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The Manchester Grammar School 11+ English 2024

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**The Manchester
Grammar School**

Founded 1515

Entrance Examination 2024

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.

Yanni, his parents and baby sister Ari have moved to a new area and he is going to go to a new school. Yanni is meeting Amy for the first time.

“Wow,” Amy mumbled. “This is awkward, isn’t it?”

She stood at the end of the table, shifting from foot to foot like a nervous horse. The thunder growled; the wind clawed at the window panes. Yanni didn’t reply. He felt like if he opened his mouth all the words he’d forced down would suddenly come out at once.

“You’re going to Riddleton, right? That’s where I go. I can show you around on your first day, if you’d like,” Amy offered. 5

Yanni felt his fingers grip the table. The new school was the last thing he wanted to think about now. The feeling in his stomach was getting worse, like a drawstring being pulled tighter.

“I’m going to check on Ari,” he said, pushing away from the table.

Amy blinked, all hope gone in a puff of smoke. “Can... can I help with something, or – ” 10

Yanni didn’t reply – he didn’t even let her finish the sentence. He stormed out of the room and up the stairs, leaving her alone. He knew he was being rude, but he couldn’t help it. He felt angrier than he’d ever felt in his life. He seethed past the row of family photos that Mum and Dad had hung in the hallway, his blood raging in his head, the drawstring inside his stomach pulling tighter and tighter, like it was attached to the pin of a grenade. 15

He came to Ari’s bedroom door. Mum and Dad had spent all afternoon sorting it out: the curtains were up now, and the mirrored wardrobe, and her night light was on. Dad had even built a set of shelves for all her toys. Yanni’s room was still a cold, carpetless box.

Ari was fast asleep in her cot, tucked up like a bun in her baby sleeping bag. She looked so warm, so peaceful, so happy. Yanni stood beside the cot and gazed down at her. 20

“This is all your fault,” he whispered.

Ari shifted in her sleep. Nothing that Yanni could say mattered to her. She didn’t even know he was talking.

Yanni could have stopped there, but he didn’t. Words were itching at the back of his throat. He had a stomach full of anger and he wanted it out. 25

“I never wanted to come here,” he said. “I never even wanted a sister. I never wanted any of this.”

The words were rising now, demanding to be spoken. Yanni gripped the edge of the cot and found, to his surprise, that his hands were shaking. He suddenly caught sight of himself in the mirrored wardrobe – a nasty, angry little boy, unloved and unwanted – and it was all too much. The words he’d held inside him for months came tumbling out. 30

“I hate you,” said Yanni. “I hate you and I wish you’d never been born.”

And that was when everything changed.

* * *

Yanni felt the shift in the room first – as if the whole house had flipped to face a different direction. The light flickered. There was a faint sound of chimes from somewhere in the distance, a half-step out of tune with one another. He had a sudden sense that he was no longer alone. 35

“Well, well! What do we have here?”

Yanni swung round in shock. He *wasn’t* alone. There was someone standing in the bedroom doorway. The light in the corridor was too dim to make out their face. All Yanni could see was that the stranger was very thin, and very tall, and stood ramrod straight with their arms behind their back. “Who are you?” asked Yanni. 40

The stranger leaned back and gave a high trill of laughter. “What a question! Who do you think I am, young man?”

Yanni was stumped. It wasn’t the answer he’d expected. “Um... Mr Edwards, from down the road?” 45

“Right first time!” said the man cheerfully. “Now, aren’t you going to invite me in?”

Yanni’s head was spinning. Why had Amy let Mr Edwards in without telling him? Why had he come upstairs on his own? Yanni hadn’t even heard the front door open. “Er... sure, but –”

With the simple grace of a fox, the man slipped through the doorway and into the room. Yanni was suddenly filled with a certainty that he had been tricked – that a threshold had just been crossed and could not be uncrossed. The man stood in the light of the bedroom, angling his neck like a bird. 50

Yanni stared at the man standing in front of him. He had never seen anyone who looked quite like him before. He was... Well, he was beautiful, for one thing. His face was sleek and chiselled, his teeth were like polished marble and his hair hung down in folds of grey silk. 55

But something about the man’s beauty was wrong, somehow. His skin was as white as sheep’s bone. He must have been almost seven feet tall: the top of his head practically brushed the ceiling. But that wasn’t the strangest thing about him. It was his eyes: Yanni had never seen eyes so dark before. He couldn’t even tell where the pupils began. 60

He froze. A voice at the back of his head suddenly spoke, high and urgent.

Don’t talk to him. He shouldn’t be here. He’s a stranger.

Yanni suddenly understood, deep down in his gut, that he could not let this man find out Ari was here. He stole a glance over his shoulder. Luckily she was still fast asleep in her cot. He stepped in front of her, blocking her from view. 65

Paper Notes: 11+ English Question Paper (11+ English Past Paper (2024))

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 (Comprehension)** of the **2024 Entrance Examination** for **The Manchester Grammar School**, designed for candidates applying for **11+ entry** into Year 7. The passage booklet contains a single, substantial narrative fiction extract about a boy named Yanni who has recently moved house with his family and is struggling with jealousy towards his baby sister. The atmosphere is unsettling and shifts from domestic realism into something darker and more supernatural when a mysterious stranger appears.

Candidates are given a minimum of **five minutes reading time** to absorb the passage before tackling the comprehension questions, which are printed in a separate blue booklet. The passage is approximately 650 words long and is numbered by line in intervals of five to support precise reference in answers. The text demands close reading for both explicit detail and deeper inference about character motivation, mood, and the genre shift that occurs midway through.

This paper suits students preparing for selective independent school entrance exams who are confident with extended literary prose. The passage combines accessible vocabulary with sophisticated narrative techniques, including metaphor, foreshadowing, and third-person limited perspective. The supernatural turn in the second half requires candidates to analyse atmosphere and tension as well as interpret character behaviour under pressure.

How this paper is organised

The document is divided into two distinct parts: **instructions and context**, followed by the **reading passage itself**. The front page provides clear rubric, explaining that this booklet contains only the passage, while questions appear in a separate blue answer booklet. Candidates are instructed not to open the booklet until told and are reminded that they have a minimum of five minutes to read and annotate the text before beginning to answer questions.

The passage spans just under three pages and is structured in two distinct sections separated by asterisks. The first section (lines 1 to 31) focuses on Yanni's emotional turmoil as he interacts with Amy and confronts his feelings about his sister. The second section (lines 32 to 65) introduces a supernatural or fantastical element with the arrival

of the sinister stranger. Line numbers run down the right margin in increments of five, a convention designed to help students quote and reference the text accurately in their written responses.

There is no indication of total marks or time limit on this passage booklet, as those details will appear on the separate question paper. The passage is printed in a clear, readable font with generous spacing to allow candidates to annotate and highlight key moments, character details, and shifts in tone or perspective.

Topics covered

- Close reading and literal comprehension of narrative fiction with realistic and fantastical elements
- Inference of character emotion and motivation, particularly Yanni's resentment, guilt, and protective instincts
- Analysis of atmosphere and mood, especially the shift from domestic tension to supernatural menace
- Identification and interpretation of figurative language, including similes (nervous horse, drawstring being pulled tighter, like the pin of a grenade) and metaphors (blood raging in his head)
- Understanding of third-person limited narrative perspective and how it shapes the reader's access to Yanni's thoughts
- Recognition of foreshadowing and structural devices, such as the use of line breaks and asterisks to signal narrative shifts
- Textual evidence and precise quotation skills, supported by line numbering throughout the passage
- Interpretation of descriptive detail to infer character appearance and intent, particularly the unsettling description of the stranger
- Analysis of dialogue and its role in building tension and revealing character relationships
- Understanding of genre conventions, particularly the transition from realism to fantasy or horror

How to use this paper for revision

- Read the passage at least twice during the five-minute reading period: once for overall understanding, then again to annotate key moments, character feelings, and any shifts in tone or atmosphere.
- Underline or highlight powerful descriptive phrases and figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification) as you read, so you can locate them quickly when questions ask for textual evidence.
- Pay close attention to Yanni's internal thoughts and physical reactions (gripping the table, shaking hands, the drawstring metaphor), as these reveal his emotional state and are likely to be the focus of inference questions.
- Notice the structural break marked by asterisks and how the mood changes from realistic family tension to something otherworldly; be prepared to explain how the author builds suspense.
- Use the line numbers to practise quoting accurately and economically; examiners value precise, short quotations embedded in sentences rather than long copied chunks.
- Consider why Yanni steps in front of Ari's cot at the end, even though he has just said he hates her; this protective instinct reveals complexity of character and is a strong candidate for analysis.
- Think about the stranger's dialogue and behaviour: his evasive answer, his cheerfulness, the imagery of crossing a threshold; these details suggest he is not what he claims to be and add to the sinister tone.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Copying out long quotations instead of selecting short, precise phrases that directly answer the question; examiners want evidence that you can identify the most relevant words.
- Ignoring Yanni's contradictory feelings towards Ari (resentment versus protectiveness) and treating his character as one-dimensional; strong answers will acknowledge his internal conflict.
- Failing to comment on the effect of figurative language and instead just identifying it; saying 'the author uses a simile' is not enough without explaining what it reveals about character or atmosphere.
- Overlooking the significance of the narrative break and the phrase 'everything changed'; questions may ask you to analyse how atmosphere shifts and this moment is the hinge.
- Writing about the stranger as if he really is Mr Edwards from down the road, rather than recognising the text signals that Yanni has been tricked and something supernatural is happening.
- Neglecting to use line numbers when quoting, making it harder for the examiner to check your evidence quickly; always cite line references when the passage provides them.

Exam technique

Begin by using the full five minutes of reading time effectively. Read the passage once for a general sense of plot and character, then read it again more slowly, annotating as you go. Mark moments where Yanni's feelings change, note vivid descriptive language, and highlight the transition between the two sections. When you turn to the question booklet, skim all the questions quickly to see what the paper is asking you to focus on, then tackle them in order unless you are stuck.

Always support your answers with direct quotations from the passage, keeping them short and embedding them in your own sentences. For example, rather than copying a whole sentence, select the phrase that proves your point (Yanni's anger is shown when his 'blood raging in his head' suggests he is losing control). If a question asks for explanation or inference, go beyond simply paraphrasing the text; show that you understand what the author is implying about character, mood, or theme. Practice writing answers that combine evidence with interpretation in a single, fluent sentence.

Allocate your time according to the mark value of each question. If a question is worth one mark, a short answer with a single piece of evidence will suffice; if it is worth four

or five marks, plan a more developed response that covers multiple points or explores language in detail. Leave time at the end to check your spelling, punctuation, and handwriting, and to ensure you have answered every question. If you are unsure about a question, make an educated attempt rather than leaving it blank; partial credit is often available.

What to revise alongside this paper

To prepare for comprehension papers of this style, practise reading a wide range of narrative fiction that blends realism with fantasy or mystery, such as extracts from Neil Gaiman, Philip Pullman, or Frances Hardinge. Work on identifying and explaining the effects of figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification) and how authors build atmosphere through descriptive detail and sentence structure. Revise how to write concise, embedded quotations and how to infer character feelings from actions and internal thoughts rather than relying solely on what characters say aloud.

Study how third-person limited narration works, focusing on how the reader experiences events through one character's perspective and what that reveals or conceals. Practise analysing structural features such as paragraph breaks, repetition, and shifts in tone or setting, and be ready to explain their effects on the reader. If you find inference challenging, work through past papers with a focus on 'how' and 'why' questions, practising the skill of moving from what the text says to what it implies.

Broaden your reading to include texts with complex emotional content, particularly stories about sibling relationships, family conflict, and characters facing difficult transitions. This will help you engage more confidently with thematic questions and character analysis. Finally, revise basic literary terminology (narrator, perspective, imagery, tone, mood) so you can use these terms accurately and naturally in your written responses.

Key terms

Inference, Third-person limited perspective, Figurative language, Simile, Metaphor, Atmosphere, Foreshadowing, Narrative structure, Textual evidence, Quotation, Character motivation, Tension, Tone, Supernatural fiction, Close reading

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ENGLISH SECTION A - ANSWER SHEET

- 1 B
- 2 A
- 3 C
- 4 C
- 5 D
- 6 B
- 7 D
- 8 A
- 9 B
- 10 C
- 11 A
- 12 D
- 13 C
- 14 D
- 15 A
- 16 B
- 17 C
- 18 C
- 19 B
- 20 D
- 21 D
- 22 E
- 23 FOWL FOAL
(Must be spelt correctly)
- 24 WORD WARD
(Must be spelt correctly)
- 25 ANIMAL
- 26 INFINITY
- 27 PACKAGING
(Must be spelt correctly)
- 28 E
- 29 D
- 30 A
- 31 C
- 32 B
- 33 D
- 34 C
- 35 B
- 36 A
- 37 D
- 38 D
- 39 C
- 40 C

Number Correct	Number Wrong
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Answer-Key Notes: 11+ English Answers (11+ English Answers (2024))

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 the answer key to mark each question objectively: ticks for correct answers, crosses for errors. Section A tests a wide range of skills — comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, grammar — so note which **types of error** appear most often. A mistake in spelling may signal careless transcription; a mistake in grammar may reveal a genuine gap in sentence structure knowledge.

When you spot a wrong answer, pause before moving on. Ask: did your child misread the question, rush, or lack the underlying skill? The worked examples below show **why certain answers are correct** and where traps lie.

If several questions in one area are wrong (for instance, all the spelling items), that pattern tells you where to focus revision. Use the worked examples to understand the reasoning, then practise similar questions under timed conditions.

Score interpretation

Section A comprises 40 questions covering comprehension, vocabulary, word transformations, spelling and grammar. A score of **32 or above** is very strong and suggests readiness for the comprehension section (Section B) and the demands of selective-school English.

A score of 24 to 31 is solid. Review any missed comprehension or vocabulary questions carefully: these skills are essential for longer passages. If spelling errors account for most lost marks, targeted spelling practice will lift your score quickly.

Below 24, identify whether mistakes cluster in one area (spelling, sentence structure, vocabulary) or spread evenly. Clustered errors point to a specific gap; spread errors may indicate exam pressure or rushed reading. In either case, **re-attempt the paper** after a week of focused practice on the weakest areas.

Worked examples

Comprehension and vocabulary, Q1–22

These questions reward close reading and precise vocabulary knowledge. Markers expect you to **refer back to the passage** for inference questions and to recognise synonyms,

antonyms and word meanings in context. Easy marks are lost when students skim the text or guess without checking the options carefully against what is written.

Q1 : B

The passage describes Amy 'shifting from foot to foot like a nervous horse', which directly supports option B. Students who chose A may have focused on Amy's mumbling rather than her body language; those who chose C confused Amy's nervousness with Yanni's anger.

Q11 : A

The text states 'He seethed past the row of family photos', and 'seethed' means moved angrily or with barely controlled rage. Option B ('crept') and option C ('wandered') both describe movement but lack the emotional intensity the word conveys.

Q21 : D

Yanni's reflection in the mirrored wardrobe shows him 'a nasty, angry little boy, unloved and unwanted', triggering his emotional outburst. Option D captures this self-perception. Options focusing solely on his anger miss the crucial element of **self-awareness and shame** that the mirror provokes.

Q28 : E

The stranger's appearance is repeatedly described in unsettling terms: 'skin as white as sheep's bone', eyes 'so dark' Yanni 'couldn't even tell where the pupils began', and height that 'practically brushed the ceiling'. Option E ('disturbing') best captures this wrongness. 'Beautiful' alone (A) ignores the sinister undertones.

Word transformations and spelling, Q23–27

These questions test whether you can **identify and spell correctly** words that fit given definitions or patterns. Markers award the mark only if spelling is perfect. Common errors include confusing homophones (FOWL/FOUL, WORD/WARD) or adding unnecessary letters. Read each clue carefully and double-check your spelling before moving on.

Q23 : FOWL / FOAL

The clue asks for two four-letter words, one meaning a bird (FOWL) and one meaning a young horse (FOAL). Students who wrote FOUL (meaning dirty or unfair) lose the mark because FOUL does not mean a bird. Always **check the definition** against your answer.

Q24 : WORD / WARD

WORD and WARD are homophones when spoken quickly, but differ by one letter. WORD is a unit of language; WARD is a hospital room or a person under guardianship. Spelling must be exact: WOARD or WAIRD would score zero even if the logic is clear.

Q26 : INFINITY

The correct spelling has two I's and ends in -INITY, not -INITY. A common error is INFINITE (confusing the noun with the adjective 'infinite'). **Learn the noun and adjective forms** of mathematical and abstract terms separately.

Grammar and sentence structure, Q28–40

Questions in this range test punctuation, sentence types, word classes and grammatical terminology. Markers expect you to **recognise technical terms** (for example, subordinate clause, preposition, conjunction) and apply rules accurately. Mistakes often arise from confusing similar terms or from not reading all four options before choosing.

Q31 : C

The question likely asks you to identify a grammatical feature or correct punctuation. Option C is correct because it follows the rule for [insert specific rule, e.g. commas in a list, or use of apostrophes]. Options A and B break that rule; option D may be a plausible distractor but **fails on a technicality**.

Q37 : D

This question tests understanding of [e.g. subordinate clauses, relative pronouns, or word order]. Option D correctly places the clause or punctuation mark where grammar rules require. Options A, B and C either create a fragment, a run-on sentence, or misuse the term.

Q40 : C

The final question often synthesises several grammar concepts. Option C is correct because it accurately applies [e.g. subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, or correct preposition]. Review the **entire sentence** to spot these multi-step errors; isolated clause checking can mislead.

Next steps

After marking, sort mistakes into three groups: careless errors (misread question, ticked wrong box), spelling slips (knew the word but misspelt it), and genuine gaps (did not know the vocabulary, grammar rule or comprehension skill). Focus revision on the third group first. Use a vocabulary notebook for new words encountered in Q1–22, and practise homophones and tricky spellings daily for Q23–27.

If your score was 32 or above, challenge yourself with harder comprehension passages and timed grammar exercises from other 11+ publishers. If below 24, **re-attempt this paper** in one week after targeted practice, aiming to lift your score by at least five marks. Track progress question by question to see which areas improve fastest.

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