

English Comprehension: Medium Practice Paper 4 Answers

Q#	Answer	Explanation
1	B	Bobbie is the one who says "Hush. Stop! What's that?" (line 5), and the paragraph that follows describes the odd noise she has heard. Nothing has fallen yet, and the watch is not looked at until much later.
2	A	The passage calls it "a soft noise, but quite plainly to be heard through the sound of the wind in tree branches, and the hum and whir of the telegraph wires" (lines 6-8). A soft sound that carries over all that noise is the odd thing about it.
3	B	The passage says the tree was moving "not just the way trees ought to move when the wind blows through them, but all in one piece" (lines 12-13). It is the whole tree travelling, like something walking, that is so strange – which is why the wind is ruled out in the same sentence.
4	C	Phyllis reaches at once for magic, and then says she has always thought the railway enchanted. A moment later she adds that it is "much too magic for me" (line 23) and wants to go home, so she is not teasing and she is not the one who works it out – that is Peter.
5	A	The tree with the grey leaves is compared to a shepherd, and the trees in front of it to sheep, using the word "like". A comparison made with "like" or "as" is a simile.
6	E	To cling fast is to hold on tightly, and to watch breathlessly is to be too caught up in something to breathe easily. Phyllis has just asked to go home; the other two stay and watch, gripped by the sight rather than frightened away from it.
7	A	The stones fall "and rattled on the railway metals far below". What lies far below at the bottom of the cutting is the track, so the metals are the rails themselves – an old railway word for them.

8	C	The second "Yes" is slower than the first, and then he stands upright and speaks about the 11.29. The pause is the sound of him thinking: he has realised that a train is due and that the line is blocked.
9	D	The white face shows fear and the words "prompt and businesslike" show him acting quickly and sensibly. Both are true at once, which is what makes him worth admiring here; he certainly does not think there is plenty of time.
10	A	Peter looks at the watch and says "it's two miles away, and it's past eleven" (line 45). As the 11.29 is due, there is not enough time to cover two miles and warn anyone before it arrives.
11	D	A red signal means danger on a railway, which is why the children later stand and wave red flags and why the driver stops. Peter says they must go round the corner and wave to the train, so it is the warning, not the background, that matters.
12	B	"Red-faced" and "damp" both describe Phyllis, so there are two adjectives. "Phyllis" and "anxiety" are nouns and "was" is a verb.
13	E	Phyllis, hot after coming down the stairs, begins to say she wishes she had not put on her flannel petticoat, and Bobbie sees at once what that means: "THEY'RE red! Let's take them off" (lines 55-56).
14	A	Peter tears each of the two petticoats into three pieces and says "Now, we've got six flags", then looks at the watch and adds "And we've got seven minutes" (lines 64-66).
15	A	The children are standing ready with the flags and can do nothing more until the train appears. Suspense is the uneasy waiting that goes with not yet knowing how something will end.
16	C	A flag has fallen on the line and Bobbie jumps forward to snatch it up and wave it. She trembled while she could only wait; with something to do she stops noticing her fear, and the train has not yet begun to slow.

17	E	It tells us how Peter cried out, and a word that tells us how something is done is an adverb. Many adverbs, like this one, are made by adding "-ly" to an adjective.
18	A	Bobbie is standing on the line waving her flags as this engine comes at her, and the words chosen – black, enormous, a voice loud and harsh – make it a monster seen from where she stands. It is her view of it, not a report on the engine's condition.
19	D	She is found lying across the line, still gripping the flag sticks, and the engine-driver, carrying her to the carriage, says "Gone right off in a faint". The train had stopped twenty yards short of her, so she was not struck.
20	A	Everything in the passage leads to the moment the 11.29 is brought to a stand: the landslide, the six red flags and Bobbie waving until she faints. The cherries, the watch and Phyllis's talk of magic are only steps along the way.