

# HOW TO HANDLE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

## Parts of a comprehension question

- Subject of the question
- Tense word/governor
- Other important words in the questions
- Asking word
- Phrasal/ reference words

## SUBJECT OF THE QUESTION

### Example

i). When did **Paul** meet his dad?

  
Subject

ii). Why should **the children in private schools** perform well?

  
Subject

**Note:** The subject of the question must be the one to begin your answer.

## **TENSE WORDS**

There are two types of tense governors i.e. influencing tense words and accompanying tense words.

### Influencing tense words

- do
- did
- does

These tense words are called influencers due to the way they influence the action verbs in the questions.

### ***Tense word***

i. When did **John** visit his uncle?

### ***Subject***

**Answer:** John visited his uncle

ii. Why does the orphan girl curse the day she was born?

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iii. What do the writer's teachers say about his performance?

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iv. When did Uganda, the pearl of Africa get her independence?

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### **Accompanying tense words**

These tense words don't cause any changes on the action verbs, they just give them company. Such tense words include;

- is
- are
- were
- was
- have
- has
- had
- will
- shall
- would
- should
- must
- ought to
- may
- might
- can
- could
- am

## **Example**

### ***Tense word***

- i.     what must a girl child do to avoid teenage pregnancies?

### ***Subject***

**Answer:** A girl child **must** abstain from sex to avoid teenage pregnancies.

- ii.     Where will the show take place?
- 

- iii.    Why were the children crying?
- 

- iv.    When could the writer of the story go back to school?
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## **ASKING WORDS**

These are words that are used to phrase the questions. These include;

- ❖ What
- ❖ When
- ❖ Where
- ❖ Why
- ❖ Which
- ❖ Who
- ❖ Whom
- ❖ How
- ❖ Whose
- ❖ How many
- ❖ How long

## **What**

This asking word usually requires you to give a specific thing

### **Example**

i. What is the poem about?

The poem is about children's rights.

ii. What annoyed the writer at the bank?

Standing in the queue for so long annoyed the writer at the bank.

iii. What delayed Irene's dad on the Christmas eve?

The heavy traffic on the road delayed Irene's dad on the Christmas eve.

## **When**

This one usually requires you to give time such; date, day, month, year, term, time

When you're presenting your answer, you are supposed to use an appropriate preposition e.g.

- ❖ On-day/ date e.g. on Tuesday or on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010
- ❖ In\_ month, year, time of the day and term e.g. in March, in 1996, in the morning, in the evening, in the afternoon and in the second term
- ❖ At\_ time/night e.g. at 7:00p.m., at seven o'clock in the evening, at midday, at dawn, at night.

### **Example**

1. When did Uganda get her independence?

Uganda got her independence on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1962.

2. At what time of the day will the play be staged? (evening)

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## **Where**

This asking word requires you to give a place/ venue. Again you have to use the appropriate preposition e.g.

**In\_** building/room/hall/ village/town/city/district/ country/continent

**At\_** social service centres e.g. at Namirembe Parents' Primary School, at Centenary Bank, at Shell Petro Station, at Katwe Police Station

### **Example**

1. Where did the writer of the passage and his aunt meet? (Sheraton Hotel)
- 

2. Where was Ivar, the Boneless born? (Norway)
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### **Why**

This asking word requires you to give either a reason/ justification or a purpose/aim.

When giving a reason, you may use conjunctions like **because, since, for, due to, because of, owing to.**

### **Example**

That day, Stellah did not go to school. This is because she was very sick and tired.

### **Question**

1. Why didn't Stellah go to school that day?
- 

When giving a purpose/aim, we use conjunctions like **in order to, so as to, so that, such that, in order that**

### **Example**

Robinah boarded a taxi to the bank. She wanted to deposit her school fees.

### **Question**

1. Why did Robinah go to the bank?
- 

### **Which**

This one requires you to give a specific thing or person. In most cases, this specific person or thing should begin the sentence.

1. Which subject was performed best in PLE 2022?

English was performed best in PLE 2022.

2. Which teacher briefed the candidates first? (Mr. Mukiibi)
- 

### **Who**

This asking word requires you to give a person at the beginning.

### **Example**

1. Who wrote the poem? (Kasolo Amos)
- 

2. Who spoke first on the sports day? (Mr. Ivan Tenywa, the games and sports teacher of NPPS)
- 

### **Whom**

This one also requires you to give a person but at the end.

### **Example**

1. By whom was the story written? (Moses Kifule)
- 

2. To whom did the angry girl talk rudely? (the head teacher)

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## **How**

This asking word commands you to state the way/ manner. We mostly talk about the way using prepositions like by and through or sometimes adverbs of manner or sometimes answer directly.

### ***Examples.***

Farmers ought to spray their crops regularly. This will help them to control crop pests like caterpillars etc.

## **Question**

1. How can farmers control crop pests?

Farmers can control crop pests **by** spraying their crops regularly.

Farmers can control crop pests **through** regular spraying of their crops.

## **Whose**

This one demands the owner.

### **Example**

1. Whose name was read by the master of ceremonies?

Patrick's name was read by the master of ceremonies.

2. Whose shopping list has been shown above? (Katogo Enock)

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## **How many**

This one simply wants the number.

### **Example**

1. How many stanzas does the above have? (three)

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2. How many stanzas make up the above poem?

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3. How many stanzas are in the poem above?

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Note: in questions of how many, if the question has a **helping verb** being followed by a **preposition**, you must begin your answer with **There**.

### **Example**

1. How many days **are in** a week?

There are seven days in a week.

2. How many birds were on the tree? (twenty)

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How many mangoes have been in the fridge? (twelve)

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### **How long**

This one always wants duration.

### **Examples**

1. How long did the conference last?

The conference lasted two weeks.

2. **For** how long did the conference last?

The conference lasted **for** two weeks.

**Note:** you should only present the duration using the preposition for only if it is used in the question but it's not used, don't use it.

### **CLOSED QUESTIONS**

These are the questions that asked beginning with helping verbs or modal verbs (***the ones we referred to as tense words above***). These



closed question must be answered beginning with either No or Yes, but still you ought to answer in full sentences.

### **Examples**

1. Did the writer enjoy his holiday?

Yes, the writer enjoyed his holiday.

2. Could John and his family buy the items they wanted?

No, John and his family could not buy the items they wanted.

### **PREPOSITIONAL QUESTIONS**

- These are the questions that asked beginning with prepositions such as; **on, in, to, at, about, by, through, against, for** etc.
- When you are handling such questions, you must use the preposition that began the question to present the answer.

#### **Example**

1. **In** which year did writer join Namirembe Parents' Primary School?

The writer joined Namirembe Parents' Primary School **in** 2018.

2. From whom did Benjamin receive the envelope? (his brother who lives in UK)

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3. At what time will the debate start? (4:30p.m.)
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**Note:** Questions that ask about time of the day may use the preposition used in the question.

### **Examples**

1. At what of the day may the wedding party start?

The wedding party may start **in** the evening.

## **PHRASAL /REFERENCE WORDS**

These are the words in the question which may be referring you where you should get the answer.

These reference words include;

- According to the poem,.....
- According to the passage,.....
- In the passage,.....
- Apart from.....
- Besides.....
- According to the writer.....

These reference words mustn't be taken for granted, actually it's better to write them before the answer regardless of where they have placed in the question.

### **Example**

1. According to the passage, to which school does the writer go?

According to the passage, the writer goes to Namirembe Parents' Primary School.

2. Who ruin the future of young girls according to the first stanza?

According to the first stanza, sugar daddies ruin the future of young girls.

3. Besides covid19, which other disease may make someone cough?  
(tuberculosis)

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## **GIVING ANOTHER WORD OR GROUP OF WORDS**

This concept is very common in upper primary comprehension. When handling this part, it's better to visit the text where the given word was used.

Any word or words you think of, you must try them in the place of the given and see if there is still flow in the sentence. If the flow is there, it means you anticipated word(s) is correct but the sentences sounds weird, it means your words is wrong.

### **Try these**

Ritah **reached** school very early on Monday.

1. Give another word(s) to mean the same as **reached**.
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Henry and his family spent a **fortnight** in Kenya and they returned to Uganda.

2. Give another word(s) to mean the same as **fortnight**.
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### **SUGGESTING SUITABLE TITLES TO PASSAGES, STORIES AND POEMS**

This is the easiest task in comprehension though some learners fail it.

- The suitable title must come from the most dominant concept in the text.
- A suitable title can be descriptive of narrative

### **Sample**

Last year in December, Isaac and his family travelled to Kasese. They had gone there mainly to chill their minds as well as having fun together. While in Kasese, they visited multiple places such as; Mt. Rwenzori, Queen Elizabeth National Park and many others.

### **Question**

1. Suggest a suitable to this story.
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