Open Ended Comprehension

The Write Tribe

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Comprehension Practice 1

Read the passage and answer Questions 1-10.

David lay still in the darkness, listening to the men's low muttering as they carried out their routine patrol. This evening, however, he was aware of their voices only as a vague meaningless noise in the distance, and he paid no attention to what they were saying.

"You must get away by tonight," the man had told him. "Stay awake so that you're ready just before the guards change. When you see me strike a match, the current to the electric fence will be cut off and you can climb over – you'll have half a minute for it, no more."

In his mind's eye, David saw once again the grey bare room he knew so well. He saw the men and was conscious, somewhere in the pit of his stomach, of the hard knot of hate he felt whenever he saw him. The man's eyes were small, repulsive, light in colour, their expression never changing; his face was gross and fat. David had known him all his life, but he never spoke to him more than what was barely necessary to answer his questions. Though he had known his name for as long as he could remember, he never said anything but "the man" when he spoke about him or thought of him. He would never have been separated from his mother, if not for this man. He and his mother would have been able to go through the horrible condition of the prison camp together but this man had to interfere.

"Take care, my boy," was all she said before she escaped. And now, he was going to help him.

That evening, David took the initiative to speak to him. "And if I don't escape?" he asked.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "That'll be none of my business. I have to leave tomorrow, and whatever my successor may decide to do about you, I shan't be able to interfere. But you'll soon be a big lad, and there's need in a good many places for those strong enough to work."

David knew too well that those other places would not be any better than the camp where he now was. "And if I get away without being caught, what then?" he asked.

"Just by the big tree in the thicket that lies on the road out to the mines, you'll find a bottle of water and a compass. Follow the compass southwards till you get to the port city, then get on board a ship and hide. You'll have to stay hidden while the ship's out at sea, so you'll need the water. Find a ship that's bound for Italy and when you get there, go north till you come to a country called

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Denmark – you'll be safe there."

Then he added, "The half minute the current's cut off is intended for you. If you try to take anyone with you, you can be sure that neither of you will get away. And now clear off before you're missed."

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. Why did David not pay attention to the guards' voices? (1m)

_____

_____

2. "You must get away by tonight…" (line 5). Why did the man urge David to escape by that night? (2m)

_____

_____

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

Empty	
Effort	
Resentment	

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

_____ David taking the ship to Italy.

_____ David crossing the fence.

_____ David taking the ship to Denmark.

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5. Why did David not refer to the man by his name and instead refer to him as "the man", in line 16? (3m)

6. How are the compass and water important in helping David to escape? (2m)

Compass	
Water	

7. How did the man intend to help David escape? (2m)

8. How was David going to escape? (2m)

9. "David knew too well that those other places would not be any better than the camp where he now was." (line 28-29). Despite that, why was David willing to escape? (2m)

10. Why was the man so certain that his plan would only allow David to escape? (2m)

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Comprehension Practice 2

Read the passage and answer Questions 1-10.

For a moment, Jeff lay confused. He could not figure out what had awakened him. He coughed. He coughed again. There was a tight suffocating feeling in his chest. As he pulled himself groggily from the last remnants of sleep, he became aware of an acrid, burning smell and a shrill, piercing noise. His eyes were watering, the insides of his nostrils stinging. Then, suddenly, he was wide awake. His room was full of smoke! The noise he was hearing was the smoke alarm. The house was on fire!

He leapt from the bed but collapsed on the floor, choking. He lay there, trying to catch his breath. "Stay low." The words from their school fire drill came to him. "The smoke is least dense near the floor. Crawl. Don't panic."

He panicked. His room was on the second floor and there was no safe way out the window. The door was his only hope. He made more of a scrabbling dash for the door than a crawl. Cautiously, he stood up and turned the knob.

Fresh smoke billowed in, but he could not see any flames. Beside him, the door of his parents' room stood open and he could see a light within. They would usually leave their light on whenever they were not home. That meant they were not home yet. The stairs were just beyond. He made for them, crouching low.

At the landing, he stumbled and half fell onto the top step. The smoke was much worse here. He could not even see the floor. He turned to go back to his room – the window might be the best way out after all, but the smoke was a solid wall in front of him, black and oily. He slid down the stairs, clutching the banister. The front door was right at the bottom.

He reached the last step and ran for the door. He could not see his babysitter, Tim, anywhere. Jeff unlocked the door and yanked it open. The fresh, sweet smell of the spring night air rushed in. He breathed a great gulp of it and staggered out through the doorway. Then he remembered his dog, Yank. The thought hit him like a baseball bat connecting right into his stomach. Yank slept in the kitchen. Jeff could not leave him!

Jeff had to save Yank. He turned and headed for the kitchen. The door was shut. Frantically, he pulled it open. A wall of flames shot out and engulfed him. He put up his hands defensively. Pain, searing and unbelievable, ripped at his palms and tore at his face. He gasped and inhaled a river of agony into his chest. He fell to his knees and tried to scream, but he could not. Then there was nothing but roaring blackness.

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He sat bolt upright, staring around him. It was cool, everything was quiet. He brought his hands to his face. They felt smooth, dry. No pain. Then he heard his parents' voice greeting Tim. Yank barked a welcome.

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. How did Jeff know that his house was on fire? (2m)

_____

_____

2. Choose three words from paragraph 1 which have similar meanings to the words listed below. Use only one word for each blank. (3m)

Perplexed	
Dazedly	
Pungent	

3. Explain whether the "words from their school fire drill" (line 9) helped Jeff in that scenario. (2m)

_____

_____

4. What does "that" (line 16) refer to? (1m)

_____

_____

5. Why was Jeff unable to escape from the window? (2m)

_____

_____

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6. What does "the thought" (line 28) refer to? (2m)

_____

_____

7. Did Jeff manage to save Yank in the end? Explain why. (2m)

_____

_____

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

_____ Jeff tried to escape from the window.

_____ Jeff attempted to rescue Yank.

_____ Jeff tried to escape through the door.

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. (2m)

Statement	True/False	Reason
Jeff was a responsible owner to Yank.		
The entire incident was only a nightmare for Jeff.		

10. Explain how Jeff would feel in the last paragraph. (1m)

_____

_____

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