

English Comprehension: Medium Practice Paper 1 Answers

Q#	Answer	Explanation
1	C	Lines 4-6 say she had been sent to put up an automatic weather station on the hill above the village, and had allowed herself a fortnight for it. The instruments, the ledgers and the plantation all appear in the passage, but none of them is why she was sent.
2	B	A ruler marks out equal, exact steps, so the comparison shows how flawlessly even the frost was. It also tells us something about the narrator: she is a scientist, and reaches for a measuring instrument even when describing a pretty morning.
3	D	Being 'too busy to ask' shows she did not think the answer worth her time. The passage is told by the narrator looking back, and this is one of several places where she quietly admits how little notice she took of Ashenholt at first.
4	A	'As though' signals a comparison rather than a fact: he had not really been expecting her for years, but his welcome was as warm as if he had. It is the first sign that he is generous towards a visitor who is not, at this stage, generous towards him.
5	B	There were 'sixty-three identical ledgers ... one for every year since 1961', so one book stands for one year. Fourteen thousand is the number of spruce trees planted much later, and no other number in the passage counts the years.
6	C	Only handwriting can grow smaller and neater on a page. 'Hand' has several meanings, and the right one is decided by the rest of the sentence, which is describing what the ledgers looked like inside.
7	E	The three short sentences are examples copied straight out of the remarks column, and they show what he judged worth noting: the roof, the birds, the beck. They are what makes the ledgers a record of a place rather than a list of numbers.

8	A	The words themselves were kind; it is 'the way' she said them that shames her. The next sentence explains why – she was not really attending to him at all, but thinking about her own machine on the hill.
9	D	Forgetting is something people do, not instruments, so the phrase is a quiet comparison with Mr Ableman. It closes a list of everything the machine can do that a man cannot, which is exactly what the rest of the passage puts to the test.
10	B	Mr Ableman's listening is compared to a bird's, and 'the way' does the same work here as 'like' or 'as'. A metaphor would have said he <i>was</i> a bird; personification gives human qualities to something that is not human, which is the other way round.
11	D	'Pleasantly' tells us how he told her she had chosen the wrong hill, so it describes the verb 'told'. Words that describe verbs in this way are adverbs, and it matters here: it shows there was nothing rude in the way he contradicted her.
12	B	He answers a scientist in the way a scientist ought to respect: with a dated record. By producing evidence instead of an opinion he makes the narrator's own habits of mind work against her.
13	E	The ledger records the plantation being set out in March 1974, and Mr Ableman explains that fourteen thousand spruce had kept the hilltop out of the wind ever since. A weather station standing in shelter cannot measure the wind properly.
14	B	To have 'never stood in the rain here' is never to have felt the weather of that hill at first hand. She is admitting that she built where the paperwork said rather than where the evidence pointed, and that the paperwork was written two hundred miles away.
15	C	For eleven days the readings looked perfectly good on their own. The fault showed only when she compared them with the figures from the rest of the county and saw her wind speeds running a third below everybody else's.

16	A	The move 'cost' her three things, and the list runs from days, to apologies, to her own good opinion of herself. Saying it cost her more than she cares to admit is her way of confessing how badly her confidence was dented, while making light of it.
17	E	His reason is about who the books belong to, not about safety or money: they are the record Ashenholt keeps of itself, and once held elsewhere they become somebody else's. He had given the same answer in 1998, so it is a settled belief and not a passing mood.
18	C	The adjectives are 'small' and 'neat', and both describe the noun 'hand'. 'In' is a preposition and 'his' is a possessive pronoun, so neither of those counts.
19	C	He has been proved right, and he writes it in four short sentences in the same column as the snow and the swallows, without a word of triumph. Being right is simply another fact about the day, worth recording and no more.
20	D	The passage is built on Mr Ableman's warning, the narrator's decision to ignore it and her discovery that he had been right all along. There is no storm in the passage, the spruce and the ledgers are details inside that story, and the fortnight she allowed herself stretched to far longer.