Reading Year 8 — Practice Paper 1 — Answers & Explanations

Answers to the 16 questions in the free preview.

The Understudy

1. C. Priya had prepared completely for something she expected never to perform

The sentence sets total preparation against no expectation of performing, which establishes both her diligence and the apparent pointlessness of it.

2. A. Understudies who give notes to the lead lose their position

The text explains the unwritten rule: such understudies "do not remain understudies for long; they simply stop being invited".

3. D. As something undramatic — a wrong step and a small sound

The writer explicitly rules out drama — "not dramatically, not with a scream" — so that the moment which changes everything is almost unnoticeable.

4. B. He is testing whether she genuinely knows the part

A single specific question about an interpretive choice reveals far more than a yes-or-no about readiness, and her instant, exact answer passes the test.

5. B. She is precise and self-controlled

Noticing that "And you said nothing" is a statement rather than a question, and declining to fill the silence, shows the same exactness she brings to the four-beat pause.

6. D. That she has been given the part and criticised at the same time

The text says she understood "she had just been given the part and criticised in the same breath, and that both were fair".

7. A. The audience was completely absorbed

Describing silence as something audible, and as the absence of movement from a specific number of people, conveys total attention more vividly than applause would.

8. C. Priya’s ability was always there; only its recognition has changed

Aisha says "You were always going to be better" and locates the change entirely in the fact that "now somebody else knows", not in Priya’s ability.

What the Algorithm Wants

9. D. To keep the user engaged for longer

The opening paragraph states the target directly: "keep you here longer".

10. B. When the system finds that some material holds attention better than the rest

The text marks this as the turning point: the difficulty begins "when the system discovers... that certain kinds of material hold attention better than others".

11. C. The drift is automatic and unintended rather than deliberate

Water does not choose to run downhill; it follows the shape it is given. The comparison makes the drift a consequence of the system’s design rather than anyone’s intention, which the writer states in the same sentence: "not out of malice".

12. A. The system learns from behaviour rather than stated preferences, building a model from weak moments

The writer explains that because the system learns "from what you do rather than from what you say you want", repeated careless clicks become the basis of its model of you.

13. A. By arguing it misunderstands how unequal the contest is

The writer answers "This misunderstands the contest", then sets one distracted person against a system running millions of experiments a day.

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14. C. To show how mismatched the user and the system are

Placing the two figures side by side makes the imbalance concrete, which is the evidence for the claim that blaming willpower misses the point.

15. B. That harm can arise without anyone intending it, from a slightly wrong target pursued with vast resources

The closing paragraph explicitly removes villainy from the explanation and lists the three conditions that are sufficient on their own.

16. D. Measured

The writer repeatedly concedes points, rules out blame, and builds the argument step by step rather than through emotive language, which is a measured tone.

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PREVIEW

That’s the end of the preview answers

These are the answers to the 16 preview questions. The full answer key covers all 39 questions in Reading Year 8 — Practice Paper 1, with the working behind every mark.

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