

EXAM PAPER

Reading Grade 6 — Practice Paper 1

Total time: 50 minutes

SECTIONS IN THIS PAPER

- The Keeper of the Light
- The Truth About Sharks
- Let Us Choose What We Read
- The Day the River Rose
- Short texts

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer every question you can. Write your working in the space provided for long-answer questions. Marking guidance and full explanations are provided in the separate answer key.

Read ***The Keeper of the Light*** and answer questions 1 to 8.

THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT

For forty-one years, Tomas had climbed the ninety-eight steps to the lamp room every evening at dusk. He knew which step creaked, which one was worn smooth in the middle, and which one to avoid in winter when the damp came through the stone.

The letter had arrived in March. The lighthouse was to be automated. A machine would switch the lamp on at dusk and off at dawn, and it would not need a keeper, a cottage, or ninety-eight steps climbed twice a day.

Tomas did not argue. He understood the arithmetic of it. What he could not explain to the man from the department, who had been polite and had stayed exactly eleven minutes, was that the lamp was not the only thing he had been keeping.

He had kept the record book, in which every ship that passed had been noted in his small, square handwriting. He had kept the habit of watching the water at three in the morning, when the fishing boats came back in weather that should have kept them home. Twice he had kept a man alive by noticing, from ninety-eight steps up, that a light on the water was not moving the way a light on the water should.

On his last evening he climbed the steps as usual. He lit the lamp, though the machine was already installed and would have done it for him, and he sat with it until the sky went grey.

1. How long had Tomas worked at the lighthouse?

A. Eleven years

B. Twenty-one years

C. Forty-one years

D. Ninety-eight years

2. What does the detail about knowing which step creaked suggest?

A. The routine had become deeply familiar through long repetition

B. The lighthouse was badly built

C. Tomas was afraid of the stairs

D. The steps needed repairing

3. "He understood the arithmetic of it." What does this mean?

A. He had studied mathematics

B. He had counted the steps himself

C. He disagreed with the numbers in the letter

D. He accepted that the decision made financial sense

4. Why does the writer mention that the man from the department "stayed exactly eleven minutes"?

A. To show he was in a hurry to catch a train

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

C. To show how short the meeting was meant to be

D. To explain that he was rude to Tomas

5. What does the writer mean by "the lamp was not the only thing he had been keeping"?

A. He had taken things from the lighthouse

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

C. He had kept the cottage tidy

D. He had kept the letter a secret

6. What had Tomas done twice?

A. Repaired the lamp himself

B. Written to the department

C. Refused to climb the steps

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

7. Why does Tomas light the lamp on his last evening even though the machine would do it?

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

B. He does not trust the new machine

C. He has not been told the machine is working

D. He wants to prove the machine is unnecessary

8. Which word best describes the mood of this text?

A. Angry

B. Frightening

C. Wistful

D. Cheerful

Read ***The Truth About Sharks*** and answer questions 9 to 16.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SHARKS

If you asked a hundred people to name the animal most likely to kill them, a great many would say shark. They would be wrong by a very large margin.

Worldwide, sharks are involved in fewer than ten fatal incidents a year. Hippopotamuses kill around five hundred people. Mosquitoes, which spread diseases such as malaria, are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths. A person is more likely to die from a falling coconut, a vending machine, or their own bathtub than from a shark.

So why is the fear so strong? Part of the answer is that our sense of risk is built for stories, not for statistics. A shark attack is dramatic, unusual and easy to picture, and every one of them is reported. A malaria death is none of those things. When something is easy to bring to mind, we assume it must be common.

The consequences are not harmless. Fear has made it politically easy to kill sharks in large numbers, and roughly a third of shark species are now threatened with extinction. Sharks mature slowly and produce few young, so their populations recover slowly or not at all.

Meanwhile the animals themselves behave nothing like the films. Most species are smaller than an adult human and eat fish. Of the more than five hundred known species, fewer than ten have ever been involved in a fatal incident with a person.

The shark, it turns out, has far more to fear from us.

9. How many fatal shark incidents occur worldwide each year?

A. About five hundred

B. About a hundred

C. Hundreds of thousands

D. Fewer than ten

10. Which animal does the text say kills around five hundred people a year?

A. The mosquito

B. The hippopotamus

C. The shark

D. The crocodile

11. "our sense of risk is built for stories, not for statistics" — what does the writer mean?

A. People prefer reading fiction to reading numbers

B. Statistics about sharks are unreliable

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

D. Stories about sharks are usually untrue

12. Why does the writer mention coconuts, vending machines and bathtubs?

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

B. To list other dangers people should worry about

C. To suggest that homes are dangerous places

D. To make the article more amusing

13. What proportion of shark species are threatened with extinction?

A. About a third

B. About a tenth

C. About a half

D. Nearly all of them

14. Why do shark populations recover slowly?

A. They are hunted all year round

B. They live in very cold water

C. They mature slowly and produce few young

D. They have few places left to live

15. "The shark, it turns out, has far more to fear from us." Why does the writer end with this sentence?

A. To warn readers to stay out of the sea

B. To reverse the idea the article began with

C. To explain how sharks hunt

D. To suggest sharks are becoming more dangerous

16. What is the writer's main purpose?

A. To describe how sharks hunt

B. To persuade readers to swim less often

C. To compare sharks with hippopotamuses

D. To correct a common misunderstanding about sharks

Read ***Let Us Choose What We Read*** and answer questions 17 to 24.

LET US CHOOSE WHAT WE READ

Every year our class is handed the same list of set novels, and every year the same thing happens. A few students love the book. Most get through it. Some quietly stop reading by chapter four and rely on class discussion to fill the gaps.

We are told that set texts teach us to read closely, and that is true. But nobody reads closely a book they have already given up on.

I am not arguing that students should only read what is easy. I am arguing that we should have some say in what we read closely. A teacher could offer four novels instead of one, all demanding, all worth studying, and let each student choose. The skills being taught — following an argument, noticing how a writer builds a character, reading past a confusing chapter — do not depend on everybody holding the same book.

Schools that have tried this report something worth noticing. Students who choose their own text are more likely to finish it, and more likely to read another one afterwards without being asked. That second part matters more than any essay mark. The point of studying literature is not to survive one novel in Year 6. It is to become someone who still reads in Year 12, and after.

Give us the choice, and you may find we choose harder books than you expect.

17. According to the writer, what do some students do by chapter four?

A. They read ahead of the class

B. They choose a different book

C. They stop reading and rely on class discussion

D. They ask the teacher for help

18. What does the writer admit is true about set texts?

A. They teach students to read closely

B. They are always too difficult

C. They are chosen by students

D. They are cheaper for schools

19. What is the writer actually proposing?

A. That novels should be removed from school

B. That students should read only easy books

C. That class discussion should be banned

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

20. Why does the writer say the skills being taught do not depend on everybody holding the same book?

A. Because the skills are never tested

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

C. Because students already have those skills

D. Because teachers do not check them

21. What do schools that have tried this report?

A. Students read fewer books overall

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

C. Essay marks improve immediately

D. Teachers find it harder to plan lessons

22. Which does the writer say matters more than an essay mark?

A. Finishing the set novel

B. Choosing a difficult book

C. Taking part in class discussion

D. Reading another book without being asked

23. "The point of studying literature is not to survive one novel in Year 6." What does the word survive suggest?

A. That the novel is endured rather than enjoyed

B. That the novel is dangerous

C. That the novel is very long

D. That most students fail

24. Why does the writer end with "you may find we choose harder books than you expect"?

A. To admit the plan might fail

B. To ask teachers for a longer reading list

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

D. To show that students dislike reading

Read ***The Day the River Rose*** and answer questions 25 to 32.

THE DAY THE RIVER ROSE

The water came up through the floor first, which nobody expected.

We had watched the river all morning from the verandah. It was brown and fast and carrying things that did not belong in a river — a fence post, a plastic drum, most of somebody's shed. Dad said we had until evening. The council said we had until evening. The river had its own timetable.

At about two o'clock my brother noticed that the carpet in the hallway had gone dark. Within twenty minutes there was water over our ankles, and we were carrying what we could up the internal stairs: photographs, the good chair, the box of my mother's letters, and the dog, who did not want to be carried and said so.

What surprised me was how ordinary it felt while it was happening. Nobody shouted. We made decisions about objects in about two seconds each — upstairs, leave it, upstairs, leave it — and then we sat on the landing and watched our kitchen disappear.

It was afterwards that was hard. The water went down in three days and left eleven centimetres of silt on everything, and a smell I still cannot describe. Neighbours we had never spoken to arrived with shovels. A man from two streets over cleaned our kitchen for six hours and left before we could thank him properly.

People ask whether the flood was frightening. It was. But that is not the part I think about.

25. How did the water first enter the house?

A. Through an open door

B. Through a broken window

C. Down from the roof

D. Up through the floor

26. What does "The river had its own timetable" mean?

A. The river rose at the same time every year

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

C. The council published a timetable

D. The flood happened exactly on schedule

27. What first told the family that the water had arrived?

A. A warning on the radio

B. The dog began barking

C. The hallway carpet had gone dark

D. A neighbour knocked on the door

28. What surprised the narrator during the flood?

A. How ordinary and calm it felt

B. How quickly the water rose

C. How much was lost

D. How loud everything was

29. Why does the writer repeat "upstairs, leave it, upstairs, leave it"?

A. To show how fast and automatic the decisions were

B. To show the family could not agree

C. To list everything that was saved

D. To show that the family was panicking

30. What did the water leave behind?

A. A layer of sand

B. Broken windows

C. Eleven centimetres of silt and a smell

D. Nothing at all

31. Why does the writer mention the man from two streets over?

A. To explain who caused the flood

B. To show the kindness of strangers afterwards

C. To suggest the family needed to pay him

D. To show that the street was crowded

32. "But that is not the part I think about." What does this suggest the writer remembers most?

A. The fear during the flood

B. The loss of the kitchen

C. The warnings that were wrong

D. The help given by neighbours and strangers

GRADE 6 READING

Read each short text and answer questions 33 to 40.

33. In a story, a character who changes and grows over time is called a:

A. Static character

B. Dynamic character

C. Narrator

D. Antagonist

34. A story told from the perspective of a character using "I" and "me" is written in which point of view?

A. Third person omniscient

B. First person

C. Second person

D. Third person limited

35. Read: "The coach benched their star player for missing practice, even though it meant a tougher game ahead." What value does this show the coach holds?

A. Discipline matters more than winning

B. Winning is the only priority

C. Practice is unimportant

D. Star players deserve special treatment

36. Read: "The map was old and torn, but the explorer trusted it more than the shiny new one in his pocket." What can you infer about the explorer?

A. He values experience and familiarity over newness

B. He dislikes maps in general

C. He is lost without any map

D. He prefers new technology

37. "Although Jack was nervous, he walked on stage and delivered his speech confidently." What is the contrast in this sentence?

A. Being on stage vs backstage

B. Speaking loudly vs quietly

C. Being early vs late

D. Feeling nervous but acting confident

38. What is the purpose of a topic sentence in a paragraph?

A. To end the paragraph

B. To list every detail

C. To ask a question

D. To introduce the main idea

39. A newspaper report about a local flood would most likely be written in which style?

A. Humorous and exaggerated

B. Personal and emotional

C. Factual and objective

D. Poetic and imaginative

40. "Time was a thief, stealing moments before she could hold onto them." What kind of language technique is this?

A. Alliteration

B. Simile

C. Onomatopoeia

D. Metaphor (comparing time to a thief)