

English Comprehension: Medium Practice Paper 5 Answers

Q#	Answer	Explanation
1	C	The moment Tom surveys the fence "all gladness left him and a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit", and the reason follows at once: thirty yards of board fence nine feet high. He shows no anger towards Aunt Polly here, and the bright summer morning is there to make his gloom stand out, not to cheer him.
2	A	Melancholy is low, settled sadness. The sentences around it - "all gladness left him" and "Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a burden" - point to gloom rather than to temper, tiredness or excitement.
3	B	The word is chosen for its size, and it is set against "the insignificant whitewashed streak" Tom has just managed. One brush-width against a whole continent is how the task feels to him. Nothing suggests a map, and the fence belongs to Aunt Polly, not to the village.
4	A	The comparison is made openly with the word "like", which is what makes it a simile. A metaphor would say the thought was fire; personification would give the thought human behaviour; alliteration repeats sounds at the start of words, and onomatopoeia is a word that sounds like its meaning.
5	C	Tom counts his "worldly wealth" and finds it "enough to buy an exchange of work, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom", so he gives up the idea of buying the boys. The plan fails on price, not on anything Aunt Polly has said.
6	A	It tells us how Tom went to work - calmly and without hurry - so it describes the verb "went", and a word that describes a verb in that way is an adverb. The -ly ending is the usual clue.
7	A	The author explains the skipping walk himself: it is "proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high". Ben is off to go swimming and has nothing on his mind - which is exactly why Tom has been dreading meeting him.

8	D	Tom does want the apple - that is the point of "his mouth watered" - but showing it would ruin the pretence that he is happily absorbed in his painting. That self-control is what wins him the whole apple soon afterwards.
9	D	The sentence comes immediately after that question, and it is the question that turns the fence from a chore into a rare chance. Tom's earlier remarks only tease Ben, and his refusal comes later still, after Ben has already asked for a turn.
10	C	Tom is about to say yes and then deliberately changes his mind, which shows the refusal is a move rather than a worry. What he says about Aunt Polly is the excuse that makes the job sound precious; the author gives the real principle at the end - a thing is wanted once it is made difficult to get.
11	A	Tom means that his aunt has exacting standards for this fence: it has got to be done very carefully, and hardly one boy in a thousand could manage it. Being hard to satisfy is what makes the job sound like an honour.
12	A	Ben first offers the core of his apple and Tom holds out, still pretending to be afraid, until Ben cries "I'll give you all of it!" The kite comes later in the day, and from Billy Fisher rather than from Ben.
13	C	Alacrity means eagerness, so his face and his heart are saying opposite things. The whole trick depends on that: the reluctance is put on for Ben to see, while the eagerness is what Tom really feels.
14	B	Ben came down the street personating the Big Missouri, ringing his own engine-bells as he went. Calling him "the late steamer" is the author's joke: the steamboat has been taken off the river and set to work on a fence.
15	E	Tom had earlier surveyed his work "with the eye of an artist", treating whitewashing as delicate craft in order to tempt Ben. Now that Ben is doing it, the author keeps the joke running by saying the artist has retired - to a barrel in the shade.

16	A	To jeer is to mock. Every boy comes along expecting to make fun of Tom for having to work, and each one leaves having paid for the privilege of doing it himself. Nobody forces them, which is what makes the line funny.
17	C	The author says Tom was "literally rolling in wealth" and then lists a key that unlocks nothing, a collar with no dog and a one-eyed kitten. The gap between the grand word and the rubbish that follows is the joke: this is wealth by a boy's reckoning and nobody else's.
18	C	"Nice", "good" and "idle" all describe the noun "time", so there are three adjectives. "He" is a pronoun, "had had" is the verb, and "all the while" tells us when.
19	B	Tom has collected marbles, tadpoles and orange-peel, so no boy is truly close to ruin. Stretching a small thing to an absurd size for comic effect is exaggeration, and the author uses it to round the episode off.
20	B	The author sets it out plainly near the end: to make a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. Tom did no hard work, shared nothing fairly, and ended the day richer, so none of the other sayings fits what happens.