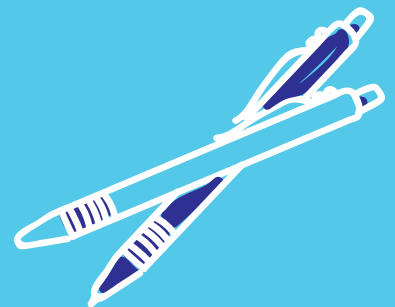
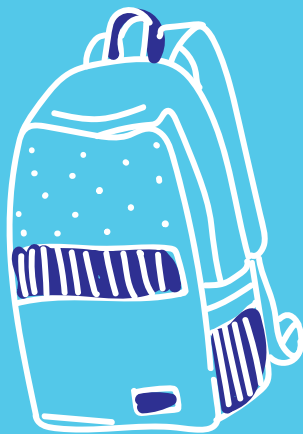


EXAM PAPERS PLUS

THE COMPLETE
ILLUSTRATED GUIDE
TO 11+ COMPREHENSION



CONTENTS

Section 1: About the Guide

Introduction for parents	5
Introduction for students	7

Section 2: Comprehension - An Overview

What is comprehension?	9
What is the examiner looking for?	9
Key features of a comprehension task.....	12
How to structure PEE / PEA answers	24

Section 3: Question Types

Question types	30
Information retrieval questions	31
Inference questions	41
Literary technique questions	53
'In your own words' questions	75
Opinion questions	83
Language definition questions	96
Mini creative-writing questions	106
Question type summary	115
Question combos	116
Multiple-choice questions	126
Different genres of comprehension passage	137

Section 4: Tips, Tricks and Strategies	140
---	-----

Section 5: Complete Practice Papers

Paper 1	149
Paper 2	156
Paper 3	163
Paper 4	172
Paper 5	178
Paper 6	185
Paper 7	193

Section 6: Answers	206
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SECTION 1:



ABOUT

THE GUIDE



INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS

What is the purpose of this guide?

The purpose of this study guide is to help your child develop the key skills and understanding that they will need to succeed in the comprehension section of the 11+ English exam.

In the comprehension section of the 11+ exam, your child will be asked to read a passage from an unseen text. This could be a piece of fiction (contemporary or classic), non-fiction (a report, news article, diary entry, letter, etc.) or even a poem. They will then be asked a number of questions designed to test their understanding of what they have just read.

Different schools have different approaches and the numbers and types of questions can vary, as can the time limit. Questions can be open answer (requiring a written answer in full sentences), multiple-choice or a combination of both.

Within the allotted time, candidates 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, designed to build your child's confidence and understanding in preparation for their 11+ exam.

Your child can work independently through many of the tasks in this guide. However, when checking their answers, it is a good idea for them to work with a friend or family member so that they can discuss their responses. To ensure your child gets the most from this guide, we recommend that you are on hand to steer them and 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!

At the end of this guide, there are seven practice papers that your child can complete to develop and consolidate all they have learnt. This will give them the opportunity to see how much progress they have made! Comprehensive answers and mark schemes are also provided, so you can feel confident going over the answers with your child and helping them to master areas that they may have found difficult.

Keep in mind

It is very important that your child gets used to reading and writing under timed conditions. Therefore, the practice papers at the back of this guide require the use of a timer or stopwatch.



INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS

What is the purpose of this guide?

Well done! You've already done the hard part — you've picked up this book and started reading!

This guide is designed to help you do well in the comprehension section of your 11+ exam. It covers all aspects of the exam from reading and understanding the instructions to the different types of questions that could come up and how to answer them effectively.

We will cover formulas and structures that you can learn and use to answer certain types of questions, plus tips, tricks, and strategies to help you manage your time, maximise your marks, get through something when you're not quite sure, stay focused and give it your best shot.

To get the most out of this guide, you should try to complete the tasks independently and stick to the time limits given. If, after you've tried your best, you still don't quite understand something, then you can look up the answers and discuss them with a parent, family member, teacher or tutor, who will help you to get to grips with the things you don't understand.

Good luck!

Or you might have to continue the story, which will again show the examiner that you have understood what you have read. We will look at some of these examples later in the guide (see page 106).

Finally, you can also get **multiple-choice questions** (MCQs). These are different in structure to open-answer questions in which you have to write your own words or a full sentence; instead, you have to choose the correct answer from a series of options. However, in the main, the questions themselves will still fall into one of the categories listed above. We will cover MCQs in more detail later in the guide (see page 106).

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL QUESTIONS

To answer an information retrieval question, you must find the information in the text. This is often one of the easiest types of question and will carry the lowest marks, as the information is given to you.

When answering information retrieval questions, you **should**:

- read the question very carefully so that you know what you're looking for — it can be easy to misread a 'simple' question like this
- underline the key words in the question if necessary, to keep you focused on what you're looking for
- go back to the passage as often as you need to find the relevant information.

3. What type of personality does Jo have?

The narrator likens Jo to a colt as she 'never seemed to know what to do with her long limbs'. This suggests that she feels uncomfortable in her own skin and is still a girl, not an adult yet. However, she doesn't seem to care about how she looks, as her beautiful hair 'was usually bundled into a net, to be out of her way.' This suggests a practical personality, as well as someone who isn't vain. She is obviously intelligent and insightful as her 'sharp, grey eyes,' appear 'to see everything, and were by turns fierce, funny, or thoughtful'. These three adjectives suggest a determined personality; someone who is passionate, has a good sense of humour and cares about others.

[6 marks]

In answering this question, be careful to concentrate on Jo's personality; don't get distracted by writing about her appearance too much. Although you should analyse some traits of her appearance in order to conclude things about her personality (e.g. her hair and her eyes), don't get consumed by this as it is not the focus of the question. Mixing up appearance and personality could be an easy mistake to make. To avoid this, make sure that you carefully read and understand the question before you begin writing. If you underline the word 'personality' in the question, this will help you to remember what you should be writing about!

To ensure that you answer this question in sufficient depth (and to help you stay focused), you should also underline the

'IN YOUR OWN WORDS' QUESTIONS

Questions that ask you to explain something *in your own words* often come up in 11+ exams. To answer this type of question, you must imagine that you are a translator. You must explain what the writer has written, but in a new way, using different words from those in the passage.

The examiner uses this type of question to directly assess whether you have understood a particular section of the passage as, to translate something effectively, you have to understand it first. The examiner is also assessing your ability to find alternative words (synonyms), so having a wide vocabulary is very helpful for questions like this.

Top Tip

Sometimes the word *paraphrase* is used in a question. If you come across a question that asks you to paraphrase a section of text, then you should rewrite it in your own words. For example, a question might say, 'Paraphrase lines 12–13'. This means that you need to rewrite lines 12–13 in your own words.

When answering 'in your own words' questions, you **should**:

- find and underline the information that you need to translate
- use your own words and write your translation in grammatically correct sentences
- use synonyms, new phrasing and strong vocabulary — you can even try using your own metaphor or simile if it adds to your explanation.

Punctuation MCQs

Other MCQs will ask you to identify mistakes in punctuation. Have a go at finding the punctuation mistakes in the following passage.

Punctuation MCQ practice

In this passage there are some mistakes in the use of capital letters and punctuation. Circle the letter that corresponds to the part of the sentence with the mistake. If there is no mistake, circle N.

1. But there are some advantages to our position Firstly, being so close

A	B	C	D	N
---	---	---	---	---

2. to the Ocean stops us getting too cold in winter, and also helps cool

A	B	C	D	N
---	---	---	---	---

3. us down when it starts to get hot in summer. For example Glasgow in

A	B	C	D	N
---	---	---	---	---

4. Scotland is on the same latitude as Moscow in Russia and yet does

A	B	C	D	N
---	---	---	---	---

How to check back over your work effectively

You are always told to check back over your work, but how do you do this effectively?

Most students struggle with this concept, if they bother to check at all! But an unchecked answer is an unfinished answer, so you should always discipline yourself to make time for final checks. Picking up on and revising an error could gain you an extra mark... or two!

Skimming over your answers doesn't actually work. You are so close to them, having just written them, that your eyes will 'read' what you meant to write in your head rather than what's actually there, and it's very easy to miss mistakes.

So, here are some top tips for checking back over your work **effectively**:

- **Slow down.**
When you begin to reread your work, slow down. Whilst you're unable to read it out loud in an exam, you can read it back in your head, mentally articulating each and every word. This slows you down and will help you to spot mistakes — usually missed out words or letters.
- **Concentrate.**
Concentration is key when reading back over your work — but you have the advantage of already being in a quiet exam environment.
- **Does it make sense?**
When you're rereading your answers slowly, you will soon spot if they make sense or not. If they don't, now is the time to add missing words or change your tenses so they are consistent.

Practice Paper 7

11+ English Comprehension

Time allowed: 15 minutes

Total marks: 25 marks

Instructions:

- Read each multiple-choice question carefully.
- Choose the best answer and circle the letter alongside it.
- Each question is worth 1 mark.