

11+ PRACTICE PACK

CSSE 11+ English 2021

Complete Practice Pack

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01 Question Booklet

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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The Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex

**ENGLISH PAPER MAIN TEST 1
FOR 2021 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. The number of marks available for each section is indicated in the right hand margin.
6. Correct spelling and grammar will be awarded marks.
7. Punctuation should be clear and exact.
8. Where you are asked to choose between a number of responses choose always the most appropriate response.
9. If you finish with time to spare, please remember to check your work.
10. **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 (8)		
2 (6)		
3 (11)		
4 (6)		
5 (9)		
6 (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.

SECTION ONE

Please do not write in this space

1. (a) Does the narrator's stairway seem well designed?

4 marks

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.....

(b) Give two reasons for your answer. Write your explanation in proper sentences.

●

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●

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.....

2. Describe the wallpaper on the stairway.

1 mark

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3. What two reasons does Uttley give to explain why the narrator is sitting on the stairs? Write your answer in proper sentences.

3 marks

●

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●

.....

.....

R
W
(8)



<p>4. Uttley writes: ‘I was suddenly aware how quiet it was, never a sound, I might have been the only person in the world. Even the clock stopped ticking, and the mice ceased rustling’.</p> <p>What ideas does Uttley communicate to the reader by making the narrator’s world suddenly go so quiet?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>2 marks</p>	<p>Please do not write in this space</p>
<p>5. As soon as Uttley has established how quiet the narrator’s house has become, she has the lady appear coming ‘downstairs from the upper floor’.</p> <p>What does Uttley suggest to the reader about the lady by having her appear in the sudden quiet?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>2 marks</p>	
<p>6. Which two of the narrator’s five senses work when the narrator sees the lady on the stairway?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>2 marks</p>	<p>R</p> <p>W</p> <p>(6)</p>





7. Write a synonym (a word or a few words with the same meaning as the word used by Uttley in the text) for the following words.

5 marks

Please do not write in this space

For example: Ceased (line 9)Stopped

- a) Tucked (line 5).....
- b) Sprang (line 12).....
- c) Grave (line 13)
- d) Pierce (line 14)
- e) Pallor (line 19)

8. (a) Write three actions that Uttley has the narrator do when the lady appears.

3 marks

-
-
-
-
-
-

(b) Do these actions suggest that the lady frightens the narrator? Explain your answer in a proper sentence.

3 marks

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.....

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.....

R
W
(11)





9. Uttley writes that although the lady's skirts 'took all the stairway,' the narrator 'never felt them touch me, and this gave me a curious sensation'.

3 marks

Please do not write in this space

What ideas does Uttley communicate to the reader about the lady when she writes this phrase? Explain your answer in proper sentences.

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10. On line 21, Uttley writes that the narrator leant over the stair rail to watch the lady go downstairs and then 'suddenly the lady was gone'. What immediately changes after the lady has gone? Please explain your answer in proper sentences.

3 marks

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

R
W
(6)





11. From lines 21-31, Uttley has the narrator do a lot of action.
Tick 4 boxes that accurately match the action the narrator does.

4 marks

Please do not write in this space

- A. The narrator watches the lady go into the sitting room
- B. The narrator sets the clock going again
- C. The narrator whistles
- D. The narrator runs downstairs
- E. The narrator is surprised to find the sitting room empty
- F. The narrator asks her mother where the lady is
- G. The narrator thinks she has imagined the lady
- H. The narrator thinks she has seen the lady

12. (a) Read lines 32-36 again. Does Uttley suggest that the mother does believe or does not believe that the narrator saw a lady on the stairway?

1 mark

.....

.....

.....

(b) Explain two ways in which Uttley has the mother behave that supports your answer.

4 marks

-
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-
-
-
-
-

GO TO NEXT PAGE FOR APPLIED REASONING QUESTIONS.

R
W
(9)



SPEND ABOUT 10 MINUTES ON THIS SECTION.

SECTION TWO**APPLIED REASONING** (You should spend about 10 minutes on this section)Please do
not write in
this space

Each of the next five questions involves replacing missing letters.
In each pair, the letters removed from the two words are the same.
The two words for each question have a similar meaning.

For example: h()us() and h()m()
should be completed h(**o**)us(**e**) and h(**o**)m(**e**)
the missing letters for this pair were **o** then **e**

Question 1

1 mark

t()l() and spe()()

Question 2

1 mark

()urpr()()e and a()ton()()h

Question 3

1 mark

dri()() and a()()nue

Question 4

1 mark

()sc()p() and ()v()d()

Question 5

1 mark

()()()ta()t and ()()()ne()t

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

R
W

(5)



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The Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex

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 'A Traveller In Time' by Alison Uttley.

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 'A Traveller In Time', a novel written by Alison Uttley and published in 1939. Reproduced with permission of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Alison Uttley.

GO TO NEXT PAGE

'A Traveller In Time' was written by Alison Uttley in 1939. In this passage, from near the beginning of the book, the young narrator is sitting alone on the stairway at home as evening falls.

1 Ours was a steep, crooked stair, with a handrail on one side, very narrow, with rooms leading
2 off it so suddenly that it was easy to fall headlong as one stepped from a doorway. We had
3 wallpaper with leaves on it, like a green wood in spring, and I used to sit on the stairs,
4 pretending I was in a forest far away from London with birds singing round me. I was sitting
5 there one evening, with my feet tucked under me, in the blue dusk, waiting for the
6 lamplighter¹ to come whistling down the street to bring a gleam to the stairway. There was a
7 streetlamp near, and this shone brilliantly through the window over the front door.

8 I was suddenly aware how quiet it was, never a sound, I might have been the only
9 person in the world. Even the clock stopped ticking, and the mice ceased rustling.
10 I turned my head and saw a lady coming downstairs from the upper floor. She was dressed in
11 a black dress which swept round her like a cloud, and at her neck was a narrow white frill
12 which shone like ivory. Her eyes were very bright, and blue as violets. I sprang to my feet and
13 smiled up at her, into the beautiful grave face she bent towards me. She gave an answering
14 smile, and her deep-set eyes seemed to pierce me, and I caught my breath as I stood aside to
15 let her pass. I never heard a footstep, she was there before I was aware. She went by as I
16 leaned against the wall, and I pressed myself against the paper to leave room for her full
17 floating skirts which took all the stairway. I never felt them touch me, and this gave me a
18 curious sensation. Soundlessly she swayed down the stairway, and I stood watching her,
19 smelling the sweet, faint odour of her dress, seeing the pallor of her hands which held her
20 ruffled skirts, yet heard nothing at all.

21 I leaned over the rail to watch her, and suddenly she was gone. The clock ticked
22 loudly, the sounds of the street came to my ears, the lamplighter's whistle, clear and round,
23 fluted through the air, and the bright gleam of the gas lamp danced through the window upon

24 the leaf-patterned wall. I ran downstairs and pushed open the door into the sitting room.

25 expecting to see her there. The room was empty, and I went thoughtfully down to the
26 kitchen where my mother was cooking our evening meal and asked her about the lady.

27 'There is no one, child,' she exclaimed. 'You've imagined her. It is easy to think you
28 see someone in the dusk with the flickering streetlights falling on the walls. It was the
29 shadow of somebody in the street perhaps.'

30 I was positive I had seen the lady and I described her little pleated frill and the way
31 her skirts hung over a quilted petticoat.

32 Mother was very quiet, as if she were thinking what to say next. Then she changed
33 the conversation, asking me if we would like to make treacle toffee that night, for soon it
34 would be Guy Fawkes's Day, and we should have fireworks as usual in our little paved yard.

35 I thought no more of the lady, nor did I see her again, but my mother looked at me
36 sometimes with a curious glance, as if she were anxious about me.

¹ *A lamplighter was a person employed to light the streetlights in the olden days before electric lamps were invented.*

END OF PASSAGE



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 the **CSSE (Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex)** English main test for **2021 entry**, designed for candidates sitting the **11-Plus examination**. The paper assesses reading comprehension, vocabulary, reasoning skills, and creative writing through **three distinct sections**: a comprehension exercise based on a literary passage, applied reasoning puzzles involving word patterns, and a continuous writing task.

The reading passage is taken from '**A Traveller In Time**' by Alison Uttley, published in 1939. Candidates are given **10 minutes of reading time** to absorb the text (a first-person account of a child encountering a mysterious lady on a staircase) before tackling comprehension questions that test inference, literary appreciation, vocabulary knowledge, and close textual analysis. The passage evokes an eerie, atmospheric mood and requires students to engage with subtle authorial choices.

This paper suits students preparing for **selective grammar school entry in Essex** and provides a rigorous test of reading maturity, technical reasoning, and written expression under timed conditions. The total examination time is **1 hour 10 minutes**, and candidates may refer back to the passage as often as needed during the comprehension section.

How this paper is organised

The test is divided into three parts with clearly defined timing guidelines. **Section One: Comprehension** comprises **30 minutes of working time** (plus the initial 10-minute reading window) and is worth **30 marks**. It contains **12 main questions** (some with sub-parts), including open-ended tasks requiring full sentences, a synonym-matching exercise, and a tick-box multiple-response question.

Section Two: Applied Reasoning follows immediately and should take approximately **10 minutes**. This section presents **five word-completion puzzles**, each worth **1 mark**, testing vocabulary, spelling, and pattern recognition. Candidates must identify missing letters that are common to pairs of synonyms, requiring both lateral thinking and a strong command of English spelling conventions.

Section Three: Continuous Writing is allocated **20 minutes** and is completed in a separate booklet. The paper explicitly states that after the first 10 minutes, candidates may proceed through sections at their own pace without waiting for instruction. The cover sheet indicates a total of **45 marks** for the comprehension component and emphasises that correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation carry marks throughout.

Topics covered

- Reading comprehension of **narrative prose** from a 1930s children's novel, requiring close reading and textual reference
- Inference and deduction about characters, mood, and authorial intent based on subtle language choices such as silence, sensory detail, and pacing
- Analysis of **literary techniques** including atmosphere, characterisation, and the use of contrast (e.g. sudden quiet followed by the resumption of sound)
- Vocabulary in context, including understanding of archaic or formal terms such as pierce, pallor, grave, and the ability to supply accurate **synonyms**
- Applied reasoning through word-completion puzzles testing **pattern recognition**, spelling knowledge, and understanding of synonym pairs
- Identification of **sensory language** (sight, hearing, smell) and the narrator's five senses as deployed in the passage
- Textual sequencing and retrieval: tracking the narrator's actions and the mother's responses across multiple lines
- Explanation and justification in full sentences, demonstrating the ability to construct coherent, grammatically accurate responses
- Understanding of how **narrative perspective** (first-person retrospective) shapes the reader's experience of events
- Continuous writing (assessed separately) requiring extended composition under timed conditions

How to use this paper for revision

- Read the passage twice during the 10-minute window: once for overall sense and once to note key phrases, shifts in mood, and descriptive detail.
- Underline or mentally note sensory words (quiet, gleam, odour, pallor) and contrasts (silence versus ticking clock, stillness versus movement) as you read.
- For synonym questions, check the word in context before answering; words like grave can have multiple meanings depending on usage.
- In inference questions, support your answer by quoting or closely paraphrasing the text rather than relying on general impressions or assumptions.
- Practise writing answers in full sentences even when the question does not explicitly require it; markers reward clear expression and grammatical accuracy.
- In applied reasoning puzzles, write out both completed words to verify that the missing letters match and that both words genuinely share a similar meaning.
- Allocate your 30 minutes carefully across the 12 comprehension questions; longer, multi-mark questions deserve proportionally more time and detail.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Skimming the passage too quickly and missing the subtle shifts in atmosphere (e.g. the sudden onset of silence before the lady appears, the return of sound when she vanishes).
- Confusing the narrator's emotional response with evidence of fear; the text shows curiosity and wonder (she smiles, leans over the rail) rather than terror, yet students often misread the mood.
- Providing single-word answers or incomplete sentences when the rubric specifies 'write your answer in proper sentences', losing marks for presentation and grammar.
- Choosing synonyms that are vaguely related but not precise (e.g. 'serious' rather than solemn for grave), or ignoring the specific line reference provided.
- In the tick-box question (Question 11), selecting more or fewer than the required four boxes, or ticking actions that are implied rather than explicitly stated in the text.
- Misinterpreting the mother's response as belief when the text shows she dismisses the encounter ('You've imagined her') and then changes the subject to deflect further discussion.

Exam technique

Begin by using the **10-minute reading period** strategically: read the passage once for comprehension, then skim the questions to see what topics they target (characterisation, mood, vocabulary) and re-read the passage with those themes in mind. This dual reading ensures you absorb both narrative flow and analytical detail.

When answering comprehension questions, always check the **mark allocation**. A 1-mark question may require a brief factual answer, whereas a 4-mark question expects a developed response with textual evidence and explanation. For multi-part questions (e.g. 1a and 1b), ensure you address each sub-part fully rather than combining them into one answer. Use the line numbers provided to locate relevant sections quickly.

In the **applied reasoning section**, work methodically: if a puzzle stumps you, move on and return to it later with fresh eyes. The puzzles are designed to be completed in roughly two minutes each, so do not let one difficult word-pair consume excessive time. For the continuous writing task, spend a minute planning your structure before you begin, as clarity and coherence under pressure are key to scoring well in this final section.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students preparing for this paper should revise **literary comprehension techniques** using a range of 19th and early 20th-century fiction extracts, as the Uttley passage typifies the formal, descriptive prose style common in selective school entrance exams. Practise identifying authorial intent, particularly how writers use pacing, silence, and sensory detail to build mood and suggest meaning beyond the literal events.

Vocabulary development is equally important. Expand your knowledge of **synonyms and formal register** by reading widely and maintaining a vocabulary journal. Work through reasoning puzzles that test spelling and word patterns, such as those found in Bond or GL Assessment practice books, to build confidence with the applied reasoning format.

For the continuous writing element, revise **narrative and descriptive writing techniques**, focusing on sentence variety, paragraphing, and the effective use of literary devices. Timed writing practice is essential; aim to produce a coherent, well-structured piece in 20 minutes. Finally, consolidate your understanding of **grammatical accuracy** and punctuation conventions, as marks are awarded throughout the paper for technical precision.

Key terms

Inference, Synonym, Characterisation, Atmosphere, Sensory language, Narrator, First-person perspective, Textual evidence, Literary analysis, Mood, Comprehension, Applied reasoning, Continuous writing, Mark allocation, Close reading

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The Consortium of Selective Schools in Essex

2021 Entry Test 1 ENGLISH

**ENGLISH PAPER MAIN TEST 1
FOR 2021 ENTRY**

Marking Scheme

ENGLISH PAPER MAIN TEST 1 FOR 2021 ENTRY – ANSWERS (A Traveller In Time)

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.	One mark for clear answer: No Two more possible marks for explanations: ● The stairway is steep. ● The stairway is crooked. ● There is only a handrail on one side. ● The stairway is narrow. ● Rooms come directly onto the stairs. ● It is easy to fall headlong. One mark per explanation. One overall mark for SPaG (do not accept an answer that says the stairway is well designed owing to the wallpaper, etc – this is a later decoration rather than part of its initial design.)	4 marks		
2.	Leaves on it (and/or) like a green wood in spring. (You can accept direct quotes for this answer.)	1 mark		
3.	The narrator would pretend to be in a forest far from London with birds singing. The narrator was waiting for the lamplighter to come and light the street lamp near the house. (Candidates must cover these two areas to gain the two points; an additional point for accurate SPaG.)	3 marks		
4.	Candidates should reflect on the unnaturalness of silence. The sudden quiet is spooky, is scary, <u>makes the reader worried</u> . Candidates may identify ideas of narrator as ‘only person in the world’ to <u>suggest loneliness/vulnerability or danger</u> . Candidates may identify ideas of the clock not ticking to suggest that <u>time has ceased to function normally</u> . (Give a maximum of two marks for a thoughtful, well explained answer eg; the underlined section; one mark for a short assertion.)	2 marks		
5.	Candidates should link the lady to the unnatural silence: perhaps Uttley is suggesting that the lady is a ghost or something supernatural. Some candidates may suggest that the lady is the reason for the silence – <u>and so may suggest that the lady has power/is magical</u> . (Give a maximum of two marks for a thoughtful, well explained answer eg; the underlined section; one mark for a short assertion.)	2 marks		
6.	Sight and smell.	2 marks		
7.	a) Hidden/tied/folded b) Jumped/leapt c) Serious/solemn/unsmiling d) Stab/impale/pin e) Paleness/whiteness Please only mark as accurate words/phrases that fit within the context. Eg: writing ‘somewhere where you are buried’ for item c) is NOT accurate. Likewise, cannot accept ‘colour’ or ‘tone’ for item e) as this is too vague.	5 marks		
8.	a) (i) Narrator jumps to feet. (ii) Narrator smiles at lady. (iii) Narrator stands aside/presses self against wall to let lady pass. (iv) Narrator catches her breath. One mark for three of these accurate actions. SPaG is not marked for this section. Direct quotations are allowed. (b) No. Candidates may explain by stating that: None of these actions suggest that the narrator is frightened by the lady – if frightened, the narrator may have tried to run away and would not have politely stood. Candidates may also explain that the fact the narrator smiles at the lady suggest friendliness, not fear. The narrator also describes her face as beautiful. One mark for a clear ‘No’ answer. One mark for an explanation. One mark for accurate SPaG.	6 marks		
9.	Candidates should be clear that there is something supernatural/unnatural/unreal about the lady: the narrator should have definitely felt the skirts in the narrow stairway and so the fact that the narrator feels nothing demonstrates that there is something ghostly/unreal occurring. Please give a mark for the candidate identifying the unnaturalness/impossibility of narrator not feeling the skirts. Please give another mark for candidate extending explanation to consider supernatural/ghostly or imaginative conclusion (eg; the narrator is imagining seeing the lady OR the lady the narrator sees must be a ghost). Please give one mark for accurate SPaG.	3 marks		
10.	The candidates need to make clear that <u>sound returns</u> /comes back; the clock is ticking loudly again, she can hear the lamplighter whistle, etc. 2 marks for an answer that states that sound has returned and so shows intellectual engagement. One mark for an answer that just copies the fact that the narrator can hear the clock ticking, etc. One mark for SPaG.	3 marks		
11.	D, E, F, H.	4 marks		
12.	Candidates are fine to answer that Uttley suggests that the mother does or does not believe the narrator. Either answer (does believe or does not believe) gets one mark. The candidates then need to give two reasons to explain their answer (see table below). They can get one mark per brief answer; two marks for an explained answer; eg; the underlined section.	5 marks		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Mother does believe the narrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mother is anxious about what the narrator has seen as <u>she has to be quiet and think about what to say next</u>. ● The mother does not want the narrator to think about the lady <u>and so distracts the narrator with talk about toffee and bonfire night</u>. ● The mother remains worried about the narrator <u>as she continues to look at her ‘as if she were anxious about me’ long after the narrator has forgotten the incident</u>. </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Mother does not believe the narrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mother does not want to upset the narrator by saying that she doesn’t believe her – <u>and so is silent while she decides what to say</u>. ● The mother is anxious about the girl imagining things <u>and so distracts her with talk about toffee and bonfire night</u>. ● The mother remains worried about the narrator seeing things/being a bit mad long after the narrator has forgotten the incident. </td> </tr> </table>		<p>Mother does believe the narrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mother is anxious about what the narrator has seen as <u>she has to be quiet and think about what to say next</u>. ● The mother does not want the narrator to think about the lady <u>and so distracts the narrator with talk about toffee and bonfire night</u>. ● The mother remains worried about the narrator <u>as she continues to look at her ‘as if she were anxious about me’ long after the narrator has forgotten the incident</u>. 	<p>Mother does not believe the narrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mother does not want to upset the narrator by saying that she doesn’t believe her – <u>and so is silent while she decides what to say</u>. ● The mother is anxious about the girl imagining things <u>and so distracts her with talk about toffee and bonfire night</u>. ● The mother remains worried about the narrator seeing things/being a bit mad long after the narrator has forgotten the incident. 	
<p>Mother does believe the narrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mother is anxious about what the narrator has seen as <u>she has to be quiet and think about what to say next</u>. ● The mother does not want the narrator to think about the lady <u>and so distracts the narrator with talk about toffee and bonfire night</u>. ● The mother remains worried about the narrator <u>as she continues to look at her ‘as if she were anxious about me’ long after the narrator has forgotten the incident</u>. 	<p>Mother does not believe the narrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mother does not want to upset the narrator by saying that she doesn’t believe her – <u>and so is silent while she decides what to say</u>. ● The mother is anxious about the girl imagining things <u>and so distracts her with talk about toffee and bonfire night</u>. ● The mother remains worried about the narrator seeing things/being a bit mad long after the narrator has forgotten the incident. 			
Do not penalise candidates if they have not lined up answers correctly against bullet points.				
TOTAL		40 marks		
Applied Reasoning (1 mark per question)		5 marks		
Q1: talk and speak Q2: surprise and astonish Q3: drive and avenue Q4: escape and evade Q5: contact and connect				
		TOTAL 45 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

Use this mark scheme to assess each answer against the published criteria, awarding marks exactly as shown. Where spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) contribute to the total, deduct only when the scheme specifies; minor slips in otherwise accurate answers should not be penalised beyond the SPaG allocation. Distinguish between careless errors (misreading a question, ticking too many boxes) and genuine gaps in comprehension or vocabulary.

For questions worth two or three marks, check whether the candidate has provided sufficient detail or cited appropriate evidence from the passage. Partial answers often earn partial credit, so read the guidance for each question carefully.

Consult the worked examples below when an answer sits on the boundary or when you want to understand the reasoning behind a model response. They show **how the passage supports the correct answer** and highlight common pitfalls.

Score interpretation

This paper carries 45 marks in total: 40 for the comprehension and vocabulary tasks, 5 for the applied-reasoning section. A score of 36 or above (80 per cent) indicates confident reading comprehension, precise vocabulary and the ability to infer meaning from context. Candidates at this level rarely miss straightforward retrieval questions and can explain their answers in clear, grammatical sentences.

Scores between 27 and 35 (60–79 per cent) suggest solid understanding with occasional lapses in inference or vocabulary. Review which question types caused difficulty: synonym tasks, multi-mark inference questions or evidence-based explanations. Errors in the applied-reasoning section often reflect time pressure rather than weak vocabulary.

Below 27 marks usually signals difficulty with implicit meaning, unfamiliar period language or the demand to write extended answers under timed conditions. Check whether the candidate skipped higher-value questions or wrote incomplete responses; both patterns point to exam technique rather than reading ability alone.

Worked examples

Comprehension and inference, Q1–6

These questions test retrieval, simple inference and attention to descriptive detail. Marks are lost when candidates copy whole sentences instead of selecting the precise phrase, or when they assert an idea without citing textual evidence. Question 4 and Question 5 each carry two marks and **reward explanation**, not mere repetition of a quotation. One-word answers rarely score full marks here.

Q4 : The sudden quiet is spooky / scary / makes the reader worried; loneliness / vulnerability / danger; time has ceased to function normally.

Uttley writes that even the clock stopped ticking and the narrator 'might have been the only person in the world'. **The exam expects you to connect silence with unease or supernatural threat**, not simply to note that the house went quiet. Saying 'it was very quiet' earns no marks; explaining that the stillness feels eerie or unnatural earns both.

Q5 : Perhaps the lady is a ghost or something supernatural; the lady has power / is magical; the lady is the reason for the silence.

The lady appears at the exact moment silence descends and vanishes when sound returns. Candidates who write 'the lady might be a ghost' without linking her to the silence earn one mark; those who explain that **her arrival and the unnatural quiet are connected** earn two. The question tests inference, so vague statements such as 'she is mysterious' do not score.

Vocabulary in context, Q7

Each item asks for a synonym that fits both the passage and the grammatical role of the original word. Marks are lost when the replacement is too broad ('colour' for 'pallor') or changes the word class ('burying place' for 'grave' as an adjective). **Test every synonym by substituting it into the sentence**; if the meaning shifts or the grammar breaks, the answer is wrong.

Q7(c) grave : Serious / solemn / unsmiling

In context, 'grave' describes the lady's facial expression, meaning serious or solemn. Writing 'somewhere where you are buried' is factually accurate for the noun but does not fit 'the beautiful grave face'. The mark scheme explicitly rejects answers that ignore grammatical context, even when the definition is correct in isolation.

Q7(e) pallor : Paleness / whiteness

'Pallor' refers to an unusually pale complexion. Answers such as 'colour' or 'tone' are too vague; they could describe any hue, not the specific lack of colour that 'pallor' denotes. **Precision matters**: the passage emphasises the lady's ghostly appearance, so the synonym must capture paleness, not merely acknowledge that skin has a tone.

Actions and evidence, Q8

Part (a) awards one mark for listing three accurate actions; spelling and grammar are not assessed here, and direct quotations are acceptable. Part (b) requires a clear yes-or-no answer supported by reference to the narrator's behaviour. Candidates lose marks by hedging ('maybe she is a bit scared') or by failing to cite evidence (smiling, standing politely) that contradicts fear.

Q8(b) : No. None of these actions suggest fear; the narrator smiles and stands aside politely rather than running away. The narrator describes the lady's face as beautiful.

The question tests whether you can evaluate a list of actions against an interpretive claim. Frightened people do not smile at the source of their fear or pause to admire beauty. **One mark is for the clear 'No'; the second and third are for evidence and SPaG.** Writing 'She was not scared because she smiled' earns two marks if the grammar is sound; adding that a frightened person would flee earns the third.

Inference and the supernatural, Q9-10

Both questions ask you to explain something impossible or unnatural. Full marks require you to identify the oddness (the skirts did not touch; sound suddenly returned) and then **draw a conclusion about what it means**. Restating the text without interpretation earns only one mark; extending the logic to 'the lady must be a ghost' or 'normality resumed' earns two.

Q9 : There is something supernatural / ghostly / unreal about the lady; the narrator should have felt the skirts but did not, which is impossible in a narrow stairway.

The passage states that the skirts 'took all the stairway' yet the narrator 'never felt them touch me'. In a confined space, physical contact is unavoidable unless one figure is not truly physical. **One mark for noting the impossibility, one for concluding the lady is ghostly, one for accurate SPaG.** Writing 'the skirts were very big' misses the point entirely.

Q10 : Sound returns: the clock ticks loudly again, the lamplighter's whistle is audible, street sounds resume.

Immediately after the lady vanishes, the narrator hears the clock, the whistle and the street. **The question rewards candidates who state that sound comes back, showing they understand the passage's structure:** silence marks the lady's presence, noise marks her absence. Simply copying 'the clock ticked' without noting the return of sound earns only one mark plus SPaG.

Selecting evidence, Q11

You must tick exactly four boxes. Ticking more or fewer forfeits all four marks, even if your selections are otherwise correct. Read lines 21–31 carefully and match each statement to a specific sentence in the passage. **The mark scheme penalises guesswork:** candidates who tick five boxes because they are unsure lose everything.

Q11 : D, E, F, H

D: 'I ran downstairs' (line 24). E: 'The room was empty' (line 25) shows surprise. F: 'asked her about the lady' (line 26). H: 'I was positive I had seen the lady' (line 30). Options A, B, C and G do not appear in the text. Candidates who tick G ('thinks she imagined the lady') misread line 30; the narrator insists she saw the lady, contradicting imagination.

Interpreting adult behaviour, Q12

Either interpretation (the mother believes or does not believe) can earn full marks, provided you give two well-explained reasons. One mark for your choice, up to two marks per reason depending on detail, one mark for SPaG. Answers that list reasons as bullet points without lining them up correctly are not penalised, but each reason must be developed beyond a single assertion.

Q12 (mother does not believe) : The mother does not want to upset the narrator by saying she doesn't believe her, so is silent while deciding what to say. She distracts the girl with talk about toffee and bonfire night. She remains worried about the narrator seeing things long after the incident.

Lines 32–34 show the mother changing the subject rather than affirming the sighting. **One strong reason** (she deflects to toffee rather than discuss the lady, suggesting disbelief) earns two marks if you explain that distraction implies doubt. A second reason (her continued anxious glances, line 36) earns another two marks. Brief statements such as 'she was worried' earn one mark each. The final mark is awarded when spelling, grammar and punctuation are consistently accurate.

Applied reasoning, Q1–5

Each question awards one mark for correctly identifying the pair of missing letters common to two synonym pairs. Answers must restore valid English words that match in meaning. Marks are lost through misspelling (writing 'suprise' for 'surprise') or choosing letters that create a word with the wrong sense.

Q2 : s, urpri, s, e and a, s, toni, s, h → surprise and astonish

Both words are synonyms meaning to shock or amaze, and both share the letters **s**, then **i**, then **s**. The missing sequence is **s-i-s** in the same order. Writing 'surprize' or omitting the second 's' in 'astonish' scores zero because the result is not a correctly spelled English word.

Q5 : c, o, n, ta, c, t and c, o, n, ne, c, t → contact and connect

The shared letters are **c, o, n, c**. Both verbs relate to joining or linking. Candidates sometimes write 'contakt' or 'connekt', misled by phonetic spelling; only the conventional spellings earn the mark.

Next steps

After marking, sort errors into three groups: misreading or careless mistakes (ticking five boxes instead of four, skipping a part-question); gaps in vocabulary or inference (unable to generate a suitable synonym, missing the supernatural theme); and incomplete explanations (one-sentence answers to two-mark questions). The first group improves with timed practice and careful question-reading. The second group benefits from wider reading, especially fiction set in unfamiliar periods, and explicit teaching of how to infer mood and character from descriptive detail.

If the score exceeds 38, consolidate exam technique with past papers under timed conditions, focusing on the extended-answer questions that differentiate strong candidates from very strong ones. If the score falls below 30, revisit the passage without time pressure, discussing each inference question aloud: **what clues in the text support the answer, and what alternative interpretations can you rule out?** Retake a similar paper in a fortnight to measure progress.

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