



ExamNinja

REVISION GUIDES • WORKBOOKS • PRACTICE PAPERS

KEY STAGE 2 SATS

2017 KS2 English Reading

Answers Explained

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How to beat each question type

Find and copy (2b)

1. Ask the child to re-read the section of text the question points to, looking for the exact word or phrase that answers the question.
 2. Encourage the child to copy the word or phrase exactly as it appears in the text, including any punctuation if needed.
 3. Remind the child that only the specific word or group of words asked for is needed - no extra explanation is required.
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Tick-box (multiple choice) (2a)

1. Ask the child to read all the options carefully before choosing, rather than ticking the first one that looks right.
 2. Encourage the child to go back to the relevant part of the text to check each option against what is actually written.
 3. Remind the child to tick only one box unless the question clearly asks for more, and to check the answer makes sense in context.
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Inference: how can you tell? (2d)

1. Ask the child to think about what the text suggests, even if it is not stated outright, and to find a specific part of the text that supports their idea.
 2. Encourage the child to write a clear point and then quote or refer to the evidence from the text that backs it up.
 3. For questions worth 2 or 3 marks, remind the child that two separate, distinct points are needed - repeating the same idea in different words will not gain extra credit.
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Word meaning in context (2a)

1. Ask the child to re-read the sentence containing the word, thinking about what the whole sentence is describing rather than just the word in isolation.
 2. Encourage the child to try substituting a simpler word or phrase in place of the difficult word to see if it fits the meaning of the passage.
 3. Remind the child that the answer must make sense within the specific context of the text, not just be a general definition of the word.
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Sequencing / ordering events (2c)

1. Ask the child to skim back through the text, noticing the order in which events are described, using any paragraph or page references given in the question.
 2. Encourage the child to number the events lightly in pencil first, checking each one against the text before writing the final answers.
 3. Remind the child that one answer is already given as an example, so they should use that as an anchor to help them place the remaining events correctly.
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True or false table (2b)

1. Ask the child to treat each row as a separate question, going back to the text to check whether the statement matches what is written.
 2. Encourage the child to be precise - a statement that is almost right but contains one incorrect detail should be marked as false.
 3. Remind the child that all rows must be completed to gain full marks, so no row should be left blank.
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Matching / drawing lines (2f)

1. Ask the child to read all the items on both sides of the matching task before drawing any lines, so they get a sense of how the pairs fit together.
 2. Encourage the child to start with the match they are most confident about (often one is already completed as an example) and use that to narrow down the remaining options.
 3. Remind the child to draw clear, straight lines and to check that every item on the left has exactly one line connecting it to an item on the right.
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Question 1 (1 mark)

Answer: The correct answer to tick is 'squatted'.

Point your child to the very first sentence of the story, where the cat is described on the branch. Ask: "What do you think the word 'crouched' tells you about the position the cat was in?"

The opening line of Gaby to the Rescue describes the Siamese cat crouching low on a branch. Children need to match **crouched** to the closest synonym from the four options. Squatted means to sit low with bent legs pressed close to a surface, which is exactly what crouching involves. Balanced focuses on stability rather than position; trembled means to shake; pounced means to leap forward. Only squatted captures the low, hunched body position implied by crouched.

Watch out: A child might tick 'balanced' because the cat is sitting on a branch, which requires balance - but balanced says nothing about the cat's low, tucked body position, whereas squatted does.

Question 2 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'She is worried about damaging the cardigan.'

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about what Gaby is worried about losing. Ask: "Why do you think Gaby pulls her cardigan tighter when she sees the cat?"

The clue is in the opening paragraph, where Gaby thinks about how this is her last good school cardigan and worries about when her father will have enough money to buy a new one. Children need to infer that pulling it tighter shows she is trying to protect it before deciding to take it off entirely – the text confirms this when she then removes it before climbing, suggesting she feared it would be ruined.

Watch out: A child might tick 'She is feeling cold' because pulling a cardigan tighter is a natural cold-weather action, but the text makes no mention of temperature – it is clearly about protecting a precious item.

Question 3 (1 mark)

Answer: The cat is out of luck because Gaby's mum, who is the expert at rescuing cats from trees, is not there. Any of these count: Gaby's mother is not back yet; only Gaby (who is inexperienced) is available; Gaby's mother is described as a master tree climber and cat rescuer.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about what Gaby says to the cat in that paragraph. Ask: "Why do you think Gaby tells the cat it is 'out of luck' - what is missing that would have helped?"

The paragraph beginning Mind made up is where children need to look. Gaby tells the cat directly: **'My mom, master tree climber and cat rescuer, isn't back yet'** - meaning the cat's bad luck is that the expert is absent and only the inexperienced Gaby is available. Children need to go one step further than simply saying the mother is away; the answer must show understanding that the mother was the one who could reliably help. A response that only says the cat is stuck in a tree will not score.

Watch out: A child who writes only that the cat is stuck up a tree has missed the point - the question asks why Gaby thinks the cat is unlucky, which is about the absence of someone better qualified to help.

Question 4 (1 mark)

Answer: The cat is trying to tell Gaby to hurry up.

Cover the page and ask your child to think about what is happening at that moment - Gaby is just starting to climb and the cat makes a noise. Ask: "What do you think the cat is trying to say to Gaby?"

Immediately after the cat meows, Gaby replies 'I am hurrying' - the italics on 'am' show she is responding as though defending herself. Children need to infer that she is interpreting the meow as an impatient demand to speed up. The key reasoning step is that Gaby treats the meow as a complaint about her pace, not as a greeting or a cry for help.

Watch out: A child must not simply write 'I am hurrying' - that is Gaby's reply, not what the cat is saying. The child needs to describe the cat's meaning, not copy Gaby's response.

Question 5 (1 mark)

Answer: Gaby climbed the tree the previous summer to take part in a water-balloon fight with the boys, or because it was the perfect position to attack them from above.

Ask your child to find the paragraph that mentions last summer and read it carefully before answering. Ask: "Why did Gaby climb this same tree last summer?"

The third paragraph of the story contains the answer. The text says 'she and her best friend, Alma, had challenged the boys to a water-balloon fight last summer' and that 'up high was the perfect spot for a full-blown assault on the boys below.' Children need to give one of these two connected points: either that the purpose was to have a water-balloon fight with the boys, or that the high position gave

a tactical advantage in the game. Both count, and a direct quotation that captures either point is also acceptable.

Watch out: A child should not simply say she was helping or rescuing someone - that is what she is doing now. The question specifically asks about the previous summer, which is a different event entirely.

Question 6 (1 mark)

Answer: It means she made sure her feet and hands had a firm grip or were safely in place on the tree before climbing higher.

Ask your child to find the sentence that contains the words 'secured her feet and hands'. Ask: "What do you think 'secured her feet and hands' means here?"

The phrase '**secured her feet and hands**' appears in the paragraph beginning 'Gaby secured her feet and hands and climbed higher'. Children need to understand 'secured' as a synonym for 'made firm/safe'. The text is describing Gaby getting a solid hold before moving upward. A child should explain this as getting a good grip, placing hands and feet firmly, or making sure she would not slip or fall.

Watch out: A child might simply say she 'held on', which is too vague. The answer needs to convey the idea of a firm, deliberate grip or safe positioning rather than just touching the branch.

Question 7 (1 mark)

Answer: The first mistake Gaby makes is looking down from the tree.

Ask your child to find the part of the story where the author uses the words 'mistake number one'. Ask: "What does Gaby do just before the author calls it mistake number one?"

The text labels the two mistakes explicitly. After Gaby climbs high enough to reach the cat, the narrator states '**But then she looked down. Mistake number one.**' Children need to find that label in the text and translate it into a clear answer. The phrase 'mistake number one' is the author's own signpost, so there is no inference needed - this is straightforward retrieval.

Watch out: A child might write 'reaching out toward the cat' because that is labelled 'mistake number two' shortly afterwards - but the question asks specifically for the first mistake, which is looking down.

Question 8 (1 mark)

Answer: The word 'universal' tells children that the rule is known by everyone, everywhere - it applies to all people, not just some.

Point your child to the paragraph beginning 'She knew the universal rule' and ask them to look closely at that one word. Ask: "What does the word 'universal' tell you about who this rule applies to?"

The paragraph beginning She knew the universal rule... contains the key word in context. Children need to understand that **universal** means applying to everyone or everything across the world. The text uses it to show that not looking down when tree climbing is a rule every climber knows - it is not a personal or local rule. An answer such as 'it is a rule everyone knows' or 'it is known all around the world' captures this. The official answer does not accept answers that say it is 'the only rule' or that qualify 'everyone' by saying 'many people know it' - the idea of all people is essential.

Watch out: A child might write 'it is the most important rule' or 'it is the only rule' - but the official answer does not accept this, because 'universal' is about how widely the rule is known, not its importance or uniqueness.

Question 9 (1 mark)

Answer: The cat had an owner who loved and cared for it - it was not a stray.

Ask your child to read the paragraph beginning 'Well, she'd just have to not fall...' carefully, paying attention to what Gaby notices about the cat. Ask: "What does Gaby decide about the cat after looking at it closely?"

The paragraph beginning Well, she'd just have to not fall... is where children need to look. Gaby notices the cat is **too shiny** and **too chubby**, then spots its rhinestone collar with gold charms. From these clues she concludes 'Someone loved that cat' - meaning it was a well-kept pet with an owner, not a stray. The answer children need to give must go beyond simply describing the cat's appearance; it must recognise the idea of human care. Saying the cat looked glossy or fat is not enough on its own.

Watch out: A child might write that the cat looked glossy or fat, but this does not score because the answer must show the child understands Gaby is concluding the cat has an owner who looks after it.

Question 10 (2 marks)

Answer: Any three of these count: the cat arched its back; it hissed; it showed its teeth (bared its teeth / snarled); it dug its claws into Gaby / latched on to her.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about how cats behave when they are frightened or unhappy - what physical things do cats do? Ask: "Can you name three things the cat does in the story that show it does not want to be rescued?"

Page 5 contains all four pieces of evidence children need to draw from. The question asks for three ways the cat shows it dislikes being rescued, and the official answer recognises four acceptable responses: **it arched its back, it hissed, it showed its teeth** ('Nice teeth' is Gaby's wry reaction), and **it dug its claws into her / latched on to her**. Two correct responses earn 1 mark; all three earn the full 2 marks. Children should write each behaviour briefly and clearly - they do not need to quote exactly, but the response must name a specific action, not just say 'it was aggressive'.

Watch out: A child might write only 'it scratched her' and 'it hissed' and then stop at two points, missing the third needed for full marks - remind them to find a third distinct behaviour from the page.

Model answer: 1. It arched its back. 2. It hissed at Gaby. 3. It dug its claws into her arm and shoulder.

Question 11 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'thinking about what to do'.

Point your child to the sentence 'She resettled on the branch, considering her options.' Ask: "What do you think 'considering her options' means - what is Gaby doing in her head at this moment?"

The phrase '**considering her options**' is the focus here. Children need to think about what 'options' means - it refers to the different choices available to Gaby. She has just settled back on the branch after the cat hissed at her, and she is now working out her next move. 'Thinking about what to do' captures this precisely. The other choices all describe something different: 'changing her mind' implies a decision already made, 'looking at it from the cat's point of view' is too literal, and 'wishing her mother was there' describes an emotion rather than active thinking.

Watch out: A child might tick 'wishing her mother was there' because Gaby has been thinking about her mother earlier in the passage, but this option describes a feeling rather than the mental process of weighing up choices.

Question 12 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should write that Gaby's mother advises speaking softly to cats, or that cats should be picked up by the loose skin at the back of their neck.

Ask your child to find the paragraph on page 5 that begins 'When Gaby was younger' and read it carefully. Ask: "What does Gaby's mum say is the right way to deal with a cat?"

Page 5 contains the relevant paragraph beginning 'When Gaby was younger'. Children need to retrieve one of two specific pieces of advice Gaby's mother passes on: either to **speak softly** to cats (the text says 'you should speak softly') or to **pick them up by the loose skin at the back of their neck** ('pick them up by the loose skin at the back of their neck, because that's how their mothers carried them'). Either piece of advice is sufficient for the mark.

Watch out: The official answer does not accept things Gaby's mother simply does rather than advises, so writing 'giggle and sweet-talk the cat' does not score, even though the text mentions this.

Question 13 (1 mark)

Answer: Gaby's mother speaks Spanish in the story.

Ask your child to look back at the story and find the part where someone else speaks Spanish, rather than English. Ask: "Can you find another character in the story who says something in Spanish?"

The retrieve-and-locate skill tested here is straightforward: children need to identify who else in the story uses Spanish. The answer is found in the paragraph beginning 'When Gaby was younger', where Gaby's mother speaks to the cat in Spanish: 'Que bonita eres gatita. You're so pretty, little cat.' That is the only other character shown speaking Spanish. Any reference to Gaby's mother is correct.

Watch out: A child might write 'Alma' as Gaby's friend is mentioned as being present during the water-balloon fight, but Alma is never shown speaking Spanish in the text.

Question 14 (1 mark)

Answer: The correct order is: Gaby notices the cat (1), Gaby takes her cardigan off (2), Gaby remembers the water-balloon fight (3), Gaby breaks the universal rule of tree climbing (4), Gaby tries to pick up the cat (5).

Ask your child to look back through the story from the very beginning and think about what happens first, second, and so on. Ask: "Can you point to where each of these five things happens in the story?"

Children need to re-read the story in sequence and track the five events in order. First, Gaby sees the cat on the branch. She then removes her cardigan before climbing. While climbing, she recalls the water-balloon fight from the previous summer. Once near the cat, she looks down - breaking the universal rule. Finally, she reaches out and the cat latches onto her - that is when she tries to pick it up. All five numbers must be correct to earn the mark.

Watch out: A child might place 'Gaby remembers the water-balloon fight' before 'Gaby takes her cardigan off', but the memory is triggered while she is already in the tree, which happens after the cardigan is removed.

Question 15 (1 mark)

Answer: Both words needed: 'exhausted' and 'staggered'. Both must be copied correctly to score the point.

Point your child to the sentence printed in the question itself and ask them to read it carefully. Ask: "Can you find two different words in that sentence that show how tired Matthew Webb was?"

The sentence quoted in the question contains two words that signal extreme tiredness. **Exhausted** directly means completely worn out, while **staggered** – meaning to walk unsteadily – implies the body is so fatigued it can barely function. Children need to copy both words accurately from that sentence. The official answer requires both; giving only one does not score.

Watch out: A child might copy 'nearly twenty-two hours' as evidence of tiredness, but the question specifically asks for words that show tiredness, not time – so only 'exhausted' and 'staggered' are accepted.

Question 16 (1 mark)

Answer: J.B. Thompson's failed attempt to swim the Channel in 1872 inspired Webb to try it himself.

Ask your child to read the second paragraph of the Swimming the English Channel text carefully. Ask: "What happened before Matthew Webb decided he wanted to swim the Channel?"

The second paragraph of the 'Swimming the English Channel' text provides the answer directly. Children need to identify both the event and its connection to Webb: the text states he was inspired by **'J.B. Thompson's failed attempt to swim the Channel in 1872'**. Simply naming J.B. Thompson

without mentioning the failed attempt is not enough - the event itself (the failure) is what triggered Webb's ambition.

Watch out: Simply writing 'J.B. Thompson' without mentioning the failed attempt does not score - the question asks for the event, not just a person's name.

Question 17 (1 mark)

Answer: The word children need to copy from the text is 'inspired'.

Point your child to the paragraph beginning 'Twenty-seven-year-old Webb' in the Swimming the English Channel text and ask them to read it carefully. Ask: "Can you find the word in this paragraph that means someone was driven or pushed to do something?"

The paragraph beginning Twenty-seven-year-old Webb contains the sentence 'he was inspired to give up his job and train as a long-distance swimmer.' Children need to identify that **inspired** is the word closest in meaning to 'motivated' - both words describe being driven or spurred into action by something. The word must be copied accurately from the text, as this is a find-and-copy question.

Watch out: A child might write 'inspired to give up his job' as a phrase, but only the single word 'inspired' is needed here.

Question 18 (2 marks)

Answer: Children need to tick True or False for each of the four statements. The correct answers are: Matthew Webb's first attempt was not successful - True; the first successful swim was in 1872 - False; J.B. Thompson and Webb both swam in 1875 - False; Webb took twenty hours - False.

Before checking the answers, ask your child to re-read the first section of the Swimming the English Channel text and find the key dates and facts about Matthew Webb. Ask: "Can you find the information in the text that tells you about Matthew Webb's attempts and how long the swim took?"

The first section of the text about Matthew Webb provides all four answers. Children should check each statement against the text carefully. Webb's **first attempt had to be abandoned** due to bad weather, making the first statement True. The first successful swim was in **1875**, not 1872 (1872 was J.B. Thompson's failed attempt), making the second statement False. Only Webb completed the swim in 1875 - Thompson failed - making the third statement False. Webb took **nearly twenty-two hours**, not twenty, making the fourth statement False. Full marks require all four correct; three correct earns one mark.

Watch out: A child might tick True for 'Matthew Webb took twenty hours' because twenty-two is close to twenty, but the text clearly says 'nearly twenty-two hours', so twenty hours is not correct.

Question 19 (2 marks)

Answer: Any two of these hardship-and-solution pairs: cold (dealt with by coating himself in oil); jellyfish stings (dealt with by coating himself in oil); limited food or drink (dealt with by being accompanied by friends in boats who fed him); danger or need for protection (dealt with by being accompanied by friends in boats).

Point your child to the paragraph about Webb's swim that mentions oil and boats. Ask: "Can you find two problems Matthew Webb faced, and for each one explain what he did about it?"

The relevant section is the third paragraph of 'The first Channel swimmer', which states that **Webb coated himself in oil for protection against the cold and jellyfish stings**, and that **he was accompanied by boats so his friends could protect and feed him**. Each mark is awarded for one correctly matched hardship-and-action pair. Children must give both parts – naming the hardship alone is not enough. Two correct pairs earns both marks; one correct pair earns one mark. The ale, brandy and beef tea detail confirms the feeding point but is not itself a hardship.

Watch out: A child might list a hardship without explaining how Webb dealt with it, or vice versa. Each mark requires both the hardship and its solution to be given together.

Model answer: 1. Hardship: cold (or jellyfish stings). How he dealt with it: he coated himself in oil. 2. Hardship: limited food and drink (or danger/need for protection). How he dealt with it: he was accompanied by friends in boats who protected and fed him.

Question 20 (1 mark)

Answer: The answer children need to copy is 'not standard' (the full phrase accepted is 'are not standard for today's cross-Channel swimmers').

Point your child to the paragraph about Matthew Webb's friends supplying him with food and drink, and ask them to find the part of the sentence that tells us those drinks are unusual today. Ask: "Which words in that sentence tell us those drinks would not be normal for swimmers today?"

The final sentence of the paragraph about Webb's swimming methods contains the key phrase. After listing the ale, brandy and beef tea that Webb's friends supplied, the text states these **'are not standard for today's cross-Channel swimmers'** - signalled by the exclamation mark as something

unusual. Children need to copy the words not standard (at minimum) to show the drinks would be considered out of the ordinary today. The full phrase up to 'swimmers' is also correct.

Watch out: A child might copy 'ale, brandy and beef tea' because those are the unusual drinks mentioned, but the question asks for the words that tell us they would be considered unusual today, not the names of the drinks themselves.

Question 21 (1 mark)

Answer: Slow swimmers have to swim further because the tides and currents push them off course. Faster swimmers get across more directly before the tides can carry them sideways.

Point the child to the 'How long does it take to swim across the Channel?' question in the Frequently asked questions section and ask them to read just the answer. Ask: "Why does it say a slow swimmer ends up going further than a fast one?"

Under the 'How long does it take?' question in the **Frequently asked questions** section, the text states 'a slower swimmer will not only take longer but will have to swim further because of the tides and currents.' Children need to lift either of two connected ideas: that faster swimmers follow a more direct route, or that tides and currents push slower swimmers off course. Either idea scores the mark. Referring vaguely to 'waves' pushing someone off course is also acceptable.

Watch out: A child might write only that slow swimmers take longer, which is true but does not answer why they swim a greater distance. The answer needs to refer to tides, currents, or a less direct route.

Question 22 (1 mark)

Answer: The fastest swim across the Channel took 7 hours.

Point your child to the 'Frequently asked questions' section on page 7 and ask them to find the question about how long the swim takes. Ask: "What does the text say is the fastest time anyone has ever crossed the Channel?"

Under the **Frequently asked questions** subheading, in the answer to 'How long does it take to swim across the Channel?', the text states 'The fastest recorded crossing is 7 hours'. Children need to copy both the number and the word 'hours' - the official answer does not accept '7' alone without 'hours' attached.

Watch out: A child might write just '7' without the word 'hours', but the official answer requires the unit to be included.

Question 23 (2 marks)

Answer: Fact: temperature ranges from 12°C to 18°C. Opinion: 18°C is too cold to swim in. Fact: direct distance is approximately 21 miles. Fact: faster swimmers do not swim as many miles.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about the difference between a fact and an opinion. Ask: "Which of the four statements do you think is someone's opinion rather than a proven fact, and why?"

The Frequently asked questions section contains the evidence children need. A **fact** is something that can be measured or verified; an **opinion** is a judgement. The temperature range, the 21-mile distance, and the statement about faster swimmers covering fewer miles are all presented as measurable data. The claim that 18°C is 'too cold to swim in' is a judgement - the text says 'most people would consider' it too cold, signalling it is a view rather than a certainty. Children earn 1 mark for three correct and 2 marks for all four correct.

Watch out: A child might tick 'Faster swimmers do not swim as many miles' as an opinion, because it sounds like a claim - but the text explains it is a direct consequence of tides and speed, making it a factual statement.

Question 24 (1 mark)

Answer: The answer children need to write is 1993.

Point the child to the 'Safe to swim?' section on page 7 of the reading booklet and ask them to read it carefully. Ask: "In what year did France make it against the law to swim from France to England?"

The **Safe to swim?** section states that 'The French authorities outlawed swimming from France to England in 1993 for safety reasons.' Children simply need to locate that section and retrieve the year. The answer must include the word 'hours' for time-based questions, but here the year alone is sufficient. Writing just a number without context is fine for this question.

Watch out: A child might write 2010 instead, as that year is also mentioned in the same section (when a coastguard official called for a complete ban), but 2010 refers to a proposal, not the year swimming was actually made illegal.

Question 25 (1 mark)

Answer: The word children need to copy from the 'Safe to swim?' section is 'outlawed'. The word 'ban' is also acceptable.

Ask your child to find the 'Safe to swim?' section and read the first two sentences carefully. Ask: "Can you find a single word in this section that tells us swimming was made illegal in France?"

In the **Safe to swim?** section, the text states 'The French authorities **outlawed** swimming from France to England in 1993 for safety reasons.' Children need to recognise that outlawed means made illegal, which is exactly what the question asks them to show. The secondary acceptable answer, ban, appears later in the same section where the deputy director of the French coastguard is described as being 'in favour of a complete ban'. Either word copied accurately earns the mark.

Watch out: A child might write 'illegal' because the question itself uses that word, but 'illegal' does not appear in the text itself and therefore cannot be copied from it.

Question 26 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should give one piece of evidence: either that David Walliams did not miss a single training session in nine months, or that he trained for nine months.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about what someone who is truly determined to succeed would do differently from someone who just hopes they might manage it. Ask: "What kind of behaviour would show you that someone was really, truly determined to succeed at something difficult?"

The 'Celebrity swimmer' section on page 7 is where children should look. The question asks them to infer determination from specific textual evidence. The clearest proof is the statement '**Walliams didn't miss a single training session in nine months**' - this shows absolute commitment, not just effort. Alternatively, noting he trained for nine months is also accepted. Children need to go beyond restating that he was determined and instead provide the actual evidence the text gives to demonstrate it.

Watch out: A child might write that Walliams 'knew more than 90 per cent of people fail' - this shows awareness of the challenge but does not itself evidence determination. The evidence must show what Walliams actively did.

Question 27 (1 mark)

Answer: The correct option to tick is 'A Sporting Challenge'.

Before revealing the answer, ask your child to think about what every section of the text has in common, not just one part. Ask: "If you had to give the whole text one title that covers everything in it, which of these four options fits best?"

Summarising the whole text requires children to look beyond any single section and ask what all four sections share. The text covers Webb's record-breaking swim, the physical challenges and dangers, the debate about safety, and Walliams' determined effort - all united by the theme of swimming the Channel as an extreme physical challenge. **'A Sporting Challenge'** is the only option broad enough to cover every section. 'The Life of David Walliams' covers only one small part; 'Sailing the Channel' is simply wrong; 'Training for Survival' fits only the preparation angle.

Watch out: A child might tick 'Training for Survival' because the text does discuss training and hazards, but that title only captures part of the text, not its overall focus on the sporting achievement of crossing the Channel.

Question 28 (1 mark)

Answer: The first Channel swimmer links to 'gives information about the origins of swimming the Channel'. Frequently asked questions links to 'summarises key information about swimming the Channel'. Safe to swim? links to 'shows contrasting viewpoints about swimming the Channel'. Celebrity swimmer links to 'highlights the continuing attractions of swimming the Channel'.

Before checking the answers, ask your child to look at each section heading in turn and think about what kind of writing it contains – is it a story, a debate, facts, or something else? Ask: "What is the main purpose of each section – what is it trying to do for the reader?"

Each section of the text has a distinct purpose, and children must match all four correctly to score the mark. The first Channel swimmer tells the story of how Webb began the tradition, so it gives information about origins. Frequently asked questions covers facts about distance, temperature, and timing – key summarised information. Safe to swim? presents both sides of a debate (critics vs supporters), making it the contrasting viewpoints section. Celebrity swimmer shows that people still attempt the swim today, highlighting its continuing appeal. All four must be correct to score.

Watch out: A child might match 'Frequently asked questions' to 'shows contrasting viewpoints' because it includes different perspectives, but that section simply presents factual answers rather than debating opposing sides – 'Safe to swim?' is the one that explicitly presents critics against supporters.

Question 29 (1 mark)

Answer: The boat was very small or it was completely still and not moving on the water.

Ask your child to picture a toy placed on a glass table and think about what that image suggests about the size of the toy and how still it is. Then ask: "What does that description tell us about the boat?"

The simile like a toy sitting on a glass table is a language and effect question testing whether children can unpack what the comparison implies. A toy on a glass table suggests two things: something tiny and insignificant in a vast space, and something completely motionless on a perfectly smooth, flat surface. Children need to identify either of these ideas to secure the mark. Saying the boat 'was small' or 'created no ripples' both count. Simply copying the simile back without explanation does not demonstrate understanding.

Watch out: A child might say the boat was floating, which is too vague and does not capture either the smallness or the stillness the simile conveys.

Question 30 (1 mark)

Answer: What was unusual was that Michael had not seen a single dolphin all day, which had not happened for over a week.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about what they remember of Michael's normal routine at sea. Ask: "What do you think was different or strange about this particular day for Michael?"

The opening of the second paragraph on page 8 holds the key: 'For the first time in over a week, Michael hadn't seen a dolphin all day.' Children need to infer that seeing dolphins was Michael's normal, daily experience, so their absence on this particular day was what made it unusual. The official answer specifically requires reference to Michael seeing no dolphins. Mentioning the heat or the stillness of the water does not count, as those are scene-setting details rather than something unusual for Michael specifically.

Watch out: A child might answer that the weather was unusually hot or that the sea was very still, but the official answer does not accept references to weather or temperature - the unusual detail is specifically about the dolphins.

Question 31a (1 mark)

Answer: The child should circle the word 'chugging' from the first row of options.

Ask the child to read the sentence containing 'putt-putt' aloud and then look at the four word choices. Ask: "Which word sounds most like a small, slow engine going along quietly?"

The phrase 'putt-putt' of her engine is the key clue. 'Putt-putt' is an onomatopoeic word suggesting a slow, rhythmic, low engine sound. Children need to match that description to the word that best captures a small, slowly moving engine. Of the four options, **'chugging'** is the only one that suggests a gentle, steady, slow-moving engine sound – 'racing' and 'roaring' both imply speed and power, while 'smoking' describes appearance, not movement or sound.

Watch out: A child might circle 'roaring' because engines can roar, but 'roaring' suggests a loud, powerful, fast engine – the opposite of the quiet, slow 'putt-putt' described in the text.

Question 31b (1 mark)

Answer: The boat was chugging along on the smooth waters.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to picture the scene and think about what kind of sea is described in the story. Ask: "What do you think the water looked like around the boat that afternoon?"

Question 31 has two parts, each worth 1 mark. Part (a), asking which word describes how the boat was moving, is covered separately. Part (b) asks children to infer the condition of the sea from the phrase 'lost in the big, quiet stillness of the afternoon'. The stillness and absence of any breeze or wave movement point directly to **smooth waters**. The text opens by saying there was not 'the slightest breeze' and that the boat 'floated like a toy sitting on a glass table', both confirming a perfectly calm, flat sea.

Watch out: A child might circle 'cold sea' because seas are often cold, but nothing in the surrounding sentence or paragraph refers to the temperature of the water – the phrase is specifically about stillness and quiet.

Question 32 (1 mark)

Answer: The two words children need to copy are 'savouring' and 'delicious'.

Direct your child to the last sentence in the paragraph where Michael pours water over himself. Ask: "Can you find two words in that sentence that show he really enjoyed the feeling?"

The last sentence of the third paragraph on page 8 reads 'He poured the water over himself, savouring the delicious coolness.' Both **savouring** and **delicious** carry the sense of genuine pleasure and enjoyment. Children need to recognise that 'savouring' means relishing something slowly, and

'delicious' describes the coolness as though it were something wonderful to taste. Both words must be copied accurately; the question is worth 1 mark only if both are given.

Watch out: A child might write 'coolness' alone, but that word simply names the sensation rather than showing enjoyment. Both 'savouring' and 'delicious' are needed for the mark.

Question 33 (3 marks)

Answer: Any two of these count: the strange, unidentified sound it makes; its sudden and unexpected appearance or disappearance; Michael's shock and confusion; only parts of the whale are visible at once; the text does not immediately name it as a whale; familiar things are used to describe something unrecognisable; the text rules out what it is not rather than saying what it is.

Ask your child to think back to the whale scene before looking at the page again. Ask: "What made the whale feel scary or mysterious when you first read about it?"

Page 9 builds mystery through several techniques, and children must identify two of them. For **3 marks**, two points are needed with at least one supported by a text example - for instance, noting that the text withholds the whale's identity (only revealing it with 'A whale! Its dark head and blowhole! That's what he had seen') alongside the eerie, unidentified noise 'Pppffffwwwraa!' that startles Michael. For **2 marks**, either two points without evidence or one point with solid evidence earns the second mark. For **1 mark**, one valid point alone is sufficient. The most accessible points for children are the unidentified sound and the delayed reveal of what the creature is.

Watch out: A child who simply retells events ('the whale appeared') without explaining what makes it mysterious will not score. The answer must identify a technique - such as delayed naming, partial description, or Michael's confusion - not just summarise the plot.

Model answer: The whale is mysterious because the text does not immediately tell us what the creature is. Instead it describes 'a black shape, much, much bigger than the biggest dolphin', leaving the reader uncertain, just like Michael. It is also made mysterious through the strange, unidentifiable sound it makes - 'Pppffffwwwraa!' - which shocks Michael so much he falls into the bottom of the boat.

Question 34a (1 mark)

Answer: Because the whale looked like a polished rock - its surface appeared smooth and shiny.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about what Michael saw when he first spotted the whale - what did it remind him of? Ask: "What did the whale look like when Michael first saw it, and what might that make you expect it to feel like?"

Page 9 is where children need to look. The question tests whether children can infer why Michael might have expected the whale to feel smooth based on its visual appearance. The text describes the whale as being **"like a polished rock"** - polished suggests a sleek, smooth surface, so Michael could reasonably have expected the texture to match that impression. Children must connect the visual description to an anticipated physical sensation. Simply saying it looked shiny or wet is not enough; the official answer requires reference to it looking polished or like a polished rock.

Watch out: A child might say the whale looked shiny or wet, but the official answer specifically requires reference to it looking polished or like a polished rock - general shininess or wetness does not score.

Question 34b (1 mark)

Answer: Because the whale had peeling, scarred skin - big sections had come off in straight lines, giving it a patchwork look - so it might have been expected to feel rough, not smooth.

Before your child looks back at the passage, ask them to think about what the whale's skin actually looked like when Michael got close to it. Ask: "What did the whale's skin look like, and why might that make you NOT expect it to feel smooth?"

Page 10 describes the whale's head up close: 'big sections of skin had peeled off in straight lines, giving the whale's head a patchwork look in greys and blacks', and earlier it is called 'a piece of huge, dark wreckage' with 'scarred lines'. Children need to use this visual evidence to infer that damaged, patchy, scarred skin would suggest a rough texture - not a smooth one. The answer children need to give is that the whale had scars or peeling/missing skin. Quotations from the text that capture this idea are also acceptable.

Watch out: Do not accept answers that refer only to the crease of skin near the eye, or that simply say the whale was injured without mentioning the scarring or peeling skin specifically.

Question 35 (1 mark)

Answer: The answer to tick is 'under the boat'.

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to picture the scene: the tail is on one side of the boat, the head is on the other side. Ask: "Where must the whale's body be if its head and tail are on opposite sides of the boat?"

The paragraph beginning Carefully, Michael leaned... describes the whale's tapering tail on one side of the boat and its head on the other side, meaning the whale's body runs **beneath** the boat. Children need to infer from this layout that the whale is under the boat, not alongside it or at a distance. The earlier mention of 'five metres from the boat' described the whale's first surfacing on page 9, not this closer moment.

Watch out: A child might be tempted to tick 'at the side of the boat' because the whale's head and tail are described on either side, but taken together those details confirm the whale is positioned underneath the boat, not merely beside it.

Question 36 (3 marks)

Answer: Children need to identify two character traits from this list, with at least one backed up by evidence from the text: curious/interested; observant; brave/daring; respectful/gentle; cautious/calm. For full marks, two traits are needed with at least one explained using the text.

Before your child looks back at the paragraph, ask them to think about how Michael behaves when the whale appears right next to his boat. Ask: "What kind of person do you think Michael is, and what makes you say that?"

The paragraph beginning Carefully, Michael leaned... is where children should focus for this 3-mark question. It tests whether children can infer personality from behaviour rather than being told directly. **One mark** is for naming a single trait such as brave, curious, or cautious. **Two marks** are for either two traits, or one trait supported by evidence from the text, for example noting that Michael is curious because 'he leaned out further and further, stretching his hand slowly towards it' rather than pulling back. **Three marks** require two traits, with at least one supported by a textual example. Children should not give a general response like 'he likes animals' - the evidence must relate to a character quality shown by how he acts in this specific moment.

Watch out: Answers that simply say Michael likes animals will not score here - the response must name a character trait (such as bravery, curiosity, or caution) and ideally link it to something specific Michael does in the paragraph.

Model answer: Michael is **brave**, because even though a huge whale was right beside his tiny boat, he leaned out further and further to touch it rather than pulling away. He is also **cautious**, because he moved slowly and carefully, stretching his hand towards the whale gently rather than making a sudden movement.

Question 37 (2 marks)

Answer: Any two of these: the whale stayed near the boat / came back after submerging; it allowed Michael to touch it and did not draw away; it looked Michael in the eye; it came close

enough for its flipper to touch the boat; it slowly and gently submerged and caressed the boat as it left.

Ask your child to think back to the story before looking at it again. Ask: "Without checking the text, what do you remember the whale doing that showed it wasn't scared of Michael?"

Pages 9 and 10 of the story contain the evidence children need. The question asks them to infer calmness from the whale's actions. For each of the two points, children should identify something the whale **did** that an alarmed creature would not do. For example, 'the whale didn't draw away' shows it was untroubled by Michael's hand; the flipper gently 'caressed the boat one more time' suggests a peaceful, unhurried departure. Each distinct action earns one mark, up to a maximum of two. Simply saying 'the whale stayed calm' without further detail does not score - the action itself must be named.

Watch out: Simply writing that the whale 'remained calm' or 'didn't attack him' does not score - children must describe a specific action the whale took that demonstrates it was unalarmed.

Model answer: 1. The whale allowed Michael to touch it and did not draw away when he stretched his hand towards it. 2. The whale's flipper gently caressed the boat as it slowly submerged, showing it left in an unhurried, peaceful way.

Question 38 (1 mark)

Answer: Children should tick 'the experience was unreal.'

Before your child looks back at the text, ask them to think about what it feels like to wake up from a very vivid dream - that moment of not being sure what was real. Ask: "How do you think Michael felt at the very end, and why?"

The simile like a sleeper waking from a dream is the key phrase. Children need to recognise that comparing Michael to someone waking from a dream suggests the encounter felt dreamlike and hard to believe had actually happened - in other words, **unreal**. The word 'dazed' reinforces this: he is confused and disoriented, as one often is on waking. The question tests whether children can move beyond the literal words to the feeling they convey.

Watch out: A child might tick 'he wanted the experience to continue' because the encounter with the whale was clearly wonderful, but the simile is specifically about feeling dazed and disoriented, not about longing.

Question 39 (1 mark)

Answer: False, False, False, True - all four rows must be ticked correctly to score the mark.

Before checking, ask your child to look back through the story and find the moment Michael touches the whale - then check each statement one by one against the text. Ask: "For each statement, can you find a sentence in the story that proves whether it is true or false?"

Each statement must be checked against the text of An Encounter at Sea. Row 1: Michael was on **his daily survey course**, a familiar route, so 'unfamiliar area' is false. Row 2: Michael had **shut off the outboard motor and stopped** before the whale appeared, so 'still motoring forwards' is false. Row 3: the whale felt **cool and smooth, like a carved stone covered in a finely stretched coat of rubber** - not warm and soft - so that is false. Row 4: the text says 'It was impossible to say what colour it was', so Michael genuinely could not name the colour - that is true. All four must be correct for the single mark.

Watch out: A child might tick 'True' for Row 1, thinking Michael was far out at sea and therefore in unfamiliar waters, but the text says he was 'motoring along his daily survey course', making it a familiar area.

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