

Comprehension Open-ended Worksheets

P6 English Language CA1 2014

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Instruction

Read the passages below and answer questions 1 to 10.

P6 Comprehension Open-ended - CA1 – MGS

The phone rang. Its shrill sound sent shivers down my spine. I bent my head real low until my nose was almost touching my book as though I could not see the words but it was my way of telling everyone to leave me alone. The incessant ringing was annoying me but I was afraid of **(Q2) what would happen** if Aunt Annie picked it up. The last time she picked it up at approximately this time, I was taken to her office and made to change into one of those dresses she hung in a small closet in her office.

Then an hour later, a couple came. I did not dare look at them. I kept **(Q3) my head low** because I knew what was coming. And it did, just like the couple before them and the one earlier and the other one and the other one...I had lost count over the years of how I was scrutinised like an object for sale. When we said ten-year-old girl who is sweet and obedient, of course it was understood that she must be presentable as well. What are these?" the lady remarked haughtily as she pointed to the scars on my face.

I bowed my head low and interlaced my fingers as I said a silent prayer. When I looked up, I saw Aunt Annie shaking her head and smiling condescendingly at me, "Never mind, dear. There will be someone one day." With a hint of sarcasm in her voice, she ordered me to change into our usual work attire and in her usual cold tone she sent me back to the workroom. I did everything she ordered without showing a hint of emotion. I knew what I wanted. I did not want any more of these visits, I just wanted to stay in the orphanage until the time came for me to find a job. Then, I would rent a place and start my life anew. **(Q6) Being part of a family now would mess up my plans.**

The next day, it rang again. Touching my face, I wished the ringing would stop. Suddenly, it did. I heard someone talking. It was Aunt Annie and I held my breath. Then, I heard footsteps approaching my room and **(Q7) my heart sank**. Why was it me all the time? But the footsteps faded away. They were going down the stairs. I opened the door and sneaked a peek. I was sure everyone else heard the noise but no one dared to leave their rooms. I took a bold step onto the landing and looked down. Aunt Annie was talking to Eliza. I could see Eliza nodding her head vigorously and beaming. She had always wanted to leave the orphanage. I hurried back into the room, glad that it was not me this time.

That night Eliza did not join us for dinner. I knew what that meant and I did not feel completely pleased for her I was not like the other girls who were bursting with excitement to find out more about Eliza's new parents and asking questions about when they would have new parents too. I was wary of the couples who came to the orphanage. **(Q8) They** would scrutinize my appearance, looking for flaws. I touched the scars on my face and once again I was reminded that 'beauty is only skin deep'. It is much more important to be beautiful on the inside.

Adapted from "Anne of Green Gables"

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. How did the author feel when the phone first rang? Which four-word phrase in paragraph one indicated how she felt?

2. Explain fully "what would happen" in paragraph 1 if Aunt Annie picked up the phone.

3. In paragraph 2, why did the author keep her "head low"?

4. In paragraph three, which word shows that Aunt Annie behaved in a superior manner to the author?

5. In paragraph three, which two actions by Aunt Annie best show that the relationship between her and the author was not a warm and friendly one?

6. In paragraph 3 the author said, "Being part of a family now would mess up my plans." What were the author's plans?

7. How do you think the author felt when her 'heart sank' in paragraph 4? Explain clearly why she felt this way.

8. What was the goal of most girls in the orphanage?

9. Who does "They" in last paragraph refer to?

10. In the last paragraph, the writer touched the scars on her face and was reminded that 'beauty is only skin deep'. Based on this five-word phrase, what do you think was the -author's idea of beauty?

P6 Comprehension Open-ended - CA1 – Nan Hua

As a boy growing up- in Shenyang, I practised the piano six hours a day on my own accord, I loved the instrument. My mother taught me to read .notes and my father; concertmaster of a local folk orchestra, showed me how to control the keys. My parents were .amazed at how quickly I learnt and realised I had the talent. At first, I played on clunky Chinese keyboards — cheap but the best we could afford. Later, my parents bought me a Swedish piano, but I broke half the strings oh it playing Tchaikovsky. That was when my parents and my teacher decided I was too much for such an instrument and for our hometown. To be a serious musician, I would have to move to Beijing. I was just eight years old.

My father knew life would not be easy. Millions of pianists in China were vying for fame. "You need fortune," my father said. "If you don't work, no fortune comes. But music is still music, and it exists to make us happy," he added.

To relocate to Beijing with me, he made a great sacrifice. He quit his job which he loved and my mother stayed behind to keep working at her job at the science institution to support us. They both warned me, "Being a pianist is hard, Can: you live without your mother?"

I said, "I want my mother!" But I knew I. need to be in Beijing.

My father and I lived in an unheated apartment with five families sharing one bathroom. My father cooked, cleaned and looked after me. Basically, he became a **(Q5) homemaker**. We lived far from my school, and since taking the bus was too expensive, my father would take me on his bicycle every day. It was an hour and a half each trip, and I was a heavy boy, much heavier than I am as an adult. He did **(Q6) this** In winter too.

I was miserable, but: not from my poverty or pressure. My new teacher did not like me. "You have no talent and will never be a pianist," she often told me. I was just nine years old. I was devastated. I did not want to be a pianist anymore. I decided I wanted to go home to my mother. For the next two weeks, I did not touch my piano. Wisely, my father did not push. He just waited.

Sure enough, the day came at school when my teacher asked me to play some holiday songs. I did not want to, but as I placed my fingers on the piano keys. I realised I could show other people I had talent after all. That day, I told my father what he had been waiting to hear - that I wanted to study with a new teacher. From that point on, everything turned around.

I started winning competitions. We still had very little money. My father had to borrow money to pay for a trip to the International Pianist Competition in Ettlingen, Germany in 1994 when I was twelve. I realised later how much pressure he was under as I watched footage of the concert. Tears streamed down his face when it was announced that I had won, earning enough money to pay back our loan.

It was soon clear I could not stay in China forever. To become a world class musician, I had to play on the world's big stages. So in 1997, my father and moved again, this time to Philadelphia.

Adapted from Music to My Ears by Lang Lang

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. Which two cities did the author spend his childhood in?

2. How can we tell that the author loved the piano?

3. Which word in paragraph 2 has the same meaning as "competing eagerly"?

4. What sacrifice did the author's father make in order to help him become a serious musician?

5. Why did the author refer to his father as a "homemaker" in paragraph 5?

6. What does the word 'this' in paragraph 5 refer to?

7. Explain clearly the cause of the author's suffering when he was in Beijing?

8. Explain clearly how the author's father felt on hearing that his son had won the International Pianist Competition?

9. Which sentence shows the author's realisation that he had to perform outside China to become a great pianist?

10. Besides their love for the author, what made his parents determined to see him succeed?

P6 Comprehension Open-ended - CA1 – Nanyang

Madam Rogayah had applied to buy a Housing and Development Board renovated apartment. Someone claiming to be an HDB officer came to her flat with forms for her to sign. Before that, however, he demanded in a businesslike manner that she proved her identity first. Madam Rogayah showed him her identity card and he stared at her face. "This is really yours?" he asked severely. Madam Rogayah began to sweat. "Yes, I swear it! I can get my neighbour over here to verify! I'll get her now!" **(Q1) The man stopped her at once**, magnanimously deciding to believe her. Madam Rogayah naturally felt deeply indebted and ready to comply with whatever more he required.

The man required two thousand dollars in cash as an additional deposit. Madam Rogayah said she had only nine hundred dollars at home. He generously said **(Q2) that** would do. He took the money, gave her an official-looking receipt and left. Madam Rogayah never saw the man again, nor her money.

The **(Q3) news** spread through the estate. It was the topic amongst many residents. Madam Wong laughed loud and long at that naive Rogayah. She would never let herself be swindled, although she too was hoping to buy an apartment. Soon, an agent came to see Madam Wong. He gave her his card which read "Rayson Bong, Bigtime Brokers Pte Ltd". She did not know him or his firm so the astute housewife told him to return the next day. Meantime, she asked around and realised that some friends had used the firm. Opinions differed about their quality of service but Madam Wong felt assured.

The next day, Rayson brought Madam Wong to an empty apartment. It looked good. The price looked good too. 'In fact, too good to be true,' Madam Wong said to herself. She was not going to be gullible: 'I'm no Rogayah, easy meat for swindlers,' she smirked to herself. Rayson said she had to pay \$5000 as deposit the next day, otherwise she would lose the apartment as he had another buyer waiting.

That night, she questioned some friends over dinner and wondered loudly if she could trust Rayson. Her uninhibited talking paid off as moments later, someone came over and drew her aside. He whispered briefly "CID", flashing an identification card. He said that she was right about Rayson. The firm was genuine but Rayson was not. The Criminal Investigation Department had been observing him but so far, they had not been able to get any evidence on him. "Could he be the conman who swindled Rogayah?" Madam Wong asked. "It's possible," replied the detective. Madam Wong was thrilled. She was assisting CID to catch that conman, what a heroine she would become! And you will cooperate with CID? You will hand over the deposit so that we can catch him red-handed?" asked the detective. "Of course I will cooperate with the police!" Madam Wong enthused, nodding eagerly.

The next morning, Madam Wong passed her five thousand dollars to the

detective who was supposed to pretend to be her brother. The moment Rayson arrived, the detective whisked him away. **(Q9) Unexpectedly**, Rayson returned later that day. He apologised to Madam Wong, saying he had sold the apartment to the other party since her brother told him that she would only consider a lower price.

Madam Wong never saw the detective again, nor her money.

Adapted from "The Conman"

ANSWER IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. What did the man stop Madam Rogayah from doing in paragraph 1?

2. What does the word "that" in paragraph 2 refer to?

3. What was "the news" in paragraph 3 that spread through the estate?

4. Which word in paragraph 3 shows that Madam Wong was a sharp and clever lady?

5. Explain fully why Madam Wong felt assured in last line of paragraph 3.

6. According to paragraph four, what was Madam Wong's main concern with the apartment?.

7. Which phrase in paragraph 4 has the same meaning as 'gullible'?

8. Why was Madam Wong so eager to cooperate with the police?

9. Explain fully why the author said that Rayson returned "unexpectedly" in second last paragraph.

10. Why did Madam Wong not see the detective again?

P6 Comprehension Open-ended - CA1 – Rosyth

Although Gabby was quite capable of looking for his own food, he always came home for his supper when he heard a tin mug rattle on the concrete yard. His usual snack was brown bread and milk with crumbs of cheese. Gabby would not get these for his snack if the family was away, so it was quite a problem when we decided to go away for a summer holiday.

The problem was solved when my father made Gabby a small travelling box. It hung from one of the metal bars holding up the roof canvas of our car. Gabby sat there swaying calmly and surveying the world with his bright, black eyes. He did not seem at all disturbed by his strange surroundings. As soon as we reached our holiday chalet and unloaded the car, Gabby was allowed to come out of his box to stretch his wings. We all held our breath while he took off and flew out of sight, but he soon returned to his temporary home. Just as we spent our time exploring our new surroundings, Gabby flew off on regular exploring trips.

One morning when we were sitting outside in the sunshine eating our breakfast we heard our neighbours on the other side of a tall hedge say, "Oh look, here's the bird again! Have we got some food for him?" And then we found out what a clever bird Gabby was! He flew to most of the homes around daily for the same purpose. When that holiday ended, Gabby rode happily home again in his special box. As Gabby was adaptable, we took him with us whenever we went away. As a result, he became a well-travelled bird.

Gabby lived with us until 1941 when the war broke out. My siblings and I were evacuated with our mother to a safer area in Scotland. This arrangement was made by my father together with a welfare organisation which arranged our transport by special train. The relocation was planned for six months initially but was extended several times. My father joined the army in London which was nearer to Wales. As Gabby was closer to my father than any of the family members, he went to London with him. My father had to stay in a huge army camp. Although Gabby was a very clever bird, he must have become confused. It was extremely difficult for him to pick out one man in green amongst thousands of other **(Q7) green-clad ones**. Gabby obviously decided to look for his family back at his old home in Wales. He disappeared from the camp in London and after several months, one of our neighbours was surprised to find him sitting on, her washing line. He surprised her even more when he said, "Hello!" The poor lady dropped her washing and dashed indoors to recover. Other neighbours saw Gabby flying about our house until he must have realised that we were away.

Thinking about it we were quite sure that Gabby had gone to spend the rest of his life with the other parrots. There is always a large colony of them in some tall trees at the bottom of the field. We think that the ones we see nowadays are Gabby's relatives and descendants, but none of them ever said, "Hello!" to us!

Adapted from Pet Stories for Children by Hazel Wilkinson

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. Who was Gabby?

2. What Was the problem faced by the writer and his family when they decided to go away for a summer holiday?

3. Why do you think the family held their breath when Gabby flew off?

4. In what way was Gabby clever as mentioned in paragraph 3?

5. Which two-word phrase tells you that Gabby had been to many places?

6. Was the writer with his father in the army camp? How do you know?

7. In second last paragraph, what does the "green-clad ones" refer to?

8. Why was Gabby unable to recognise the writer's father?

9. Why did Gabby disappear from the camp in London?

10. How do you describe Gabby's relationship with the writer and his family? Support your answer with an evidence from the passage.

P6 Comprehension Open-ended - CA1 – St Nicholas

In a tiny village near Nuremberg, lived a family with eighteen children. Just to keep food on the table for his family, Mr. Durer the Elder, the father and head Of the household, had to work almost eighteen hours a day at his goldsmith trade and any other paying chore he could find in the neighbourhood.

Despite their seemingly hopeless condition, two of his children harboured a dream. They both greatly desired to pursue their talent in art, but knew full well that their father would never be financially able to send either of them to Nuremberg Art Academy.

After innumerable lengthy discussions at night in their crowded bed, the two boys finally worked out a pact. **(Q3) They would toss a coin.** The loser would go down into the mines and, with his earnings, support the brother studying at the academy. Then, when the brother who won the toss completed his studies, he would support the other brother at the academy with the sale of his artwork and, if necessary, by labouring in the mines too.

Albrecht won the toss and went off to the academy. Albert went down into the dangerous mines and, for the next four years, financed his brother's studies. Albrecht's etchings, his woodcuts, and his oils were so well-received that by the time he graduated, he was beginning to earn considerable fees for his commissioned works.

The Darer family held a dinner to celebrate Albrecht's triumphant homecoming. After the long meal, which was punctuated with music and laughter, Albrecht rose from his honoured position at the head of the table to drink a toast to his beloved brother for the years of sacrifice that had enabled him to fulfil his ambition. His closing words were, "And now, Albert, blessed brother of mine, it is your turn. Now you shall go to Nuremberg to pursue your dream, and I will take care of you."

All heads turned eagerly to the far end of the table where Albert sat, tears streaming down his pale face, shaking his lowered head from side to side while he repeated, over and over, "No ...no ...no."

Finally, Albert rose and wiped the tears from his cheeks. He glanced down the long table at the faces he loved and then, holding his hands close to his right cheek, said softly, "No, brother. I cannot go to Nuremberg. It is too late for me. Look ... look what four years in the mines have done to my hands! The bones in every finger have been smashed at least once, and lately, I have been suffering from arthritis so badly in my right hand that I cannot even hold a glass to return your toast, much less make delicate lines on parchment or canvas with a pen or a brush. No, brother, for me it is too late."

One day, to pay homage to Albert for all that he had sacrificed, Albrecht lovingly and painstakingly drew his brother's damaged hands with palms together and thin fingers stretched skyward. He called it simply 'Hands,' but the entire world was touched by this great masterpiece- and renamed his tribute of love 'The Praying Hands.'

More than 450 years have passed and hundreds of Albrecht Durer's masterful portraits, pen and silver-point sketches, watercolours, charcoals, woodcuts, and copper engravings hang in every great museum in the world. However, the odds are great that you, like most people, are familiar with only one of his works. More than merely being

familiar with it, you may very well have a reproduction hanging in your home or workplace. For many people, it is a beautiful reminder that no one ever makes it alone!
<http://www.moytura.com/reflections/prayinghands.htm>

ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1. What was Mr. Durer the Elder's profession?

2. What dream did the two boys share?

3. Why did the brothers lose a coin paragraph 3?

4. How long did Albrecht take to complete his studies at the academy?

5. Which five-word phrase in paragraph 5 shows that Albrecht's homecoming meal was a merry occasion?

6. Explain in your own words how we can tell that Albrecht kept the pact he had made with his brother.

7. How do we know that Albrecht was a successful artist?

8. What was the cause of Albert's grief?

9. Which word in the second last paragraph has the same meaning as 'with great care and effort'?

10. Why are people more familiar with Albrecht's 'The Praying Hands' than with any other piece of his artwork?

Answer Key

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Subject: Primary 6 English – Comprehension Open Ended

Paper: CA1 2014

School: MGS

1. She felt scared. It is “shivers down my spine”.
2. The author would be asked to change into a dress and taken to meet a couple who might want to adopt her.
3. She was afraid that the couple would criticize the scars on her face.
4. It is “condescendingly”.
5. Aunt Annie ordered author to change into her usual attire and spoke to the author in a cold tone.
6. Her plans were to stay in the orphanage until the time came for her to find a job. Then, she would rent a place and start her life anew.
7. The author was worried as she thought that the footsteps she heard meant that she was being called up for adoption.
8. They wanted to be adopted by a family.
9. It refers to the couples who came to the orphanage.
10. I think the author’s idea of beauty is not based on one’s appearance, but based on the beauty and kindness inside the person.

School: Nan Hua

1. He spent his childhood in Shenyang and Beijing.
2. He practiced the piano six hours a day on his own accord.
3. The word is “vying”.
4. The author’s father quit his job, which he loved in order to help the author become a serious musician.
5. His father cooked, cleaned and looked after the author.
6. It refers to his father taking him to school on his bicycle everyday.
7. The author’s new teacher did not like him and even said that he had no talent and would never be a pianist.
8. He was relieved that they won enough money to pay back their loan.
9. The sentence is “To become a world class musician, I had to play on the world’s big stages”.
10. They realized their son had talent in music.

School: Nanyang

1. The man stopped her from getting her neighbor ever to verify her identity card was hers.
2. It refers to the nine hundred dollars.
3. It was about Madam Rogayah being swindled.
4. The word is “astute”.

5. Madam Wong asked around and realized that some of her friends had used the firm.
6. Her main concern was that the price of the apartment was too good to be true.
7. The phrase is “easy meat”.
8. She wanted to become a heroine.
9. Rayson was supposed to be caught by the police.
10. The detective was a swindler.

School: Rosyth

1. Gabby was the writer’s bird.
2. They would not be able to feed Gabby his usual snack.
3. The thought that Gabby would fly away and not return.
4. Gabby would fly to most of the homes around daily to get some food.
5. The two phrase is “well-travelled bird”.
6. No, the writer was not with his father in the army camp. The writer and his sibling were evacuated to a safer place in Scotland.
7. It refers to the men in army uniform.
8. Many men in the army camp were dressed in green.
9. He could not find the writer’s father in the camp so he decided to look for the rest of the family.
10. The relationship was close. Gabby flew to their temporary home to look for them.

School: St Nicholas

1. Mr. Durer the elder was a goldsmith.
2. They want to go to Nuremberg Art Academy to pursue their study in art.
3. The brothers did not know which of them should pursue art and which of them should work in the mines, so they tossed a coin.
4. Albrecht took four years to complete his studies at the academy.
5. It is “punctuated with music and laughter”.
6. After Albrecht returned, he said that it was time that Albert went to pursue his dream and that he would finance him.
7. By the time Albrecht graduated, he was earning considerable fees for his commissioned artwork.
8. He could not study art as every bone in his right hand had been broken.
9. It is “painstaking”.
10. ‘The Praying Hands’ is a beautiful reminder that no one ever makes it alone and the story behind that painting was very touching and famous.