

11+ PAST PAPER PACK

The Manchester Grammar School 11+ English 2014

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The Manchester
Grammar School

Entrance Examination 2014

English Section B - Comprehension

Comprehension Passage

Printed inside this cover you will find the passage on which the comprehension paper is based. The questions are printed in the blue booklet and you should write your answers in the spaces provided on those pages.

You have a minimum of 5 minutes to read through the passage carefully, making any notes that you need alongside the text. You should not begin answering questions until the 5 minute period has finished.

Do not open this booklet until told to do so.

Read through the passage very carefully. We recommend that you spend at least five minutes reading and re-reading the following material before you begin to answer the questions.

This story, set on a ranch, focuses on a young boy, Jody. His father is called Carl and the ranch worker is called Billy Buck. Carl and Billy Buck have taken much longer than usual to get home. Jody, his parents, and Billy have just had a late supper.

After supper, Jody sat by the fireplace and his shy polite eyes looked everywhere except at his father, and he waited for him to speak, for Jody knew he had news of some sort. But he was disappointed. His father pointed a stern finger at him.

"You'd better go to bed, Jody. I'm going to need you in the morning."

That wasn't so bad. Jody liked to do the things he had to do as long as they weren't routine things. He looked at the floor. 5

"What are we going to do in the morning, kill a pig?" he asked softly.

"Never you mind. You better get to bed."

When the door was closed behind him, Jody heard his father and Billy Buck chuckling and he knew it was a joke of some kind. Jody heard the hoot-owls hunting mice down by the barn. A cow was lowing when he went to sleep. 10

In the morning, Jody dressed more quickly even than usual. In the kitchen, while he washed his face and combed back his hair, his mother addressed him irritably.

"Don't you go out until you get a good breakfast in you."

He went into the dining-room and sat at the long white table. He took a piece of steaming hot toast, arranged two fried eggs on it, covered them with another slice of toast and squashed the whole thing with his fork. 15

His father and Billy Buck came in. His father looked stern and disciplinary, but Billy Buck didn't look at Jody at all. He avoided the shy questioning eyes of the boy and soaked a whole piece of toast in his coffee. 20

His father said crossly, "You come with us after breakfast!"

Jody had trouble with his food then, for he felt a kind of doom in the air. After Billy had tilted his saucer and drained the coffee which had slopped into it, and had wiped his hands on his jeans, the two men stood up from the table and went out into the morning light together, and Jody respectfully followed a little behind them. He tried to keep his mind from running ahead, tried to keep it absolutely motionless. 25

His mother called, "Carl! Don't you let it keep him from school."

They marched past the cypress, where the pigs were usually butchered, so it was not a pig killing. The sun shone over the hill and threw long, dark shadows of the trees and buildings. They crossed a stubble-field to shortcut to the barn. Jody's father unhooked the door and they went in. They had been walking toward the sun on the way down. The barn was black as night in contrast and warm from the hay and from the beasts. Jody's father moved over toward one stall in particular. 30

"Come here!" he ordered.

Jody could begin to see things now. He looked into the stall and then stepped back quickly.

35

A red pony colt was looking at him out of the stall. Its tense ears were forward and a light of disobedience was in its eyes. Its coat was rough and thick and its mane was long and tangled. Jody's throat collapsed in on itself and cut his breath short.

"He needs a good brushing down," his father said, "and if I ever hear of you not feeding him or leaving his stall dirty, I'll sell him off in a minute."

40

Jody couldn't bear to look at the pony's eyes any more. He gazed down at his hands for a moment, and he asked very shyly, "Mine?"

No one answered him. He put his hand out toward the pony. Its gray nose came close, sniffing loudly, and then the lips drew back and the strong teeth closed on Jody's fingers. The pony shook its head up and down and seemed to laugh with amusement. Jody regarded his bruised fingers.

45

"Well," he said with pride. "Well, I guess he can bite all right."

The two men laughed, somewhat in relief. His father went out of the barn and walked up a side-hill to be by himself, for he was embarrassed, but Billy Buck stayed. It was easier to talk to Billy Buck. Jody asked again, "Mine?"

50

Billy became professional in tone. "Sure! That is, if you look out for him and break him right. I'll show you how. He's just a colt. You can't ride him for some time."

Jody put out his bruised hand again, and this time the red pony let his nose be rubbed.

"I ought to have a carrot," Jody said.

55

The pony stretched out his nose and shook the forelock from his wild eyes. Jody stroked the nose a little. He said softly, "There isn't a - saddle?"

Billy Buck laughed. "I'd forgot. Come along."

In the harness room he lifted down a little saddle of red morocco leather. "It's just a show saddle," Billy Buck said disparagingly. "It isn't practical for the ranch, but it was cheap."

60

Jody couldn't trust himself to look at the saddle either, and he couldn't speak at all. He brushed the shining red leather with his fingertips, and after a long time he said, "It'll look pretty on him though." He thought of the grandest and prettiest things he knew. "If he hasn't a name already, I think I'll call him Gabilan Mountains," he said.

END OF PASSAGE

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PAGE**

Paper Notes: 11+ English Question Paper (11+ English Past Paper (2014))

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

Overview

This is **Section B of The Manchester Grammar School's 2014 11+ Entrance Examination for English**, focusing exclusively on reading comprehension. The paper presents a literary extract from **John Steinbeck's novella The Red Pony**, depicting a young boy named Jody receiving a surprise gift of a red pony colt from his father on their Californian ranch. Candidates are given at least five minutes to read the passage carefully before turning to the separate blue question booklet containing the comprehension questions.

The extract is substantial (approximately 850 words), written in **mid-twentieth-century American prose** with rich descriptive detail and subtle emotional nuance. It tests a candidate's ability to understand character motivation, interpret mood and tone, analyse the writer's craft, and make inferences from dialogue and behaviour. The passage centres on themes of childhood anticipation, family relationships, responsibility, and the connection between humans and animals.

This paper is designed for **high-achieving ten- and eleven-year-olds** seeking entry to one of England's most academically selective independent schools. The choice of a classic American literary text, rather than contemporary children's fiction, signals the level of reading maturity expected. Candidates must demonstrate sophisticated comprehension skills, close textual analysis, and the ability to write coherently about literature under timed conditions.

How this paper is organised

The document is structured as a **reading stimulus booklet**, separate from the question paper itself. Candidates encounter a cover page with clear rubric instructions, emphasising that **at least five minutes must be spent reading and re-reading** the passage before any questions are attempted. Students are explicitly told not to open the booklet until instructed, and that the questions appear in a separate blue booklet where answers must be written.

The passage itself spans approximately three pages and is **numbered by line (lines 1 to 65)** to facilitate precise reference in answers. This line numbering is essential for quotation and allows examiners to assess how accurately candidates locate evidence. The text is prefaced with a brief contextual introduction explaining the setting (a ranch),

the main characters (Jody, his father Carl, and ranch hand Billy Buck), and the immediate situation (Carl and Billy have returned late, and the family has just finished supper).

The extract unfolds chronologically across three scenes: the evening after supper when Jody senses something is afoot, the following morning's tense breakfast, and the revelation in the barn. The passage concludes with **END OF PASSAGE** marked clearly, followed by a blank page. This careful structure supports candidates in orienting themselves within the text and managing their reading time effectively before tackling the unseen questions.

Topics covered

- Reading comprehension of a substantial literary prose extract from a classic American novella, requiring inference and deduction
- Analysis of character motivation, emotion, and relationships through dialogue and action (Jody's anticipation, his father's stern demeanour, Billy Buck's kindness)
- Understanding of mood, tone, and atmosphere created through descriptive language and narrative pacing
- Interpretation of figurative language and metaphor (e.g. 'Jody's throat collapsed in on itself and cut his breath short')
- Identification of narrative perspective and how the writer reveals information gradually to create suspense and surprise
- Close textual reference and quotation skills, using line numbers to support written answers
- Vocabulary in context, including American dialect and ranch-specific terminology ('colt', 'forelock', 'stubble-field', 'morocco leather')
- Understanding of historical and cultural context in mid-twentieth-century rural American literature
- Recognition of themes such as childhood, responsibility, family dynamics, and the bond between humans and animals
- Analysis of sentence structure and punctuation for effect (e.g. short sentences to convey Jody's nervousness, use of dialogue to reveal character)

How to use this paper for revision

- Read classic children's literature and coming-of-age stories (such as other Steinbeck works, *My Family and Other Animals*, or *Black Beauty*) to familiarise yourself with rich descriptive prose and character-driven narratives.
- Practise annotating texts during your initial reading time: underline key phrases, note emotional shifts in the margin, and mark where the atmosphere changes or new information is revealed.
- Build your vocabulary around American English and rural or animal-related terminology so unfamiliar words like 'colt', 'lowing', 'stubble-field', or 'morocco leather' do not slow your comprehension.
- Work on inference skills by asking yourself why characters behave as they do: why does Jody's father walk away embarrassed? Why does Billy Buck avoid looking at Jody? What do these actions reveal about their feelings?
- Time yourself reading passages of similar length (around 800 words) and then summarising the key events and emotions in two or three sentences to sharpen your ability to extract the essentials quickly.
- Practise quoting selectively and accurately, ensuring you integrate short quotations into your sentences smoothly and that you reference line numbers correctly.
- Discuss stories with a parent or tutor, focusing on how writers create suspense, build atmosphere, or reveal character gradually rather than stating everything directly.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Rushing the initial reading phase and missing subtle clues about characters' emotions or motivations, leading to superficial or inaccurate answers later.
- Failing to use the line numbers when quoting or referring to the text, making it harder for examiners to verify that evidence has been understood in context.
- Copying out long chunks of the passage as answers rather than selecting concise, relevant quotations and explaining them in your own words.
- Misinterpreting American vocabulary or idioms (e.g. not understanding that 'lowing' means a cow's call, or that 'brushing down' refers to grooming a horse).
- Overlooking the significance of minor details such as the father's embarrassment, Billy Buck's avoidance of eye contact, or the description of the pony as having 'a light of disobedience' in its eyes.
- Writing about what happens in the story without analysing how the writer creates mood, tension, or character, which is often what comprehension questions at this level demand.

Exam technique

Use the **minimum five-minute reading period strategically**: read the passage once for overall understanding, then reread more slowly, annotating as you go. Mark moments where Jody's emotions shift, where the atmosphere changes, or where the writer uses particularly vivid or unusual language. These are likely to be the focus of questions. Note the structure of the extract (anticipation, breakfast tension, revelation) as questions may ask you to trace how suspense builds across the passage.

When you turn to the question booklet, **read all questions briefly before starting** so you understand what the paper is asking you to do overall. Tackle questions in order unless one strikes you as particularly straightforward. Allocate your time based on the marks available for each question: a two-mark question might need a single well-chosen quotation and a sentence of explanation, while a five-mark question will require multiple points, quotations, and detailed analysis. Always refer back to the passage and use line numbers to anchor your evidence.

For questions asking 'how does the writer...!', focus on **technique**: word choice, sentence structure, imagery, dialogue, or narrative perspective. For questions asking 'why does the character...!', focus on **motivation and emotion**, supported by evidence from the text. Write in full sentences, keep your handwriting legible under pressure, and leave time to reread your answers, checking that every point is supported by a quotation or specific reference to the passage.

What to revise alongside this paper

Alongside this comprehension paper, revise your ability to **write analytically about fiction**: practise explaining not just what a writer says, but how and why they say it. Study other comprehension passages from 11+ papers, particularly those using classic or literary extracts rather than modern children's fiction, to build confidence with more demanding vocabulary and sentence structures. Work on your skills in identifying and explaining the effects of literary techniques such as simile, metaphor, personification, and the use of short sentences or repetition for emphasis.

Broaden your reading to include **American literature and animal stories** from the mid-twentieth century (Steinbeck's other works, *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *The Yearling*, or *Charlotte's Web*) to familiarise yourself with the style and themes. These often feature rural settings, close observation of nature, and subtle exploration of growing up, responsibility, and relationships. Understanding these contexts will help you interpret similar passages more quickly and confidently.

Finally, practise **timed comprehension under exam conditions**, ensuring you can read, annotate, plan, write, and check your answers within the time allowed. Work on writing

concisely but thoroughly, integrating quotations smoothly into your sentences, and structuring multi-part answers logically. If you are also preparing for creative writing or grammar sections of the 11+ English exam, balance your revision so that comprehension, vocabulary, and written expression skills all receive attention.

Key terms

Inference, Characterisation, Mood and atmosphere, Narrative perspective, Suspense, Dialogue, Figurative language, Metaphor, Foreshadowing, Close textual reference, Quotation, Line numbering, Literary prose, Coming-of-age narrative, Steinbeck

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English Section A - Answers 2014

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1) FOOTBALL | 21) O |
| 2) HOLIDAY | 22) S |
| 3) SCIENTIST | 23) I |
| 4) TROUSERS | 24) R |
| 5) C | 25) J |
| 6) C | 26) P |
| 7) D | 27) D |
| 8) B | 28) F |
| 9) D | 29) A |
| 10) C | 30) E |
| 11) C | 31) MOUNTAIN BIKING |
| 12) B | 32) AHMED |
| 13) A | 33) SWIMMING |
| 14) B | 34) BECKY |
| 15) D | 35) GOLF |
| 16) D | 36) EMMA |
| 17) C | 37) TAIPEI (101) [TOWER] |
| 18) A | 38) ZIFENG [TOWER] |
| 19) C | 39) 79 |
| 20) D | 40) 8 |

Answer-Key Notes: 11+ English Answers (11+ English Answers (2014))

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 lists correct responses only, without working or explanations. When marking your child's paper, award one mark per correct answer and total the score objectively. Resist the temptation to award half-marks for 'nearly right' answers, especially in the multiple-choice questions (5–30), where precision matters.

Once you have a total, distinguish between careless slips and genuine gaps. If your child wrote 'HOLIDAYS' instead of 'HOLIDAY' (Q2), that is a spelling or attention error. If they could not identify the tower names in Q37–38, that suggests they struggled to locate specific facts in a text under time pressure.

Use the worked examples below to understand **why particular answers are correct** and to show your child the evidence or logic they may have missed. Focus revision on the question types where marks were lost most often, rather than re-doing the whole paper immediately.

Score interpretation

Section A contains 40 marks in total: four spelling questions (Q1–4), 26 multiple-choice questions testing vocabulary, grammar and punctuation (Q5–30), and ten short-answer questions based on written sources (Q31–40). A score of 32 or above suggests strong technical English and confident comprehension; any errors are likely to be isolated slips rather than systemic weaknesses.

Between 24 and 31 marks indicates solid foundations with room to tighten accuracy. Check whether mistakes cluster in one area—perhaps the letter-answer matching (Q21–30) or the factual retrieval questions (Q37–40)—and practise that skill separately. Below 24 marks, the paper has exposed gaps that need targeted work: spelling rules, vocabulary breadth, or the ability to scan a text quickly for names and numbers.

Remember that this paper was written under timed conditions. If your child scored well but used extra time, build speed through regular short practice sessions. If they rushed and lost marks on questions they could answer, teach them to read each question twice before committing to an answer.

Worked examples

Spelling, Q1–4

These four words test common spelling patterns and word families. Marks are lost when children spell phonetically (e.g. 'TROY3ERS' with a 'Z') or confuse similar-sounding words. **Every letter must be correct**; there are no half-marks for near-misses. Encourage your child to sound out syllables and visualise the word on the page.

Q2 : HOLIDAY

The answer is singular, **HOLIDAY**, not HOLIDAYS. Many children add an S automatically because they think of 'going on holidays', but the question will have asked for the singular form. Check the exact wording of the question stem to avoid this error.

Q3 : SCIENTIST

The tricky part is the middle: SC-I-E-N. Children often write 'SCIENTEST' or 'SIENTIST'. Remember that SCIENCE and SCIENTIST share the same root. If your child spelled this wrongly, practise the whole word family: science, scientific, scientist.

Multiple choice: vocabulary and grammar, Q5–20

Each question offers four options, only one of which is correct. Marks are lost when children rush and choose the first plausible answer rather than eliminating the wrong ones. **Reading all four options carefully** is essential. If your child scored poorly here, practise similar questions under timed conditions to build decision-making speed and accuracy.

Q7 : D

The question likely tested a specific grammatical point or vocabulary item where D was the only precise fit. If your child chose A, B or C, ask them to explain their reasoning aloud: often they will spot their own error when they have to justify the choice in words.

Q15 : D

Again, D is correct. These middle questions (Q10–20) often test subtler points—synonyms, verb tenses, or sentence structure. If your child is making several mistakes in this range, they may need more practice distinguishing between similar-sounding or similar-looking options.

Multiple choice: letter matching, Q21–30

Questions 21–30 use single-letter answers (A–Z or a subset). This format usually tests definitions, sentence completion, or matching items to descriptions. **Cross-referencing is key**: children must hold several pieces of information in mind at once. If your child lost marks here, they may have misread the instructions or confused two similar options.

Q21 : O

The correct answer is O. Check the source list or table in the question paper: O must have matched the description or definition in Q21. If your child chose a nearby letter (N or P), they were probably working too quickly and did not double-check the correspondence.

Q29 : A

A is correct. By Q29, some children lose concentration and start guessing. Remind them to **refer back to the source list for every question**, even if they think they remember the answer. One careless slip can cost an otherwise strong performance.

Short-answer questions, Q31–40

These ten questions require written answers—single words, names or numbers—drawn from a passage or data table. Marks are lost when children misspell proper nouns, write incomplete answers (e.g. 'TAIPEI' instead of 'TAIPEI 101 TOWER'), or misread the question and give a different fact from the same paragraph. **Accuracy of transcription** is as important as finding the right information.

Q32 : AHMED

The name AHMED must appear in the source text, probably in a list or table matching people to activities. If your child wrote 'Ahmad' or 'Achmed', they misread or misspelled the name. Teach them to copy proper nouns letter-by-letter when they are unsure.

Q37 : TAIPEI (101) [TOWER]

The full answer is TAIPEI 101 TOWER, though the mark scheme shows that 'TAIPEI' alone or 'TAIPEI 101' would be accepted (the brackets and square brackets indicate optional elements). **Check the exact wording of the question**: if it asked for the tower's location, 'TAIPEI' suffices; if it asked for the tower's name, the full '101 TOWER' is needed. This question rewards children who scan the text carefully and copy the precise form given.

Q39 : 79

The answer is the number 79. If your child wrote '79 storeys' or '79 floors', check the question: it may have asked for the number only. Conversely, if the question asked 'How many storeys?' and your child wrote just '79', that is usually acceptable. The key skill is **finding the correct figure in the source text** without confusing it with other nearby numbers.

Next steps

After marking, sit down with your child and review every incorrect answer together. For the spelling questions (Q1–4), add any misspelled words to a personal list and practise them daily. For the multiple-choice section, ask your child to explain why they chose their answer and why the correct option is better; this trains them to evaluate options critically. For the short-answer questions, check whether mistakes were due to misreading the text or misreading the question, and practise whichever skill needs work.

If your child scored well (32 marks or above), extend their skills by moving to past papers from slightly harder exams or by setting a tighter time limit on the next attempt. If the score was below 24, identify the two weakest areas and work on those intensively for a fortnight before attempting another full paper. Regular, focused practice on specific question types will yield faster improvement than simply repeating whole papers. Keep a log of scores over time so that you and your child can see progress clearly.

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