Open Ended Comprehension

The Write Tribe

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Comprehension Practice 3

Read the passage and answer Questions 1-10.

Rama sat at the door of his hut and relaxed. He knew people would call him an idler but he did not care. He refused to work and there was no one to chase him out of his house – his wife was still away. It was with quiet joy that he sent her off in a taxi two days ago. Though he was sad to be apart from his little son, he hoped that her parents would insist that she stayed an few extra days. If she were around, he would be climbing coconut trees, clearing them of pests and plucking the coconuts just to earn a dollar for the day's work.

He was tempted to join his friends at Lucky Club to gamble at a game or two but became angry when he remembered that she did not let him keep a cent of his hard-earned money. "What is the point of going there empty-handed?" Rama remarked. At that moment, an idea struck him. He walked to a corner of their house, where an old trunk lay. It was the most prized possession in their household. He ransacked the trunk for a wooden box where she usually kept her money. He opened the wooden box, but it was empty.

"Where has all the money gone? She must have given it to her brother!" Just then, something caught his eye. Tucked away in a corner of the old trunk laid a cigarette tin. It belonged to Gopal, who had picked it up from the rubbish dump behind a rich man's bungalow. He had spent hours playing with that cigarette tin and would not part with it till Rama suggested that he make a money-box out of it.

"When it is full," said the young lad, "I will buy a motorcar, like that boy in the big house!" Rama took the tin to a blacksmith who then sealed its lid, leaving only a slit that was big enough to insert a coin. Gopal often asked his father in great anticipation, "Is it full? When can I open it?"

Now Rama shook the tin violently but nothing came out. The slit was large enough for a coin to go in one way only. His conscience pricked him and he felt resentful that his wife had made him succumb to such a wicked idea. He ransacked his house for an assortment of things that could help him pry open the tin, but to no avail. In his frustration, he threw the tin onto the floor and it burst open along its side. Rama scooped the coins up hungrily and counted them. Ten dollars. He put them in his pocket and headed for Lucky Club.

There, luck deserted him and he lost all the money. He rose from his seat and started his walk home. As he turned into the lane, he saw his wife and Gopal walking towards their house. "May it be a dream!" Rama muttered.

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"Gopal missed you, so we decided to come back a day earlier," she said. Rama watched her and felt a dull panic building up inside him. The old trunk with its contents messed up, the battered cigarette tin – she would see them all the moment she stepped in. The situation was hopeless. "Why do you look like that?" she asked, before going in. *40*

Gopal held up some coins to his father. "Uncle gave me these. Will you put them into the tin for me?" A groan of misery escaped Rama, as he resigned himself to face an oncoming storm.

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. What is Rama's occupation? (1m)

_____

_____

2. Quote the sentence that suggests that Rama was in high spirits as his wife was away from the house. (1m)

_____

_____

3. Choose three words from the passage which have similar meanings to the words listed below. Use only one word for each blank. (3m)

Property	
Opening	
Bitter	

4. What prevented Rama from going to Lucky Club originally and how did he solve the problem? (2m)

_____

_____

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5. What does the phrase "wicked idea" (line 28) mean? (2m)

_____

_____

6. How would Rama's wife know that the money was gone? (3m)

_____

_____

_____

7. In the last paragraph, why did Rama "resign himself to face an oncoming storm"? (2m)

_____

_____

8. Write 1, 2 and 3 in the blanks to indicate the order in which the events occurred in the story. (1m)

_____ Rama broke open Gopal's cigarette box and took away all the money.

_____ Rama was left alone at home.

_____ Rama lost all the money when he was gambling.

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9. Based on the passage, state whether each statement in the table below is true or false. Then give one reason why you think so. (3m)

Statement	True/False	Reason
Rama is a driven and hardworking man.		
Rama's wife disapproves of Rama's gambling habits.		
Rama felt guilty for stealing all the money.		

10. What lesson should Rama learn from this incident? (2m)

_____

_____

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Comprehension Practice 4

Read the passage and answer Questions 1-10.

Dear Diary,

It was only our second meeting. She sat at the table, her face barely inches above. However, I could feel the tremors of the table and could tell from the way her body was swaying that she was swinging her legs vigorously beneath. Her face, though, betrayed none of that excitement, for she regarded me with a solemn expectancy.

As I enquired about her homework, she readily reached into her bag and triumphantly handed it to me. She was radiating with unconcealed pride as she observed me skim over the answers. I felt uneasy with her staring, so I selected a passage and explained that she was to read it whilst I checked her work.

She began to read softly to herself as I looked at her answers. Unlike most children, she had rather small but neat and regular handwriting. I did notice some marks on the pages, evidence that the soiled erasers did more harm than good. Mei Mei had done rather well; she managed sixteen correct answers out of twenty. This was quite a feat considering the fact that she spoke mostly Mandarin. I drew an extravagant star beside the "Good" as I remembered how anxious I had always been as a child about getting affirmations from adults.

Mei Mei grinned in delight when she saw what I had drawn. I explained to her the errors she had made and got her to repeat my explanations and do the necessary corrections. After that, I read the passage with her, and asked if she had any questions. Mei Mei did not reply immediately, but sat there biting her upper lip. I coaxed her as gently as I could to tell me what she could not understand.

Mei Mei then pointed out that she did not know the difference between 'gate' and 'fence'. I had always taken these two words for granted, so I floundered for a moment. I tried explaining in Mandarin how both are used to enclose houses and buildings and the difference between them. I went on to add that a gate could be opened but a fence surrounds a place and could not be opened. As I continued, I told her that a gate was larger than a fence and that the latter was the green, wire-like thing that she would see around a house.

Mei Mei nodded uncertainly as she listened earnestly. I looked at Mei Mei

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again and saw the confusion that had crept upon her face. Then, I realised the inaccuracies in my explanation. I decided that I had to show her instead. Leaving our things on the table, I took her hand and led her to the front of the school where I pointed out a fence and a gate. Mei Mei grinned as her face brightened up.

I heaved a sigh of relief. I knew everything would be all right. I had not expected this task of helping underprivileged homes to be easy after I had been warned at the briefing that some of the children were playful and even lazy. Mei Mei, has turned out otherwise – she was quiet and shy. It was an added bonus that she was a hardworking girl. This would make my job easier, and I resolved to give my best shot even though I was not being paid.

Jane

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. Why was Mei Mei so excited to hand in her homework to Jane in paragraph 1 and "radiating with unconcealed pride" (line 7)? (2m)

_____

_____

2. Choose three words from the passage which have similar meanings to the words listed below. Use only one word for each blank. (3m)

Serious	
Proudly	
Dirty	

3. Why did the soiled erasers do "more harm than good" (line 14)? (2m)

_____

_____

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4. Which sentence in paragraph 4 shows that Mei Mei was happy about the star that Jane had drawn? (1m)

_____

_____

5. What does "both" (line 27) refer to? (2m)

_____

_____

6. The table shows the similarity and difference between a gate and a fence. Fill in the blanks. (3m)

	Similarity	Difference
Fence		
Gate		

7. Why was it "an added bonus" that Mei Mei was hardworking? (1m)

_____

_____

8. Write 1, 2 and 3 in the blanks to indicate the order in which the events occurred in the story. (1m)

_____ Jane tried to explain the difference between a gate and a fence verbally.

_____ Jane marked Mei Mei's homework.

_____ Jane decided to bring Mei Mei to the front of the school where she was able to see the gate and the fence.

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9. The table shows Mei Mei's feelings when the author did something. Fill in the blanks with information from the passage. (3m)

How she felt	What happened
She was excited	
	The author drew a star beside the "Good".
	The author had to explain the difference between a fence and a gate.

10. What lesson do you think this story is trying to convey? (2m)

_____

_____

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