

Comprehension

Name: _____
Grade _____

Date: _____

English Language

Main Idea & Supporting Details

Instructions:

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow. All questions must be answered in complete sentences and in your own words, unless otherwise indicated.

All answers must be based on information in the passage.

Special attention should be given to the directions for each question.

SECTION A

Somehow I managed to get up next day, eat some breakfast and then put on my uniform. But as my mother held open the back gate and I wheeled my bicycle through dumbly, I saw by her face that she understood.

"Never mind, you'll soon be home," she said hopelessly. "The first day's always the worst."

Heading blindly in the right direction, I rode away with her last two words sinking into me.

I remember going into the crowded playground and a fat boy rushing up to me with a tattered book, shouting something. I found out afterwards that when you moved up to the next class you tried to sell books and an atlas second hand to the kids. A whistle shrilled out, cutting into all the movements and disorder, stopping it abruptly, and soon the queues of boys were shuffling into the entrance like prisoners. I found myself with the new comers in a queer dumb fellowship. We tramped up a gloomy stone staircase to the top of the building.

The first morning we were in a room smelling of chemicals, sitting at broad, flat benches which had gas taps and bunsen burners. None of us had been in a place like this before. Before long, somebody was fingering one of the taps. The teacher, a Mr. Henry, rapped out:

"What are you doing here?"

There was a moment of awful silence. We all sat as if frozen on our high stools.

"You, near the tap, on the end there. Stand up!"

The boy slid off his stool, and we all stared at him greedily.

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing, sir."

"What's your name?"

"Steve, sir."

Mr. Henry looked without expression at the boy. Then he said:

"Sit down." And turning to the rest of us, he added harshly, "You'll soon learn what I'm like. Don't try any of your tricks, they won't work on me. And this goes for the lot of you. Keep your hands off those taps."

Another half an hour went by peacefully, and then the harsh voice made us jump again.

"There's a smell of gas. Who's turned it on this time?"

My heart was pounding, even though I was innocent. Then I was horrified to see the same boy, Steve, climbing down from his stool in the cruel silence, his face white.

"Me, sir," he said, very clearly.

He was stiff with fright, yet he seemed determined to own up to his crime. Afterwards, when he kept doing this, I was full of wild admiration for his courage. Nobody seemed to understand why he did things which were bound to make his life hellish, and I never found out why he was like it.

from *Native Ground* by Phillip Pullman

Multiple Choice

For questions 1-4 select the circle with the correct answer.

1. This is a _____ story. _____

- a. persuasive
- b. narrative
- c. descriptive
- d. expository

2. How does the writer feel at the beginning of the story? _____

- a. excited
- b. annoyed
- c. nervous
- d. somber

3. What is the specific setting of this story? _____

- a. school
- b. the playground
- c. science class
- d. math class

4. How were the movements and the disorder stopped? Refer to paragraph 4. _____

- a. a shout
- b. a whistle
- c. a bell rang
- d. a fight occurred

Section B - Short Answer

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

5. Why was the 'fat' boy shouting at the writer?

6. "Fat boy" expresses a positive, negative or neutral connotation? _____

7. The writer says that "queues of boys were shuffling into the entrance like prisoners." What did the boys have in common with prisoners?

8. What incident occurred in class?

9. Who did the writer admire him? _____

10. Why did the writer admire him? _____

11. How did the teacher know that the bunsen burner had been touched?

Vocabulary

Instructions: Use the clues to explain the meanings of these words and phrases based on their use in the passage.

12. 'tattered book' _____

13. 'wheeled my bicycle' _____

14. 'frozen on our high stools' _____

