Year 6 reading comprehension: The Spelling Bee

English · Reading comprehension
Level: Medium

Student: _____ Date: _____

Instructions
- Read the text first. There are 4 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 1–4.



The Spelling Bee

The hall was a pressure cooker, and Lena’s heart hammered against her ribs like a trapped bird. Her name was called, and she walked to the microphone on legs that wobbled like jelly. ‘Accommodate,’ said the judge, in a voice as dry as chalk. It was the final round, and only Lena and a boy from another school were still standing. Lena closed her eyes, and the letters lined up in her mind like ducklings following their mother. ‘A-C-C-O-M-M-O-D-A-T-E,’ she said, and the silence stretched thin as a wire. A single bell rang, and the hall erupted with applause. The judge announced that Lena had won the trophy for the Year 6 section. Lena returned to her seat, walking on air.

1. What feeling does ‘the silence stretched thin as a wire’ give us?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Sadness, because Lena had lost.

○ **B** Calm, as if nothing mattered.

○ **C** Tension, as if something might snap.

2. What does ‘walking on air’ mean?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** floating above the floor

○ **B** feeling very nervous and heavy

○ **C** feeling extremely happy

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3. Which technique does the writer use in ‘The hall was a pressure cooker’?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** a simile ○ **B** personification ○ **C** a metaphor

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4. In ‘the letters lined up like ducklings following their mother’, what do the letters and the ducklings share?

Circle one answer.

○ **A** Both are yellow and fluffy.

○ **B** Both are small and very noisy.

○ **C** Both are neatly in order, one behind the other.

Answer key

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1. C — Tension, as if something might snap.
A thin, stretched wire is tight and can snap. The image makes the waiting feel tense.

2. C — feeling extremely happy
‘Walking on air’ is an idiom for being delighted. Lena has just won applause for a correct spelling.

3. C — a metaphor
The hall is said to be a pressure cooker without using like or as. That is a metaphor.

4. C — Both are neatly in order, one behind the other.
The simile compares letters in order with ducklings in a line behind their mother.