

English Comprehension: Easy Practice Paper

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

Down the Rabbit-Hole

by Lewis Carroll

The opening of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865). Alice is sitting out of doors on a hot afternoon with her elder sister, thoroughly bored, when a rabbit runs past her. This extract has been shortened in places. A waistcoat is a short sleeveless jacket worn under a coat, and in 1865 a gentleman would keep his pocket watch in one of its pockets.

1 Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on
the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped
into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or
conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice
5 "without pictures or conversations?"

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for
the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the
pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of
getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit
10 with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice
think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say
to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!" (when she thought it
over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered
15 at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but when the
Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and
looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it
flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with
either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning
20 with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately
was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the
hedge.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering
how in the world she was to get out again.

25 The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and
then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment
to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling
down a very deep well.

30 Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her and to wonder what was going to happen next. First, she tried to look down and make out what she was coming to, but it was too dark to see anything; then she looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were filled with cupboards and book-shelves; here and there she saw maps
35 and pictures hung upon pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed; it was labelled "ORANGE MARMALADE", but to her great disappointment it was empty: she did not like to drop the jar for fear of killing somebody underneath, so managed to put it into one of the cupboards as she fell past it.

40 "Well!" thought Alice to herself, "after such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling down stairs! How brave they'll all think me at home! Why, I wouldn't say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house!" (Which was very likely true.)

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began
45 talking again. "Dinah'll miss me very much to-night, I should think!" (Dinah was the cat.) "I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at tea-time. Dinah my dear! I wish you were down here with me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I
50 wonder?" And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, "Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?" and sometimes, "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it. She felt that she was dozing off, and had just begun to
55 dream that she was walking hand in hand with Dinah, and saying to her very earnestly, "Now, Dinah, tell me the truth: did you ever eat a bat?" when suddenly, thump! thump! down she came upon a heap of sticks and dry leaves, and the fall was over.

Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a
60 moment: she looked up, but it was all dark overhead; before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" She was
65 close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be seen: she found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.

There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other,

70 trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

Suddenly she came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass; there was nothing on it except a tiny golden key, and Alice's first thought was that it might belong to one of the doors
75 of the hall; but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock,
80 and to her great delight it fitted!

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. "Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank" (lines 1-2)

Why had Alice grown tired?

- A. Her sister had been unkind to her all morning.
- B. There was nothing at all for her to do.
- C. She had walked a very long way to reach the river.
- D. The book she was reading was far too difficult.
- E. She had been waiting a long time for the White Rabbit.

Q2. "and what is the use of a book," thought Alice "without pictures or conversations?" (lines 4-5)

What does this tell us about Alice?

- A. She had never been taught how to read properly.
- B. She thought her sister was reading far too slowly.
- C. She wanted a book she could talk about with her sister.
- D. She judged a book by whether it was entertaining to look at and listen to.
- E. She believed that reading books was a waste of anybody's time.

Q3. "stupid" (line 7)

What is the best meaning of this word here?

- A. drowsy and dull
- B. badly behaved
- C. unable to learn anything
- D. stubborn and unwilling
- E. puzzled and worried

Q4. What was Alice weighing up in her mind just before the White Rabbit appeared? (lines 6-10)

- A. Whether to make a daisy-chain or not to bother getting up.
- B. Whether to go home for tea or wait for her sister.
- C. Whether to borrow her sister's book after all.
- D. Whether to swim in the river or sit in the shade.
- E. Whether to look for rabbits along the hedge.

Q5. "There was nothing so very remarkable in that" (line 11)

What is surprising about Alice's reaction here?

- A. She was frightened by an animal that was really quite harmless.
- B. She had been told about the Rabbit before and was expecting it.
- C. She thought a rabbit that talked was nothing much out of the ordinary.
- D. She refused to believe that she had heard the Rabbit at all.
- E. She was annoyed rather than interested by the Rabbit's rudeness.

Q6. "took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket" (line 16)

Why has the author printed these words in sloping letters?

- A. To show that Alice was reading the words in her sister's book.
- B. To show that the words come from an old-fashioned language.
- C. To show that the Rabbit spoke these words out loud.
- D. To show that Alice only imagined this part afterwards.
- E. To mark the one detail that was finally too strange to accept.

Q7. "Alice started to her feet" (line 17)

What does "started" mean in this sentence?

- A. began walking slowly
- B. jumped up suddenly
- C. set off on a journey
- D. stumbled and fell over
- E. was the first to stand

Q8. "burning with curiosity" (lines 19-20)

What does this description mean?

- A. Alice wanted to know what was happening so badly that she could not hold back.
- B. Alice had been left out in the hot sun for far too long.
- C. Alice was angry that the Rabbit had run away from her.
- D. Alice was ashamed of having stared at the Rabbit so rudely.
- E. Alice was too hot and tired to follow the Rabbit any further.

Q9. "never once considering how in the world she was to get out again" (lines 23-24)

What does this tell us about Alice?

- A. She had been down the rabbit-hole before and knew the way out.
- B. She was certain her sister would come and fetch her.
- C. She acted on the moment without a thought for what came next.
- D. She had carefully planned how she would climb back up.
- E. She did not really want to return home at all.

Q10. "went straight on like a tunnel" (line 25)

This is an example of...

- A. a simile
- B. a metaphor
- C. personification
- D. alliteration
- E. onomatopoeia

Q11. What did Alice see on the sides of the well as she fell? (lines 32-35)

- A. Doors, all of them firmly locked.
- B. Roots, stones and dripping water.
- C. Cupboards, book-shelves, maps and pictures.
- D. Lamps hanging in a long row from the roof.
- E. Nothing at all, because it was completely dark.

Q12. Why was Alice disappointed by the jar she took from the shelf? (lines 35-39)

- A. It was empty, although it was labelled "ORANGE MARMALADE".
- B. It held marmalade of a kind she did not like.
- C. It slipped out of her hands and smashed below her.
- D. The label on it had been worn away and could not be read.
- E. It was far too heavy for her to hold as she fell.

Q13. "for fear of killing somebody underneath" (line 38)

What does this show about Alice?

- A. She knew there were people living at the bottom of the well.
- B. She was afraid of what her sister would say about the mess.
- C. She was more frightened of falling than she would admit.
- D. She thought of other people's safety even in the middle of her fall.
- E. She wanted to keep the empty jar to use it later on.

Q14. "How brave they'll all think me at home!" (lines 41-42)

What is Alice doing here?

- A. Calling out to her family to come and rescue her.
- B. Complaining that nobody at home understands her.
- C. Imagining the credit she will get for surviving such a fall.
- D. Reminding herself of a promise she made before setting out.
- E. Wishing that her sister had come down the hole with her.

Q15. "(Which was very likely true.)" (line 43)

Why has the author added these words?

- A. To show that Alice said them under her breath.
- B. To step into the story himself and agree with Alice, half in fun.
- C. To warn the reader that Alice is not telling the truth.
- D. To explain a word that young readers might not know.
- E. To show that somebody at the bottom of the well was listening.

Q16. "suddenly" (line 9), "earnestly" (line 56) and "sadly" (line 70)

What type of word are these three?

- A. nouns
- B. adjectives
- C. adverbs
- D. pronouns
- E. conjunctions

Q17. "(Dinah was the cat.)" (line 46)

Why has the author put this in brackets?

- A. Because Alice was speaking about Dinah in a whisper.
- B. Because Dinah does not really appear anywhere in the story.
- C. Because Alice had made the name up while she was falling.
- D. To slip the reader a piece of information Alice already knows.
- E. To show that Alice was no longer sure who Dinah was.

Q18. "she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it" (lines 53-54)

Why did it not matter to Alice?

- A. Because she was too sleepy to hear her own words.
- B. Because she had no idea of the answer to either version.
- C. Because both questions meant exactly the same thing.
- D. Because Dinah was not there to be asked.
- E. Because she had already decided that cats do eat bats.

Q19. "a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass"
(lines 72-73)

How many adjectives are there in this description?

- A. one
- B. two
- C. three
- D. four
- E. five

Q20. Which of these would make the best alternative title for this passage?

- A. A Quarrel by the River
- B. The Cat Called Dinah
- C. An Afternoon of Reading
- D. Following the White Rabbit
- E. The Locked Doors of the Hall