

## Fiction: Comprehension Practice 5

**Text for Section A**, an extract from 'Moon Bear' by Gill Lewis

*Tam and his friend Noy are spending a night in the forest to see if they can catch sight of a bear which has been entering their village.*

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I rubbed my eyes and breathed in deeply, filling my lungs with the cool night air. Above, the moon had forced an arc across the sky. We had been waiting all night. The forest was dark and still. This was the dark before the dawn. The dark when the spirits walked.

I wriggled forward and peered down from our high rock. Moonlight reflected from the wide pools below the waterfall, the ripples spreading in perfect circles of bright, white light. The sweet scent of moth flowers drifted across the water. The whole forest was deep in sleep. Maybe Noy was wrong. Maybe it wouldn't come tonight.

I stared into the folds of darkness on the far side of the river. In the deep shadows between the rocks and boulders, a darker shadow was stirring. I twisted a loose piece of forest vine through my fingers and watched. Despite the coolness of the night, my palms ran slick with sweat. I could feel the blood pumping through my hands. I swallowed hard. Below, some 50 paces away, the shadow moved. It formed, gathered shape and stepped out into the moonlight.

I grabbed Noy in the ribs.

'Wake up!'

Noy's head jolted up. 'What?'

'Ssh,' I said. 'It's here, now.'

Noy wiped the sleep from his face and leant out. He looked down at the river and gripped my arm, 'Where?'

'There!'

The shadow rose onto its hind legs and sniffed the air.

I held my breath.

A bear. A huge bear. I had never seen one before. It was taller than Pa. Taller than the Chief. The crescent of white fur on its chest was bright against the dark fur of its body. It sniffed the air again, its small round ears twitching in our direction. It was the bear of the Old Stories. A Moon Bear. Right here.

5

10

15

20

25

Right now.

30

I pressed myself into the rock. We were downwind, wrapped in shadow. The thunder from the waterfall drowned our noise. Yet, as we lay still and hidden, I wondered if the bear would sense us somehow. Did she know we were here?

Noy tensed up beside me. I could hear his breath, soft and shallow. I could feel him waiting too. The bear dropped onto all four paws and leant forward into the river. She dipped her head low and drank, gulping the water, her ears swivelling backward and forwards. I breathed out slowly. Noy leaned into me, 'I told you she would come.'

35

The bear was thin. She'd eaten our crops and broken into the feed store, and put fear into our village. Yet no one had managed to catch her.

40

Noy thrust a small flashlight in my hand. 'Go', he said. 'Go now.'

'I thought we were going together.'

Noy shook his head, 'One of us has to keep watch. Besides you're smaller and will fit between the rocks.'

I glared at him. We were born the same night, under the same moon. People thought we shared our souls like twin brothers. Yet Noy was the chief's youngest son. He always got his way.

45

## Section A: Reading

*Spend 30 minutes on this section.*

Read the **Text**, in the Insert and answer questions 1–10.

1 Look at the first paragraph (lines 1–4).

- (a) Give **one** example of a countable noun and **one** example of an uncountable noun from the first sentence (line 1).

Countable: \_\_\_\_\_

Uncountable: \_\_\_\_\_ [2]

- (b) How do we know it is not yet morning? Give **two** quotations from the paragraph.

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_ [2]

- (c) Give **one** example of an adjective that is being used as a noun in the paragraph.

\_\_\_\_\_ [1]

2 Look at the second paragraph (lines 5–9).

- (a) Give **one** word from the paragraph that means 'looked'.

\_\_\_\_\_ [1]

- (b) Give a **three-word** phrase from the paragraph that is an example of rhyme.

\_\_\_\_\_ [1]

(c) Which literary technique does the writer use when describing the forest?  
Tick (✓) **one** box.

alliteration

☐

onomatopoeia

☐

personification

☐

simile

☐

[1]

3 Look at the beginning of the third paragraph (lines 10–15).

(a) What is Tam looking at?

\_\_\_\_\_ [1]

(b) Look at this phrase: *the shadow moved* (lines 14–15).

Give **three** verbs from earlier in the paragraph that tell the reader about movement.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ [3]

(c) The narrator feels nervous.

Give **two** quotations from the paragraph that tell us this.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ [2]

- 4 The writer uses structure to create excitement in lines 16–24.  
How does the writer do this? Give **two** ways.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ [2]

- 5 What does *one* (line 25) refer to?

\_\_\_\_\_ [1]

- 6 Why did Tam press himself into the rock?

\_\_\_\_\_ [1]

- 7 Which of the following statements about the bear are true? Tick (✓) **two** boxes.

Her body has a lot of fat.

☐

Her fur has more than one colour.

☐

Her eyes follow the boys' movements.

☐

Her ears move as she is drinking.

☐

Her movements are noisy.

☐

[2]

**8** Do you think Tam and Noy are in danger? Tick (✓) **one** box.

Yes

☐

No

☐

Explain your answer. Give a quotation from the text to support your answer.

Explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

Quotation: \_\_\_\_\_

[2]

**9** Tam and Noy are the same age.

Give **one** quotation from the text that tells us this.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[1]

**10** How do you think the villagers will feel towards Tam and Noy if they catch the bear? Why? Explain your answer, giving evidence from the text.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[2]

## Section B: Writing

*Spend 30 minutes on this section.*

**11** Continue the story about Tam and Noy. What happens next?

Ideas to help you:

- Characters      Tam?  
                      Noy?  
                      the Chief?  
                      anyone else?
- Setting            the forest?  
                      the village?  
                      anywhere else?
- Plot                Are the boys safe?  
                      Does the bear see the boys?  
                      Does Noy help Tam?

*Space for your plan:*

Write your continuation of the story on the next page.

[25 marks]