


Comprehension - A Little More Difficult

We are coming to Comprehension that is a little more difficult. The passage will not be, but the questions will! You are expected to read through the piece carefully, and the answers are not to be found in the passage, but have to be worked out; as suggested previously:

Activity 2	Read carefully through the coming description, as advised taking Notes to help you to answer the coming Questions:
	<p>Passworth Town was a far cry from leafy, prosperous Camberford. In Passworth, the residential area was just two square miles, while the rest of the town was dominated by vast council estates, snaking over the hills, the roads looking from the distance like black strips of liquorice with crimson borders. The whole panorama on grey, rainy days, and there were many, was unbearably depressing, although Andrew could see that before those houses were thrown up in the 'twenties, the area must have been beautiful indeed. Rolling hills, covered with woodland and in the valleys, shining streams, this fringe of the Pennines could have competed with any national park.</p> <p>a) Why did the inhabitants of Passworth tend to live in council houses?</p> <p>b) Try to rewrite the following clearly, omitting the expressions: snaking, and like black strips of liquorice:</p> <p>"snaking over the hills, the roads looking from a distance like black strips of liquorice"</p> <p>c) Give words to replace: far cry; unbearably; thrown up; rolling; competed with</p>

Comprehension - A Few More Hints

We have seen that the most important part of reading any Passage is to understand it. Two of the obstacles that prevent understanding are: a) Difficulty of Vocabulary; b) Red Herrings or distracting material.

We are now going to have some practice at coping with Vocabulary and as this is not a test, more a means of helping you, we will simply let you have some guidance, and advice on how to deal with the problems yourself.

Vocabulary

Here are some examples of tricky Vocabulary and Expressions with the simpler version placed alongside.

- a) The locomotive proceeded at high velocity through the picturesque landscape =
The express travelled quickly through the beautiful countryside
- b) Terminate that clamour, instantly! = Stop that noise at once
- b) The illusionist performed many skillful deceptions =
The conjuror played many clever tricks

General Guidance

But it's all very well, you are probably saying, these are just examples; what happens to the thousands of problems that may turn up in Comprehension Passages generally? It's a matter of approach, and there are three Answers to these Questions:

- i) As you have been told, wide Reading is very important for a development in understanding of English generally, of whatever style it may be. *Practice makes Perfect* is an old fashioned saying with more truth in it than is perhaps guessed. Read as much as you can, most obviously a reasonable newspaper, and magazines and journals about topics that interest you:




- ii) Another Answer to these problems is the ability to use a good dictionary. Lesson Twenty Four in the Fourth Module deals with this, and if you like you could have a look at this Section now, which is included as it is well known how difficult it is to find one's way through a dictionary.

A pocket dictionary, let us face it, is not enough, (neither is a giant monster dictionary, being too big...), but a medium dictionary can fill the bill perfectly, though even that needs some practice getting used to. However, now that you have been successfully through the Section dealing with English grammar, you shouldn't find coping with a dictionary too fearsome! (Go to Lesson Twenty Four to find out...)

- iii) The third Answer is the *thesaurus*, not as widely used as the dictionary but still very valuable. A thesaurus gives you various words with the same meanings, or approximately the same meanings, as a given word; some

thesauruses also give antonyms i.e. words with the opposite meanings to others, this can again be very useful.

If you study carefully these books in conjunction with general reading of as wide a nature as possible, this will enable you more than anything else to get used to our difficult English language. And then you will find that Comprehension is no longer the nightmare it might once have been!

Activity 3	Simplify the following sentences using your dictionary or thesaurus as required:
	<p>a) Those wishing to obviate a response may resort to circumlocution</p> <p>b) When confronted by a dilemma, employ every means at your disposal to elude it</p> <p>c) It is beyond me to comprehend your communication</p> <p>d) We perceived a massive protuberance on his cranium</p>

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