

Activity 1: Welcome & Icebreaker – “English Snapshots” (5 min)

Share one book, movie, or story that has inspired you and explain why.

Activity 2: Mindset Mastery – How Top Students Think (10 min)

“What do you think matters more in English, talent or effort?”

“It’s not that I’m so smart. It’s just that I stay with problems longer.” - *Albert Einstein*

“How could this apply to your writing or comprehension work?”

Activity 3: Comprehension Strategy (15 min)

Comprehension Strategy Steps

1) Skim the text first (get the gist)

- Read **title, first and last paragraphs, and topic sentences** to see what it’s *mostly about*.
- For **fiction**: note who, where, when, and mood.
- For **non-fiction**: note the main idea, argument, and purpose.
- Mark key ideas lightly, don’t highlight everything.
- *Aim*: Write one quick summary: “*This text is mainly about ____.*”

2) Underline key words in the question

- Identify what’s being asked: **who / what / why / how / except / most likely**.
- Circle negatives (*NOT, EXCEPT*) and qualifiers (*main, primary, best*).

- Rephrase in your own words — “Find why she hesitates” → clear task focus.
- Don’t confuse literal with inferential questions; check for hidden cues like “suggests” or “implies.”

3) Find matching evidence in the text

- Predict where the answer should be from question clues (e.g., “after the storm” → near the end).
- Scan for **keywords or synonyms**, and read 2–3 lines above/below for context.
- Bracket the lines that answer it; jot a 2–3 word note like *fear* or *reason*.
- *Rule:* If you covered the answer options, could you still answer? If yes — you’ve found real evidence.

4) Eliminate distractors (wrong but tempting answers)

- Most multiple-choice sets have **two half-right** distractors.
- Cross out any that are:
 - **Too extreme** (*always, never*).
 - **Wrong scope** (too broad/narrow).
 - **Twisted meaning** (word appears, sense doesn’t).
 - **True but irrelevant.** (often the hardest to eliminate, usually 2 answers may be true but one is more suited for the question)
- Keep checking: *Which line actually proves this answer?*

5) Justify your answer when practicing “Which line proves it?”

- **Write a short justification (LLQ method):**
 - **Line:** note the line/paragraph.

- **Logic:** explain what it shows.
- **Quote:** choose 3–6 key words as proof.
- **Example:** “In lines 14–16, ‘air still hummed with its warning’ suggests she’s nervous — so option B fits.”
- Avoid quoting whole sentences or general ideas; keep it concise and precise.
- This practice technique will improve your justification techniques and ability to understand the question, answers will be gone through using this technique during class
- Note: Do not use this technique during exams/time pressured practice as it will reduce the time to answer more questions

Activity 4: Exemplar Comprehension Task (25 minutes)

The Photograph

[1] It was the photograph, curled and faint at the edges, that caught my eye when I opened the drawer again; your smile, half-remembered, lit the dust of years like sunlight warming a windowpane.

[5] I held it up — the room seemed smaller somehow, as though time itself had paused to listen. Behind the smile I saw our old street, and the echo of footsteps that no longer glisten.

[9] I set it back, gently, beside its shadow — a silence filled the corners of the air. The light had shifted, and for a breath I thought I almost heard your laughter there.

Questions 1-6

1. In the first verse, what causes the narrator to pause and reflect?
 - A. The sound of footsteps outside.
 - B. A photograph discovered while tidying.
 - C. The sight of a window filled with sunlight.
 - D. A memory of walking through their old street.
2. What emotion best describes the narrator's tone throughout the poem?
 - A. Bitter and resentful.
 - B. Joyful and carefree.
 - C. Nostalgic and tender.
 - D. Confused and uncertain.
3. The line "*as though time itself had paused to listen*" (line 6) suggests that
 - A. The narrator feels the past momentarily return.
 - B. The room has grown uncomfortably still.
 - C. someone nearby has stopped moving.
 - D. The narrator is anxious about what they remember.
4. The description of the photograph as "*curled and faint at the edges*" implies that
 - A. it has been stored with great care.
 - B. The image is delicate but freshly taken.
 - C. it has aged and been handled many times.
 - D. The picture has lost its emotional value.
5. In line 11, what is meant by "*a silence filled the corners of the air*"?
 - A. The room has become peaceful and safe.
 - B. The silence feels heavy with emotion.
 - C. The narrator is comforted by solitude.
 - D. The wind outside has suddenly stopped.
6. What is the most likely relationship between the narrator and the person in the photograph?
 - A. Former lovers separated by time or distance.

- B. Two strangers who once met briefly.
- C. A teacher remembering a student.
- D. A traveller missing their homeland.

1.

Answer:

Justification:

2.

Answer:

Justification:

3.

Answer:

Justification

4.

Answer:

Justification

5.

Answer:

Justification

6.

Answer:

Justification

Activity 5: Types of Comprehension Questions (15 minutes)

Comprehension questions test how well you understand, interpret, and evaluate what you read. Each question type focuses on a different level of thinking, from finding

facts to analysing ideas or applying them creatively. Recognising the type of question helps you choose the right reading strategy and give stronger, more accurate answers.

Comprehension Question Types

1. Literal (Direct Comprehension)

What It Means: Focuses on information that is **explicitly stated** in the text. Tests whether the reader can locate and recall details exactly as they appear.

Question Clues / Triggers: “Where...?” “Who...?” “When...?” “What happened after...?” “How many...?”

How to Answer Effectively:

- Re-read the relevant section carefully.
- Find the **exact words or phrases** that match the question.
- Avoid guessing — answers come **straight from the text**.

Example

Q: Where was the boy standing?

A: He was standing at the edge of the wooden pier, watching the waves crash below.

2. Inferential (Interpretive Comprehension)

What It Means: Requires readers to **read between the lines** — using clues and reasoning to reach conclusions not directly stated. Tests understanding of motives, implications, and relationships.

Question Clues / Triggers: “Why...?” “What does this suggest/implies?” “How do you know...?” “What can we infer...?”

How to Answer Effectively:

- Combine what the text says with what you already know.
- Look for **tone, word choice, or behaviour** that reveal feelings or motives.
- Support inferences with brief evidence (only do this during practice)

Example

Q: Why did the boy hesitate before stepping forward?

A: His hesitation suggests he was uncertain or afraid of what lay ahead, showing inner conflict.

3. Evaluative (Critical Comprehension)

What It Means: Asks readers to **form judgements** about the author’s ideas, tone, or

technique. Moves beyond what is said to consider *how* and *why* it is written.

Question Clues / Triggers: “How effective...?” “Do you agree...?” “What is the author’s attitude...?” “How does the author make the reader feel...?”

How to Answer Effectively:

- Identify the **author’s intent** — to inform, persuade, or move the reader.
- Analyse language features such as **imagery, tone, and structure**.
- Use evaluative phrasing: “The author successfully...”, “This creates a sense of...”.

Example

Q: How does the author make the reader feel sympathy for the boy?

A: Through emotive language (“trembling hands”, “lonely figure”) and slow pacing, the author evokes empathy for his fear and isolation.

4. Applied (Creative / Extended Thinking)

What It Means: Encourages students to **transfer ideas** from the text to new contexts — making predictions, connections, or creative responses. It extends comprehension beyond analysis.

Question Clues / Triggers: “What might happen if...?” “What is most likely to occur...?”

How to Answer Effectively:

- Use ideas or themes from the text but express them **in your own words or scenarios**.
- Justify your ideas using evidence or logic from the text.

Example

Q: How might the boy’s experience change his outlook later in life?

A: He may become more cautious yet resilient, remembering how facing uncertainty once led to growth.

Activity 6 - Exemplar Comprehension Practice (25 minutes)

The Lighthouse Keeper

By Daniel Harrow

[1] Every evening, just before dusk, Mr Calder climbed the narrow spiral stairs of the lighthouse with the same steady rhythm he had kept for nearly forty years. The town below had grown noisier over time, but up here, above the rocks and wind, there was only the sound of the sea breathing against the cliffs.

[5] He paused at the lantern room window, wiping the glass with slow, careful strokes. From this height, the ocean looked calm and obedient, though he knew better. He had learned long ago that the sea could appear gentle while quietly preparing its fury.

[9] On this particular night, dark clouds gathered low on the horizon. Fishing boats were still scattered across the bay, their lights flickering like uncertain stars. Mr Calder adjusted the lamp, increasing its brightness, even though no storm warning had yet been issued.

[13] “Better early than late,” he murmured, recalling the winter years ago when a delayed signal had cost a vessel its safe return. That memory had never loosened its grip, no matter how many calm nights followed.

[17] As the beam swept across the water, he imagined the sailors glancing up, reassured by the familiar glow. The lighthouse did not shout or demand attention; it simply stood, constant and watchful, doing its duty whether anyone noticed or not.

[21] When the rain finally began to fall, Mr Calder did not move from his post. Some responsibilities, he believed, were not measured by recognition, but by the quiet certainty of being there when it mattered most.

Questions 1–8

1. In the first paragraph, what does the description of Mr Calder’s routine suggest about him?
 - A. He is bored with his job.
 - B. He values consistency and responsibility.
 - C. He dislikes the town below.
 - D. He is eager for change.

2. Why does the author describe the sea as “breathing against the cliffs” (line 3)?
 - A. To show the sea is harmless.
 - B. To suggest the sea is alive and powerful.
 - C. To indicate the tide is rising quickly.
 - D. To show the lighthouse is unstable.

3. In lines 9–12, why does Mr Calder increase the lamp's brightness?
 - A. He has been ordered to do so.
 - B. He enjoys watching the light spread.
 - C. He anticipates danger despite the calm.
 - D. The lantern is malfunctioning.
4. The phrase “Better early than late” (line 13) reflects Mr Calder’s
 - A. impatience with modern systems.
 - B. fear of being blamed by others.
 - C. cautious and preventative mindset.
 - D. frustration with the sailors.
5. What is the significance of the memory mentioned in lines 13–15?
 - A. It explains why Mr Calder dislikes storms.
 - B. It shows why he no longer trusts boats.
 - C. It motivates his careful behaviour.
 - D. It suggests he regrets choosing his career.
6. The lighthouse is described as something that “did not shout or demand attention” (line 18). What does this suggest?
 - A. It is outdated and ignored.
 - B. Its role is subtle but important.
 - C. It is less effective than modern technology.
 - D. Sailors no longer rely on it.
7. What is the author’s attitude toward Mr Calder?
 - A. Critical of his stubbornness.
 - B. Amused by his habits.
 - C. Respectful of his dedication.
 - D. Indifferent to his work.
8. Which theme is most strongly conveyed in the passage?
 - A. The conflict between old and new technology
 - B. The loneliness of working at sea
 - C. Duty and quiet responsibility
 - D. Fear of natural disasters

1.

Answer:

Justification:

2.

Answer:

Justification:

3.

Answer:

Justification

4.

Answer:

Justification

5.

Answer:

Justification

6.

Answer:

Justification

7.

Answer:

Justification

8.

Answer:

Justification

Discussion:

One question I felt confident answering:

One question I found challenging:

The reason it was challenging (misreading, rushing, tricky wording, tone)

Activity 7 - Different Types of Comprehension Texts/Questions (20 minutes)

In the Selective High School Placement Test, you will read different types of texts, each designed to test a specific comprehension skill. This activity reviews the main comprehension formats you will encounter and allows you to practise reading, skimming, and annotating without answering questions yet. We will cover the specific types in the upcoming comprehension lessons in order to understand and answer in much greater depth.

1. Single Text Comprehension (Narrative / Informative)

What this format looks like in the exam:

One complete passage followed by several questions testing:

- main idea
- inference
- mood or tone
- cause and effect

How to approach it:

Skim first, identify the situation, then read carefully for meaning and clues.

2. Text Comparison (Two Short Extracts)

What this format looks like in the exam:

Two short texts on a shared theme, often followed by questions asking you to:

- identify common ideas
- compare viewpoints
- analyse tone or purpose

How to approach it:

Read both texts carefully and ask:

What do they have in common? How are they different?

3. Poem Comprehension

What this format looks like in the exam:

A short poem testing:

- imagery
- figurative language
- tone
- overall message

How to approach it:

Read twice. First for feeling, second for meaning. Look closely at comparisons and word choices.

4. Paragraph Summary Matching

What this format looks like in the exam:

A longer non-fiction text divided into paragraphs.

You are asked to match each paragraph to a summary or heading.

How to approach it:

Ignore details. Focus on the **main idea** of each paragraph.

5. Multiple Extracts – Matching Ideas to Writers

What this format looks like in the exam:

Four short extracts written by different people.

Students must track **who says what**, focusing on:

- attitude
- purpose
- background
- tone

How to approach it:

Underline key opinions and shifts in viewpoint in each extract.

6. Fill in the Blank – Word Precision (Cloze)

What this format looks like in the exam:

A short text with missing words testing:

- vocabulary
- tone
- meaning in context

How to approach it:

Read the sentence first **without** the blank. Decide what type of word fits before looking at options.

7. Fill in the Blank – Statement Completion

What this format looks like in the exam:

Incomplete statements that test:

- cause and effect
- logical flow
- overall understanding

How to approach it:

Find the section of the text that explains *why* or *what happened as a result*.

Activity 8 - End of Class Discussion

One comprehension strategy I used well today:

One mistake I want to avoid next lesson:

One thing I learned about how selective school questions work:

Day 6 Homework

Homework Task 1 - Fill in the Blank (12 minutes)

Instructions

Read the text below carefully.

Select the **correct word or phrase** for each gap from the answer options

The Early Days of the Tour de France

When 60 cyclists set off from a café near Paris in July 1903, few people realised they were (1) _____ one of the world's most famous sporting events. The race was designed as a test of endurance, with riders expected to travel extremely long distances each day.

In the early years, cyclists rode both day and night. However, travelling in darkness made cheating (2) _____. Under the (3) _____ of night, some competitors accepted help or took shortcuts without being seen. To reduce this problem, race organisers later changed the rules so that racing took place only during daylight hours.

The bicycles used at the time would seem very (4) _____ compared to modern racing bikes. Riders had no gears and very little safety equipment. It may be hard to (5) _____, but the first Tour de France winner's bike had no brakes at all. Instead, riders slowed down by pressing their foot against the wheel.

Photographs from the early races show cyclists with spare inner tubes (6) _____ across their shoulders. Today, professional teams can change a wheel in a (7) _____ of seconds. While early riders relied on (8) _____ amounts of water, modern cyclists benefit from planned nutrition and energy drinks.

Answer Options 1-8

1.

- A. cancelling
- B. beginning
- C. copying
- D. delaying

2.

- A. difficult
- B. possible
- C. illegal
- D. unnecessary

3.

- A. shade
- B. cover
- C. edge
- D. silence

4.

- A. basic
- B. fragile
- C. advanced
- D. efficient

5.

- A. accept
- B. imagine
- C. explain
- D. remember

6.

- A. tied
- B. balanced
- C. slung
- D. hidden

7.

- A. number
- B. matter
- C. length
- D. series

8.

- A. large
- B. exact

- C. small
- D. equal

Homework Task 2 - Matching Extracts (12 minutes)

Instructions

Using **Extracts A–D**, read the four extracts on the theme of **dreams**.

For each statement, choose the **correct extract (A, B, C or D)**.

Each extract **may be chosen more than once**.

Extract A

Last night I dreamt I returned to the house where I grew up. At first, everything appeared as I remembered it — the narrow hallway, the creaking stairs, the familiar smell of old wood. But as I moved further inside, the space began to change. The ceilings felt lower, the rooms darker, and the windows no longer faced the street I knew so well.

I remember feeling unsettled, aware that something was wrong yet unable to explain why. Only later did I realise that the dream had altered my memory, reshaping the place into something unfamiliar. What disturbed me most was not the change itself, but how easily my mind accepted it as real.

Extract B

People often assume that dreams are dramatic or surreal, filled with impossible events and strange imagery. In reality, research suggests that most dreams are surprisingly ordinary, reflecting everyday concerns such as work, relationships, or minor anxieties.

What makes certain dreams stand out is emotion. Strong feelings can make even trivial events seem meaningful, encouraging us to remember and discuss them. Without this emotional pull, many dreams fade quickly, leaving little trace once we wake and return to the routines of daily life.

Extract C

When I was younger, I was told never to talk about my dreams — they bored other people, and perhaps that was true. Yet as a writer, I have come to value them deeply.

Dreams offer images and ideas that logic alone cannot supply, fragments that linger just long enough to be captured on the page.

Although most dream ideas do not survive unchanged, they often spark creative work. In this way, dreams act as a private workshop, providing raw material that can later be refined into something deliberate and purposeful.

Extract D

For the first time in years, I experienced a dream in which I realised I was dreaming. Instead of waking immediately, I remained within the scene, curious to see what might happen next. I moved effortlessly, unconstrained by gravity or physical limitation, aware that these freedoms were impossible outside the dream.

The experience felt vivid and controlled, yet fragile. As morning approached, details slipped away, and by the time I woke fully, much of what had seemed so clear had already vanished, leaving only fragments behind.

Which extract...

1. describes becoming aware that the experience is a dream?

Answer:

2. suggests that dreams usually involve ordinary situations?

Answer:

3. refers to dreams as a source of professional or creative inspiration?

Answer:

4. mentions being able to do something impossible in real life?

Answer:

5. explains why some dreams feel more memorable than others?

Answer:

6. describes a place appearing different from how it is remembered?

Answer:

7. focuses on how easily the mind accepts dream logic?

Answer:

8. states that dreams often fade once the person wakes?

Answer:

9. presents a reflective or analytical tone toward dreaming?

Answer:

10. contrasts emotional experience with rational understanding?

Answer:

Vocabulary Mastery

- 1. Anticipate (verb)** – to expect or predict something before it happens, often based on evidence or experience; *The organisers anticipated poor weather and adjusted the schedule accordingly.*
- 2. Conceal (verb)** – to hide something carefully so that it cannot be seen or easily discovered; *Dark clouds concealed the mountain peak, preventing hikers from seeing the summit.*
- 3. Endurance (noun)** – the ability to continue a difficult task over a long period without giving up; *Completing the marathon required physical endurance as well as mental resilience.*
- 4. Distort (verb)** – to alter the shape, meaning, or truth of something so it no longer accurately represents the original; *Over time, repeated retelling can distort the details of an event.*
- 5. Reflective (adjective)** – showing thoughtful consideration, often about past actions or ideas; *His reflective response demonstrated careful thinking rather than a rushed reaction.*