

Part 1: Reading Comprehension

- What to do: You will read a short story titled "The Key to the Old Cottage."
- Task: After reading, answer questions 1 to 6. Each question has four options: A, B, C, or D.
- How to answer: Choose the one correct answer for each question and mark it. There is only one right answer per question.

The Key to the Old Cottage

I had always considered my grandmother to be a somewhat eccentric figure, full of stories that seemed to belong more to a fairy tale than to our modern world. So, on my fifteenth birthday, I wasn't entirely surprised when, instead of a conventional present, she pressed a small, heavily tarnished brass key into my palm. Her grip was surprisingly firm for her age. "This," she whispered, her voice dropping to a conspiratorial tone that made me lean in, "opens the back door of the old Birchwood cottage by the lake. But listen carefully, Leo. If you go there, you must go absolutely alone, and only in the final twenty minutes before sunset. Not a minute earlier. The view from that kitchen window is... *transformed* under that specific light."

I was intrigued, of course, but also sceptical. The Birchwood cottage had been abandoned since my great-uncle vanished decades ago, and was now the subject of predictable local ghost stories. That summer, my priorities were firmly elsewhere: the final football trials for the county team and a seemingly endless series of plans with my friends. *If I wasted my precious evenings chasing my grandmother's whims, I would undoubtedly miss out on everything that mattered.* Her key felt heavy in my pocket, a silent, nagging promise.

Weeks passed in a blur of activity. Yet, on one peculiarly still and humid evening, when my friends were all away and a strange, restless feeling settled over me, I found myself walking the overgrown path to the lake. The cottage was more dilapidated than in my childhood memories; its windows were like dark, empty eyes. A part of me argued this was foolish. *If anyone saw me here, they'd think I'd lost my mind.* Swallowing my doubt, I fitted the key. It turned with a screech that shattered the silence.

The interior smelled of damp wood and forgotten years. Dust motes danced in the slivers of late light. Following her instructions precisely, I walked straight through the gloomy living room to the small kitchen at the rear. As I waited, the sinking sun began its final descent, blazing a path of fiery orange and deep purple across the calm surface of the lake. Then, as the light shifted to a precise, golden angle, something impossible happened. The rays hit the old, flawed glass of the kitchen window, and words slowly materialised on the dusty pane, as if being written by the sun itself: *"For the one who seeks not treasure, but peace."*

The breath left my lungs. In that profound, silent moment, my grandmother's eccentricity revealed itself as wisdom. This was never about hidden riches or spectral encounters. She had given me a key to a sanctuary. *If I had dismissed her as just a silly old woman, I would have lost this gift forever.* The cottage's true treasure was this mandatory solitude, this enforced pause. *If you give this place your quiet, it gives you clarity in return.* Now, years later, whenever the noise of the world becomes too

loud, I return. The key, now polished smooth from use, is a reminder that some of the best advice comes in whispers, not shouts.

Questions:

1. What was the narrator's initial opinion of his grandmother?
 - A. He thought she was a very practical and modern person.
 - B. He found her stories to be unrealistic and childish.
 - C. He believed she was involved in local ghost stories.
 - D. He considered her strange and fanciful.
2. The phrase "*If I wasted my precious evenings chasing my grandmother's whims, I would undoubtedly miss out on everything that mattered.*" (paragraph 2) shows that the narrator initially believed that:
 - A. His grandmother's instructions were dangerous.
 - B. The cottage held the key to understanding his family.
 - C. His social and sporting life was more important than the cottage.
 - D. The sunset was not a special time to visit.
3. What caused the message to appear on the window?
 - A. The narrator cleaned the dusty glass.
 - B. The specific angle of the sunlight at a precise time.
 - C. The heat from the humid summer evening.
 - D. The memory of his great-uncle.
4. What does the narrator mean by "She had given me a key to a sanctuary." (paragraph 5)?
 - A. She had given him ownership of the building.
 - B. She had shown him how to find financial treasure.
 - C. She had provided him with a secret meeting place for friends.
 - D. She had taught him how to find a place of refuge and calm.
5. The sentence "***If I had dismissed her as just a silly old woman, I would have lost this gift forever.***" (paragraph 5) is used by the narrator to express:
 - A. A general rule about respecting elders.
 - B. A real possibility for the future.
 - C. Regret about a past action that did **not** happen.
 - D. A hypothetical situation in the present.
6. What is the main contrast the story presents?
 - A. Between youth and old age.
 - B. Between modern life and ancient secrets.
 - C. Between seeking external excitement and valuing internal peace.
 - D. Between belief and scepticism in the supernatural.

Part 2: Use of English - Key Word Transformation

- What to do: In this section, you will practice paraphrasing. You will see six sentences (7-12).
- Task: For each one, you must complete the second sentence so that it means exactly the same as the first sentence.
- The rule: You must use the word given in capital letters. Do not change this word.
- Important: Your completed sentence must contain between two and five words, including the word given.
- Look at the example (0) to see how it's done.

obtain these exercises from Vince

Part 3: Language Focus - Conditionals in Narrative

Instructions: This section has two tasks to check your understanding of how conditionals are used in stories.

A. Classification: You will see four sentences taken from the reading text. Next to each one, write 0, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd to identify the type of conditional.

1. "If you go there, go alone, and only at sunset." → _____
2. "If I spent my evenings there, I would miss out on all the fun." → _____
3. "If I had brought my noisy friends, I would never have experienced this profound calm." → _____
4. "If I ever need to clear my mind, I know exactly where to go." → _____

B. Rules in Storytelling: Below you will see the three main conditional groups. Underneath them are three descriptions (labeled a, b, c) of how they are typically used in storytelling. Match each conditional group to its correct narrative use by writing the corresponding letter in the blank.

- Zero / First Conditional: _____
- Second Conditional: _____
- Third Conditional: _____

Options to match:

- a) To express regret or imagine how the past could have been different.
- b) To describe rules, general facts within the story's world, or likely results.
- c) To talk about imaginary or unlikely hypotheses in the present or future of the story.

Part 4: Writing Task - Guided Planning

- Your goal: To plan a story for the B2 First writing exam.
- The rules for your story:
 1. You must choose one of the three titles provided.
 2. Your story must begin with this exact sentence: "I knew it was a risk, but I decided to trust the instructions."
 3. Your story must include at least one example of each type of conditional tense: Zero, First, Second, and Third.
- The planning sheet: Use the questions and prompts in the boxes to plan your story step-by-step. This will help you organize your ideas before you write. Pay special attention to box 6, where you should write down your ideas for the conditional sentences you will use.

Planning:

1. Characters and Setting:

Who? Where? When?

First problem or main event: What "risk" is it? ¿Which are the instructions?

2. Development:

¿What happens? Plan a topic in which you can use:

- 2nd Conditional: "If I were in his position, I would probably..." (to speculate).
- 1st or 0 Conditional: "If you press this button, a light comes on." (for a rule).

3. Climax (The most exciting moment):

¿What crucial decision does the character take?

4. The end:

¿How are problems solved? Plan a topic in which you can use:

- 3rd Conditional: "If I hadn't followed the map, I would never have found..."

5. Being aware of conditionals:

Plan your conditional sentences first

- Zero/1st: _____
- 2nd: _____
- 3rd: _____

Part 5: Writing Production

- Now, write your full story.
- Length: Your story must be between 140 and 190 words. Check your word count.
- Content: Follow your plan from Part 4. Make sure you:
 - Use your chosen title.
 - Start with the required sentence.
 - Include the conditional sentences you planned.
- Presentation: Write neatly. Organize your story into logical paragraphs. Check your grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation.

Remember: The most important objective of this writing task is to show you can use different conditional tenses consciously and correctly within a story. Good luck