

English Comprehension: Hard Practice Paper 7 Answers

Q#	Answer	Explanation
1	A	"Want" in this older sense means lack, so a man in want of a wife is one who has none and therefore, the sentence claims, must need one. The point of the joke is that the man himself has not been asked whether he feels the lack at all.
2	C	The second paragraph gives the game away: the truth is "so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families". What is dressed up as a law that everybody accepts turns out to be the private wish of one interested group, and the reader is invited to smile at the difference.
3	A	A man is spoken of as if he were an estate that must have an owner. The words "rightful property" belong to law and to possessions, not to people, and putting them here shows how coolly the neighbourhood treats a stranger's arrival as an opportunity to be claimed.
4	B	Set against his wife's eager questions, the flatness of these two sentences is deliberate. He answers in as few words as possible, and then in none at all, which is his way of teasing her – and the reader can see it long before Mrs. Bennet can.
5	E	Italics mark the word a speaker leans on. His wife has just asked whether he wants to know; he answers by pushing the wanting back on to her. He never says he is interested – only that he has no objection to listening, which is a very long way from the same thing.
6	B	Her husband has offered no more than that he has no objection to hearing it, and that is enough to set her off for six lines without a pause. The dryness of the author's comment does the work of a whole description of her character.
7	C	Keeping four horses to a carriage was expensive, and Mrs. Bennet reports it as carefully as she reports his income. Every detail she gives – the fortune, the carriage, the servants sent ahead – is a measure of the same thing, which is what makes her interest so plain.

8	D	His wife has just said what a fine thing a rich single man is for their girls, and nothing could be more obvious than her meaning. By asking her to spell it out he forces her to admit what she is thinking, which she does in the next speech, calling him tiresome.
9	B	Mr. Bennet is asking whether marrying one of the girls is what Mr. Bingley came to Hertfordshire to do. In this older use, a person's design is the aim they have in view, which is why his wife hears the word as mockery and answers "Design? Nonsense".
10	C	He has just suggested that she send five grown daughters off unaccompanied, and now proposes that a young man might prefer their mother. It is nonsense on the face of it, offered in the same even voice as everything else he says – which is exactly how his teasing works.
11	C	She does not laugh; she accepts the compliment, protests modestly, and then wanders into a wistful little speech about the share of beauty she once had. The joke has gone straight past her, and the reader sees it land while she does not.
12	B	On the surface he seems to agree with what she has just said. In fact he has turned her modest remark into an insult, and done it so smoothly that it can hardly be objected to. It is the sharpest thing he says in the whole conversation.
13	C	For a woman of that time, marriage was the one way of gaining a household and an income of her own. When Mrs. Bennet says what an establishment Netherfield would be for one of the girls, she is thinking of the whole future that the match would settle.
14	A	Mrs. Bennet is not being unreasonable here, and this is worth noticing: she cannot introduce her daughters to Mr. Bingley at all until her husband has made the first formal call. His refusal is therefore a real obstacle, and the whole chapter turns on it.

15	B	A father giving a stranger his blessing to marry any daughter he fancies, sight unseen, is a parody of what his wife wants. He has still not agreed to call, and by pretending to go far further than she asked he shows how absurd the whole business seems to him.
16	C	Mrs. Bennet measures Lizzy against Jane for beauty and against Lydia for good humour, and finds her wanting on both counts. Her husband grants that the girls are all silly, then singles out the one quality his wife never mentions – quickness. It is the first hint of what the rest of the novel will be about.
17	D	Mrs. Bennet's nerves are spoken of as though they were people he has known for years and greets with respect. Treating something that is not alive as if it were is personification, and here it turns her favourite complaint into a standing joke.
18	B	Each one stands before a noun and describes it – an odd mixture, sarcastic humour, uncertain temper – so each is an adjective. The nouns themselves (mixture, humour, temper) are the abstract nouns in those phrases.
19	D	A whole life is summed up in a single line: one purpose, and gossip and calls to console her while she pursues it. "Solace" means comfort, and the word is chosen carefully – it makes her sound as though marrying off the girls were a hardship she must be consoled for.
20	C	The whole chapter is one conversation in which he teases and she misses it, and the closing paragraph confirms it: twenty-three years have not been enough to make her understand him. Nothing suggests real anger or real hardship – the comedy comes from two people talking past each other.