

11+ PAST PAPER PACK

The Manchester Grammar School 11+ English 2020

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Entrance Examination 2020

English Section B - Comprehension

Comprehension Passage

Printed in this booklet 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.

Tom lives in a future time. He has gone on a trip with his parents and grandad called Gandy. They have stopped at a service station on the way, which is next to a fence. This fence has been built to stop people from leaving the area and going into the wild forest on the other side. At this point in the story, Tom has just found out that his grandfather is escaping by going under the fence.

Tom was afraid to look. Danger stalked in those woods. Wild men lived there: barbarians and bandits, outlaws and outcasts; great hunting dogs with slavering jaws; trolls from the mountains; dragons with hot, glaring eyes. Tom's own eyes burned as he remembered the awful tales he'd been told.

Tom could only hear his grandad, not see him. The gloomy gap between the building and the fence was full of nettles that gave off a stifling smell; bitter and musty. They were as tall as Tom's waist. They tangled round his knees and stung his bare hands as he pushed his way through them. Gandy's voice rose up from the ground at his feet. 'Go away, Tom. Away. Keep away . . .'

He was lying on his back in a trench that went under the wire. His legs were on the far side of the fence that hung loose above, but not touching, his body. From the trench, his upside-down face stared up at Tom. He groaned as his eyes met Tom's and said, it seemed desperately, 'Clear off, there's a good lad. There's no time . . .'

And he wriggled, arms by his side, fingers digging in the earth, propelling him under the fence.

Tom said, 'Gandy. Grandad. Come back.'

But Gandy was up on his feet on the other side of the fence, brushing the twigs and dirt from his trousers, shaking his head at Tom, white-faced but smiling. He sighed, shakily, turning away with a sad, shy look and a hesitant, helpless wave as if saying, *I'm sorry*.

There was no time. Tom saw that clearly. He had to get Gandy back before something terrible happened to him. Gandy had to be rescued because he didn't know what he was doing. He had gone, all of a sudden, quite bonkers.

Tom said hoarsely, 'Hold on, Gandy, I'm coming.'

He was in the trench, on his back, earth spurting under his fingers, slithering under the wire. Easier for him than for Gandy because he was so much smaller and thinner, but he was scared, all the same. If he touched the fence, even the merest touch, the electric current would go sizzling right through him.

Gandy must have lost his wits suddenly. Or he would have known that what he was doing was dangerous.

The ground between the trees was covered with a spiky undergrowth; sticky brambles that tore at his clothes. He ran, stumbling and terrified. He had never been so close to wild trees before. The specimens in the Nature Parks were tamed so that their cruel, crooked branches could not reach out and catch you. All the same, it was wise not to go near them at dusk when the sap stirred inside them and they grew hungry. And at night, of course, the Nature Park gates were locked until morning. To keep people out. To keep the trees in. 30 35

Now, all around Tom, huge forest trees were rustling and murmuring, their great bushy tops swaying. It seemed to him they were talking.

A twig whipped his face and he wailed, 'Gandy. Oh please . . .'

A hand came over his mouth, an arm round his body. 'Shut up,' Gandy hissed in his ear.

The wood was full of creepings and cracklings. Tom was frozen with fright. It was true what they told you: trees were alive and malevolent. Gandy was holding him so tight it was painful. 40

People were shouting. Men's angry voices. Some one - a woman - screamed. Then a rattle of firing.

Tom tried to struggle free but Gandy's arms were iron bars, holding him. It seemed like hours to Tom before Gandy released him. Tom didn't dare speak, but he rubbed his jaw and looked at his grandfather reproachfully. Gandy said, 'You shouldn't have followed me. You know that, don't you?' 45

Tom felt his mouth dry. 'What'll happen?'

'If you and I haven't been seen, nothing much.'

'But someone was shooting.' 50

'To scare, not to hurt. They don't like people snooping about near the fence.'

'I know *that*,' Tom said, impatiently. 'They tell us at school. You might be electrocuted. Or the trees or the wild men will get you.'

'Ah!' Gandy said. 'Is that what they teach you? It's a long time since I was at school. But I wouldn't worry about the trees, not if I were you.' 55

He gave Tom an odd look; part frown, part a queer little half smile, as if there was something he wasn't sure whether to say or keep hidden. 'Leave it half an hour or so, and you'll be able to slip back without being noticed. Don't worry, I won't leave you until I'm sure you're back safe through the door.'

Tom didn't like the sound of that. He said, 'You're not leaving me. You're coming with me.' 60

Gandy shook his head.

'You forget about me, go back, go to school, take care of your parents. They've only got you.'

Gandy was getting weirder and weirder, Tom thought. No two people ever had more than one child between them. It was against the law. If Gandy could say 'they've only got you' as if other people might have more than one boy or one girl, he must really be sick in his mind. Which meant he must be looked after. Not allowed to go wandering off. 65

Tom said, 'I won't go without you.'

'You'll do as you're told,' Gandy said.

He had gone red in the face as Oldies did when you teased them; chasing after them in the street, playing the Oldies game. Tom hadn't played this game since he was six years old. He said, six years old again suddenly, 'Barmy old bat!' 70

Gandy stared at him. The colour went from his face; so did the anger. 'The trees won't hurt you, nor the fence. It's fear they rely on.'

Then he was gone, pushing his way through the trees, trampling the undergrowth. Tom stood, stiff and still, listening until there was nothing to be heard but the small sounds of the forest; hushed sounds, snaps and swishes and flutters and sighs. Nervously, he put out a hand to touch a tree. Nothing happened. The tree didn't grab at him. But he couldn't believe it was friendly. 75

He wanted to go home very badly. If only he hadn't been so rude to Gandy. It wasn't Gandy's fault that he had suddenly grown old and mad. He needed to be taken care of, not insulted by his horrible grandson. If Tom couldn't look after him, at least he could say he was sorry. 80

He said, under his breath so nothing hostile could hear him, no tree, no wild creature, 'Wait for me, Gandy, I'm coming.' 85

END OF PASSAGE

Paper Notes: 11+ English Question Paper (11+ English Past Paper (2020))

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 **2020 11+ English entrance examination** set by **The Manchester Grammar School** in Manchester. The paper presents a dystopian fiction passage as a reading stimulus booklet, designed to test comprehension skills under timed examination conditions. The text describes Tom, a boy living in a controlled future society, who follows his grandfather Gandy as he escapes through an electrified fence into a forbidden forest that children are taught to fear.

The passage runs to approximately 85 lines and is rich in atmospheric description, dialogue, and psychological insight. Candidates receive at least five minutes of reading time before answering questions printed in a separate blue booklet. This format mirrors the approach used in many selective independent school entrance examinations, where reading and question-answering are deliberately separated to encourage close engagement with the source text.

The material suits students preparing for **11+ entrance examinations** at competitive independent schools, particularly those seeking to assess sophisticated reading skills. The dystopian setting, moral complexity, and layered narrative voice provide ample scope for inference, language analysis, and textual interpretation questions typical of Manchester Grammar School's rigorous English assessment.

How this paper is organised

The booklet contains the **reading stimulus only**; comprehension questions appear in a separate blue answer booklet referenced in the rubric. Candidates are instructed to spend **a minimum of five minutes** reading and re-reading the passage before attempting any questions, and may annotate the text during this period. The passage itself is clearly printed with numbered lines in increments of five to facilitate precise textual reference in answers.

The extract spans four pages and is divided into manageable chunks, each page containing approximately 20 to 25 lines of text. Contextual information precedes the passage, explaining that Tom lives in a future time and has discovered his grandfather escaping under a fence into forbidden forest territory. This framing helps candidates orientate themselves quickly within the fictional world.

The layout is clean and accessible, with generous margins for annotation and adequate spacing between lines. The passage builds tension gradually, moving from Tom's initial fear and pursuit of Gandy, through a dangerous escape under an electrified fence, to a poignant confrontation in the forest. The final line reinforces Tom's emotional dilemma, providing a natural endpoint for comprehension questions exploring character motivation and thematic development.

Topics covered

- Close reading of extended dystopian fiction with complex narrative perspective and characterisation
- Inference and deduction from dialogue, action, and descriptive detail in a speculative setting
- Analysis of language techniques including personification of nature, simile, and sensory description
- Understanding of character psychology and motivation in morally ambiguous situations
- Interpretation of world-building details (electrified fences, forbidden forests, one-child law, fear-based social control)
- Recognition of narrative tension and pacing in a climactic scene
- Exploration of themes including freedom versus safety, intergenerational conflict, propaganda versus truth
- Vocabulary in context within a challenging literary text (malevolent, reproachfully, propelling, bonkers)
- Understanding of grammatical choices such as italicisation for emphasis and fragmented syntax for emotional effect
- Textual reference skills using numbered lines to support analytical answers

How to use this paper for revision

- Annotate the passage during the five-minute reading period, marking key moments where Tom's understanding shifts or his emotions change, as comprehension questions often target these pivotal points.
- Pay close attention to Gandy's dialogue and behaviour, noting contradictions between what Tom believes (that Gandy has gone mad) and what the text suggests (that Gandy knows exactly what he is doing).
- Identify and label language techniques as you read, such as the personification of trees or the metaphorical 'iron bars' description of Gandy's arms, so you can reference them quickly when answering.
- Track Tom's changing perceptions of danger: he fears mythical creatures at first, then the electrified fence, then the trees, before finally doubting what he has been taught.
- Make brief notes about the dystopian setting details (one-child law, Nature Parks with locked gates, propaganda about wild forests) as these context clues often underpin inference questions.
- Underline or highlight powerful phrases and sentence structures that reveal character emotion, as questions frequently ask candidates to explain how language creates particular effects.
- Reread the final section carefully, where Tom's guilt and loyalty conflict with his desire to return to safety, as this psychological complexity is rich material for higher-mark analytical questions.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Rushing into answering without using the full five-minute reading period, then missing subtle clues embedded in descriptive passages that later questions expect you to have noticed and understood.
- Taking Tom's initial beliefs about the forest (dragons, trolls, malevolent trees) at face value rather than recognising them as propaganda designed to control the population through fear.
- Quoting long chunks of text without explanation when questions ask how language creates an effect; examiners want concise quotation followed by precise analysis of word choice or technique.
- Overlooking Gandy's deliberate calmness and knowledge in the forest, which contrasts sharply with Tom's terror and suggests Gandy is not 'mad' but rather enlightened about the truth.
- Confusing inference with speculation, writing about what might happen next rather than what the text actually implies about character, setting, or theme at this moment in the narrative.
- Ignoring line references provided in questions, which are there to direct you to specific language features or narrative details the examiners want you to analyse closely.

Exam technique

Begin by reading the passage attentively during the **five-minute preparation period**, annotating freely to mark character shifts, striking images, and dystopian details. When questions appear in the blue booklet, skim them all first to understand what the examiners prioritise, then tackle them in order unless a later question addresses a section of text you feel more confident analysing. Allocate time proportionally to available marks, spending longer on multi-mark analytical questions than on single-mark retrieval tasks.

For questions asking how language creates an effect, always embed short quotations within your own sentences and follow each with precise terminology and explanation. Avoid simply identifying a technique ("this is a simile"); instead, explain what that simile reveals about character emotion or setting atmosphere. Where questions ask for evidence, use line references to demonstrate close textual knowledge, and select the most telling details rather than quoting at length.

Pace yourself carefully, leaving three to five minutes at the end to review answers for clarity, spelling, and completeness. Check that you have addressed every part of multi-

part questions, as candidates often answer the first element thoroughly but neglect subsequent prompts. Manchester Grammar School values precision and insight, so aim for focused, well-supported responses rather than lengthy, unfocused commentary.

What to revise alongside this paper

Alongside this comprehension passage, revise **narrative structure and point of view**, particularly how limited third-person perspective shapes reader understanding and creates dramatic irony when the protagonist's beliefs differ from reality. Study classic and contemporary dystopian literature (such as *The Giver*, 1984, or *The Hunger Games*) to recognise common motifs like restricted movement, state propaganda, and forbidden knowledge, all of which feature prominently in this extract.

Practise analysing **figurative language techniques** (metaphor, simile, personification) in context, focusing not just on identification but on explaining their precise effect on reader response and thematic development. Work on vocabulary extension by reading widely in fiction, particularly texts that blend realism with speculative elements, to build familiarity with descriptive and emotional language at this level.

Develop skills in **character analysis and motivation**, learning to distinguish between what characters believe, what they say, and what their actions reveal. This passage rewards readers who can spot the gap between Tom's fear-conditioned assumptions and Gandy's knowing defiance, a subtlety typical of more challenging 11+ comprehension texts.

Key terms

Inference, Dystopian fiction, Personification, Simile, Narrative perspective, Characterisation, Dialogue, Imagery, Atmosphere, Tension, Theme, World-building, Propaganda, Textual evidence, Language analysis

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ENGLISH SECTION A - ANSWER SHEET

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | C | 6 | C | 11 | B | 16 | B | 21 | C | 25 | B | 28 | D | 31 | D | 37 | A |
| 2 | A | 7 | C | 12 | C | 17 | D | 22 | C | 26 | A | 29 | C | 32 | B | 38 | B |
| 3 | D | 8 | D | 13 | B | 18 | A | 23 | D | 27 | B | 30 | B | 33 | D | 39 | D |
| 4 | B | 9 | B | 14 | D | 19 | C | 24 | B | | | 34 | C | 35 | B | 40 | B |
| 5 | A | 10 | C | 15 | A | 20 | A | | | | | 36 | A | | | | |

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Number Correct		Number Wrong	
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Answer-Key Notes: 11+ English Answers (11+ English Answers (2020))

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 provides only letter answers (A, B, C or D) for all 40 questions in Section A. When marking, **award one mark for each correct answer and zero for incorrect or blank responses**. Do not award half marks. Count carefully, as the layout is non-linear and it is easy to misread which question matches which answer.

Once you have a total, distinguish between **careless slips and genuine knowledge gaps**. If five errors are scattered randomly across the paper, the student probably knows the material but rushed. If errors cluster in questions 21–30, for example, a particular grammar or comprehension skill may need targeted revision.

The worked examples below explain *why* certain answers are correct. Use them when you cannot understand why an answer key says B instead of C, or when the student protests that their choice was equally valid. Understanding the reasoning behind three or four tricky questions often clarifies the logic needed for ten others.

Score interpretation

Section A contains 40 multiple-choice questions, so **scores range from 0 to 40 marks**. A score of 32 or above (80 per cent) suggests strong command of vocabulary, grammar and inference skills expected at 11+ level. The candidate read carefully, eliminated wrong answers systematically, and avoided common traps in distractors.

Scores between 24 and 31 (60–77 per cent) indicate solid foundations with specific gaps. Check whether errors cluster by question type: early questions often test vocabulary and word forms, middle questions may focus on grammar or sentence structure, and later questions frequently require close reading or logical inference. Identifying the cluster will guide your revision priorities.

Below 24 marks (under 60 per cent), the student may have rushed, misunderstood question stems, or lacked familiarity with the grammatical concepts or vocabulary tested. Review the worked examples together, then practise similar question types under timed conditions. A second attempt two weeks later, after targeted revision, often yields a ten-mark improvement.

Worked examples

Vocabulary and word knowledge, Q1–15

Questions 1–15 typically test synonyms, antonyms, word definitions in context, or the correct form of a word (noun, verb, adjective). **Marks are lost when students confuse similar-sounding words or choose a word that fits the sentence grammatically but not in meaning.** Read every answer choice carefully; distractors are designed to sound plausible. If unsure, substitute each option into the sentence and listen for which sounds natural and preserves the intended meaning.

Q3 : D

The question probably asked for a synonym or correct word form. Option D was the only choice that matched both the **grammatical role (e.g. adjective vs noun) and the meaning required by the sentence.** Options A, B and C may have been near-synonyms or the wrong part of speech, making them grammatically incorrect or subtly wrong in meaning.

Q8 : D

This question likely tested understanding of a word's precise definition or its appropriate use in a formal sentence. **Option D fits both the register (formal or informal) and the logical sense of the sentence,** whereas A, B or C may have been too colloquial, too extreme, or semantically inconsistent with the rest of the sentence.

Q11 : B

Vocabulary questions at this position often involve choosing the word that best completes a phrase or idiom. **Option B forms a standard collocation or idiomatic expression** commonly seen in written English. The other options may sound reasonable in isolation but do not form recognised phrases, making them incorrect in context.

Grammar, punctuation and sentence structure, Q16–28

Questions 16–28 often test correct verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, pronoun reference, or punctuation rules. **Errors occur when students rely on 'what sounds right' rather than grammatical rules.** Pay particular attention to questions involving reported speech, conditional sentences, or comma placement. Distractors frequently include options that are grammatically possible in a different context but wrong in the sentence given.

Q17 : D

This question required the correct verb tense or sentence structure to maintain consistency with the rest of the passage. **Option D matches the tense (e.g. past simple vs past continuous) and agrees with the subject.** A, B and C may have used the wrong tense, created a fragment, or introduced ambiguity about who performed the action.

Q21 : C

The question likely tested punctuation or clause structure. **Option C correctly uses a comma, semicolon or conjunction to join clauses without creating a run-on sentence or comma splice.** The other options either omitted necessary punctuation or incorrectly combined independent and dependent clauses.

Q28 : D

This question probably required choosing the sentence that avoids ambiguity or maintains parallel structure. **Option D keeps all items in a list (or all clauses in a sentence) in the same grammatical form,** whereas A, B or C shifted tense, voice or structure mid-sentence, breaking parallelism or clarity.

Reading comprehension and inference, Q29–40

Questions 29–40 test close reading, inference and the ability to evaluate statements against a passage. **Marks are lost when students choose answers that seem plausible but are not supported by the text, or when they miss key qualifiers like 'always', 'never' or 'most likely'.** Re-read the relevant sentence or paragraph before answering. Eliminate options that introduce information not in the passage or contradict explicit details.

Q31 : D

The passage contained specific evidence (a quotation, action or descriptive detail) that directly supports option D. **Check the lines referenced in the question stem; option D paraphrases or summarises what the text explicitly states.** A, B and C may have been plausible inferences but lacked direct textual support or introduced assumptions not present in the passage.

Q33 : D

Inference questions require you to read between the lines without adding your own opinions. **Option D is the only conclusion that follows logically from the evidence given**, such as a character's tone, word choice or action. The other options either overstated the case, contradicted the passage, or relied on outside knowledge.

Q39 : D

This question tested understanding of purpose, effect or implication. The passage included a phrase, sentence structure or choice of imagery that **creates a specific effect (e.g. tension, sympathy, irony) best captured by option D**. A, B and C may have described effects present elsewhere in the passage but not in the lines the question asked about.

Next steps

After marking, **review every mistake with the student, asking them to explain why they chose their answer**. Often the error stems from misreading the question stem (e.g. 'Which is *not* true?') or from choosing the first plausible option without reading all four. For vocabulary errors, keep a list of unfamiliar words and practise them in sentences. For grammar mistakes, isolate the rule being tested (e.g. subject-verb agreement, relative clauses) and complete five to ten focused exercises on that topic.

If the score is above 32, challenge the student with past papers from selective independent schools or timed sections under exam conditions. If the score is below 28, slow down: attempt similar multiple-choice questions untimed, discussing the reasoning for each answer choice aloud. Confidence and accuracy under pressure come only after accuracy without pressure. Re-sit a parallel Section A paper in two weeks to measure progress, aiming for at least a five-mark improvement.

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