

English Comprehension: Medium Practice Paper 6 Answers

Q#	Answer	Explanation
1	B	The poem names it in its third line: "The river Weser, deep and wide". Hanover is the city nearby and Brunswick the region, so neither is a river – and remembering which is which matters, because the Weser is where the rats end up.
2	A	A ditty is a slight, singable piece of verse, and the poet is speaking of his own poem: "when begins my ditty". Calling it a ditty is a piece of modesty – the tale that follows is anything but slight.
3	C	The first stanza has been describing a pleasant spot in gentle, winding lines; then a single word drops into the poem and everything changes. Its shortness is the point – the reader is pulled up as sharply as the townsfolk were.
4	E	Every other answer is taken word for word from the second stanza. The church bells are never mentioned in the poem; it is the Piper's pipe, not a bell, that makes the noise that matters here.
5	C	To drown a sound is to cover it with a louder one. The rats squeal over the top of the women's conversations, so that "spoiled the women's chats" means the talk was made impossible, not that the talk was about anything wicked.
6	C	A noddy is a simpleton. The lines around it settle the meaning: they go on to call the council "dolts that can't or won't determine", which is an accusation of stupidity rather than of dishonesty or cruelty.
7	B	The word "we" is doing the work: it is the townspeople's money that pays for the fur-lined robes. Their point is that they have bought the council its dignity and the council has not earned it, since it cannot decide what to do about the rats.

8	A	To send someone packing is to get rid of them without ceremony. The threat is aimed straight at the Mayor and Corporation, and it works: the very next line has them quaking. It is the fear of losing their places that makes them listen to a stranger.
9	C	A guilder is a single coin, so he is saying he would part with the badge of his office for almost nothing. The wish that follows makes it plainer still: he does not want a solution, he wants to be somewhere else.
10	A	An oyster left open too long has gone flat and cloudy, and that is exactly the picture the poet wants for the Mayor – fat, dim-eyed and no longer fresh. The comparison is a joke at his expense, not a sign of grief or illness.
11	B	The words imitate the quick uneven beating they describe, and a word that copies a sound is onomatopoeia. There is no comparison being made here, so it is neither a simile nor a metaphor.
12	A	“Kith and kin” means one’s friends and one’s family, so it is his origins that nobody can guess. The lines before it explain why: his colouring is a set of contradictions – light hair with dark skin, blue eyes, no beard – that fits no place the townsfolk know.
13	C	He is reaching for a comparison, not making a claim: the man looks as his own great-grandfather might if the last trumpet woke him and he stepped down off his tomb. It tells us the Piper struck the townsfolk as uncanny before he had played a note.
14	B	He claims to draw after him “all creatures living beneath the sun, that creep or swim or fly or run”, and adds that he chiefly uses the charm on creatures that do people harm. Nothing is said about killing – the rats drown because they follow him into the Weser.
15	B	The poem never defines the word, but it shows it twice: the coat that is “half of yellow and half of red” and the scarf “of red and yellow stripe” that matches it. Pied means patched with two or more colours, and it is his clothes, not his piping or his travels, that the name records.

16	C	The Piper asks for a thousand guilders and they leap to fifty times as much without drawing breath. The poem calls them "astonished" rather than generous – relief has run away with them, and the promise is made far too easily to be safe.
17	E	Each line picks up the last line's word and passes it on to a bigger one – muttered, muttering, grumbling, rumbling – so the noise builds in the reader's ear exactly as it built in the street. The words themselves grow heavier as they go.
18	C	"Great", "small", "lean" and "brawny" each describe the rats, so there are four adjectives. "Rats" appears four times as well, but it is a noun each time.
19	A	Family words are used for the rats so that the reader sees a whole population on the move rather than a swarm. Nothing is left in the houses, which is why the townsfolk believe the bargain has been kept in full.
20	D	The passage runs from the plague of rats to the moment the stranger rids the town of them, and everything in it turns on him. The gown, the river and the town are details along the way, and the council's refusal to pay comes later in the poem than these lines reach.