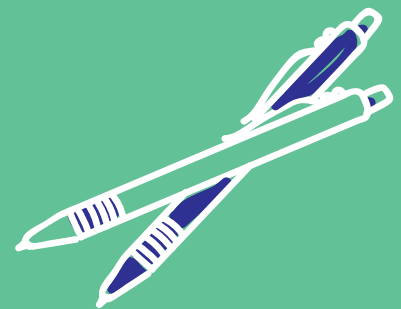
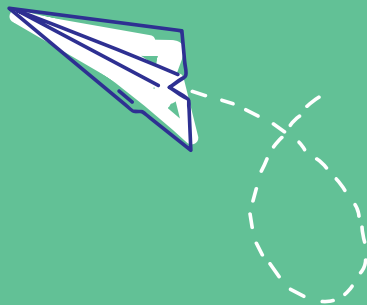


EXAM PAPERS PLUS

THE COMPLETE  
ILLUSTRATED GUIDE  
TO 8+ COMPREHENSION



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ABOUT

THE GUIDE



# NOTE FOR PARENTS, TEACHERS AND TUTORS

The purpose of this study guide is to help your child develop the key skills that they will need to succeed in the comprehension section of the 8+ English exam.

In the comprehension section of the exam, your child will be asked to read a text. This could be a piece of fiction, non-fiction or even a poem. They will then be asked a number of questions that are designed to test their understanding of the text. Different schools have different approaches and the numbers and types of questions asked can vary, as can the time limit.

Within the allotted time, children must read the text, answer the questions and check their work. Therefore, it is essential that your child can complete a range of comprehension tasks quickly and efficiently within a given time limit, whilst ensuring that they pick up as many marks as possible.

This guide covers all of the different types of questions that could come up in the exam, along with strategies for dealing with them. The activities and exercises in the guide follow a step-by-step approach that is designed to build your child's confidence and understanding in preparation for their 8+ exam.

Your child is accompanied through the guide by a team called 'The Comprehension Clan': Information Ivan, Detective Deepra, Logical Linda and Writer Raoul. There are also three assistants: Lucy Light Bulb, Charlie Challenge and Tanya Teamwork. These characters help to make the exercises fun and engaging.

Children can work independently through many of the tasks in this guide. However, wherever they see Tanya Teamwork, they are encouraged to work with a friend or family member so that they can discuss what they have read or written, or check their answers. You are encouraged to work through as much of the guide as possible with your child to make sure that key concepts have been fully understood. You will also be able to monitor their progress, provide plenty of encouragement and hopefully enjoy the journey too!

If there are any sections that your child finds difficult, or if you feel that they would benefit from further practice, there is an 'Extra Practice' section towards the end of the guide. There is also a final comprehension task, featuring mixed questions, which will allow your child to practise all of the skills they have learned and see for themselves how much progress they have made.

### *Keep in mind*

It is very important that your child gets used to reading and writing under timed conditions. Therefore many of the activities and exercises in this guide require the use of a timer or stopwatch.



# MEET THE TEAM

## The Comprehension Clan

Hi there! We're 'The Comprehension Clan', a crack team of text investigators. Our mission is to help children with their comprehension skills. It has come to our attention that you are preparing to sit the 8+ Exam. We're here to help you learn everything you need to know to get top marks in your comprehension task!

So, let us introduce ourselves:



## Information Ivan

When I tackle comprehension questions, I find all the information I need written in the text.



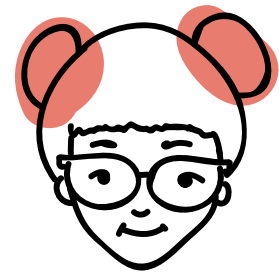
## Detective Deepra

I love clues! I search a text for all the clues I can find to help me answer questions.



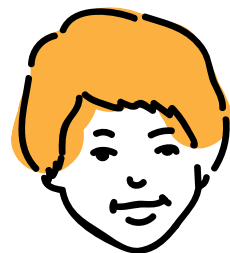
## Logical Linda

I like to look for hints in a text and then draw my own conclusions.



## Writer Raoul

Hey guys, don't forget about me! I'm great at thinking like a writer, so I am really good at working out why an author may have chosen to write in a particular way.



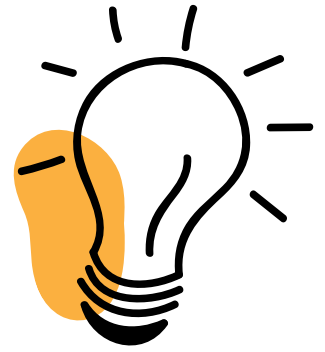
You'll learn more about us as you work through this guide.

However, before we get started on the first activity, we mustn't forget to introduce our trusty assistants - without these guys to help us, we'd be hopeless!



## Lucy Light Bulb

Lucy's full of useful hints and top tips that will make your mission easier. When you see her shining, be sure to pay close attention to what she has to tell you.



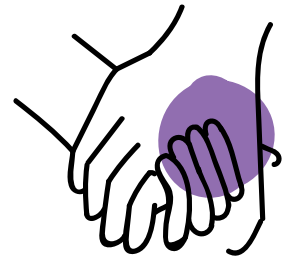
## Charlie Challenge

Charlie loves activities that get his brain working harder. If you feel like giving your brain an extra workout, look out for Charlie's challenges.



## Tanya Teamwork

Tanya loves working with other people and, whenever you see her along your journey, she is letting you know that it would be a good idea to read or complete the activity with a friend or family member.



Now that you've met us all, we'd like to give you our first bit of advice: there is a lot to learn and explore on this mission, so take it step by step and only tackle a few exercises and activities at a time. Before you know it, you'll be the king or queen of comprehension!

Let's get this mission started...



## SECTION 1

# THE COMPREHENSION

# TASK

### **Skills covered:**

Recognising the key features of a comprehension task

Understanding and interpreting the question

Using the 'skim and scan' reading technique to find information

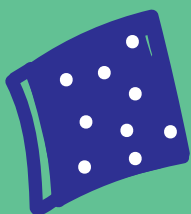
Answering multiple-choice questions

Answering questions using full sentences

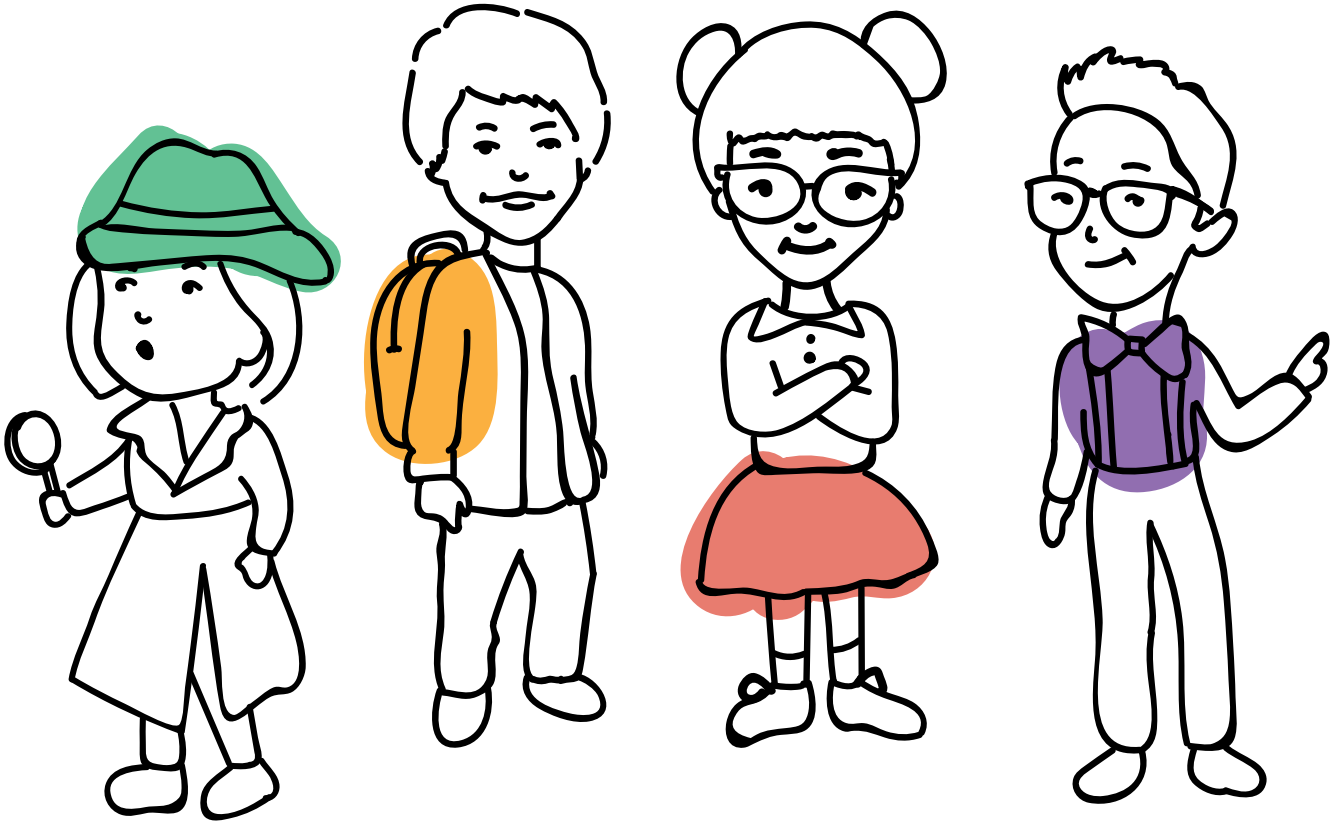
Quoting directly from the text

Rewording information from the text

Checking your answers.



**The Comprehension Clan says:** In this first section, we'll take a look at some key features of the comprehension task in the 8+ exam so that you know what to expect.



## STARTER ACTIVITY

'Comprehension' simply means 'understanding', so a reading comprehension task is designed to test your understanding of a piece of writing. By answering comprehension questions correctly, you are demonstrating to the examiner that you have fully understood the text.

Before we go any further, try the following activity to test your comprehension skills.



Read the following passage of text and then draw a picture of the octopus. Make sure you use coloured pencils so that you can include as much detail as possible.

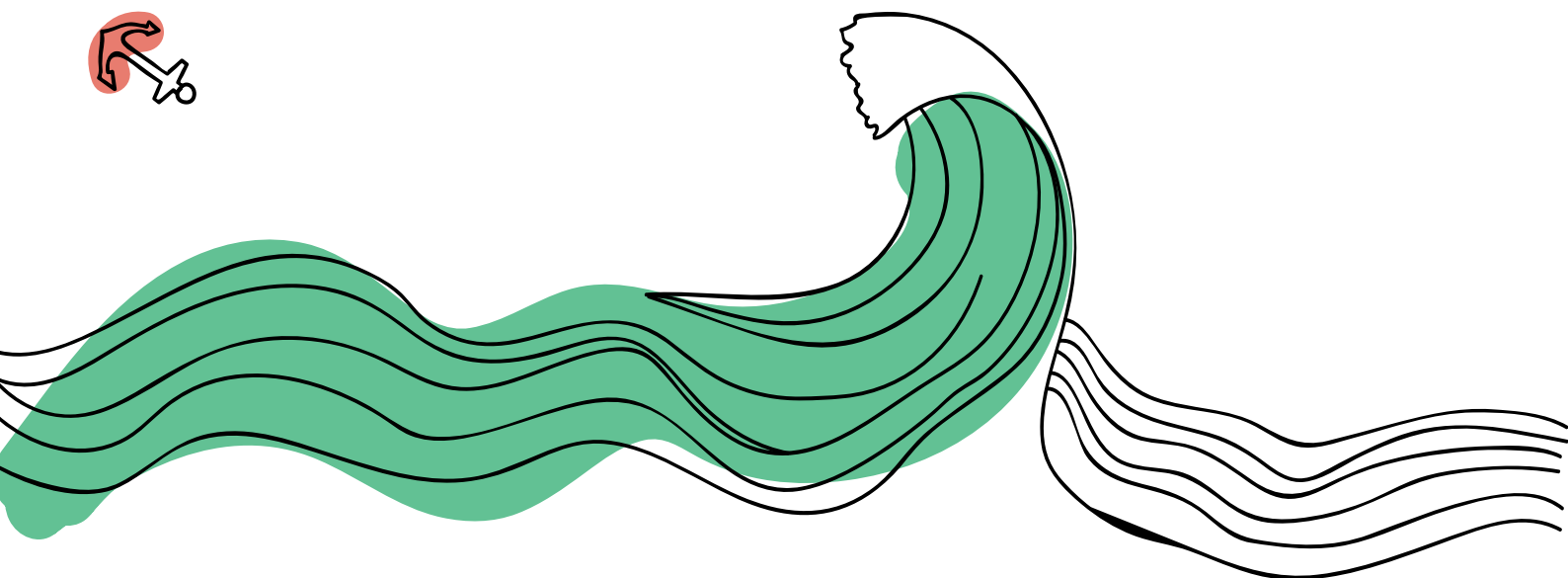


 You have 15 minutes to complete this task.

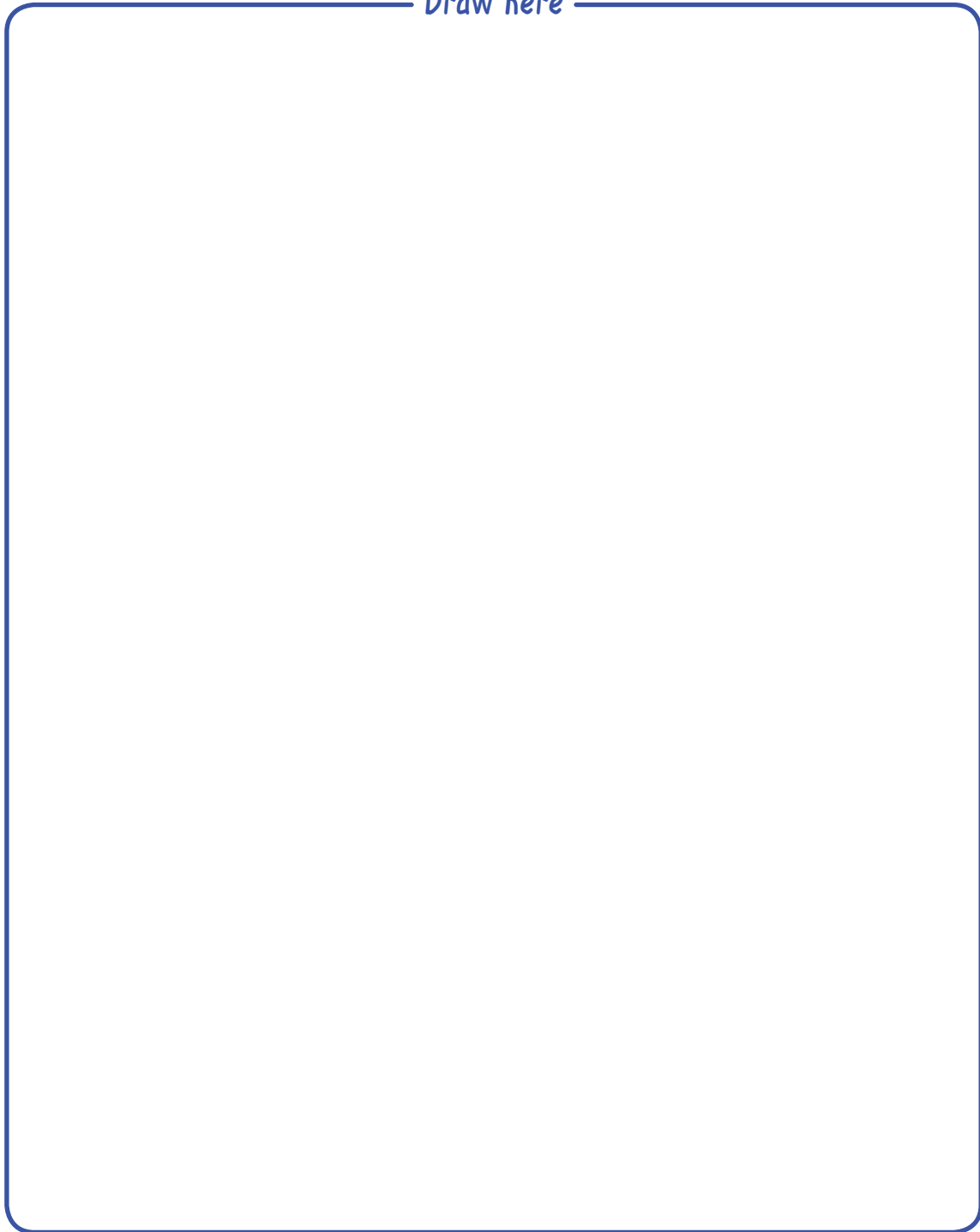
## The Sea Fairies, By Frank L. Baum

“Take care,” said Clia in a low voice. “It’s an octopus.”

Trot looked eagerly around. A long, brown arm stretched across their way in front and another just behind them, but that did not worry her. The octopus himself came slowly sliding up to them and proved to be well worth looking at. He wore a red coat with brass buttons, and a silk hat was tipped over one ear. His eyes were somewhat dull and watery, and he had a moustache of long, hair-like “feelers” that curled stiffly at the ends. When he tried to smile at them, he showed two rows of sharp, white teeth. In spite of his red coat and yellow-embroidered vest, his standing collar and carefully tied cravat, the legs of the octopus were bare, and Trot noticed he used some of his legs for arms, as in one of them was held a slender cane and in another a handkerchief.



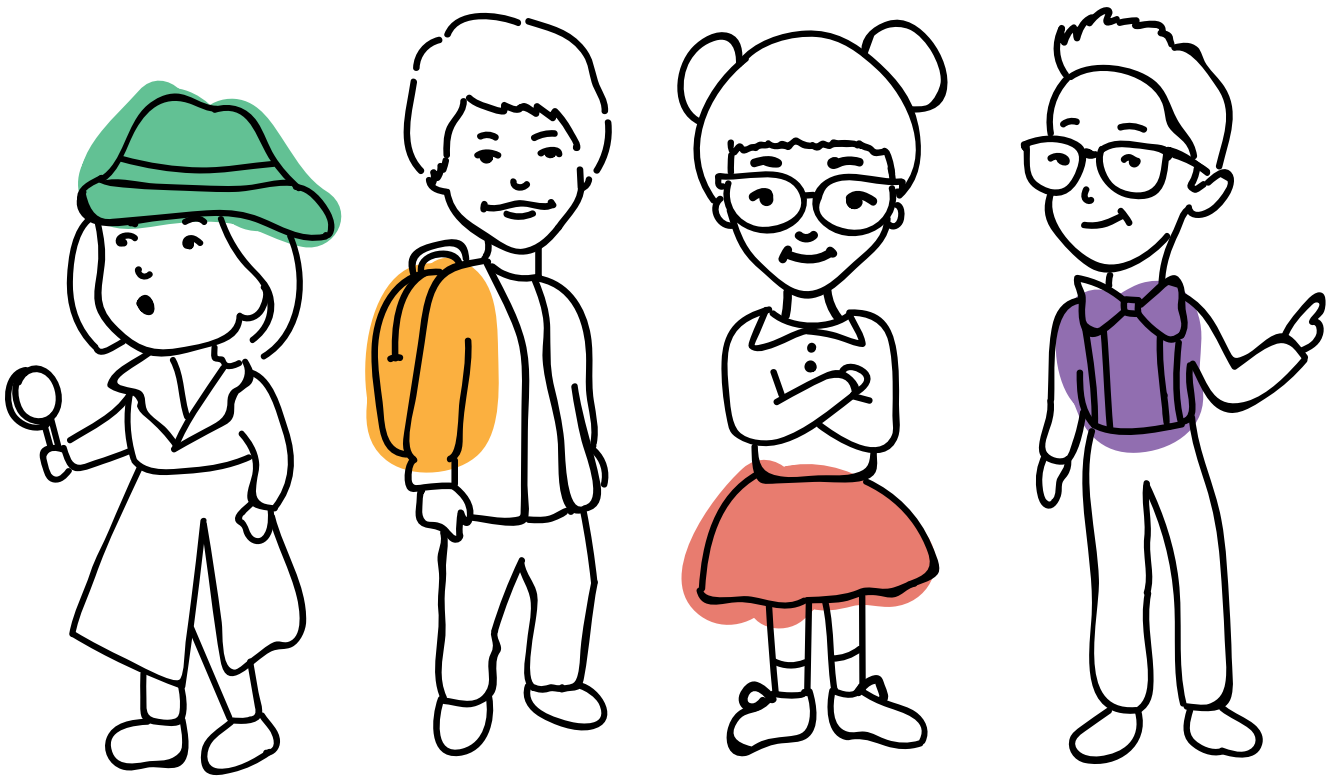
Draw here



*Tanya Teamwork says*

Show your picture to a friend or family member and explain why you drew the octopus in this way. Can they find any details in the text that you have missed?





**The Comprehension Clan says:** So, comprehension is as simple as that! You may have missed some of the details about the octopus but, as long as you used information from the text to draw what he looked like (and didn't make any details up yourself!), you were using your comprehension skills!

When you sit the 8+ exam, you will have to read a passage of text and then answer some questions about what you have read. It could be a story, a non-fiction text or a poem and the questions will test different comprehension skills. Some questions may ask you to choose from a list of possible answers, others may want you to write an individual word or phrase. There may also be questions that require you to write a full sentence, a paragraph or more for your answer. Therefore, it is important that you read the text carefully and understand what the different types of questions are asking you to do.

# KEY FEATURES OF THE COMPREHENSION TASK

Let's take a look at the key features of an example comprehension task.

① **Comprehension** (15 marks) ②

③  You have 20 minutes to complete this task.

④ Here is the opening of a story. Read it carefully and answer the questions that follow. ⑤

## The Concert

The car pulled into the car park and Leila peered out of the window excitedly. "I can't believe we're here!" she squealed. Her dad smiled at her mum and turned off the engine. "Come on then," he laughed. "We don't want to miss the start!"

Leila and her parents got out of the car and began walking towards the arena entrance. Leila couldn't stop looking around. There were lots of people heading in the same direction, so she held on tightly to her mum and dad's hands. In the distance, she could hear the crowd chanting and the musicians sound testing their instruments.

Together, the sea of people made its way swiftly into the arena, pausing only to hand over their tickets at the gates. Leila was so excited – the atmosphere was electric!

- ① The task type.
- ② The total number of marks available.
- ③ The amount of time you have to read the text, answer the questions and check your work.
- ④ Information about the text that you have been given to read.
- ⑤ Instructions that you need to follow.