**Text:** Oliver Twist

The room in which the boys were fed, was a large stone hall, with a copper at one end: out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at mealtimes. Of this festive composition, each boy had one porringer, and no more—except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides.  
  
 The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper, with such eager eyes, as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon. Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months: at last, they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn’t been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook-shop), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel per diem, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next to him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye; and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more, and it fell to Oliver Twist.  
  
 The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook’s uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered to each other and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity:  
“Please, sir, I want some more.”

B, B, ?, D

D, C, A, A

D, D, D, A

C, ? , ?

**Questions**

1. Which word in the sentence is a verb? “One or two women ladled the gruel at mealtimes.”
   1. Women
   2. **Ladled**
   3. Gruel
   4. Mealtimes
2. Why did the bowls never need “washing”?
   1. The boys cleaned their own bowls
   2. **The boys were so hungry they would eat every single bit**
   3. The boys used their spoons to clean the bowls
   4. The boys cleaned both their bowls and spoons
3. What does “occasions of public rejoicing” mean?

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1. How long had the boys been starving for?
   1. 14 days
   2. 28 days
   3. two months
   4. **Three months**
2. Which of these statements are true?
   1. The master sat on the same side as the copper
   2. The portions of gruel they boys received were small
   3. The master made the boys polish their bowls and spoons
   4. **The boys had voted Oliver to ask the master for more**
3. Which of these statements are false?
   1. The boys needed to encourage and hint at Oliver to ask for more
   2. **The council was held the day before Oliver asked for more**
   3. **The only meal the boys had to eat was dinner\***
   4. The boys would receive bread on a day like Christmas
4. What reason best describes why the boys licked the fingers?
   1. **The food tasted so good that they wanted more**
   2. The boys did not want to waste any bit of their daily meal
   3. **The boys generally had excellent appetites**
   4. The boys did not have good table manners
5. Why was the tall boy not used to “that sort of thing”?
   1. **He used to be surrounded by food**
   2. He grew faster than the other boys
   3. He grew up eating more than once a day
   4. He was starved longer than the rest of the boys
6. What does it mean that a “council” was held?
   1. The boys are part of an official organisation
   2. The Master has selected a few boys to make decisions
   3. The boys were simply chatting and discussing together
   4. **The boys were meeting to decide upon a matter**
7. What happened when the council was held?
   1. Lots of boys showed up to discuss something
   2. Lots of boys walked up to the master to ask for more
   3. They cast votes on who should ask for more
   4. **They selected a boy at random to ask for more food**
8. Why do you think they chose someone in this way?
   1. The task was undesirable and risky
   2. The task meant getting more food
   3. The task involved a lot of work
   4. **The task needed to be given out fairly**
9. What effect is created by Dickens telling us the boys were hungry enough to eat each other?
   1. **It highlights the horrible situation the boys are in**
   2. It highlights the horror of the novel
   3. It highlights the mystery about what will happen next
   4. It highlights the sarcasm in the author’s story-telling
10. What is the cook’s uniform?
    1. A ladle
    2. A hat and ladle
    3. **An apron**
    4. An apron and hat
11. Oliver is described as “reckless with misery”. What does this mean?

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1. If you were a child living with Oliver, how would you feel?

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