

Reading Comprehension Workshop – Extract of “Around India in 80 Trains” by Monisha Rajesh

"Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care". Theodore Roosevelt

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Answer all questions in the spaces provided on the question paper. You should pay particular attention to sentence structures, punctuation, and spelling. The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part question.

Section A – Reading

Read the extract from *Around India in 80 Trains* by Monisha Rajesh, then answer questions 1–8.

Chennai Egmore station could be heard before it was seen. A cacophony erupted as we made our way under the arches, running after Subbu who had been instructed to come with us to the platform. Indian stations are not designed for running. An assault course lay between us and Subbu, who was winding deeper and deeper into the sea of boxes. We ducked and wove around the slalom of wooden carts wheeled by men with no sense of urgency, strings of hand-holding children, hobbling dogs, stacked hessian sacks, nose-pickers, watersellers, booksellers and red-shirted porters. Subbu now stood by our train, under a digital sign reading B2, his face powder dry, as we bent double, sweat running down our bodies.

Engines hissed and thudded as they began to move, high-pitched announcements singing out in breakneck-speed Tamil, while the smell of dried fish crept up my nostrils. Passepartout leapt about, clicking away, and I smiled weakly for the camera before boarding the Anantapuri Express to Nagercoil.

Subbu had already found our seats and placed our bags on each by the time we squeezed through. Thanking him, we dug out bottles of water, notebooks, pens, toilet paper, flannels and flip-flops, much to the amusement of our companions who had already chained up bags, hidden shoes, plugged in phones and sat down cross-legged, watching us. At 7.20pm the train jerked. Subbu bowed and slunk off as the train glided out of the station. Through the tinted window he was soon no more than a saluting silhouette. We were on the move.

1. What does the **first sentence** tell you about Chennai Egmore station? [1]

2. What does **'we ducked and wove'** (lines 5–6) tell you about how they were running? [1]

3. What does **'wooden carts wheeled by men with no sense of urgency'** (lines 6–7) tell you about the way that the carts were moving? [1]

4. Look at **lines 8–16**. Explain, using your own words, the difference between Subbu's and the narrator's physical conditions. [2]

Subbu is _____

The narrator is _____

5. Give **two powerful verbs** that suggest that the train is noisy (lines 11–13). [1]

6. **Explain**, using your own words, why the narrator can only smile 'weakly for the camera' (lines 13–14). [1]

7. What is the effect of describing Subbu as a '**saluting silhouette**' (line 21)? [1]

8. What is interesting about the structure of the **final paragraph**, and why is it effective for the reader? [2]

The structure is **interesting** because

It is **effective** because

Section B – Vocabulary

1. Choose the word that best fits each of these sentences from the boxes below. [6]
 - a. My house is very close to the airport and the first _____ flies over at 6 a.m.!

airline	aeroplane	aircraft
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 - b. I would like to get a new _____, one of those with wheels on and a padlock would be good for my holiday.

luggage	bag	suitcase
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 - c. In London, if there aren't more than four of you, you can get a _____ from one side of the city to the other.

cruise	ferry	water taxi
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 - d. My sister has always been interested in _____ – she reads books about nothing else!

travel	trip	journey
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 - e. When we were flying over China, it was very rough and the _____ told us to fasten our seat belts.

pilot	driver	captain
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 - f. He was so tired after the _____ over the mountains that he could hardly walk!

flight	voyage	trek
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