

English Comprehension: Easy Practice Paper

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

The Door Under the Ivy

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

An extract from The Secret Garden (1911). Mary Lennox has been sent from India to live at her uncle's lonely house on the Yorkshire moors. She has heard of a walled garden that was locked up ten years ago, and the day before this extract begins a robin showed her where the key to it lay buried. Here she is skipping in the gardens with that key in her pocket. The extract has been shortened.

1 Mary skipped round all the gardens and round the orchard, resting every few minutes. At length she went to her own special walk and made up her mind to try if she could skip the whole length of it. It was a good long skip and she began slowly, but before she had gone
5 half-way down the path she was so hot and breathless that she was obliged to stop. She did not mind much, because she had already counted up to thirty. She stopped with a little laugh of pleasure, and there, lo and behold, was the robin swaying on a long branch of ivy. He had followed her and he greeted her with a chirp. As Mary
10 had skipped toward him she felt something heavy in her pocket strike against her at each jump, and when she saw the robin she laughed again.

"You showed me where the key was yesterday," she said. "You ought to show me the door today; but I don't believe you know!"

15 The robin flew from his swinging spray of ivy on to the top of the wall and he opened his beak and sang a loud, lovely trill, merely to show off. Nothing in the world is quite as adorably lovely as a robin when he shows off—and they are nearly always doing it.

Mary Lennox had heard a great deal about Magic in her Ayah's
20 stories, and she always said that what happened almost at that moment was Magic.

One of the nice little gusts of wind rushed down the walk, and it was a stronger one than the rest. It was strong enough to wave the branches of the trees, and it was more than strong enough to sway
25 the trailing sprays of untrimmed ivy hanging from the wall. Mary had stepped close to the robin, and suddenly the gust of wind swung aside some loose ivy trails, and more suddenly still she jumped

toward it and caught it in her hand. This she did because she had seen something under it—a round knob which had been covered by the
30 leaves hanging over it. It was the knob of a door.

She put her hands under the leaves and began to pull and push them aside. Thick as the ivy hung, it nearly all was a loose and swinging curtain, though some had crept over wood and iron. Mary's heart began to thump and her hands to shake a little in her delight and
35 excitement. The robin kept singing and twittering away and tilting his head on one side, as if he were as excited as she was. What was this under her hands which was square and made of iron and which her fingers found a hole in?

It was the lock of the door which had been closed ten years and she
40 put her hand in her pocket, drew out the key and found it fitted the keyhole. She put the key in and turned it. It took two hands to do it, but it did turn.

And then she took a long breath and looked behind her up the long walk to see if anyone was coming. No one was coming. No one ever did
45 come, it seemed, and she took another long breath, because she could not help it, and she held back the swinging curtain of ivy and pushed back the door which opened slowly—slowly.

Then she slipped through it, and shut it behind her, and stood with her back against it, looking about her and breathing quite fast with
50 excitement, and wonder, and delight.

She was standing inside the secret garden.

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

Q1. Why was Mary obliged to stop before she reached the end of her special walk? (lines 4-6)

- A. The robin flew down and landed in front of her
- B. She had dropped the key out of her pocket
- C. She was so hot and breathless that she could not go on
- D. She had reached thirty and was not allowed to count higher
- E. Someone called to her from the house

Q2. "she was obliged to stop" (lines 5-6)

What is another way of saying obliged?

- A. forced
- B. delighted
- C. allowed
- D. ashamed
- E. tempted

Q3. What was the heavy thing in Mary's pocket that struck against her at each jump? (lines 9-11)

- A. Her skipping-rope
- B. A piece of bread for the robin
- C. A round iron knob
- D. The key to the garden door
- E. A handful of stones from the path

Q4. "she began slowly" (line 4)

What type of word is slowly?

- A. An adjective
- B. An adverb
- C. A noun
- D. A verb
- E. A pronoun

Q5. "You ought to show me the door today; but I don't believe you know!" (lines 13-14)

What does this tell us about Mary?

- A. She is angry with the robin for hiding the door from her
- B. She is certain the robin understands every word she says
- C. She has decided to give up looking for the door
- D. She is frightened of being overheard by the gardener
- E. She is half joking with the robin and does not really expect him to help

Q6. "Nothing in the world is quite as adorably lovely as a robin when he shows off" (lines 17-18)

Describing the bird in this way is an example of:

- A. alliteration
- B. personification
- C. a rhyme
- D. an exaggeration of size
- E. onomatopoeia

Q7. Why has the author told us that Mary had heard a great deal about Magic in her Ayah's stories? (lines 19-21)

- A. To show that Mary was homesick for India
- B. To warn the reader that the garden is dangerous
- C. To prove that the robin really was magical
- D. To explain how Mary had learned to skip
- E. To explain why Mary thought that what happened next was Magic

Q8. "strong enough to sway the trailing sprays of untrimmed ivy" (lines 24-25)

What does sway mean here?

- A. to swing gently from side to side
- B. to tear away completely
- C. to make a rustling noise
- D. to grow more thickly
- E. to press flat against the wall

Q9. What caused the loose ivy trails to swing aside? (lines 22-27)

- A. The robin landing heavily on them
- B. Mary pulling them with both hands
- C. A gust of wind stronger than the rest
- D. A branch falling from one of the trees
- E. The door behind them opening

Q10. What did Mary see beneath the ivy that made her catch hold of it? (lines 28-30)

- A. A square iron lock with a hole in it
- B. A robin's nest built against the wall
- C. A rusty key hanging on a nail
- D. A round knob that had been covered by the leaves
- E. A gap where the bricks had fallen away

Q11. "the trailing sprays of untrimmed ivy" (line 25)

How many adjectives are there in this phrase?

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. none

Q12. "it nearly all was a loose and swinging curtain" (lines 32-33)

This is an example of:

- A. a simile
- B. a question
- C. an instruction
- D. a metaphor
- E. a rhyme

Q13. "Mary's heart began to thump and her hands to shake a little in her delight and excitement" (lines 33-35)

What does this tell us about how Mary feels?

- A. She is thrilled by what she has found
- B. She is terrified of what is behind the wall
- C. She is worn out from all her skipping
- D. She is cross that the ivy is so thick
- E. She is cold and beginning to shiver

Q14. Why has the author written that the robin tilted his head "as if he were as excited as she was"? (line 36)

- A. To show that the robin is about to fly away
- B. To suggest that the robin is warning her of danger
- C. To explain why the robin had followed her all morning
- D. To show that Mary has forgotten the robin is there
- E. To make it seem that the robin is sharing in Mary's discovery

Q15. How long had the door been closed? (line 39)

- A. Two years
- B. Five years
- C. Ten years
- D. Twenty years
- E. The passage does not say

Q16. Which detail shows that turning the key was hard work? (lines 40-42)

- A. She had to force the door with her shoulder
- B. The key would not fit the keyhole at first
- C. She had to scrape the rust off the lock
- D. She had to stand on a stone seat to reach it
- E. It took two hands to do it

Q17. Why does Mary look behind her up the long walk before she goes in? (lines 43-45)

- A. To check that the robin was still following her
- B. To make sure that nobody was coming to see her
- C. To find out how far she had skipped
- D. To see whether the wind had dropped
- E. To look for the gardener who had lost the key

Q18. "pushed back the door which opened slowly—slowly" (line 47)

Why has the author repeated the word slowly?

- A. To show that the door was too heavy for her to move
- B. To suggest that Mary had changed her mind about going in
- C. To make the sentence rhyme with the one before it
- D. To draw the moment out and make the reader wait with Mary
- E. To show that Mary was being quiet so as not to wake anyone

Q19. Which of these would make the best alternative title for this passage?

- A. The Door Under the Ivy
- B. Mary Learns to Skip
- C. A Robin Builds a Nest
- D. The Long Walk Home
- E. A Windy Day on the Moor

Q20. Which word best describes how Mary feels at the very end of the passage? (lines 48–51)

- A. Disappointed
- B. Bored
- C. Wonderstruck
- D. Guilty
- E. Impatient