



CLASS 8 ENGLISH · 2026-27

Unseen passage and inference

Comprehension

24

QUESTIONS

30

MINUTES

3

EXERCISES

This belongs to _____ Date _____

WHAT YOU'LL GET GOOD AT

- Answers a directly stated question quickly and moves on
- Answers an inference question in their own words, with evidence quoted
- Works out a phrase's meaning from its context
- Recognises when a question has more than one defensible answer

Take your time, and have a go at every one. If you get stuck, look at the orange box — Ollie has already done one for you.

Unseen passage and inference

Comprehension · 24 questions · tick each box as you finish

Exercise 1 of 3 · 8 questions

Read the passage, then answer. **PASSAGE:** For thirty-one years Mr Iyer's shop opened at six and closed at nine, and for thirty-one years a green ledger sat beside the till. In it he wrote the names of people who had taken rice or oil and could not pay that week. He never mentioned the ledger to anyone, and never sent word to anyone whose name was in it. When a customer eventually paid, he drew a single line through the entry - he never crossed it out and never tore out the page. His son, who runs the shop now, found the ledger while clearing the back room last winter. Almost four hundred entries were still open. He has not decided what to do with it, though he has not thrown it away either.

☐

WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

These four should take about ninety seconds between them, and that is the point of doing them first. Every one is stated directly, so a child who is slow here is reading the passage rather than searching it. Read once for sense, then search for each answer - the retrieval questions are meant to be cheap so that the time goes to the ones that are not.

1) For how many years did Mr Iyer run the shop in this way?

2) What did he write in the green ledger?

3) What did he do when a customer finally paid?

4) How many entries were still open when the ledger was found?

5) Where was the green ledger kept?

6) What did Mr Iyer do when a customer paid?

7) Who was clearing the back room?

8) What did the family find there?

Exercise 2 of 3 · 8 questions None of these is stated. Answer in your own words and quote your evidence. ☐

WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

Why did he never mention the ledger? Because he did not want people to feel ashamed - and the evidence is that he 'never sent word to anyone whose name was in it'. Notice the shape: the answer in the child's own words, then the quotation that supports it. Quoting the evidence rather than the answer is the whole technique, and it is what separates a Class 8 inference answer from a Class 5 one.

1) Why do you think Mr Iyer never mentioned the ledger to anyone?

2) What does drawing a line - rather than crossing out or tearing the page - suggest about him?

3) What does the last sentence suggest about how his son feels?

4) What is the writer's attitude towards Mr Iyer? How do you know?

5) Why might Mr Iyer have kept lending without ever pressing for payment?

6) What does keeping the ledger beside the till suggest about how often it was used?

7) Why does the writer give the number of open entries rather than describing them?

8) What kind of shop does this seem to have been?

Exercise 3 of 3 · 8 questions What does each phrase mean here? Work it out from the passage. ☐

WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

'Still open' does not mean the shop was open, and the passage tells you so: entries are open when they have not been settled, because a line was drawn through them when they were. Vocabulary questions in Class 8 are testing whether a child reads the sentence around the word or reaches for a meaning they already know. Working it out is the exercise; looking it up defeats it.

1) beside the till

2) still open

3) clearing the back room

4) sent word

5) ran the shop

6) entries

7) drew a line through

8) for thirty-odd years



All done? How did that feel?

Colour in a star. Three stars means you could teach it to someone else.



Tricky · Getting there · Easy now



Answer key

For grown-ups

Unseen passage and inference · keep this page back until your child has finished.

1. Read the passage, then answer. PASSAGE: For thirty-one years Mr Iyer's shop opened at six and closed at nine, and for thirty-one years a green ledger sat beside the till. In it he wrote the names of people who had taken rice or oil and could not pay that week. He never mentioned the ledger to anyone, and never sent word to anyone whose name was in it. When a customer eventually paid, he drew a single line through the entry - he never crossed it out and never tore out the page. His son, who runs the shop now, found the ledger while clearing the back room last winter. Almost four hundred entries were still open. He has not decided what to do with it, though he has not thrown it away either.

- 1) Thirty-one years.
- 2) The names of people who had taken rice or oil and could not pay that week.
- 3) He drew a single line through the entry.
- 4) Almost four hundred.
- 5) Beside the till.
- 6) He drew a line through the entry.
- 7) The family, after the shop had closed.
- 8) The green ledger, with entries still open in it.

2. None of these is stated. Answer in your own words and quote your evidence.

- 1) So that the people in it would not feel ashamed or indebted. The passage says he 'never sent word to anyone whose name was in it', which shows he was not trying to collect the money.
- 2) That he did not want to erase what had happened. A line still leaves the entry readable, and the passage stresses that he 'never crossed it out and never tore out the page' - the record mattered to him beyond the debt.
- 3) That he is uncertain, and that the ledger means something to him. He 'has not decided what to do with it, though he has not thrown it away either' - the second half is what shows he values it.
- 4) Admiring, though the writer never says so. The admiration is carried by the details chosen - the exactness of 'thirty-one years', the single line, the four hundred open entries - none of which needed to be included unless they were meant to say something about the man.
- 5) Because he knew his customers and understood that some could not pay at once. Pressing them would have shamed them and cost him their custom.
- 6) That it was in constant use - it was kept where he could reach it during every transaction, not stored away.
- 7) Because a number is concrete and lets the reader judge the scale for themselves. Describing them would have made it a story about individuals rather than about how he ran the shop.
- 8) A small neighbourhood shop where the owner knew his customers personally, which is what made lending on trust possible at all.

3. What does each phrase mean here? Work it out from the passage.

- 1) Next to the cash box or drawer where money was kept.
- 2) Not yet paid off - the entry had never had a line drawn through it.
- 3) Emptying or tidying the storeroom at the back of the shop.
- 4) Sent a message - here, a reminder asking for payment.
- 5) Managed and operated it from day to day.
- 6) Written records of what each customer owed.
- 7) Crossed it out to show the debt had been paid.
- 8) For a little more than thirty years - 'odd' here means slightly more, not strange.

WHILE YOUR CHILD WORKS

- For every inference answer, ask 'which words made you think that?' and have them quoted. The evidence carries the mark.
- Time the retrieval questions. If those take more than two minutes, the child is reading rather than searching.
- The last inference question has more than one defensible answer. Judge it on the evidence given, not on matching the key.

**Spotted a gap while marking?**

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