Year 5 reading comprehension: passage pack

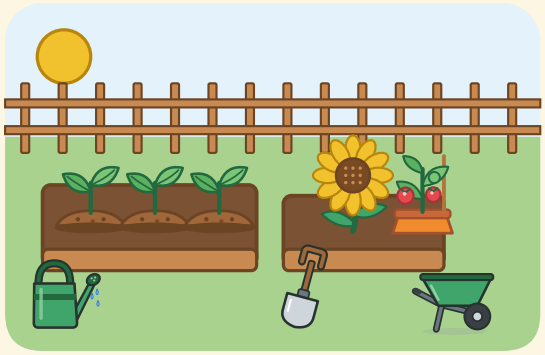
English · Reading comprehension
Level: Easy, medium and hard

Student: _____ Date: _____

Instructions
- Read each text first. There are 29 questions. Read each one carefully.
- Circle the best answer. Look back at the text to find the words that tell you.
- A grown-up can read the text aloud — that's fine.
- The answers are at the end. Check them together when you have finished.

Questions

Read this, then answer questions 1–3.



The Dried-Out Garden

In Term 2, Room 5B planted a vegetable garden beside the oval. Each student chose a seedling, and Mr Ahmed handed out bags of compost. The class planted lettuce, beans and tomatoes in three tidy rows. Mia drew a roster so that two students would water the garden each day. For two weeks, the roster worked well, and the first lettuce leaves were ready to pick. Then the school holidays began, and nobody remembered to ask someone to water the garden. When the class returned, the lettuces were brown and the bean plants had dried out. Only the tomato plants, which had a thick layer of straw around their stems, were still green. Mr Ahmed explained that the straw had held in the moisture. Next term, the class made a holiday roster and spread straw around every plant.

1. How could the dried-out garden have been avoided?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Someone should have been asked to water it in the holidays.

○ **B** Mia should not have drawn the roster.

○ **C** The class should have used a different kind of compost.

○ **D** The lettuce should have been picked on the first day.

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2. Which word from the text fits the gap? “The class planted ___, beans and tomatoes in three rows.”

Circle one answer.

○ **A** lettuce ○ **B** roster ○ **C** straw ○ **D** compost

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3. Match to the right description: Mia.

Circle one answer.

○ **A** She drew a roster for watering the garden.

○ **B** He explained that the straw had held in the moisture.

○ **C** The class spread straw around every plant.

○ **D** He handed out bags of compost.

Read this, then answer questions 4–6.



The Greater Bilby

The greater bilby is a small desert animal with long ears and soft blue-grey fur. It lives in the dry country of central and northern Australia. During the day, a bilby sleeps in a burrow that it digs with its strong front claws. Some burrows are up to three metres long and keep the animal cool. At night, the bilby comes out to hunt for insects, seeds and fungi. It hardly ever needs to drink, because it gets water from its food. Bilbies were once common, but foxes and cats hunt them and rabbits compete with them for food. Today, rangers fence off safe areas so the bilbies can live without these animals. Many shops also sell chocolate bilbies at Easter to raise money for bilby care.

4. How do we know a bilby can live in very dry country?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** It has long ears.

○ **B** Rangers fence off safe areas.

○ **C** Foxes and cats hunt it.

○ **D** It gets water from its food.

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5. Find a word in the text that means ‘found in large numbers’.

Circle one answer.

○ **A** safe ○ **B** strong ○ **C** soft ○ **D** common

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6. Which statement is NOT true?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Bilbies sleep at night and hunt for food during the day.

○ **B** A bilby digs a burrow with its front claws.

○ **C** A bilby burrow can be up to three metres long.

○ **D** Bilbies eat insects, seeds and fungi.

Read this, then answer questions 7–8.





Ten More Minutes of Reading

Our class should have ten more minutes of reading time each day. Reading helps children learn new words and makes them better writers. Right now, we read for 15 minutes after lunch, and the bell always rings in the middle of a chapter. A survey of our class found that 18 of the 24 students want longer. Some parents say the day is already too full, and they may be right. However, ten minutes is a tiny change that would not need any new timetable. Nothing is better for a student than a good book and a quiet corner. We hope our teachers will try the change for a month.

7. Which sentence is an opinion?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Right now, we read for 15 minutes after lunch, and the bell always rings in the middle of a chapter.

○ **B** A survey of our class found that 18 of the 24 students want longer.

○ **C** Nothing is better for a student than a good book and a quiet corner.

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8. Which statement matches the text?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Most of the students in the class want longer reading time.

○ **B** Every student in the class wants longer reading time.

○ **C** Only a few students in the class want longer reading time.

Read this, then answer questions 9–11.

Our School Canteen

The school canteen is the best place to be at lunchtime. It opens at 8:30 each morning and closes at 1:30 each afternoon. Children write their orders on paper bags and hand them in before the first bell. Fruit cups are cheaper than wraps, so many children choose them. Most of the canteen workers are parent volunteers, who each give one morning a week. Every family ought to help out at least once a term. A wrap costs $4, and a fruit cup costs $2. The canteen is always looking for new helpers.

9. Which sentence is an opinion?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** It opens at 8:30 each morning and closes at 1:30 each afternoon.

○ **B** The school canteen is the best place to be at lunchtime.

○ **C** Most of the canteen workers are parent volunteers, who each give one morning a week.

10. Why do many children choose fruit cups?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** The canteen closes at 1:30.

○ **B** They are cheaper than wraps.

○ **C** Wraps are not sold.

11. Which figure tells how much a fruit cup costs?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** $2

○ **B** $4

○ **C** 8:30

Read this, then answer questions 12–13.



Dear Diary, Race Day

Saturday 21 March. Dear Diary, today was the junior bike race at Wattle Park, and I was so nervous that I could not eat breakfast. Dad checked my tyres twice, and Mum pinned the number 38 on my shirt. There were forty riders, and we lined up at the start with our wheels almost touching. When the whistle blew, I pedalled hard, but I was near the back at the first corner. On the long straight, I kept my head down and passed six riders. At the last bend, my chain slipped, and I had to jump off and fix it. I finished twenty-first, which is a long way from the winners' stage. Even so, Mum says I was the bravest rider there, and Dad bought me a hot chocolate. Tonight I am sore, but I am already planning for next year.

12. Why did the writer not eat breakfast?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** The writer was late for the race.

○ **B** The writer was too nervous.

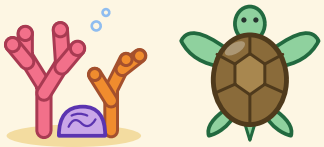
○ **C** Dad checked the tyres twice.

13. How many riders were in the race?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** thirty-eight ○ **B** forty ○ **C** twenty-one

Read this, then answer questions 14–15.



The Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef stretches for about 2300 kilometres along the coast of Queensland. It is the largest coral reef system in the world, and it is made up of almost 3000 separate reefs. Corals look like rocks or plants, but they are really made by tiny animals called polyps. Each polyp builds a hard skeleton around its soft body. When the polyps die, their skeletons stay behind, and new polyps grow on top. Tiny algae live inside the polyps and give corals their bright colours. If the sea becomes too warm, the polyps push the algae out, and the coral turns white. This is called bleaching, and it can kill the coral if the water stays warm for too long. More than a thousand kinds of fish, as well as turtles and dolphins, live on the reef. The reef is so big that parts of it can be seen from space.

14. What makes coral turn white?

Circle one answer.

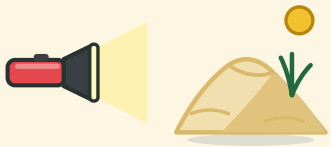
- ○ **A** Hard skeletons build up on top.
- ○ **B** Too many fish live on the reef.
- ○ **C** The sea becomes too warm.

15. True or false: Bleaching happens when the water is too cold.

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** False
- ○ **B** True

Read this, then answer questions 16–17.



The Torch in the Dunes

Ben and his cousin Priya had been told to stay close to the camp, but a flash of light drew them over the sand dunes. The light blinked three times, paused, and blinked again. “It could be a signal,” said Priya, and she zipped her jacket to the chin. They crept up the last dune on their hands and knees. At the top, they found an old torch lying in a hollow, and its glass was catching the setting sun. Ben gave a nervous laugh, because there was no one there at all. “It was only the sun on the glass,” he said. Priya picked up the torch and read the letters scratched on its handle: J. Lowe, 1962. “Somebody lost this a long time ago,” she said, “so we should hand it in to the ranger.” They walked back down the dune, and they were careful to follow their own footprints.

16. What caused the flashing light?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** a signal, said Priya
- ○ **B** the sun shining on the glass of an old torch
- ○ **C** a person sending a signal

17. How are Ben and Priya related?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** They are brother and sister.
- ○ **B** They are classmates.
- ○ **C** They are cousins.

Read this, then answer questions 18–19.



A Flyer for Speedy Scooters

A scooter shop in town has put out a flyer that says its scooters are “the fastest in the street”. The flyer shows a boy winning a race against two children on old bikes. It also says, “Without a Speedy scooter, you will always finish last!” The shop says its scooters weigh only 3 kilograms and fold flat for the bus. Many parents like the folding design, because it fits into a hallway cupboard. Some riders wonder how the shop tested speed, since the flyer gives no numbers. Others point out that a scooter goes only as fast as the person pushing it. A few children interviewed said the flyer made them want a new scooter straight away. A careful reader should look for facts before spending any money.

18. Which sentence is an opinion?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** A careful reader should look for facts before spending any money.

○ **B** The shop says its scooters weigh only 3 kilograms and fold flat for the bus.

○ **C** The flyer shows a boy winning a race against two children on old bikes.

19. What does the article mention straight after the shop’s weight claim?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** what parents like about the folding design

○ **B** The flyer shows a boy winning a race against two children on old bikes.

○ **C** Some riders wonder how the shop tested speed, since the flyer gives no numbers.

Read this, then answer questions 20–22.





Selling Crunchy Crisps

Last week, a snack company launched a television advertisement for Crunchy Crisps. In the ad, a footballer scores a goal, opens a packet and shouts, “Champions eat Crunchy Crisps!” The announcer then adds that Crunchy Crisps are “the only crisps with real cheese”. A food magazine tested six brands and found that three others also list cheese as an ingredient. Most of the children we asked remembered the footballer, but only a few remembered the cheese. Advertisers often link a product to a hero because we trust people we admire. Some viewers say that is clever marketing, and others say it is unfair to young viewers. The company replies that its advertisements are made to entertain as well as sell. Smart shoppers should ask what an advert is really selling: the product or the feeling.

20. Which sentence is an opinion?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Most of the children we asked remembered the footballer, but only a few remembered the cheese.

○ **B** A food magazine tested six brands and found that three others also list cheese as an ingredient.

○ **C** Smart shoppers should ask what an advert is really selling: the product or the feeling.

21. Which statement matches the text?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** All of the children asked remembered the footballer.

○ **B** Only a few of the children asked remembered the cheese.

○ **C** Most of the children asked remembered the cheese.

22. What does the article tell us straight after the cheese claim?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** In the ad, a footballer scores a goal, opens a packet and shouts, “Champions eat Crunchy Crisps!”

○ **B** Smart shoppers should ask what an advert is really selling: the product or the feeling.

○ **C** the results of a magazine’s test of six brands

Read this, then answer questions 23–25.

Opals and Coober Pedy

Australia produces about 95 per cent of the world’s precious opal, a gemstone that flashes with rainbow colours. Much of it comes from the outback town of Coober Pedy in South Australia. Opal began to form millions of years ago, when water full of dissolved silica seeped into cracks in the rock. When the water dried up, the silica was left behind as tiny spheres that split light into colours. A fourteen-year-old boy named Willie Hutchison found the first opal at Coober Pedy in 1915. Summer temperatures there often climb above 40 degrees Celsius, so many people live underground. These homes, called dugouts, are dug into the hillsides and stay cool in summer and warm in winter. Even some churches and shops are underground. Visitors can tour an old opal mine and see how the stones were dug out by hand.

23. How do we know that opal is very old?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** A boy found the first opal in 1915.

○ **B** Summer temperatures climb above 40 degrees.

○ **C** Visitors can tour an old opal mine.

○ **D** It began to form millions of years ago.

24. Which word from the text fits the gap? “Opal began to form when water full of dissolved ___ seeped into cracks in the rock.”

Circle one answer.

○ **A** gemstone ○ **B** silica ○ **C** spheres

○ **D** temperatures

25. True or false: More than nine-tenths of the world's precious opal comes from Australia.

Circle one answer.

○ **A** True ○ **B** False

Read this, then answer questions 26–27.





Gran's Birthday Plan

Dear Mia,

Next Sunday is Gran's eightieth birthday, and I am writing to ask for your help.

Your uncle Sam is flying in from Perth on Friday, and your cousins Joel and Ana will come with him.

Joel is thirteen, which is three years older than Ana.

Gran thinks that we are only having a quiet lunch at one o'clock.

In truth, we will gather in the park across the road from her flat, and everyone will hide behind the old fig tree.

At half past twelve, you must take Gran for a slow walk past the tree, and you must not tell her why.

I am counting on you to keep a straight face, because Gran can spot a fib from a mile away.

Your cousin Ana is baking the cake, and it will have eighty candles.

Thank you, Mia. You are a star.

Love, Mum

26. Why is the writer worried about Mia keeping a straight face?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** The cake has eighty candles.

○ **B** Gran can easily tell when someone is not honest.

○ **C** Mia laughs at every joke.

27. How is Sam related to Mia?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** He is her cousin. ○ **B** He is her uncle. ○ **C** He is her brother.

Read this, then answer questions 28–29.



The Overland Telegraph

Before 1872, a letter from Australia to England took about two months to arrive by ship. A message sent along the new Overland Telegraph could arrive in a few hours. The line was planned by Charles Todd, who was South Australia's Postmaster-General. Work began in 1870, and teams of men set up wooden and iron poles across about 3000 kilometres of bush and desert. Heat, floods and a shortage of water slowed the teams, and termites ate many of the wooden poles. In August 1872, the last wires were joined, and Australia was linked to the world by telegraph. The town of Alice Springs grew up near one of the stations, and it was named after Todd's wife, Alice.

28. What does 'linked' tell us about Australia in the sixth line?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** It was cut off from other countries.
- ○ **B** It was joined to the rest of the world by the telegraph.
- ○ **C** It was moved closer to England by ship.

29. Which fact is true about the termites?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** They ate many of the wooden poles.
- ○ **B** They slowed the ships bringing letters.
- ○ **C** They carried messages along the line.

Answer key

Year 5 reading comprehension: passage pack · Sheet 500002

1. A — Someone should have been asked to water it in the holidays.
The text says: “Then the school holidays began, and nobody remembered to ask someone to water the garden.” The reason must come from the text.

2. A — lettuce
The text says: “The class planted lettuce, beans and tomatoes in three tidy rows.” Read the whole sentence with the word in the gap.

3. A — She drew a roster for watering the garden.
The text says: “Mia drew a roster so that two students would water the garden each day.” Each detail has its own sentence.

4. D — It gets water from its food.
The text says: “It hardly ever needs to drink, because it gets water from its food.” The reason must come from the text.

5. D — common
The text says: “Bilbies were once common, but foxes and cats hunt them and rabbits compete with them for food.” Try the word in the sentence. It must mean the same.

6. A — Bilbies sleep at night and hunt for food during the day.
The text says: “At night, the bilby comes out to hunt for insects, seeds and fungi.” Three choices are true. The one that is not true is the answer.

7. C — Nothing is better for a student than a good book and a quiet corner.
The text says: “Nothing is better for a student than a good book and a quiet corner.” A fact can be checked. An opinion tells what someone thinks.

8. A — Most of the students in the class want longer reading time.
The text says: “A survey of our class found that 18 of the 24 students want longer.” Keep the statement no stronger than the little word in the text.

9. B — The school canteen is the best place to be at lunchtime.
The text says: “The school canteen is the best place to be at lunchtime.” A fact can be checked. An opinion tells what someone thinks.

10. B — They are cheaper than wraps.
The text says: “Fruit cups are cheaper than wraps, so many children choose them.” The words because and so point to the reason.

11. A — $2
The text says: “A wrap costs $4, and a fruit cup costs $2.” Check which sentence the figure belongs to.

12. B — The writer was too nervous.
The text says: “Dear Diary, today was the junior bike race at Wattle Park, and I was so nervous that I could not eat breakfast.” The words because and so point to the reason.

13. B — forty
The text says: “There were forty riders, and we lined up at the start with our wheels almost touching.” Read the whole sentence, not only the key word.

14. C — The sea becomes too warm.
The text says: “If the sea becomes too warm, the polyps push the algae out, and the coral turns white.” The words because and so point to the reason.

15. A — False
The text says: “If the sea becomes too warm, the polyps push the algae out, and the coral turns white.” A statement is true only if the text says so.

16. B — the sun shining on the glass of an old torch

The text says: “At the top, they found an old torch lying in a hollow, and its glass was catching the setting sun. “It was only the sun on the glass,” he said.” The words because and so point to the reason.

17. C — They are cousins.

The text says: “Ben and his cousin Priya had been told to stay close to the camp, but a flash of light drew them over the sand dunes.” Read the whole sentence, not only the key word.

18. A — A careful reader should look for facts before spending any money.

The text says: “A careful reader should look for facts before spending any money.” A fact can be checked. An opinion tells what someone thinks.

19. A — what parents like about the folding design

The text says: “Many parents like the folding design, because it fits into a hallway cupboard.” Find the point in the question, then look just before or after it.

20. C — Smart shoppers should ask what an advert is really selling: the product or the feeling.

The text says: “Smart shoppers should ask what an advert is really selling: the product or the feeling.” A fact can be checked. An opinion tells what someone thinks.

21. B — Only a few of the children asked remembered the cheese.

The text says: “Most of the children we asked remembered the footballer, but only a few remembered the cheese.” Keep the statement no stronger than the little word in the text.

22. C — the results of a magazine’s test of six brands

The text says: “A food magazine tested six brands and found that three others also list cheese as an ingredient.” Find the point in the question, then look just before or after it.

23. D — It began to form millions of years ago.

The text says: “Opal began to form millions of years ago, when water full of dissolved silica seeped into cracks in the rock.” The reason must come from the text.

24. B — silica

The text says: “Opal began to form millions of years ago, when water full of dissolved silica seeped into cracks in the rock.” Read the whole sentence with the word in the gap.

25. A — True

The text says: “Australia produces about 95 per cent of the world’s precious opal, a gemstone that flashes with rainbow colours.” A statement is true only if every part of it is in the text.

26. B — Gran can easily tell when someone is not honest.

The text says: “I am counting on you to keep a straight face, because Gran can spot a fib from a mile away.” The words because and so point to the reason.

27. B — He is her uncle.

The text says: “Your uncle Sam is flying in from Perth on Friday, and your cousins Joel and Ana will come with him.” Read the whole sentence, not only the key word.

28. B — It was joined to the rest of the world by the telegraph.

The text says: “In August 1872, the last wires were joined, and Australia was linked to the world by telegraph.” The text tells you how the word is used here.

29. A — They ate many of the wooden poles.

The text says: “Heat, floods and a shortage of water slowed the teams, and termites ate many of the wooden poles.” Read the whole sentence, not only the key word.