English Comprehension: Easy Practice Paper 2

Read this poem carefully, then answer the questions that follow.

The Field Behind Miller's Lane

In this poem the speaker remembers the summer when a travelling fair arrived, without warning, in the empty field behind his house. The fair stayed for a single day.

All summer long the field lay bare,
a square of grass behind the lane,
where nothing stirred but thistledown
and one bent gate that sang in rain.

I passed it every day at four,
my school bag heavy on my back,
and never gave the place a thought —
a patch of green, a muddy track.

But on the second night of June
I woke to engines, low and deep,
and lorries growling up the hill
like weary lions dragged from sleep.

I knelt upon the window sill
and watched the headlamps slowly pass,
and heard the clang of iron poles
go ringing out across the grass.

But by the morning, sure enough,
the field had blossomed overnight
with tents and flags and painted booths,
a city made of noise and light.

The carousel wore coats of bulbs
and turned its horses round and round;
the toffee spat inside its tray;
the drum of music shook the ground.

My mother gave me fifty pence
and said that I could stay till eight;
I ran the whole way down the lane
and did not stop to shut the gate.

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I rode the waltzer twice, and once
the ghost train, screaming all the way;
I won a goldfish in a bag
and begged an extra hour to stay.

At nine they sent me home to bed.
I lay and listened, half awake,
to music thinning through the dark
like water draining from a lake.

And when I woke the field was bare.
The lorries had gone before the dawn.
No flags, no booths, no smell of smoke —
just rings of yellow, flattened lawn.

I stood there in my socks and stared
at where the carousel had been,
and June went on. The thistles grew.
The gate sang on. The field was green.

Please answer these questions. (Look at the poem again if you need to.) You should choose the best answer and mark its letter on your answer sheet.

Q1. What was the field behind the lane like before June? (lines 1–4)

A. It was ploughed and planted with crops.

B. It was used as a car park for the village.

C. It was empty, with rough grass and a bent gate.

D. It was a garden that the family looked after.

E. It was full of children playing after school.

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Q2. ‘one bent gate that sang in rain’ (line 4)

This is an example of…

A. a simile

B. personification

C. onomatopoeia

D. a rhetorical question

E. exaggeration

Q3. ‘never gave the place a thought’ (line 7)

What does this tell us about the speaker?

A. He was frightened of walking past the field.

B. He had been told to keep away from the field.

C. He wished the field belonged to him.

D. The field was so ordinary that he barely noticed it.

E. He was too busy with his schoolwork to look up.

Q4. ‘like weary lions dragged from sleep’ (line 12)

This is an example of…

A. a simile

B. a metaphor

C. alliteration

D. onomatopoeia

E. a rhetorical question

Q5. What type of word is ‘slowly’ (line 14)?

A. a noun

B. an adjective

C. an adverb

D. a verb

E. a conjunction

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Q6. ‘the clang of iron poles’ (line 15)

Why has the poet chosen the word ‘clang’?

A. to show that the poles were being carried carefully

B. to suggest that the poles were rusty and old

C. to show that the noise went on all night

D. to explain that the poles were very heavy

E. because the word imitates the sound the poles made

Q7. ‘blossomed’ (line 18)

What is another way of saying ‘blossomed’?

A. burst into flower

B. sprung up

C. faded away

D. been ploughed

E. flooded

Q8. ‘a city made of noise and light’ (line 20)

Why has the poet described the fair in this way?

A. because the fair had been brought from a city

B. because people from the city had come to see it

C. to explain that the fair was too big for the field

D. to show how large, bright and busy the empty field had suddenly become

E. to suggest that the fair would stay there for years

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Q9. What did the mother do before the speaker went to the fair? (lines 25–26)

A. She gave him fifty pence and said he could stay until eight.

B. She gave him a pound and said he could stay until nine.

C. She walked down the lane to the fair with him.

D. She said he could go only if he shut the gate behind him.

E. She gave him no money but let him stay out as late as he liked.

Q10. 'did not stop to shut the gate' (line 28)

What does this tell us about the speaker?

A. He had forgotten which gate was his.

B. He was angry with his mother.

C. He wanted to leave the gate open for his friends.

D. He was hoping that somebody else would shut it.

E. He was in such a hurry to reach the fair that nothing else mattered.

Q11. 'screaming all the way' (line 30)

Who was screaming?

A. the engine of the ghost train

B. the people queuing outside

C. the speaker and the others riding with him

D. the wind blowing through the tunnel

E. the music playing on the carousel

Q12. What did the speaker win at the fair?

A. a coconut

B. a goldfish

C. a toffee apple

D. fifty pence

E. a painted horse

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Q13. ‘begged an extra hour to stay’ (line 32)

What happened as a result?

A. He was sent home at once.

B. He was allowed to stay, but had to give back the goldfish.

C. His mother came to the fair to fetch him.

D. He was allowed one more hour and went home at nine.

E. He stayed at the fair all night.

Q14. ‘like water draining from a lake’ (line 36)

What does this tell us about the music?

A. It grew slowly fainter until it was gone.

B. It stopped suddenly and completely.

C. It grew louder as the night went on.

D. It sounded wet and muffled through the rain.

E. It kept the whole village awake until morning.

Q15. What had happened while the speaker was asleep? (lines 37–40)

A. The fair had been rained off and cancelled.

B. A farmer had ploughed the field.

C. The bent gate had been mended.

D. The goldfish had been lost.

E. The fair had packed up and left before dawn.

Q16. How many adjectives are there in the line ‘just rings of yellow, flattened lawn’? (line 40)

A. 1

B. 2

C. 3

D. 4

E. 5

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Q17. ‘rings of yellow, flattened lawn’ (line 40)

What had made these rings?

A. children running in circles at the fair

B. the lorries turning their wheels in the mud

C. the rides and tents that had stood on the grass

D. the rain that had fallen during the night

E. the thistles that had grown there all summer

Q18. ‘I stood there in my socks and stared’ (line 41)

Which of these is used in this line?

A. a metaphor

B. a simile

C. onomatopoeia

D. alliteration

E. a rhetorical question

Q19. In each verse of the poem, which lines rhyme with one another?

A. the first and the third

B. the first and the second

C. all four lines rhyme together

D. none of the lines rhyme

E. the second and the fourth

Q20. Which of these would make the best alternative title for the poem?

A. The Fair That Came and Went

B. The Bent Gate

C. A Night on the Ghost Train

D. Fifty Pence

E. The Lorries on the Hill

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