



**Open Ended
Comprehension**

The Write Tribe



Comprehension Practice 5

Read the passage and answer Questions 1-10.

Big fat drops started falling from the sky, quickly forming puddles on the road surface. Several people hurriedly held their briefcases above their heads and hastened for shelter. Bob looked up in dismay. Ditching his initial plan of waiting for a bus, he followed them. Trust it to rain on the day of his job interview! There was once a time when he could splurge on luxuries. Unfortunately, he could not afford to do so after being jobless for the past few years. This job, if he clinched it, would turn the tables. No more eating microwave food for dinner; finally, a decent meal for his family. All he had to do was pass the interview. To do that, he needed to make an excellent first impression. How could he do that if he was late? Luckily, the unrelenting rain masked the hot tears that were flowing down his cheeks away from prying eyes. He was desperate to get to that job interview.

Pushing his way through throngs of people, Bob ran to the nearest shelter he could find, which happened to be the train station. "My previous plan didn't work, but perhaps I could still make it if I take the train," he thought. An elderly lady accidentally knocked into him, causing the contents of his briefcase to fall out. "I'm sorry, I didn't.." she said. Bob cut her off, gesturing it was fine and hurriedly gathered his things. Once he reached the platform, he was crestfallen when he saw that notices had been put up everywhere informing of a ten-minute delay. Time dragged by in an excruciatingly slow manner. Many people around him were tapping their feet, checking their watches while some were trundling their trolley bags along the platform.

Ten minutes came and went. Something was wrong. The floor was flooded. The pipes had burst and water began gushing out. The ceiling was leaking. Panic ensued, followed by a chaotic rush to the exits where a bottleneck had formed. As Bob made his way to the exit, he saw the elderly lady who knocked into him earlier. She was obviously struggling to hobble along amidst the commotion, clutching her walking stick with her frail hands for her dear life. Fear was written clearly on her face. Though it would slow him down further, his heart went out to the old lady. "Auntie, let me help you," he muttered and without waiting for a reply, he placed her hand on his right arm. She was jittery at first but her tense muscles soon relaxed. After some time, they made it out of the flooded platform. Not wanting to forsake the old lady, he decided to help her to her destination. After all, there was no way he could make it in time for his interview now.

Noticing his obvious gloom, she asked, "Son, why do you look so sad?" Bob sobbed bitterly, "I have been jobless for years. Finally, I was going to a promising interview today but the heavy rain ruined everything! Maybe I am a failure. That's why no one wants to employ me." He could almost hear his wife chiding him for saying that. "You are a talented and hard worker. No one has discovered that about you yet. That's all," she would say.

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The lady replied, "Don't worry. You are a decent man. I am sure things will work out for you once the financial crisis this country is facing is over." Hearing her encouraging words, he brightened up. The skies had cleared up by then as well. "This is my destination," the lady said. The words "Zane and Zane Law Firm" caught Bob's attention. Having been lost in his thoughts, Bob had not realised where he was heading. "This was where the interview was supposed to have been!" he remarked as an immaculately dressed young man rushed out to meet the old lady.

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"Grandma, it was a horrible storm! I was so worried for you!" he cried out. The old lady told him about Bob's timely help and selflessness. Her grandson looked at Bob with gratitude.

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"Is it too late for a job interview now?" Bob asked, hopefully.

"I think you have already passed your interview with flying colours!" the young man exclaimed, as he patted his grandmothers' hands gently. "My company needs more people like you!"

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ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. What does "them" (line 4) represent?

(1m)

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

(3m)

Disheartened	
Continuous	
Congestion	

3. Quote a sentence from paragraph 1 that showed Bob's desperation to reach the job interview venue on time. (1m)

4. Why did time pass by "in an excruciatingly slow manner" (line 20-21)? (2m)

5. Why did Bob decide to help the elderly woman to her destination? (2m)

6. How would Bob's wife cheer him up when he was upset? (3m)

7. The table shows Bob's feelings when something took place. Fill in the blanks with information from the passage. (3m)

How he felt	What happened
	It was raining very heavily.
	The elderly woman was struggling to get out of the train station.
He was encouraged.	

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

_____ An elderly woman knocked into Bob.

_____ Bob realised that the elderly lady was in fact the grandmother of his potential employer.

_____ Bob tried taking a train to his job interview venue.

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
Bob was initially sure that he would not get the job.		
Bob knew that the elderly woman was the grandmother of his potential employer.		
Bob became hopeful after realising that the elderly woman was in fact the grandmother of his potential employer.		

10. What lesson did you learn from Bob's story? (1m)

Comprehension Practice 6

Read the passage and answer Questions 1-10.

The sounds of the train approaching drew the boys' attention to the track. After making their way through the trees, they clambered with difficulty to the top of the steep roadbed, knelt along the railroad tracks and began to play.

To the west, a freight train rolled slowly towards the children. Overhead lights signalled to engineer Rich Campana that the passenger train ahead was out of the way and they could resume their normal speed of 40 miles per hour. The engineer pulled the throttle, then turned to conductor Anthony Falzo who was sitting at the locomotive's left observation window. Rich and Anthony spotted something ahead at the same instant. "What's that up there?" asked the engineer. Anthony did not answer and was staring intently. A crumpled cardboard box? Discarded rags? Suddenly both men realised what it was.

Rich threw the emergency brake and jerked the horn handle with all his strength. The horn's blast and Anthony's words exploded at the same time, "Kids on the track!"

Anthony had dealt with emergencies for many years, especially in his police service. Now all his experience took over. He felt his body 'go into autopilot'. He sprang through the door and raced to the front of the swaying train. Scrambling down a steel ladder, he paused on the bottom rung, two feet above the roadbed flashing by.

Now he could clearly see the two little children. They were sitting alongside the rail. Anthony waved frantically and shouted, "Get away!" He mentally calculated the train's deceleration rate and groaned. Engrossed in play, Todd and Scott did not hear the train.

Finally as the sound became thunderous, Scott looked up and froze. Though the train was slowing down, Anthony knew that he could not outrun it. Instead, he forced himself to wait until he would be close enough to leap off and grab the boys. With perhaps ten feet between them and the sharp-edged snowplough blade at the front of the train, Anthony sprang forwards from the ladder. Landing on the loose, fist-size ballast stones alongside the track, he had to struggle to keep his balance. In two giant strides, he almost reached the children. They stared up at him in wide-eyed shock. Anthony, flinging his body forwards, flew towards them.

As his body hurtled downward, Anthony covered Todd while reaching out with one arm to grab Scott and pulled him clear of the track. But the train had caught up to them. Anthony saw the black steel edge of the snow blade

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clip the young child on the chin. Part of the train punched into the back of Anthony's work vest. Still, Anthony managed to pull Scott completely beneath him. Burying his face in the stones, he pushed downward on the two boys with all his strength as the overhang of the train passed inches above them.

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. What did "it" (line 11) refer to? (1m)

2. What sentence in the passage shows that Anthony instinctively rushed to the rescue of the children? (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)

Abandoned	
Anxiously	
Captivated	

4. What did Anthony do immediately after realising that there were two children playing on the train tracks? (3m)

5. Why did Anthony groan after he failed to get the attention of the children? (2m)

6. Why did Anthony have to wait even though the train was slowing down? (2m)

7. What type of person do you think Anthony is? Support your answer with evidence from the passage. (2m)

8. The table shows Anthony's feelings when something took place. Fill in the blanks with information from the passage. (3m)

How he felt	What happened
He was confused.	
	He realised that it was two children playing on the train tracks.
	He realised that even though the train was decelerating, it would knock down the children.

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

_____ Anthony shouted to get the attention of the children.

_____ Anthony realised that there were two children on the train tracks.

_____ Anthony jumped off the train to rescue the children.

10. 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
Anthony knew that the train would crash into Todd and Scott even after the train started braking.		
Todd and Scott heard Anthony's shouting.		
Anthony managed to save the two children in the end.		