

**YEAR 8**

Reading for Meaning

Three parts that get harder: a warm-up, where you should be now, then a stretch. Write the letter of the right option, or a number where one is asked for. The passage stays beside the questions. Questions name the paragraph to look in.

Maya's family have just moved to a house beside a river. This is the first night of heavy rain.

- 1 The rain began at teatime, polite at first, tapping at the kitchen window as if asking to be let in. By nine o'clock it had stopped asking. It hammered on the roof, it rattled the gutters, it ran down the glass in thick

5 grey ropes.

Maya stood at her bedroom window and watched the river.

In the daytime it was a lazy, brown thing that hardly seemed to move. Now it was swollen and fast, carrying branches past the house as easily as a conveyor belt

10 carries shopping.

"It's fine," Dad said from the doorway. He said it the way people say things when they are trying to convince themselves. "The man at the estate agent's said it hasn't flooded in thirty years."

- 15 Maya did not answer. She was counting the stone steps that led down from the garden to the water. At teatime there had been eleven. Now she could see seven.

At midnight the power went off. The house fell silent except for the rain and the low, steady roar of the

20 river, which seemed to have moved closer in the dark.

Maya lay awake with her torch under the duvet, listening. She told herself she was not afraid. Her heart did not believe her.

When the grey light came, she ran to the window. Four
25 steps. The river had stopped one step short of the
garden wall, and on the lawn a single heron stood
perfectly still, as if it had been placed there to keep
watch.

A. Warm-up

- 1 Paragraph 1: when did the rain begin?
(a) At teatime
(b) At midnight
(c) At nine o'clock
(d) At dawn **(a) At teatime**

- 2 Paragraph 4: how many steps could Maya see at teatime? **11**

- 3 Paragraph 4: how many steps could she see later that night? **7**

- 4 Paragraph 2: what does the river carry past the house?
(a) Boats
(b) Branches
(c) Shopping
(d) Leaves **(b) Branches**

- 5 Paragraph 6: which bird stands on the lawn?
(a) A swan
(b) A duck
(c) A heron
(d) A gull **(c) A heron**

B. Where you should be now

- 6 Paragraph 3: what does the way Dad says "It's fine" suggest?
(a) He is angry with Maya
(b) He knows nothing about rivers
(c) He wants to go to bed
(d) He is worried but trying to stay calm **(d) He is worried but trying to stay calm**
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- 7 Why does Maya count the steps?
- (a) To measure how high the river is rising
 - (b) Because she is bored
 - (c) To practise her maths
 - (d) To find the way down to the water **(a) To measure how high the river is rising**
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- 8 "Her heart did not believe her" (paragraph 5) tells us that Maya
- (a) is ill
 - (b) is more frightened than she admits
 - (c) has stopped being afraid
 - (d) is angry with herself **(b) is more frightened than she admits**
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- 9 In paragraph 2 the river carries branches as easily as a conveyor belt. This suggests
- (a) it is noisy and mechanical
 - (b) it is full of shopping
 - (c) it moves things along quickly and without effort
 - (d) it has stopped flowing **(c) it moves things along quickly and without effort**
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- 10 How has the river changed by night?
- (a) From fast to frozen
 - (b) From clear to brown
 - (c) It has not changed
 - (d) From slow and lazy to swollen and fast **(d) From slow and lazy to swollen and fast**
-
- 11 At dawn Maya can see four steps. What does that tell us?
- (a) The river rose even higher in the night
 - (b) The river went down in the night
 - (c) Some steps were washed away
 - (d) Maya counted wrongly before **(a) The river rose even higher in the night**
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C. Stretch

- 12 The rain is "polite at first" and then "had stopped asking". What is the writer doing?
- (a) Showing the rain is friendly
 - (b) Giving the rain human behaviour to show it growing more violent
 - (c) Describing the sound of the gutters
 - (d) Explaining the weather forecast **(b) Giving the rain human behaviour to show it growing more violent**
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- 13 What is the effect of the short sentence "Four steps." in paragraph 6?
- (a) It describes the size of the garden
 - (b) It shows she has stopped caring
 - (c) It shows Maya checking at once, anxious to know
 - (d) It slows the story down with detail
- (c) It shows Maya checking at once, anxious to know**
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- 14 How does the passage end?
- (a) With the house flooding
 - (b) With the family moving away
 - (c) With Maya falling asleep
 - (d) With relief: the river stopped just short of the garden wall
- (d) With relief: the river stopped just short of the garden wall**
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- 15 Why might the writer end with the heron standing "perfectly still"?
- (a) To create a calm, watchful mood after the tension of the night
 - (b) To show the garden has flooded
 - (c) To bring in a new character who speaks
 - (d) To show it is still raining hard
- (a) To create a calm, watchful mood after the tension of the night**
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- 16 Which word best describes the mood of paragraph 5?
- (a) Joyful
 - (b) Tense
 - (c) Bored
 - (d) Peaceful
- (b) Tense**
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