

EXAM PAPER

Reading Year 10 — Practice Paper 1

Total time: 65 minutes

SECTIONS IN THIS PAPER

- What the River Kept
- The Tyranny of the Reasonable Voice
- Salvage
- The Museum of Objects Nobody Wanted
- 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 ***What the River Kept*** and answer questions 1 to 8.

WHAT THE RIVER KEPT

My grandfather worked the dredge for thirty-one years and never once, in all that time, described what he did as looking for anything.

The distinction mattered to him. Looking implied you knew what you were after. The dredge simply took what the riverbed held and laid it out on a screen, and what came up was whatever the river had been carrying for as long as there had been a river. Bicycle frames. A cash register. Four hundred and some shopping trolleys. A Roman coin, once, which turned out not to be Roman.

And, twice in thirty-one years, a person.

He told me about the first one when I was nineteen, in the flat unhurried voice he used for everything, and I understood partway through that he was not telling me a story about a body. He was telling me a story about a wallet. The man had been in the water eleven months, and in his jacket was a wallet, and in the wallet, entirely legible, was a photograph of a woman on a beach.

"Eleven months," he said. "And you could see her face."

What he wanted me to take from this was not that the river preserves things, though it does. It was something about proportion. He had spent three decades hauling up the discarded weight of a city, and the object he could still describe in detail forty years on was four inches of card.

I have thought about this more since he died than I did when he was alive, which I suspect is the general rule. The dredge is gone now; they use a suction system that does not lay anything out on a screen, and so nothing is looked at on the way past. Everything the river holds still comes up. It simply comes up unseen, and goes into a hopper, and is not the kind of thing anyone tells their grandchild about thirty years later.

1. Why does the grandfather reject the word "looking"?

A. He thought the work was too difficult to describe

B. He did not want to discuss his job

C. Looking implies knowing what you are after, and the dredge took whatever was there

D. He was not permitted to search for specific items

2. The list "Bicycle frames. A cash register. Four hundred and some shopping trolleys." is written as fragments rather than a full sentence. This has the effect of

A. conveying the sheer accumulated randomness of what came up

B. making the objects seem carefully catalogued and valued

C. suggesting the writer has forgotten most of the details

D. implying the objects were dangerous

3. Why is the detail that the Roman coin "turned out not to be Roman" included?

A. To show the grandfather was often mistaken

B. To suggest the river was older than people thought

C. To explain why the dredge was eventually replaced

D. To undercut the one glamorous item in the list and keep the tone unromantic

4. The single-sentence paragraph "And, twice in thirty-one years, a person." is set apart in order to

A. show how rarely the dredge was used

B. give the fact the weight the list denied it

C. suggest the narrator is unsure of the number

D. indicate a change of narrator

5. What does the narrator realise partway through the grandfather's account?

A. That the story was invented

B. That the story was really about the wallet, not the body

C. That his grandfather had been frightened by the work

D. That his grandfather wanted him to take up the same work

6. "What he wanted me to take from this was... something about proportion." What does proportion mean here?

A. That the river was larger than people realised

B. That the grandfather had worked longer than most people

C. That photographs last longer than other materials

D. That thirty years of heavy objects mattered less than one small surviving thing

7. What is the effect of the final paragraph's description of the suction system?

A. It suggests that efficiency has removed the act of noticing

B. It celebrates a safer and more efficient method

C. It explains why the grandfather retired

D. It implies the river is now cleaner

8. Which best describes the narrator's tone throughout?

A. Bitter and accusing

B. Nostalgic and sentimental

C. Restrained and reflective

D. Detached and uninterested

PrepNest

Read ***The Tyranny of the Reasonable Voice*** and answer questions 9 to 16.

THE TYRANNY OF THE REASONABLE VOICE

There is a particular way of speaking that is very difficult to argue with, and it has almost nothing to do with being right.

It goes like this. The speaker is calm. They concede a point early, which costs them nothing and purchases a great deal. They use the passive voice for anything uncomfortable — mistakes were made, concerns have been raised — so that no one is ever the person who did it. They describe their own position as pragmatic and the other as emotional, which is a neat trick, because the more strongly you object to being called emotional, the more emotional you appear.

None of this is lying. That is what makes it worth noticing. Every individual sentence can be true while the whole performance is engineered to produce a conclusion the evidence does not support.

We are trained to read tone as evidence of character. A raised voice suggests someone losing an argument; an even one suggests someone who does not need to win it. But volume is a choice, and the person with the least at stake in a dispute will always find calm easiest. The tenant facing eviction and the company lawyer are not equally free to be measured, and treating the lawyer's composure as a sign of the better case mistakes comfort for correctness.

I am not arguing for shouting. Anger is not an argument either, and a great deal of nonsense arrives at high volume. The claim is narrower: that we routinely credit a manner as though it were a reason, and that the manner is cheapest for whoever has the most power in the room.

The test is uncomfortable but simple. Take the calm speaker's claims and write them out flatly, stripped of the concessions and the passive constructions, in the plainest language you can manage. Then do the same to the person who sounded upset. Very often the flattened versions say something quite different from what you concluded while listening — and the difference is the size of the effect the voices had on you.

9. According to the writer, what does conceding a point early achieve?

A. It shows genuine open-mindedness

B. It confuses the opposing speaker

C. It shortens the argument

D. It costs the speaker nothing and buys a great deal of credibility

10. Why does the writer describe the passive voice as useful to this kind of speaker?

A. It sounds more formal and educated

B. It removes the person who did the thing

C. It makes sentences shorter

D. It is harder to understand

11. Why does the writer call the pragmatic-versus-emotional framing "a neat trick"?

A. Because both words mean the same thing

B. Because pragmatic speakers are usually correct

C. Because objecting to the label appears to confirm it

D. Because it ends the discussion immediately

12. "None of this is lying. That is what makes it worth noticing." Why does the writer emphasise this?

A. Because a lie would be easier to identify and answer

B. To defend the speakers being described

C. To show the writer is being fair-minded

D. Because lying is a separate topic

13. What point does the example of the tenant and the company lawyer make?

A. That composure is easiest for whoever has least at stake

B. That lawyers are better trained at arguing

C. That tenants are usually in the right

D. That legal disputes are decided unfairly

14. What concession does the writer make?

A. That the calm speaker is usually right after all

B. That tone should always be ignored

C. That anger is not an argument either

D. That the test proposed is unreliable

15. What does the writer's proposed test involve?

A. Recording the speakers and comparing their volume

B. Rewriting both speakers' claims flatly and comparing them

C. Asking a neutral third party to judge

D. Reading the arguments rather than hearing them

16. What is the writer's central argument?

A. That calm speakers are dishonest

B. That emotional arguments are more truthful

C. That public debate should be conducted in writing

D. That we credit manner as though it were reasoning, and manner favours the powerful

Read **Salvage** and answer questions 17 to 24.

SALVAGE

The boat had been on the hard since before Ada was born, and by the time she was old enough to ask about it, the asking had become the wrong thing to do.

It sat on two rusted cradles at the back of the yard with a tarpaulin over the cabin that her father replaced, wordlessly, every second autumn. Nothing else about it changed. The hull was still the colour it had been in the one photograph, which was propped inside the shed on a shelf of paint tins and had been there so long the light had taken most of the blue out of the sea.

Her mother had gone out on it once, in 1994, and had not enjoyed it, and said so, often, in a way that suggested the complaint stood in for something else.

Ada was fourteen when she climbed inside. The cabin smelled of hot canvas and old rope and, faintly, of diesel, which surprised her, because nothing had run in it for twenty years. There was a chart table with a pencil still in the groove. There was a tide book for a year she had not been alive in. And there was, screwed to the bulkhead in a brass frame with the glass missing, a list in her father's handwriting of everything that needed doing before she could sail.

It was not a short list. It was not a long one either. Twenty-two items, and eleven of them had been ruled through.

She sat with it for a while. Then she went inside and did not mention it, and her father did not ask where she had been, and they watched something on the television neither of them was following.

She is forty now, and the boat is still on the cradles, and the tarpaulin has been replaced eight more times. She has never told him that she found the list. She has thought a great deal about the eleven that were crossed off, and about the exact moment he must have stopped, and she has decided, on the whole, that she would rather not know which item it was.

17. Why had asking about the boat "become the wrong thing to do"?

A. Ada's father had forbidden any mention of it

B. The boat was dangerous to climb on

C. The subject had become painful without ever being discussed

D. Her mother had sold it without telling anyone

18. What does the detail that her father replaced the tarpaulin "wordlessly, every second autumn" suggest?

A. He has neither finished with the boat nor let it go

B. He intended to sell the boat

C. He resented having to maintain it

D. He had forgotten why the boat was there

19. The mother's complaint about the 1994 trip is described as standing "in for something else". This suggests

A. she had actually enjoyed the trip

B. she had been unwell that day

C. the trip never took place

D. the real grievance is about the boat's hold on the family, not the sailing

20. Why is the smell of diesel surprising to Ada?

A. Diesel is not used in boats of that kind

B. Nothing had run in the boat for twenty years

C. The boat had been cleaned recently

D. She had expected the cabin to smell of the sea

21. What is the significance of the pencil still in the groove of the chart table?

A. It proves someone had been aboard recently

B. It shows the boat was left mid-preparation, as though work would resume

C. It suggests the boat was used for teaching

D. It indicates the chart table was never finished

22. Why does the writer specify that the list was "not a short list. It was not a long one either"?

A. To show Ada could not count them accurately

B. To indicate the list was incomplete

C. To show the father was disorganised

D. To suggest the work was achievable, which makes stopping harder to explain

23. Why does Ada say nothing when she goes back inside?

A. She recognises the silence as something the family maintains together

B. She is afraid of being punished

C. She has not understood what she found

D. She intends to finish the boat as a surprise

24. Why would Ada "rather not know which item it was"?

A. The list has since been lost

B. She no longer cares about the boat

C. Knowing the exact point he gave up would make the loss too specific

D. She believes he may still finish it

PrepNest

Read ***The Museum of Objects Nobody Wanted*** and answer questions 25 to 32.

THE MUSEUM OF OBJECTS NOBODY WANTED

On the second floor of a municipal building in a city I will not name, there is a room containing four thousand items that were handed in to police stations and never collected.

It is not open to the public. I was allowed in because I asked eleven times.

The contents are arranged by year rather than by type, which produces a strange effect: a shelf is not all umbrellas or all keys, but everything a single twelve-month period failed to reclaim. 2009 contains a viola, a wedding ring, a box of dentures, and a folder of what appear to be architectural drawings for an extension that may or may not have been built.

The curator — not her official title, but the only accurate one — has worked there for nineteen years. I asked her the obvious question, which is whether it is sad.

She said it was the question everyone asks and that the answer is no, and then gave a reason I have been unable to argue with since. Almost everything in the room, she said, was replaced. The umbrella was replaced that afternoon. The phone was replaced within a week. The ring was, in all likelihood, mourned and then replaced, or not replaced, and either way the person went on. What the room holds is not four thousand losses. It is four thousand things that turned out to be survivable.

She conceded one exception. There is a shelf, near the window, of items she described as unreplaceable, and she did not elaborate, and I did not ask, and I have since decided that not asking was either the most tactful thing I did that year or the worst piece of journalism.

What stays with me is not the viola or the dentures. It is that the room exists at all — that a city, having no legal obligation to keep any of it beyond a statutory period, has quietly decided to go on keeping it anyway. Nobody made that decision. Nineteen years of people simply did not throw anything away, and the accumulated result of not deciding is a museum.

25. Why does the writer mention asking "eleven times"?

A. To criticise the building's staff

B. To explain why the article took so long to write

C. To suggest the room contains something secret

D. To show how difficult access was, and so how rarely the room is seen

26. What effect does arranging the items by year rather than by type produce?

A. It makes individual objects easier to locate

B. Each shelf shows everything a single year failed to reclaim

C. It keeps valuable items separate from worthless ones

D. It allows the room to hold more objects

27. Why does the writer call "curator" the "only accurate" title?

A. She was formally trained as a curator

B. The council refuses to give her a proper title

C. What she does — keeping, arranging and knowing a collection — is curatorship in everything but name

D. She curates a different museum as well

28. What is the curator's reason for saying the room is not sad?

A. Almost everything in it was replaced, so it records survivable losses

B. Most of the items were of little value

C. The owners will eventually return for them

D. She has grown used to the collection

29. Why does the writer not elaborate on the shelf of "unreplaceable" items?

A. He did not ask, and is unsure whether that was tact or a failure

B. The curator refused to discuss it

C. The items were too valuable to describe

D. He was not permitted to approach that shelf

30. What is the effect of leaving the unreplaceable shelf undescribed?

A. It suggests the writer is concealing evidence

B. It weakens the article by omitting its best material

C. It preserves the weight of those objects by refusing to turn them into anecdotes

D. It implies the curator was being untruthful

31. "Nobody made that decision." What is the writer's point here?

A. The council acted without proper authority

B. The room was created by nineteen years of nobody choosing to discard anything

C. The curator exceeded her responsibilities

D. The decision was made but never recorded

32. Which best describes the structure of this piece?

A. A chronological account of one day's visit

B. An argument supported by statistics

C. A comparison between two collections

D. A description that opens out into a reflection on how the room came to be

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Read each short text and answer questions 33 to 39.

33. In a persuasive text, an appeal to the audience's emotions is known as:

A. Kairos

B. Pathos

C. Logos

D. Ethos

34. Read: "The report concluded that further research was needed, a phrase repeated in every study the company had funded for a decade." What does this suggest about the company's intentions?

A. It may be deliberately delaying a definitive conclusion

B. It is committed to rapid scientific progress

C. It has already solved the problem

D. It disagrees with all its own research

35. Read: "The senator promised transparency, then closed the meeting to the public for the third time that year." What rhetorical effect does this sequence create?

A. It exposes a contradiction between the senator's words and actions

B. It confirms the senator kept their promise

C. It shows the senator dislikes public meetings

D. It has no particular effect

36. The underlying message or lesson of a literary text is called its:

A. Plot

B. Theme

C. Genre

D. Setting

37. A text that presents a deliberately biased or one-sided argument to sway opinion is best analysed for its:

A. Rhyme and metre

B. Setting details

C. Rhetorical techniques and bias

D. Character development

38. Comparing two texts on the same topic but with opposing viewpoints helps a reader develop:

A. Faster reading speed

B. Critical, balanced thinking

C. Better spelling

D. Simple recall of facts

39. An unreliable narrator is a literary device where:

A. The story has multiple settings

B. The narrator speaks in first person

C. The narrator is a minor character

D. The narrator's credibility is compromised, so their account may be biased or false

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