skills are general reading skills, so they can be developed using any sufficiently challenging text rather than one particular title.

21. B. Students are more likely to finish and to read another book afterwards

The text says students who choose "are more likely to finish it, and more likely to read another one afterwards without being asked".

22. D. Reading another book without being asked

The writer says of that finding, "That second part matters more than any essay mark."

23. A. That the novel is endured rather than enjoyed

Survive is a word used about hardship, so choosing it for reading a novel implies the experience is something to be got through rather than valued.

24. C. To answer the worry that students would choose easy books

The most obvious objection to letting students choose is that they will take the easy option, and the closing line meets that objection head on.

The Day the River Rose

25. D. Up through the floor

The opening line says "The water came up through the floor first, which nobody expected."

26. B. The river did not follow the predictions people had made

Both Dad and the council said "until evening", and the water arrived at two o'clock, so the sentence points out that the river ignored everybody's predictions.

27. C. The hallway carpet had gone dark

The text says the brother "noticed that the carpet in the hallway had gone dark", which was the water soaking up through it.

28. A. How ordinary and calm it felt

The narrator says directly, "What surprised me was how ordinary it felt while it was happening. Nobody shouted."

29. A. To show how fast and automatic the decisions were

The clipped repetition imitates the rhythm of decisions made in "about two seconds each", letting the reader feel the speed rather than being told about it.

30. C. Eleven centimetres of silt and a smell

The text says the water "left eleven centimetres of silt on everything, and a smell I still cannot describe".

31. B. To show the kindness of strangers afterwards

The man is a stranger who worked for six hours and left before he could be thanked, which is the writer's clearest example of unasked-for kindness.

32. D. The help given by neighbours and strangers

The paragraph before this line is entirely about neighbours arriving with shovels and a stranger cleaning the kitchen, so that is what the closing sentence points back to.

Short texts

33. B. Dynamic character

A dynamic character undergoes meaningful internal change during the story.

34. B. First person

First person narration uses "I" and "me" because the narrator is a character inside the story.

35. A. Discipline matters more than winning

Choosing to bench a key player despite the cost to the team shows the coach values discipline over winning.

36. A. He values experience and familiarity over newness

Trusting the old, worn map over a new one suggests the explorer values familiarity and proven reliability.

37. D. Feeling nervous but acting confident

"Although" signals a contrast between Jack's nervous feelings and his confident actions.

38. D. To introduce the main idea

A topic sentence introduces what the paragraph will be about.

39. C. Factual and objective

News reports aim to present facts objectively rather than opinions or emotions.

40. D. Metaphor (comparing time to a thief)

A metaphor directly compares two unlike things without using "like" or "as" — here, time is called a thief.

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