*Note: before you begin, please go into the VIEW menu and turn off Print Layout so the page breaks don’t become frustrating.*

This activity has been designed to expose all of the inner workings of comprehension.

It uses a traditional reading comp excerpt, but walks you through the thinking process that

happens so that by the time you’re finished the exercise, you think *holy-toot, these are easy!*

You’ll find the original reading & questions [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r6Ex1FGbp87PRjvo1GuBtaAfPxwrtLctxGl6RiCSXa4/view). In this document, however, unlike a traditional

reading comp, I’ve messed with the formatting so your thinking is guided in more explicit ways.

**Complete the steps in the prompts on the right BEFORE highlighting the correct answer in the original question.**

|  | *This passage takes place in 1951 outside a professional baseball stadium in New York, where a pennant or championship game is about to begin.*  **from PAFKO AT THE WALL**  This is a school day but he is nowhere near the classroom, the box of forty faces looking blank. The longing to be here, standing in the shadow of this old rust-hulk of a structure, is too intense to resist — this metropolis of steel and concrete and flaky paint and cropped grass and enormous Chesterfield1 packs aslant on the scoreboards, a couple of cigarettes jutting from each.  1 Chesterfield — a brand of American cigarette |
| --- | --- |

| 1. The description of the classroom at the end of the first sentence (line 1) conveys a feeling of    1. obstinacy    2. belonging    3. entrapment    4. contentment | *So,*   * *we need to find the end of the first line (done)* * *the two most descriptive words in that line are:*  | box | blank | | --- | --- |  * *… which matches up to one of the four options on the left.* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

| 20  25 | They are waiting nervously for the ticket holders to clear the turnstiles, the last loose cluster of fans, the stragglers and loiterers. They watch the late-arriving taxis from downtown and the brilliantined2 men stepping dapper to the windows, policy bankers and club owners secure in their remoteness, high-aura’d, showing an untouchability that’s finished and pristine. They watch garment bosses and Broadway sharpies and a couple of dumpy men clambering out of a powder blue Cadillac, picking lint of their mohair sleeves. They stand at the curb and watch without seeming to look, wearing the sourish air of corner handabouts. All the hubbub has died down, the pregame babble and swirl, vendors working the jammed sidewalks waving scorecards and pennants and calling out in ancient singsong, chicken-neck men hustling buttons and caps, all dispersed now, gone to their roomlets in the beaten streets.  2 brilliantined — having a hair styles with hair dressing oil |
| --- | --- |

| 1. In lines 19 to 21, the description of the late arrivals “They watch … finished and pristine” serves **mainly** to    1. provide a cosmopolitan atmosphere    2. create a contrast with the ticketless boys    3. establish the moral principles of the rich    4. Illustrate the traditional classiness of ball fans | * *we need to find the line as quoted (done)* * *note that it doesn’t start with “late arriving taxis,” but with “They watch.” Who’s watching?*  | the (ticketless) boys | | | --- | --- |  * *… which matches one effect from options on the left?* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |

| 30 | There are four turnstiles just beyond the pair of ticket booths. The youngest boy is also the scrawniest, Cotter Martin by name — scrawny tall in a polo shirt and dungarees, and maybe the scaredest too, located near the tail of the rush, running and shouting with the others. You shout because it makes you brave or you want to announce your recklessness. They have made their faces into scream masks, tight-eyed, with stretchable mouths, and they are running hard, trying to funnel themselves through the lanes between the booths, and they bump hips and elbows and keep the shout going. The faces of the ticket sellers hang behind the windows like onions on strings. |
| --- | --- |

| 1. The sudden shift in point of view in line 31 serves to    1. enable the reader to identify with the boys    2. explain ~~game procedures~~ to the reader    3. diminish the importance of the action    4. disrupt the unity of the passage | * *we need to find the line and the POV shift (done)* * *what is the POV that the rest of the passage uses.*  | third person (limited) | | | | --- | --- | --- |  * *who is “you” for the author?*  | the reader | | | --- | --- |  * *so, which of the four options on the left include this person AND explain why this shift in POV works?* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| 40 | the gate-crashing becoming real. They are jumping too soon or too later and hitting the posts and bars, doing cartoon climbs up each other’s back, and what kind of stupes must they look like to people at the hot-dog stand on the other side of the turnstiles, what kind of awful screwups — a line of mostly men beginning to glance this way, jaws working at the sweaty meat and grease bubbles flurrying on their tongues, the gent at the far end hanging a dubious look and going dead-still except for a hand that produces and automatic movement, swabbing on mustard with a brush. |
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| 1. The description of the hotdog eaters in lines 41 to 44 evokes    1. a sense of the boy’s irrational fear    2. an unappealing image of passivity    3. a disturbing image of adult anger    4. a portrait of the crowd’s appeal | * *we need to find the relevant description (done)* * *most of the options on the left have two pieces, which relate to the description in lines 41 to 44:*  | *piece one:*  *irrational? unappealing? disturbing? appealing?* | | *piece two:*  *scary? passive?*  *angry? none of these?* | | --- | --- | --- | | VOMIT → unappealing | | super-bored → passivity |  * *highlight the option on the left that has those pieces.* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| 50 | Cotter thinks he sees a path to the turnstile on the right. He drains himself of everything he does not need to make the jump… . A couple of real-live cops are rumbling down the ramp. Cotter sheds these elements as they appear, sheds a thousand waves of information hitting on his skin. His gaze is trained on the iron bar projected from the post. He picks up speed and seems to lose his gangliness, the slouchy funk of hormones and unbelonging and all the dumb-hearted things that seal his adolescence. He is just a running boy, a half-seen figure from the streets, but the way running reveals some clue to being, the way a runner bares himself to self-examination, this is how the easy-gating kid seems to open to the world, how the blood-rush of a dozen strides brings him into eloquence. |
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| 1. In the context of lines 46 to 53, “He is just a running boy” (line 50) is an understatement of Cotter’s transformation into    1. a fugitive, fleeing the law    2. an offensive and fierce hero    3. an embodiment of grace and freedom    4. an adolescent trying to mimic adult behaviour | * *“transformation” is a change word: highlight at least 4 of the verbs in this passage that mean “change”* * *what’s different about Cotter after “He is just a running boy”? (hint: his new running “reveals” this)*  | not gangly (49) | is easy-gating (52) | is eloquent (53) | | | | --- | --- | --- |  * *find the answer that has a synonym for this new style.* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| 70 | He runs up a shadowed ramp and into a crossweave of girders and pillars and spilling light. He hears the rescendoing last chords of the national anthem and sees the great open horseshoe of the grandstand and that unfolding vision of the grass that always seems to mean he has stepped outside his life — the rubbed shine that sweeps and bends from the raked dirt of the infield out to the high green fences. It is the excitement of a revealed thing. He runs at quarter speed, craning to see the rows of seats, looking for an inconspicuous wedge behind a pillar. He cuts into an aisle in Section 35 and walks down into the heat and smell of the massed fans, he walks into the smoke that hangs from the underside of the second deck, he hears the talk, he enters the deep buzz, he hears the warmup pitches crack into the catcher’s mitt, a series of reports that carry a comet’s tail of secondary sound. |
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| 1. The imagery in line 66 to 73 serves **primarily** to describe the    1. details of the setting    2. thrilling atmosphere of the ballpark    3. boy’s search for the safety of anonymity    4. boy’s merging with the mythic dream he seeks | * *“primarily” is one of those modifiers that suggests more than one of the options is on target, but ONLY one hits the bullseye of that target.* * *consider the final line in the selection, especially the underlined part.* * *Is this simply informative (a.), thrilling (b.), anonymous (c.), or is he thoroughly connecting with his goal (d.)?* |
| --- | --- |

| 1. The impact of this episode on Cotter could **best** be described in terms of his    1. self-discovery    2. social status    3. physicality    4. morality | * *“best” is a modifier like “primarily” in the last question.* * *also keep in mind that the answer here fits with ALL of the other answers in this question set, which is a good reminder for all reading comp tests: the answers fit together and teach you how to interpret the text.* * *this is seemingly a question about character, but is actually about theme; eliminate the themes listed here that are not focal points of the passage as a whole.* |
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|  | Then we lose him in the crowd. |
| --- | --- |

| 1. The writer’s shift in point of view in the final sentence serves to    1. lessen the impact of the story    2. re-establish Cotter’s anonymity    3. illustrate Cotter’s cavalier attitude    4. create contrast with the preceding paragraph | * *find the line and the POV shift (done) and note that this time it’s first person plural: everyone who isn’t Cotter.* * *a. is a terrible choice: what author would wreck their story?!* * *so now it’s just a matching game: which of the underlined words matches “lose him”?* * *(note: if you don’t know what “cavalier” means, you can still answer this question because you know the rest of the words.)* |
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