

English Comprehension: Medium Practice Paper 2 Answers

Q#	Answer	Explanation
1	B	Lines 3-5 say her grandfather cut it from a single length of ash the year the new mill opened, and that in forty winters he had never let another person carry it. The umbrella is only a comparison, not a repair, and nothing suggests the pole was bought or stored elsewhere.
2	D	The wires are compared to umbrella ribs using the word 'like', which is what makes a simile. A metaphor would have said the wires were ribs, and personification would have given the pole human qualities.
3	A	Nobody asks her to go; she hears the cough that stops him standing and reaches for her coat. It shows both that she understood at once what his illness meant and that she was willing, without any argument, to do something she had only ever watched.
4	B	He is telling her to be certain she follows the book, so 'Mind' works as a warning to take care to do something. 'Mind' can also mean to look after or to object, but neither of those fits an instruction about keeping to the order of a list.
5	C	Lines 15-17 explain that the order in the book was the order of the clock and not of the streets. A house wanted at four and a house wanted at five could stand side by side, so keeping to the times meant crossing her own path.
6	D	The note says there is no money until Friday, and his answer to it is two words in pencil. A family who missed their shift would earn nothing at all, so waking them costs him a knock and saves them a day's wages – and he settles it without any fuss.
7	C	Water in a bath does not drift about: it sits, level and deep, filling everything below its surface. The comparison makes the fog something Martha has to move through rather than something blowing past her.

8	D	A penny at the bottom of a well is a long way down, under water, catching almost no light – you know it is there rather than see it clearly. That is exactly how much help the lamps were to Martha, which is why she counted doors instead of reading them.
9	B	'Never more' turns a habit into a rule: enough to wake one sleeper, not enough to rouse the whole street. Martha has never walked the round before, yet she keeps to it exactly, which shows how closely she has watched her grandfather do it.
10	A	A candle moving means somebody is up and about. Waiting for it is the difference between knocking at a house and actually waking it, and it explains how sixty people could all be got out of bed on time by one girl with a pole.
11	C	The words look forward rather than back: the author breaks off from the story to tell us that this moment of satisfaction leads somewhere. It makes the mistake on Blackthorn Row feel earned rather than merely unlucky.
12	B	Because every house on the row looked the same and the fog hid the numbers, she counted instead of reading – and counted from the wrong corner, so the twelfth house she came to was not the twelfth house in the book.
13	C	'Thick' describes the blurred, clogged sound of somebody dragged out of sleep. There is a small joke in it too: the one man Martha wakes who is not on her list is the one who complains.
14	E	'Quietly' tells us how she went round the back, so it describes the verb 'went', and words that do that are adverbs. It matters here, because going quietly is the whole point: she is trying not to wake the front of the house.
15	B	Lines 46-47 explain that Cropper's wife worked nights at the infirmary and slept in the front room. Tapping at the front would have woken the one person in the house with every reason to stay asleep, which is why the instruction was worth her grandfather's breath.

16	A	The wires are already up at the wrong window when the memory arrives – she is tired, the pole is heavy, and she is one tap away from an unpleasant mistake. It is a near miss rather than a piece of good judgement, and the author is careful to show it that way.
17	C	The adjectives are 'thin' and 'grey', and both describe the noun 'light'. 'The' is an article, 'above' is a preposition and 'yard' is a noun, so none of those counts.
18	E	The sentence sets 'the whole street' against one unnamed girl, and dropping her name is what makes the gap felt. It is a quiet reminder that walking the round means knowing the people on it, and not merely knowing the times.
19	C	Praise would have made her a visitor to the job; instead he writes the date the way he has written it four thousand times and holds out the pencil for her to fill in the page. Handing over the pencil says more than telling her she has done well.
20	C	The passage follows one morning, from the pole behind the door to the pencil held out at the end, and its subject is Martha doing her grandfather's work for the first time. The fog, the angry man and his illness are all parts of that morning rather than the story itself.