

11+ PRACTICE PACK

CSSE 11+ English 2020

Complete Practice Pack

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CSSE 11+ English. Work through this paper first.

Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

02 Answers

CSSE 11+ English. Use to mark your work against the official answer key.

Includes Paper Notes: score interpretation, selected worked examples, next steps.

PRACTISE THE REAL THING

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ENGLISH PAPER MAIN TEST 1 FOR 2020 ENTRY

Name:

Candidate Number:

Primary School:

Boy or Girl:

Date of Birth:

Today's Date:

Test Taken At:

READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY:
 This test consists of three parts:
 ● A COMPREHENSION (30 minutes plus 10 minutes reading time)
 ● APPLIED REASONING QUESTIONS (10 minutes)
 ● CONTINUOUS WRITING (20 minutes)
 TOTAL TIME: 1 hour 10 minutes
AFTER THE FIRST 10 MINUTES YOU DO NOT NEED TO WAIT TO BE TOLD TO CARRY ON TO THE NEXT SECTION.

1. Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so.
2. Inside the booklet is a separate passage. Read the passage and questions carefully when you are told to do so. **You have 10 minutes.** Then answer the questions in the booklet.
3. Think carefully about the passage and its meaning.
4. Work quickly but carefully through the questions.
5. All answers (apart from questions 5 and 9) must be answered in full sentences.
6. The number of marks available for each section is indicated in the right hand margin.
7. Incorrect spelling and grammar will be penalised.
8. Punctuation should be clear and exact.
9. Where you are asked to choose between a number of responses choose always the most appropriate response.
10. If you finish with time to spare please remember to check your work.
11. **Once the test has begun you should not ask questions about the test.**

NOT TO BE FILLED IN BY PUPIL		
PAGE	SCORE	
	R	W
1 (7)		
2 (13)		
3 (9)		
4 (11)		
5 (5)		
TOTAL (45)		
INITIALS OF MARKER(S)		

REMEMBER: this is not a test of memory. You can look back at the passage to check your answers as many times as you want.

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SPEND ABOUT 30 MINUTES ON THIS SECTION.

All answers (apart from questions 5 and 9) must be answered in proper sentences for you to get the full marks for this paper.

SECTION ONE

Please do not write in this space

1. What does Mulholland suggest both humans and dogs did when the thunderstorm hit the village of Hurly Burly?

2 marks

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2. How far away from the village or town of Hurly Burly do the Squire and Mistress Hurly live?

2 marks

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3. How does Mulholland suggest the old woman at the gate-lodge house felt about the thunderstorm? Explain your answer with evidence from the extract.

3 marks

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R
W

(7)



Please do not write in this space

4. In paragraph one, does Mulholland suggest that the thunderstorm has been dangerous to the inhabitants of Hurly Burly? Explain your answer using two pieces of evidence from paragraph one.

6 marks

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5. Write a synonym (one or two words that has the same meaning as the word used by Mulholland in the text) for the following words.

5 marks

For example: Timid (line 4)Nervous

- a) Unwieldy (line 6).....
- b) Saturated (line 7).....
- c) Mire (line 11).....
- d) Deface (line 24).....
- e) Hale (line 28).....

6. Does Mulholland want the reader to imagine Mistress Hurly as pretty or ugly?

2 marks

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.....
.....
.....

R
W
(13)

Please do not write in this space

7. Where was Mistress Hurly hiding during the thunderstorm?

2 marks

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.....
.....
.....

8. What aspect of the storm does Mulholland suggest most frightened Mistress Hurly?

2 marks

.....
.....
.....
.....

9. How does Mulholland describe the Squire?
Tick the 5 boxes you think are correct.

5 marks

- A. He is frightened of the storm
- B. He has white hair
- C. He has tanned skin
- D. He has grey hair.....
- E. His hair is bristly.....
- F. He is a noisy man
- G. He has a hushed voice
- H. He has dim eyes
- I. He is shorter than his wife

R
W
(9)

Please do not write in this space

10. Mulholland states that the Squire and Mistress Hurly used to argue a lot. What did they argue about so much and what sides of the argument did they take?

6 marks

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11. Why does Mulholland state that the couple have now stopped arguing?

2 marks

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12. Do you think that Mulholland wants the reader to like or to not like the Squire and Mistress Hurly? Give a reason for your answer.

3 marks

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GO TO NEXT PAGE FOR APPLIED REASONING QUESTIONS.

R
W
(11)

SECTION TWO

Please do not write in this space

APPLIED REASONING (You should spend about 10 minutes on this section)

Question 1

1 mark

Complete the two words using the same pair of consecutive letters.

For example:

fir() () and () () age *should be completed*

fir(**s**)(**t**) and (**s**)(**t**)age

dou() () : () () **ost**

Question 2

1 mark

Complete the two words using the same pair of letters that are one letter apart in the alphabet.

For example:

a() () uct and su() () ue *should be completed*

a(**b**)(**d**)uct and su(**b**)(**d**)ue

gu() () oint : **sig**() () ost

Question 3

1 mark

Complete the two words using the same pair of letters that are two letters apart in the alphabet.

For example:

ab() () y and () () efy *should be completed*

ab(**b**)(**e**)y and (**b**)(**e**)efy

ela() () e : **u**() () et

Question 4

2 marks

Complete the pair of words with a different letter for each pair.

For example:

qui() and ha() e *should be completed*

qui(**t**) and ha(**t**)e *and*

qui(**z**) and ha(**z**)e

spa() e : () hose

spa() e : () hose

GO TO SEPARATE BOOKLET ON YOUR DESK TO ANSWER THE CONTINUOUS WRITING QUESTIONS.

R
W
(5)



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ENGLISH

10 MINUTES READING TIME

**60 MINUTES TO
COMPLETE THE TEST**

Suggested timing for candidates:

READING TIME: 10 minutes

SECTION ONE: COMPREHENSION 30 minutes

SECTION TWO: APPLIED REASONING 10 minutes

Go to the separate booklet on your desk to answer the continuous writing questions.

SECTION THREE: CONTINUOUS WRITING 20 minutes

Read the passage that starts overleaf carefully when you are told to do so. After ten minutes has ended you will have 60 minutes to complete the test. Answer the questions which are on the following pages.

The passage is from 'The Haunted Organist of Hurly Burly' by Rosa Mulholland.

To the left of each line you will see the lines have been numbered. This will help you when you are answering the questions.

*The passage used is from
'The Haunted Organist of Hurly Burly',
a novel written by Rosa Mulholland
and published in 1891.*

GO TO NEXT PAGE

*'The Haunted Organist of Hurly Burly', was written by Rosa Mulholland in 1891.
This extract is from the very beginning of the story.*

1 There had been a thunderstorm in the village of Hurly Burly. Every door was shut, every dog
2 in his kennel, every rut and gutter a flowing river after the deluge of rain that had fallen. Up
3 at the great house, a mile from the town, the rooks were calling to one another about the
4 fright they had been in, the fawns in the deer-park were venturing their timid heads from
5 behind the trunks of trees, and the old woman at the gate-lodge had risen from her knees,
6 and was putting back her prayer-book on the shelf. In the garden, July roses, unwieldy with
7 their full-blown richness, and saturated with rain, hung their heads heavily to the earth;
8 others, already fallen, lay flat upon their blooming faces on the path, where Bess, Mistress
9 Hurly's maid, would find them, when going on her morning quest of rose-leaves for her lady's
10 pot-pourri. Ranks of white lilies, just brought to perfection by today's sun, lay dabbled in the
11 mire of flooded mud. Tears ran down the amber cheeks of the plums on the south wall,
12 and not a bee had ventured out of the hives, though the scent in the air was sweet enough
13 to tempt the laziest drone. The sky was still lurid behind the boles of the upland oaks, but
14 the birds had begun to dive in and out of the ivy that wrapped up the home of the Hurlys of
15 Hurly Burly.

16 This thunderstorm took place just over half a century ago, and we must remember
17 that Mistress Hurly was dressed in the fashion of that time as she crept out from behind the
18 Squire's chair, now that the lightning was over, and, with many nervous glances towards the
19 window, sat down before her husband, the tea-urn, and the muffins. We can picture her fine
20 lace cap, with its peachy ribbons, the frill on the hem of her gown just touching her ankles,
21 her embroidered stockings and the rosettes on her shoes, but not so easily the lilac shade
22 of her mild eyes, the satin skin, which still kept its delicate bloom, though wrinkled with
23 advancing age, and the pale, sweet, puckered mouth, that time and sorrow had made angelic

24 while trying vainly to deface its beauty.

25 The Squire was as rugged as his wife was gentle, his skin as brown as hers was white,
26 his grey hair as bristling as hers was glossy; the years had ploughed his face into ruts and
27 channels; a bluff, blustering, noisy man he had been; but of late a dimness had come on his
28 eyes, a hush on his loud voice, and a check on the spring of his hale step. He looked at his
29 wife often, and very often she looked at him. She was not a tall woman, and he was only a
30 head higher. They were a quaintly well-matched couple, despite their differences. Of late
31 they had fitted one another better than they had ever done in the heyday of their youthful
32 love. A common sorrow had developed a singular likeness between them. In former years the
33 cry from the wife had been, "Don't curb my son too much!" and from the husband, "You ruin
34 the lad with softness." But now the idol that had stood between them was removed, and
35 they saw each other better.

END OF PASSAGE



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Paper Notes: 11+ English Question Booklet

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is a **CSSE 11+ English practice paper** for 2020 entry, designed to assess candidates applying for selective grammar schools in Essex. The paper is divided into three sections and runs to **16 questions** in total, with a total working time of **70 minutes** (including a 10-minute reading period).

The comprehension section is based on an extract from '**The Haunted Organist of Hurly Burly**', a Victorian novel by Rosa Mulholland published in 1891. Students are tested on their ability to infer meaning, locate detail, understand character portrayal, and identify literary devices. The passage describes a thunderstorm and its aftermath in a fictional village, focusing on the elderly Squire and Mistress Hurly.

The paper also includes **applied reasoning** tasks that test vocabulary and pattern recognition, and a **continuous writing** task completed in a separate booklet. The format and expectations are typical of selective school entrance assessments: full-sentence answers are required for most questions, and marks are deducted for poor spelling, grammar, and punctuation. This paper suits students preparing for competitive 11+ entry exams who need practice in close reading, inference, and formal written responses.

How this paper is organised

The paper opens with a **10-minute reading period** during which students read the Rosa Mulholland extract carefully. After this, students have **60 minutes** to complete all three sections without waiting for further instructions.

Section One: Comprehension carries 30 marks and should take about 30 minutes. It contains **12 questions** requiring full-sentence answers, apart from questions 5 and 9. Question 5 is a synonym task worth 5 marks; question 9 is a multiple-selection tick-box question worth 5 marks. The remaining questions range from 2 to 6 marks each and demand evidence-based answers, close reading, and inference.

Section Two: Applied Reasoning lasts 10 minutes and consists of **4 word-completion tasks** worth 5 marks total. These involve finding consecutive or spaced letter pairs to complete word pairs. **Section Three: Continuous Writing** is answered in a separate booklet and lasts 20 marks, though the question prompt is not reproduced in this document. Marks are allocated across five pages, as shown in the score table on the front cover.

Topics covered

- Reading comprehension of a Victorian literary extract with descriptive and figurative language
- Inference and deduction about character traits, emotions, and relationships from textual evidence
- Locating and retrieving specific information from dense narrative prose
- Understanding and interpreting the writer's purpose, tone, and intended reader impressions
- Identifying synonyms for advanced vocabulary in context (e.g. unwieldy, saturated, mire, deface, hale)
- Multiple-selection questions requiring careful matching of textual detail to statements
- Applied reasoning: consecutive letter-pair completion in word puzzles
- Applied reasoning: letter-pair completion with alphabetic spacing constraints
- Continuous writing in response to a prompt (task not shown in this booklet)
- Formal written expression with attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation throughout

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise reading pre-twentieth-century fiction aloud to familiarise yourself with older sentence structures and vocabulary before the exam.
- When answering inference questions, always quote or paraphrase a phrase from the text to support your point; examiners reward evidence.
- For synonym questions, read the sentence around the target word carefully to understand its meaning in context before choosing your answer.
- In multiple-selection tasks, eliminate obviously wrong options first, then re-read the passage to verify each remaining choice against the text.
- Budget your time strictly: if a question is worth 6 marks, aim to spend roughly 6 minutes on it, and move on if you are stuck.
- Leave a line between answers so you can add detail if you finish early and return to check your work.
- For applied reasoning, work through the alphabet systematically and write down possibilities rather than guessing; patterns become clearer on paper.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Failing to answer in full sentences when required: single-word or phrase answers lose marks even if factually correct.
- Ignoring the instruction to provide evidence from the text: stating an opinion without a supporting quotation or reference earns no credit.
- Misreading the span of a question, for example, citing evidence from paragraph two when the question specifies paragraph one only.
- Writing synonyms that are too informal or vague (e.g. 'soaked' instead of 'saturated'); precision and register matter.
- Ticking too many or too few boxes in multiple-selection questions; the rubric states exactly how many to choose.
- Spending too long on a single challenging question and leaving easier, higher-value questions incomplete at the end of the paper.

Exam technique

Read the passage during the 10-minute reading period without writing anything, but use the time to underline or mentally note key phrases, character descriptions, and shifts in tone. When the writing phase begins, skim the questions first to identify which are retrieval tasks (quick) and which require inference (slower).

Answer the comprehension questions in order, but if you are unsure about a 6-mark question, leave space and return to it after completing the rest of the section. For synonym questions, cross out any answer you write that you later realise is wrong, and replace it neatly; examiners mark the final answer only. In applied reasoning, work quickly but methodically: these are designed to be completed in 10 minutes, so do not over-think patterns.

Leave at least three minutes at the end to check your spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction. Read your answers aloud in your head to catch missing words or awkward phrasing. If you finish the comprehension and applied reasoning early, move straight to the continuous writing booklet rather than sitting idle; time management across all three sections is a skill that distinguishes top candidates.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students should revise techniques for analysing **descriptive writing**, particularly the use of personification, metaphor, and imagery to create atmosphere. Understanding how writers use **sentence structure** and **punctuation** to control pace and emphasis will help with both comprehension and continuous writing. Familiarity with **nineteenth-**

century social conventions (forms of address, clothing, domestic roles) will aid interpretation of period texts like this one.

Practise **synonym and antonym exercises** to build vocabulary range and precision. Work on **timed reading tasks** with a mix of fiction and non-fiction to improve stamina and speed. For applied reasoning, try similar letter-pattern puzzles and word-completion games to sharpen pattern recognition under pressure.

Finally, revise the **conventions of formal written English**: subject-verb agreement, comma use, and paragraph structure. These skills underpin both the comprehension answers and the continuous writing section, and marks are deducted for careless errors throughout the paper.

Key terms

Inference, Evidence, Synonym, Context, Figurative language, Character portrayal, Tone, Narrative voice, Victorian prose, Multiple-choice selection, Applied reasoning, Consecutive letters, Alphabetic spacing, Full-sentence answer, Pot-pourri

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2020 Entry
Test 1
ENGLISH

**ENGLISH PAPER MAIN TEST 1
FOR 2020 ENTRY**

Marking Scheme

ENGLISH PAPER MAIN TEST 1 FOR 2020 ENTRY – ANSWERS (The Haunted Organist of Hurly Burly)

Candidates must **NOT** tick more boxes than they are instructed to. Any who do will lose all the marks for that question.

Question	Answer	Marks
1.	2 marks: one for content, one for SPaG. Both humans and dogs hid inside.	2 marks
2.	2 marks: one for content, one for SPaG. They live one mile from the town/village.	2 marks
3.	3 marks: two for content, one for SPaG Mulholland suggests that the old woman was scared of the thunderstorm (one mark). This is because Mulholland suggests the old woman spent the thunderstorm <u>ON HER KNEES</u> and <u>PRAYING</u> . (Answer must include at least 'on her knees'; 'praying' – or can also accept <u>READING HER PRAYER-BOOK</u> and be written in proper SPaG to get the full three marks.)	3 marks
4.	6 marks; five for content, one for SPaG 2 marks per good explanation/use of evidence: This is because the deer/rooks/bees all survived the storm. Some roses and lilies were destroyed but their petals could still be used for pot-pourri. Bess would be collecting petals for pot-pourri the next morning and this would not happen if dangerous damage had occurred. The plums have not been damaged – just made wet. The birds are already diving again in the air. Candidates must accurately state that storm was not dangerous to get marks. Do not accept vague answers – must have precise reference to evidence in text to gain supplementary marks for interpretation. One sweeping statement alone for answer: 'The storm did not kill anyone' can only gain a maximum of two marks if SPaG is accurate.	6 marks
5.	Answers MUST be synonyms to the given word and can only be of one word in length. Answers could include – but also mark as correct any other one-word synonym to the given word. A. awkward/clumsy/unmanageable/weighty B. sodden/water-logged/swamped C. swamp/quagmire/bog D. destroy/ruin/spoil E. healthy/confident/light/fit	5 marks
6.	2 marks: one for content, one other for SPaG. Mulholland wants the reader to imagine Mistress Hurly as pretty/beautiful.	2 marks
7.	2 marks: one for content, one for SPaG. Mistress Hurly spent the thunderstorm hiding behind the Squire's chair/her husband's chair. – Ensure possessive apostrophe is present if student has written about Squire's chair for candidate to gain the accurate SPaG mark.	2 marks
8.	2 marks: one for content, one for SPaG. Mulholland suggests that Mistress Hurly was most frightened by the lightning.	2 marks
9.	C, D, E, G, H	5 marks
10.	6 marks: five for content, one for SPaG. Mulholland states that the Squire and Mistress Hurly used to argue about their son (one mark). 2 marks each for explanation of how each character argued: Mistress Hurly used to argue that the Squire was too stern and controlling of the son and tried to 'curb him'; while the Squire argued that his wife spoils the son as she was 'too soft' with him. Candidates must state that the couple argued about the son and must give a clear sense that they argued because the wife believed her husband was too hard on the son and that the husband believed his wife was too soft. 1 mark for SPaG.	6 marks
11.	2 marks: one for content, one for SPaG. The couple have stopped arguing because their son is now absent/dead/has gone away/is missing.	2 marks
12.	3 marks: two for content, one for SPaG. For one mark for content, students must make a clear argument: either that Mulholland wants the reader to like Squire and Mistress Hurly or that Mulholland wants the reader to dislike Squire and Mistress Hurly. Students should then select one piece of evidence to support their argument. This could include the following: Like Squire and Mistress Hurly Comic value that Mistress Hurly hides behind her husband's chair. Eating 'friendly' food like muffins – makes them seem unthreatening. The fact they often look at each other is charming. The fact they are closer makes them seem loving. The fact they miss their son is heat-warming/makes the reader feel sorry for them. Dislike Squire and Mistress Hurly Mistress Hurly hides behind her husband's chair and so seems silly/cowardly. The Squire does not help his wife when she is scared but remains seated at table – so he seems uncaring.	3 marks
TOTAL		40 marks
Applied Reasoning (1 mark per question except question 4 which is 2 marks) 1. dough ghosts 2. gunpoint signpost 3. elapse upset 4. spate those space chose		5 marks
Continuous Writing This will be marked as one piece of work and candidates will be expected to write in appropriate styles for the two contrasting tasks. Candidates will be assessed on accuracy, spelling, punctuation, the quality of writing and originality.		15 marks
TOTAL		60 MARKS

Answer-Key Notes: 11+ English Answers

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you mark this paper and learn from each answer.

How to use this answer key

This answer key contains mark allocations, acceptable answers and marking guidance for a literary comprehension, vocabulary puzzles and continuous writing. **Award marks exactly as specified:** most questions split content and SPaG, so a factually correct answer with poor spelling or grammar will lose one mark. The mark scheme is generous with alternative phrasings (question 5 accepts any correct one-word synonym, question 12 accepts either 'like' or 'dislike' if well supported), but insists on precision where stated (question 4 requires the candidate to say the storm was 'not dangerous', not simply list pleasant details).

Careless slips — a missing apostrophe in question 7, ticking six boxes instead of five in question 9 — cost marks disproportionately. Knowledge gaps show up as vague answers that fail to quote evidence or as wildly inappropriate synonyms in question 5. **Check the worked examples below whenever an answer loses marks** for reasons that are not immediately obvious; many deductions reflect subtleties in the passage rather than factual errors.

Continuous writing is marked holistically for fifteen marks. The guidance states 'accuracy, spelling, punctuation, quality of writing and originality', but gives no breakdown. If handwriting is illegible or the response ignores the prompt, award zero and note the reason on the script.

Score interpretation

The paper totals sixty marks: forty for comprehension and vocabulary (questions 1–12), five for applied reasoning (the letter-pair puzzles) and fifteen for continuous writing. A score of **48–60 suggests strong readiness:** comprehension answers are detailed and supported by evidence, synonyms are precise, and the written piece shows varied sentence structure and accurate spelling. Scores in this band indicate that vocabulary, inference and extended-writing skills are all secure.

Scores of 36–47 are middling. Candidates often lose marks on the longer inference questions (4, 10, 12) by being vague or omitting SPaG checks, and may struggle with less common synonyms ('unwieldy', 'saturated'). The continuous writing may be clearly structured but lack originality or contain repeated punctuation errors. **Targeted practice on inference and on proofreading** will move a middling score upward.

Below 36, fundamental gaps appear: answers may paraphrase the question without adding evidence, synonyms may be multi-word phrases or incorrect, and the extended writing may be brief, off-topic or marred by pervasive spelling errors. Candidates scoring in this range need systematic vocabulary-building, regular short-answer practice with a focus on quotation, and explicit teaching of sentence punctuation before attempting full timed papers.

Worked examples

Reading comprehension, questions 1–4

Questions 1–3 test straightforward retrieval ('both humans and dogs hid', 'one mile', 'on her knees and praying'). **Candidates lose the SPaG mark** if they copy fragments instead of writing a complete sentence or if they misspell 'praying' as 'praiing'. Question 4 is the first multi-mark inference question: the mark scheme awards two marks per piece of evidence that the storm was not dangerous, but only if the candidate explicitly states that conclusion. Listing happy details without the 'not dangerous' claim caps the score at two.

Q3 : Mulholland suggests that the old woman was scared of the thunderstorm. This is because Mulholland suggests the old woman spent the thunderstorm on her knees and praying.

The question asks how the woman *felt* (one content mark) and for evidence (second content mark). **'On her knees' and 'praying' are the two key phrases** from line 5; writing 'reading her prayer-book' is equally acceptable. Many candidates write 'She was scared' but forget to add the evidence, losing one mark. The SPaG mark requires a full sentence with correct spelling of 'praying'.

Q4 : The storm was not dangerous. The deer, rooks and bees all survived; Bess will collect rose petals for pot-pourri the next morning, which shows normal life continues; the plums are wet but not damaged; the birds are already flying again.

Six marks (five content, one SPaG). The mark scheme gives two marks for each 'good explanation/use of evidence' and insists that **the candidate must state the storm was not dangerous**. Simply writing 'The storm did not kill anyone' as a standalone sentence earns a maximum of two marks even if SPaG is perfect, because it is a sweeping claim without supporting detail. Select any two pieces of evidence from the list (survival of animals, pot-pourri plans, undamaged plums, birds diving) and explain each in a sentence; that yields four content marks plus one for the opening assertion, then one for SPaG.

Vocabulary and retrieval, questions 5–8

Question 5 is pure vocabulary: **answers must be one word** and must be true synonyms ('awkward' or 'clumsy' for 'unwieldy', not 'heavy and hard to move'). The mark scheme lists examples but will accept any correct one-word synonym, so 'bog' and 'quagmire' both score for 'mire'. Questions 6–8 return to straightforward retrieval. The SPaG mark in question 7 specifically checks for the possessive apostrophe in 'Squire's chair'; writing 'Squires chair' loses that mark even if the content is correct.

Q5(b) : sodden (or water-logged, swamped)

'Saturated' (line 7) means completely soaked. **'Sodden' is the closest single-word synonym**; 'water-logged' and 'swamped' are also accepted because the mark scheme permits hyphens in compound adjectives. 'Wet' is too vague and would not score; 'soaking' might be accepted if clearly used as an adjective, but 'sodden' is safer.

Q7 : Mistress Hurly spent the thunderstorm hiding behind the Squire's chair.

Line 18 states she 'crept out from behind the Squire's chair'. **The possessive apostrophe in 'Squire's' is compulsory** for the SPaG mark. Writing 'her husband's chair' is equally acceptable and also requires the apostrophe. Many candidates omit the apostrophe, reducing a two-mark answer to one.

Inference and interpretation, questions 9–12

Question 9 is a five-option tick-box. The mark scheme states **candidates must not tick more than five boxes**; those who do lose all five marks, even if the correct five are among their selections. The correct answers (C, D, E, G, H) come from lines 25–28: tanned skin, grey hair, bristly hair, hushed voice, dim eyes. Question 10 is the longest answer (six marks) and requires candidates to state the topic of the argument (their son), then explain both sides (wife: too stern/curbing; husband: too soft/spoiling). Question 12 asks for a personal judgement backed by one piece of evidence; either 'like' or 'dislike' will score if the reasoning is sound.

Q9 : C, D, E, G, H

C (tanned skin, line 25), D (grey hair, line 26), E (bristly hair, line 26), G (hushed voice, line 28), H (dim eyes, line 27). **Option A is false** because the Squire remains seated and calm. Option B (white hair) contradicts 'grey'. Option F (noisy) contradicts 'a hush on his loud voice'. Option I (shorter than his wife) contradicts 'he was only a head higher'. If a candidate ticks six or more boxes, award zero for the question.

Q10 : Mulholland states that the Squire and Mistress Hurly used to argue about their son. Mistress Hurly argued that the Squire was too stern and tried to curb him. The Squire argued that his wife was too soft and spoilt the boy.

Six marks (five content, one SPaG). One mark for identifying the son as the subject. Two marks for explaining the wife's view ('Don't curb my son too much', line 33); **candidates must convey that she thought her husband was too controlling**. Two marks for explaining the husband's view ('You ruin the lad with softness', line 34); candidates must convey that he thought his wife spoiled the boy. Finally, one mark for accurate SPaG throughout. Vague answers such as 'They argued about parenting' score at most three marks because they lack the required detail.

Q12 : I think Mulholland wants the reader to like the Hurlys. The fact they miss their son is heart-warming and makes the reader feel sorry for them.

Three marks (two content, one SPaG). **One mark for stating 'like' or 'dislike'**; both are acceptable. One mark for selecting relevant evidence and explaining it. The mark scheme lists several acceptable reasons on each side: for 'like', the comic value of hiding, eating muffins, looking at each other often, missing their son; for 'dislike', Mistress Hurly seems silly/cowardly, the Squire seems uncaring. Any one reason, clearly explained, earns the second content mark. Generic statements such as 'Mulholland describes them well' score zero for evidence.

Applied reasoning (letter-pair puzzles)

These are logic puzzles, not comprehension. Each requires candidates to find a pair of letters that completes two words. Question 1 uses consecutive letters ('gh' completes 'dou(gh)' and '(gh)ost'). Question 2 uses letters one apart ('np' completes 'gu(n)(p)oint' and 'sig(n)(p)ost'). Question 3 uses letters two apart. Question 4 (worth two marks) asks for two different solutions. Candidates who write a two-word answer ('gun point') or who guess randomly will score zero; these questions test systematic alphabet knowledge.

AR Q2 : n, p (to make gunpoint, signpost)

The letters must be one apart in the alphabet. 'N' and 'p' are separated by 'o'. 'Gunpoint' and 'signpost' are both real words. A common error is to write 'in' and 'os', creating 'guino int' (nonsense). Another error is writing 'gun point' as two words; the mark scheme specifies one-word answers.

AR Q4 : spate / those AND space / chose

Two marks, one per valid pair. **The instruction says 'a different letter for each pair'**, so 'spa(t)e / (t)hose' and 'spa(c)e / (c)hose' are both required. If a candidate gives only one pair, award one mark. If a candidate gives 'spate / those' twice, award one mark because the letters are not different.

Next steps

After marking, **sit with your child and review every lost mark together**. For comprehension questions, return to the passage and locate the sentence or phrase that contains the answer; if the answer was vague ('the storm was bad'), practise rewriting it with a direct quotation ('the storm was not dangerous because the birds had begun to dive again'). For the letter-pair puzzles, work through the alphabet aloud to reinforce the 'one apart' or 'two apart' pattern. For continuous writing, identify the two most frequent errors (often missing capital letters after full stops, or overuse of 'and then') and set a single target for the next piece.

If the score is below 36, **do not attempt another full paper immediately**; instead, spend two weeks on focused skills work (daily synonym practice, short inference questions with model answers, one paragraph of timed writing every other day) before returning to timed conditions. If the score is 48 or above, move on to a similar paper under stricter timing or try a paper from a different publisher to ensure the skills transfer. Keep a log of recurring mistakes; patterns (always losing the SPaG mark, always struggling with question 12) guide your revision far better than overall scores.

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