

## Chapter

# 8

# English Language (Comprehension)

The following items are based on **passages** in English to test the comprehension of English language and therefore **these items do not have Hindi version**. Read each passages and answer the items that follow.

### PASSAGE

He walked several miles that day but could not get anything to eat or drink except some dry bread and some water, which he got from cottagers and farmers. As night fell, he slept under a haystack lying in a meadow. He felt frightened at first, for the wind blew awfully over the empty fields. He felt cold and hungry, and was feeling more lonely than he had ever felt before. He, however, soon fell asleep, being much tired with his long walk. When he got up next day, he was feeling terribly hungry so he purchased a loaf of bread with a few coins that he had. [2011 - II]

1. When the night fell, he slept
  - (a) in the open field
  - (b) under a pile of dry grass
  - (c) in a farmer's cottage
  - (d) under a tree
2. He soon fell asleep because
  - (a) he was exhausted
  - (b) he was all alone
  - (c) he had not slept for days
  - (d) he was very frightened
3. With reference to the passage, consider the following statements :
  1. He was walking through the countryside.
  2. The cottagers and farmers gave him enough food so that he could sleep at night without feeling hungry.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

### PASSAGE

I opened the bag and packed the boots in; and then, just as I was going to close it, a horrible idea occurred to me. Had I packed my toothbrush? I don't know how it is, but I never do know whether I've packed my toothbrush.

My toothbrush is a thing that haunts me when I'm travelling, and makes my life a misery. I dream that I haven't packed it, and wake up in a cold perspiration, and get out of bed and hunt for it. And, in the morning, I pack it before I have used it, and it is always the last thing I turn out of

the bag; and then I repack and forget it, and have to rush upstairs for it at the last moment and carry it to the railway station, wrapped up in my pocket-handkerchief.

4. When he was going to close the bag, the idea that occurred to him was
  - (a) unpleasant
  - (b) sad
  - (c) fantastic
  - (d) amusing
5. What makes his life miserable whenever he undertakes travelling ?
  - (a) Going to railway station
  - (b) Forgetting the toothbrush
  - (c) Packing his bag
  - (d) Bad dreams
6. His toothbrush is finally
  - (a) in his bag
  - (b) in his bed
  - (c) in his handkerchief
  - (d) lost

### PASSAGE

In spring, polar bear mothers emerge from dens with three month old cubs. The mother bear has fasted for as long as eight months but that does not stop the young from demanding full access to her remaining reserves. If there are triplets, the most persistent stands to gain an extra meal and it may have the meal at the expense of others. The smallest of the litter forfeits many meals to stronger siblings. Females are protective of their cubs but tend to ignore family rivalry over food. In 21 years of photographing polar bears, I've only once seen the smallest of triplets survive till autumn.

7. Female polar bears give birth during
  - (a) spring
  - (b) summer
  - (c) autumn
  - (d) winter
8. Mother bear
  - (a) takes sides over cubs
  - (b) lets the cubs fend for themselves
  - (c) feeds only their favourites
  - (d) sees that all cubs get an equal share
9. With reference to the passage, the following assumptions have been made :
  1. Polar bears fast as long as eight months due to non availability of prey.
  2. Polar bears always give birth to triplets.

Which of the assumptions given above is/are valid ?

  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**PASSAGE**

For fourteen and a half months I lived in my little cell or room in the Dehradun jail, and I began to feel as if I was almost a part of it. I was familiar with every bit of it, I knew every mark and dent on the whitewashed walls and on the uneven floor and the ceiling with its moth-eaten rafters. In the little yard outside I greeted little tufts of grass and odd bits of stone as old friends. I was not alone in my cell, for several colonies of wasp and hornets lived there, and many lizards found a home behind the rafters, emerging in the evenings in search of prey. [2012 - II]

10. Which of the following explains best the sentence in the passage "I was almost a part of it"?
- I was not alone in the cell.
  - I was familiar with every bit of the cell.
  - I greeted little tufts of grass like old friends.
  - I felt quite at home in the cell.
11. The passage attempts to describe
- the general conditions of the country's jails.
  - the prisoner's capacity to notice the minute details of his surroundings.
  - the prisoner's conscious efforts to overcome the loneliness.
  - the prisoner's ability to live happily with other creatures.
12. The author of the passage seems to suggest that
- it is possible to adjust oneself to uncongenial surroundings.
  - the conditions in Indian prisons are not bad.
  - it is not difficult to spend one's time in a prison.
  - there is a need to improve the conditions in our jails.

**PASSAGE**

We started pitching the highest camp that has ever been made. Everything took five times as long as it would have taken in a place where there was enough air to breathe; but at last we got the tent up, and when we crawled in, it was not too bad. There was only a light wind, and inside it was not too cold for us to take off our gloves. At night most climbers take off their boots; but I prefer to keep them on. Hillary, on the other hand, took his off and laid them next to his sleeping bag. [2012 - II]

13. What does the expression "pitching the highest camp" imply?
- They reached the summit of the highest mountain in the world.
  - Those who climbed that far earlier did not pitch any camp.
  - So far nobody has ever climbed that high.
  - They were too many climbers and needed to pitch a big camp.
14. They took a long time to finish the work because
- they were very tired.
  - there was not enough air to breathe.
  - it was very cold.
  - it was very dark.
15. When they crawled into the tent
- they took off their gloves because it was not very cold.

- they could not take off their gloves because it was very cold.
- they took off their gloves though it was very cold.
- they did not take off their gloves though it was not cold.

**PASSAGE**

A local man, staying on the top floor of an old wooden house, was awakened at midnight by a fire. Losing his way in a smoke-filled passage, he missed the stairway and went into another room. He picked up a bundle to protect his face from the fire and immediately fell through the floor below where he managed to escape through a clear doorway. The "bundle" proved to be the baby of the Mayor's wife. The "hero" was congratulated by all. [2012 - II]

16. The man went into another room because
- he did not know where exactly the stairway was.
  - the passage was full of smoke.
  - he was extremely nervous.
  - he stumbled on a bundle.
17. The man was called a hero because he
- expressed his willingness to risk his life to save others.
  - managed to escape from the fire.
  - showed great courage in fighting the fire.
  - saved a life.

**ENGLISH PASSAGE**

Seven-year-old Jim came home from the park without his new bicycle. "An old man and a little boy borrowed it," he explained. "They are going to bring it back at four o'clock". His parents were upset that he had given his expensive new bicycle, but were secretly proud of his kindness and faith. Came four o'clock, no bicycle. The parents were anxious. But at 4:30, the door bell rang, and there stood a happy man and a boy, with the bicycle and a box of chocolates. Jim suddenly disappeared into his bedroom, and then came running out. "All right," he said, after examining the bicycle. "You can have your watch back!" [2013 - II]

18. When Jim came home without his bicycle his parents
- were angry with him
  - were worried
  - did not feel concerned
  - were eager to meet the old man and the little boy.
19. Jim returned the watch to the old man and the little boy because
- they gave him chocolates.
  - his father was proud of him.
  - he was satisfied with the condition of his bicycle
  - they were late only by 30 minutes.

**ENGLISH PASSAGE**

It was already late when we set out for the next town, which according to the map was about fifteen kilometers away on the other side of the hills. There we felt that we would find a bed for the night. Darkness fell soon after we left the village, but luckily we met no one as we drove swiftly along the narrow winding road that led to the hills.

As we climbed higher, it became colder and rain began to fall, making it difficult at times to see the road. I asked John, my companion, to drive more slowly. After we had travelled for about twenty kilometers, there was still no sign of the town which was marked on the map. We were beginning to get worried. Then without warning, the car stopped and we found we had run out of petrol. [2013 - II]

20. The author asked John to drive more slowly because
- the road led to the hills.
  - John was an inexperienced driver.
  - the road was not clearly visible.
  - they were in wilderness.
21. The travellers set out for the town although it was getting dark because
- they were in a hurry.
  - the next town was a short distance away and was a hill-resort.
  - they were in wilderness.
  - the next town was a short distance away and promised a good rest for the night.
22. The travellers were worried after twenty kilometers because
- it was a lonely countryside.
  - they probably feared of having lost their way.
  - the rain began to fall.
  - it was getting colder as they drove.

#### ENGLISH PASSAGE

A stout old lady was walking with her basket down the middle of a street in Petrograd to the great confusion of the traffic and no small peril to herself. It was pointed out to her that the pavement was the place for foot-passengers, but she replied "I'm going to walk where I like. We've got liberty now." It did not occur to the dear lady that if liberty entitled the foot-passenger to walk down the middle of the road it also entitled the taxi-driver to drive on the pavement, and that the end of such liberty would be universal chaos. Everything would be getting in everybody else's way and nobody would get anywhere. Individual liberty would have become social anarchy. [2013 - II]

23. It was pointed out to the lady that she should walk on the pavement because she was
- a pedestrian
  - carrying a basket
  - stout
  - an old lady
24. The lady refused to move from the middle of the street because
- she was not afraid of being killed.
  - she felt that she is entitled to do whatever she liked.
  - she did not like walking on the pavement.
  - she was confused.
25. The old lady failed to realise that
- she was not really free.
  - her liberty was not unlimited.
  - she was an old person.
  - roads are made for motor vehicles only.

#### PASSAGE

In front of us was walking a bare-headed old man in tattered clothes. He was driving his beasts. They were all laden with heavy loads of clay from the hills and looked tired. The man carried a long whip which perhaps he himself had made. As he walked down the road he stopped now and then to eat the wild berries that grew on bushes along the uneven road. When he threw away the seeds, the bold birds would fly to peck at them. Sometimes a stray dog watched the procession philosophically and then began to bark. When this happened, my two little sons would stand still holding my hands firmly. A dog can sometimes be dangerous indeed. [2014 - II]

26. The author's children held his hands firmly because
- they were scared of the barking dogs.
  - they wanted him to pluck berries.
  - they saw the whip in the old man's hand.
  - the road was uneven.
27. The expression "a stray dog watched the procession philosophically" means that
- the dog was restless and ferocious.
  - the dog stood aloof, looking at the procession with seriousness.
  - the dog looked at the procession with big, wondering eyes.
  - the dog stood there with his eyes closed.

#### PASSAGE

Cynthia was a shy girl. She believed that she was plain and untalented. One day her teacher ordered the entire class to show up for audition for the school play. Cynthia nearly died of fright when she was told that she would have to stand on stage in front of the entire class and deliver dialogues. The mere thought of it made her feel sick. But a remarkable transformation occurred during the audition. A thin, shy girl, her knees quaking, her stomach churning in terror, began to stun everyone with her excellent performance. Her bored classmates suddenly stopped their noisy chat to stare at her slender figure on the stage. At the end of her audition, the entire room erupted in thunderous applause. [2014 - II]

28. Cynthia was afraid to stand on stage because
- she felt her classmates may laugh at her.
  - her stomach was churning.
  - she lacked self-confidence.
  - she did not like school plays.
29. Cynthia's classmates were chatting because
- it was their turn to act next.
  - they were bored of the performances.
  - Cynthia did not act well.
  - the teacher had no control over them.
30. Cynthia's knees were quaking because
- she felt nervous and shy.
  - the teacher scolded her.
  - she was very thin and weak.
  - she was afraid of her classmates.
31. The transformation that occurred during the audition refers to
- the nervousness of Cynthia.
  - the eruption of the entire room in thunderous applause.
  - the surprise on the faces of her classmates.
  - the stunning performance of Cynthia.

# HINTS & SOLUTIONS

1. (b) 'Haystalk' means 'pile of dry grass'
2. (a) 'Exhausted' means 'much tired'.
3. (a) 'Countryside' means 'land outside town and cities, with field, woods etc.' Hence statement 1 is correct. Statement 2 is not correct as they did not give him enough food except for some dry bread and some water.
4. (a) 'Horrible' means 'unpleasant'
5. (b) Refer to 1st sentence of 2nd para of the passage.
6. (c) Refer to last sentence of the passage.
7. (d) Refer to 1st sentence of the passage (The cubs were already three months means, so the time of their birth falls in winter.)
8. (b) Refer to second last sentence of the passage.
9. (d) Assumptions 1 is not true as reason of their fasting is not given in the passage. Assumption 2 is also not true as the passage says "if there are triplet ....."
10. (b) When the narrator says that he was "almost a part of it" he means that he was familiar with every corner of the cell.  
(a) It is true that he was not alone in the cell; there were lots of insects to keep him company. But this is not the meaning conveyed by the quoted text. The same goes for options (c) and (d).
11. (c) The impression that comes across through the narrator's description is his untiring efforts to adjust to extreme loneliness. It is quite obvious that he was very lonely and that he was making friends with various types of insects, flowers, etc. to retain his sanity.  
(a) The general condition of the country jails is revealed in the passage but this is not the central idea of this passage.  
The same is true of options (b) and (d).
12. (a) (a) Since the central idea of the passage is loneliness and the author's struggle to adjust himself to rather difficult circumstances option (a) is the right answer.  
(b) This obviously not correct.  
(c) This is true but it is not the central idea.  
(d) This is also true but that is not just what the author wants to suggest.
13. (b) The implication here is that even if anybody else had climbed this far earlier. They had not pitched any camp.  
(a) There is no reference to the building of any camp in this option.  
(c) It is implied that no camp had been built so high.  
(d) There is no mention of the manpower required to pitch the camp in the paragraph.
14. (b) They took a long time to finish the work because there was not enough air to breathe at such a high altitude.  
All the other three options (a), (c) and (d) are true, but they are not clearly stated in the passage as in the case of option (b).
15. (a) (a) When they crawled in the tent they took off their gloves since it was not very cold.  
(b) The narrator says that it was not very cold at such a high altitude. So this option is ruled out.  
(c) The same argument as in (b) holds true.  
(d) The narrator says they took off their gloves. So this option is not correct.
16. (b) The man went into another room because the passage was full of smoke. It was an old wooden house. There was a fire at midnight. The man who was staying on the top floor of the house was caught unawares. He stumbled out into the smoke filled passage and lost his way. So the root cause of his going into another room was the smoke filled passage.  
All the other three options (a), (c) and (d) are automatically cancelled in the height of the above context.
17. (d) The man was called a hero because he saved a life.  
(a) In the context of the passage he saved the life of a baby accidentally. So there is no question of his expressing his willingness to risk his life for others.  
(b) He did escape from the fire but that is no reason why he should be called a hero.  
(c) He just kept stumbling and falling from one spot to another; this does not call for courage.
18. (b) His parents were worried because the cycle was new and expensive.
19. (c) Jim has kept the watch from the old man and the little boy as a security for his new bicycle.
20. (c) As it was raining. Moreover it was dark so visibility was a problem.
21. (d) They expected to reach the town within a short time as the distance was only 15 km.
22. (b) They were supposed to reach their destination after a run of 15 km according to the map. After going 20 km and still not finding their destination they became worried as it was dark and rain had begun to fall.
23. (a) If she did not walk on the pavement, she might face an accident.
24. (b) She felt so because she was arrogant and newly achieved liberty had gone into her head in a wrong way.
25. (d) The old lady failed to realise that the liberty given to her did not entitle her to walk on the roads as they were meant for motor vehicles only.
26. (a) Refer to last sentence of the passage. The two little boys feared the barwing dogs.
27. (c) The stray dogs looked at the procession curiously because everytime the old man threw seeds from the berries, the birds would fly to peck them.
28. (c) Cynthia was a shy girl and she believed that she was plain and untalented.
29. (b) It is because Cynthia's classmates were not interested in the previous performances.
30. (a) As Cynthia did not have confidence in herself and was frightened to perform in front of her classmates. She was trembling. So her knees were quaking.
31. (d) Cynthia's remarkable performance attracted everybody's attention and everyone was stunned. After her performance ended, all the people in the room stood up and applauded for Cynthia.

