11+ Daily

11+ PRACTICE PAPER

English Comprehension

The Allotment Key: a story, with 25 questions on it

25	25	5
questions	minutes	answer choices

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 25

Instructions

1. You have **25 minutes** for the whole paper, reading included.
2. Read the passage first, then answer the questions.
3. Each question has **one** correct answer. Mark it on the separate answer sheet.
4. If you get stuck, move on and come back to it at the end.
5. No marks are taken away for a wrong answer, so answer every question.

For the adult

Print the paper and the answer sheet. Sit your child at a clear table with a pencil and a clock they can see, start the timer, and do not help once it has started.

Mark it with the answers at the back. Each answer comes with the reason and the kind of question it is, so you can see which kinds went wrong, not just how many.

Inside this paper

How to do it
Tips for the child, and the kinds of question

Passage and questions
A story of about 950 words, then 25 questions

Answer sheet
A separate page to mark answers on

Answers
Every answer with the reason, for the adult

Every question is original to 11+ Daily and checked for accuracy. This is a practice paper, not a past paper. Free to print for home and classroom use. © Egghead Studios Ltd.

HOW TO DO THIS PAPER

Reading for the answer

A comprehension paper tests careful reading more than anything else. Every answer is in the passage: these habits help your child find it.

1. Read the whole passage first

Read it once, carefully, from start to finish: about five minutes. That leaves about 50 seconds for each question.

2. Go back to the paragraph

Most questions name a paragraph. Read it again before choosing. The answer comes from the text, not from what you think would happen.

3. Swap the word in

For a word-meaning question, put each option in place of the word and read the sentence. The right one keeps the meaning.

4. Watch for NOT

A question may ask which answer is NOT true. Read those twice, and tick off the ones that are true until one is left.

5. Cross out the wrong ones

Often two options are clearly wrong. Cross them out on the question paper, then choose between the rest.

6. Look for the proof

For "what does this suggest" questions, pick the option you can point to in the text. If you cannot point to anything, it is probably wrong.

The kinds of question in this paper

Finding information	The answer is stated in the passage. Find the sentence.
Inference	Working out what the writer suggests but does not say, from clues in the text.
Word meaning	What a word means in this sentence, which is not always its usual meaning.
Writer's language	Why the writer chose a word or a comparison, and the effect it has.
Grammar	What job a word is doing in its sentence, for example noun, verb or pronoun.
Whole text	What the passage is mainly about, from beginning to end.

The Allotment Key

1 Priya had never wanted the key. It arrived in a padded envelope the week after Grandad moved into the flat by the river, with a note in his careful, wobbly capitals: THE ALLOTMENT IS YOURS NOW. DON'T LET THE BEANS DOWN.

2 "He means it kindly," said Mum, reading over her shoulder. It was exactly the sort of thing adults said when something was not kind at all, just heavy.

3 On Saturday Mum walked down with her to the allotment, which sat at the far end of Hollins Lane, behind a gate that shrieked on its hinges. Mum settled on the bench by the shed with a library book and said the plot was Priya's now, not hers. Priya had been there a hundred times, but always trailing behind Grandad, carrying the flask, never deciding anything. Now the plot stretched in front of her like a page of homework in a subject she had not taken. The bean canes leaned together at the top like gossiping aunts. Something that might have been a courgette, or might have been a marrow, lay swollen and yellow under a leaf the size of a dinner plate.

4 She found his notebook in the shed, hanging on a nail. Every page was a list. Water beans Tues and Fri. Pinch out tomatoes. Slugs: copper tape, NOT pellets (hedgehog). The handwriting grew shakier towards the back, and the last entry was just a date and the word "frost?" with nothing after it.

5 Priya stood for a long time with the notebook open. Then she filled the watering can from the water butt, because the tap at the top of the lane had a sign on it saying OUT OF ORDER in three different people's handwriting. It took eleven trips.

6 Next came the weeds. The notebook was no help here. Under the heading CARROTS it said only: feathery. Everything in the carrot row looked feathery to Priya, and some of it was certainly dandelion. She knelt on the path and pulled up what she was sure of, left what she was not, and soon the row looked like a mouth with half its teeth missing. A robin came down from the hedge and hopped along behind her, so close that she could see the bead of its eye. It seemed to know exactly what it was doing, which made one of them.

7 By the time she had finished, her trainers were dark with water and her arms ached in a way that felt, oddly, like being praised. She picked the courgette-or-marrow and wrote underneath Grandad's last entry: No frost. Beans fine. Tap still broken. Then, after a moment, she added a smaller line: I don't know what I'm doing, but I came.

8 She was putting the notebook in her bag, to show Grandad, when a voice called over the hedge, and Mum looked up from her book. The next plot belonged to Mrs Kowalski, who grew dahlias the size of saucers and wore a sun hat in every kind of weather.

9 "You'll be Stan's granddaughter," she said, leaning on her fork. "He told me you'd come. I told him you'd have more sense." She nodded at the bean canes. "Those want tying tighter before

the wind gets at them. String's in the blue tin, behind the flowerpots. He keeps everything in tins."

10 The blue tin was behind the flowerpots on the bottom shelf of the shed, and Priya had to elbow her way past a rake, two buckets and a bag of compost to reach it. Inside, under a ball of green string, was a seed packet she had never seen before. On the front, in firm, straight capitals, Grandad had written: SWEET PEAS. FOR P. SOW NEXT SPRING.

11 She turned the packet over twice. The letters did not shake at all. He must have written it long before the flat, before the word "frost?", before the shaky pages. She put it in her pocket, next to the key, and went to tie up the beans.

12 Mrs Kowalski watched her for a while without saying anything, then went back to her dahlias. Once she called across that the knots wanted to be tighter, and once that they were too tight. When Priya left, Mrs Kowalski lifted a hand without looking up, the way people do to someone they expect to see again. Priya found that she had lifted hers back.

13 Mum had not asked a single question all afternoon. On the walk back up Hollins Lane she asked only one: "Well?" Priya thought about the eleven trips, the robin, and the knots that were not tight enough and then too tight. "I don't know yet," she said, which was true. Mum nodded, as if that were a proper answer, and carried the bag with the marrow in it.

14 On the way home they stopped at the flat by the river. Grandad was in the chair by the window, a blanket over his knees though the room was warm. She put the notebook on the table between them, and the vegetable next to it, where it looked enormous and faintly ridiculous.

15 "Marrow," he said. "You let it go too long. Should have had that a fortnight ago."

16 "You should have had it a fortnight ago," said Priya. "It was your allotment then."

17 Grandad looked at her for a moment. Then he laughed, properly, the laugh she had not heard for months, and reached for the notebook.

18 He turned the pages slowly until he reached her writing. He read the last line twice, and for a while he did not say anything at all. Then he tapped it with one finger. "That," he said, "is the most useful thing anybody has ever written in this book."

Now turn over and answer the questions.

1 How did the key reach Priya?

- A By post, in a padded envelope
- B Mum found it in the shed
- C Grandad handed it to her at the flat
- D It was hanging on a nail in the shed
- E It was left under the gate

2 "It was exactly the sort of thing adults said when something was not kind at all, just heavy." (paragraph 2) How does Priya feel about being given the allotment?

- A She is worried that the beans have already died
- B She is excited to be in charge at last
- C She is cross with Mum for reading the note
- D She is proud that Grandad chose her instead of Mum
- E It feels like a burden she never asked for

3 "Priya had been there a hundred times, but always trailing behind Grandad." (paragraph 3) What does "trailing" mean here?

- A Hurrying to keep up
- B Following along a little way behind
- C Walking beside him
- D Dragging something along the ground
- E Leaving a mark on the path

4 "...behind a gate that shrieked on its hinges." (paragraph 3) What does "shrieked" tell us about the gate?

- A It opened without a sound
- B It was falling off its hinges
- C It made a loud, high noise when it moved
- D It had just been painted
- E It was locked and would not open

5 "The bean canes leaned together at the top like gossiping aunts." (paragraph 3) What is the effect of this comparison?

- A It shows that Priya has a lot of aunts
- B It shows the canes have been blown over by the wind
- C It suggests the canes are old and falling to pieces
- D It makes the canes seem like people chatting
- E It warns that the beans have been badly looked after

6 "Now the plot stretched in front of her like a page of homework in a subject she had not taken." (paragraph 3) What does this comparison show?

- A Priya does not know where to start or what to do
- B The plot is neat and laid out in rows like a page
- C The plot is much smaller than she remembered
- D Priya enjoys learning about new subjects
- E Priya has homework to finish that weekend

7 What does the change in Grandad's handwriting towards the back of the notebook (paragraph 4) suggest?

- A The pages had got wet
- B He had lost his glasses
- C He was becoming less well as time went on
- D He was writing in a hurry because of the frost
- E He had started letting Priya write in the notebook

8 According to the notebook, why must slug pellets NOT be used?

- A Copper tape is cheaper than pellets
- B Mrs Kowalski does not allow them
- C They would kill the beans
- D They could harm the hedgehog
- E The shed had run out of them

9 Why did Priya fill the watering can from the water butt?

- A Grandad's notebook told her to use the butt
- B The watering can would not fit under the tap
- C The water in the butt was warmer
- D Mrs Kowalski had told her to
- E The tap at the top of the lane was broken

10 The sign on the tap was written "in three different people's handwriting" (paragraph 5). What does this suggest?

- A Grandad had written the sign himself
- B The tap had been broken for a while, and several people had noticed
- C Three people had broken the tap together
- D The sign was written in three languages
- E The tap had broken only that morning

11 Why was the notebook no help with the carrots?

- A It did not mention carrots at all
- B The carrot page had been torn out
- C The writing on that page had faded
- D It said only that carrots were "feathery"
- E It told her to dig all the carrots up

12 "...soon the row looked like a mouth with half its teeth missing." (paragraph 6) What does this tell us?

- A The row was perfectly neat and even
- B The robin had pecked holes in the soil
- C Slugs had eaten half of the carrots
- D Priya had pulled up plants and left gaps along the row
- E Priya had planted new seeds in a line

13 "It seemed to know exactly what it was doing, which made one of them." (paragraph 6) What does "which made one of them" mean?

- A Grandad and the robin both knew what to do
- B Priya and the robin both knew what they were doing
- C The robin had made itself a nest
- D There was only one robin in the allotment
- E The robin knew what it was doing, but Priya did not

14 "Her arms ached in a way that felt, oddly, like being praised." (paragraph 7) Why does the writer use the word "oddly"?

- A Because she expected Grandad to praise her
- B Because Priya's arms do not usually ache
- C Because aches usually feel bad, not good
- D Because the ache was really in her legs
- E Because Mrs Kowalski had just praised her

15 Which of these did Priya NOT write in the notebook?

- A Carrots weeded
- B Beans fine
- C Tap still broken
- D No frost
- E I don't know what I'm doing, but I came

16 "He told me you'd come. I told him you'd have more sense." (paragraph 9) What does Mrs Kowalski mean?

- A She is telling Priya off for picking the marrow
- B She thinks Priya should not be allowed on the allotments
- C She thinks Grandad has no sense at all
- D She wants to take over Grandad's plot herself
- E She is teasing: she thought Priya would be too sensible to take on so much work

17 "He keeps everything in tins." (paragraph 9) What type of word is "everything" in this sentence?

- A verb
- B adverb
- C preposition
- D pronoun
- E adjective

18 "Priya had to elbow her way past a rake, two buckets and a bag of compost" (paragraph 10). What type of word is "elbow" in this sentence?

- A preposition
- B adverb
- C verb
- D adjective
- E noun

19 Why does Priya decide that Grandad wrote on the seed packet long ago?

- A Mrs Kowalski had told her so
- B The capitals were firm and straight, not shaky
- C The seeds inside had already sprouted
- D The packet was faded and torn
- E There was an old date written on it

20 Mrs Kowalski lifted a hand "the way people do to someone they expect to see again" (paragraph 12). What does this suggest?

- A She thinks Priya will keep coming to the allotment
- B She did not notice that Priya was leaving
- C She was waving to Mum, not to Priya
- D She was cross that Priya was leaving early
- E She wanted Priya to come back for more string

21 "Mum nodded, as if that were a proper answer" (paragraph 13). What does this suggest about Mum?

- A She is disappointed in Priya's work
- B She accepts that Priya needs time to work out how she feels
- C She thinks Priya is being rude to her
- D She wants Priya to give up the allotment
- E She was not really listening to Priya

22 What is the meaning of "fortnight" (paragraph 15)?

- A A whole month
- B The last weekend
- C Two weeks
- D Fourteen hours
- E Four nights

23 Why does Grandad laugh (paragraph 17)?

- A He thinks Priya has looked after the plot badly
- B He enjoys having his own words turned back on him
- C He is glad to hear that the beans are fine
- D He is pleased that the tap is still broken
- E He has remembered a joke about marrows

24 Why does Grandad call Priya's last line "the most useful thing anybody has ever written in this book" (paragraph 18)?

- **A** It shows him she came and means to keep trying
- **B** It tells him how to grow the sweet peas
- **C** It proves that there has been no frost
- **D** It reminds him that the tap needs mending
- **E** It is written more neatly than his own notes

25 Looking at the whole story, what is it mainly about?

- **A** A broken tap that nobody on the allotments will bother to fix
- **B** A grandfather who is angry that his vegetables were picked too late
- **C** A girl who learns that adults often say things they do not mean
- **D** A girl who wins a prize for growing the biggest marrow
- **E** A girl who comes to care about a job she never wanted

End of the paper. If you have time left, go back and check your answers.

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ANSWER SHEET

English Comprehension

Name _____ Date _____

Mark one box for each question with a firm pencil line. If you change your mind, rub it out completely.

1	A	B	C	D	E		14	A	B	C	D	E
2	A	B	C	D	E		15	A	B	C	D	E
3	A	B	C	D	E		16	A	B	C	D	E
4	A	B	C	D	E		17	A	B	C	D	E
5	A	B	C	D	E		18	A	B	C	D	E
6	A	B	C	D	E		19	A	B	C	D	E
7	A	B	C	D	E		20	A	B	C	D	E
8	A	B	C	D	E		21	A	B	C	D	E
9	A	B	C	D	E		22	A	B	C	D	E
10	A	B	C	D	E		23	A	B	C	D	E
11	A	B	C	D	E		24	A	B	C	D	E
12	A	B	C	D	E		25	A	B	C	D	E
13	A	B	C	D	E							

Example: answer B — A — C D E

Detach this sheet, or print an extra copy of this page to try the paper again.

FOR THE ADULT

Answers and explanations

One mark for each correct answer, out of 25. Then look at the kind of question beside each one your child got wrong: three wrong in the same kind tells you more than the total does. One short paper is a snapshot, so read nothing into a single score.

Q	ANSWER	WHY
1	**A**	**FINDING INFORMATION** Paragraph 1: it arrived in a padded envelope. The nail in the shed held the notebook, not the key.
2	**E**	**INFERENCE** The story opens with "Priya had never wanted the key", and the gift is called "heavy": a weight she has been handed, not a treat.
3	**B**	**WORD MEANING** She followed behind him, carrying the flask and never deciding anything. Trailing here is about her place behind him, not about speed or marks.
4	**C**	**WORD MEANING** A shriek is a loud, high scream. The gate screeches as it swings, which is what old, unoiled hinges do.
5	**D**	**WRITER'S LANGUAGE** Gossiping aunts are people standing close and chatting. The comparison turns a frame of sticks into a little group of people, which gives the plot some life.
6	**A**	**WRITER'S LANGUAGE** Homework in a subject you have never studied is work you cannot do yet. Priya has always followed Grandad, so she has never had to decide anything on the plot.
7	**C**	**INFERENCE** The writing grows shakier, the entries stop at "frost?", and he now sits under a blanket in a warm room. The notebook records his strength running down.
8	**D**	**FINDING INFORMATION** Paragraph 4: "Slugs: copper tape, NOT pellets (hedgehog)." The hedgehog in brackets is the reason for the NOT.
9	**E**	**FINDING INFORMATION** Paragraph 5: the tap at the top of the lane had a sign saying OUT OF ORDER, so she used the water butt.
10	**B**	**INFERENCE** Each person who found the tap broken added to the sign, so it has been out of order long enough for several people to complain. Priya later writes "Tap still broken".
11	**D**	**FINDING INFORMATION** Paragraph 6: under CARROTS the notebook said only "feathery", and to Priya everything in the row looked feathery, weeds included.
12	**D**	**WRITER'S LANGUAGE** She pulled what she was sure was a weed and left the rest, so the row ended up with gaps in it, like a mouth with teeth missing.
13	**E**	**INFERENCE** "One of them" means one of the two, Priya and the robin. Only the robin knew what it was doing, a joke at Priya's own expense.

Q	ANSWER	WHY
14	C	**WRITER'S LANGUAGE** An ache normally feels bad. Here it is the sign of work done, so it feels like praise, and "oddly" marks the surprise. Mrs Kowalski has not appeared yet.
15	A	**FINDING INFORMATION** Paragraph 7 lists everything she wrote: "No frost. Beans fine. Tap still broken." and then "I don't know what I'm doing, but I came." She weeded the carrots but did not write it down.
16	E	**INFERENCE** Looking after a plot is hard work, so "more sense" means sense enough to say no. She says it as a joke, and she helps Priya straight afterwards.
17	D	**GRAMMAR** "Everything" stands in place of naming all the things Grandad keeps, so it is a pronoun, like "something" or "nothing".
18	C	**GRAMMAR** Here "elbow" is what Priya does: she pushes her way past using her elbows, so it is a verb. Usually it is a noun, the joint in your arm, which is the trap.
19	B	**INFERENCE** Paragraphs 10 and 11: the letters "did not shake at all", unlike the shaky last pages of the notebook, so he must have written them before he became ill.
20	A	**INFERENCE** A wave without looking up is how you say goodbye to a regular. Priya waving back shows she is starting to belong there too.
21	B	**INFERENCE** "I don't know yet" is not really an answer, but Mum takes it as one and asks nothing more, just as she has left Priya in charge all afternoon.
22	C	**WORD MEANING** A fortnight is fourteen nights, which is two weeks. Grandad means the marrow should have been picked two weeks earlier.
23	B	**INFERENCE** He tells her she should have picked the marrow a fortnight ago; she points out it was his allotment then, so the fault was his. He laughs at being caught out, before he has read the notebook.
24	A	**INFERENCE** "I don't know what I'm doing, but I came" tells him the allotment will be looked after. That matters more to him than any gardening tip.
25	E	**WHOLE TEXT** The tap, the marrow and Mum's remark are details. The story follows Priya from not wanting the key to "but I came", a wave from a neighbour who expects her back, and Grandad's pleasure at her last line.

WHAT NEXT

Turn the gaps into a plan

A paper shows where your child is today. 11+ Daily does the part in between: open the app and it picks a short session on the skills your child is weakest in, brings back what they got wrong until it sticks, and shows you progress by subject and skill. A session takes about ten minutes, with more whenever your child wants it. Free for 14 days, no card needed.

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