

Introduction to the elite English skills target series

Comprehension is a key skill for students learning English and is always tested in exams from early Primary right through to pre-university public exams. These worksheets give students practice in age-appropriate but challenging comprehension similar to the exercises used in Hong Kong elite school exams. They contain 'traps' and 'trick' questions.

Passages that relate to children's daily life are interesting and show how English is used in normal life. A handy hints guide is provided.

Completing these exercises on a regular basis will improve:

- ★ Comprehension skills
- ★ Inference skills
- ★ Question-type skills (long, short, multiple choice)
- ★ Vocabulary skills
- ★ Grammar skills
- ★ Thinking skills
- ★ Writing skills



Instructions for parents:

1. Explain the question types to your child first.
2. Print off the blank ones and ask your child to attempt them.
3. Check the work against the answers.
4. Give lots of encouragement and praise.
5. Provide guidance. Notice if your child is having repeated problems and practice more in that area (e.g. using the wrong tense in the answers)
6. Reprint the worksheets for another attempt if necessary.

Hints for tackling reading comprehension

1. Read the questions first.
2. Predict the answers (this starts the thinking process).
3. Read the passage and underline any parts that could be answers.
4. Beware of traps (e.g. where more than one answer is required).
5. Check the tense of the question.
6. Copy the verbs - they often need to change.
7. Check the grammar of the answer (tense, punctuation, agreement etc.)

Question Types and hints

Locating Details

Looking for information in the text.

Use key words in the question to find specific details. Answers may be in more than one place.

Comparing and Contrasting

Finding differences

Look for differences when things are being compared. Words like 'unlike' at the beginning of sentences are clues. Be careful with grammatical structure when finding the answers.

Vocabulary in context clues

Guessing the meaning of words.

You can work out the meaning of words from the words and sentences around it.
E.g. These nocturnal animals are active at night. Nocturnal animals sleep during the day (opposite of humans). When you need to find words to replace, look for similar word forms.

Grammar (Changing word form (parts of speech))

Finding details and changing the word form.

Many words need to change but mostly the verbs. Be especially careful with Do/Does/Did questions. This is common. Copy the verb and it will be in the wrong form. If you get a 'How' question, the form of the verb should follow the 'by'.

Reference Questions

Finding what pronouns refer to.

Work backwards to the nouns or noun phrases. Also think about the meaning. You may need to go back to the three nouns. The pronoun can also refer to a word that is coming in the next sentence. A noun phrase contains more than one word and often starts with a gerund (-ing form)

E.g. It was the most wonderful experience of my life. I had never imagined performing in front of a live audience.

What does the 'it' refer to? Ans: Performing in front of a live audience.

Exercise 1

Read the following text and answer the questions.

Architects

Architects are responsible for designing different buildings, from places of work such as offices to residences as well as community structures such as churches and schools. There is far more to designing buildings than appearance though. Safety is a vital component.

The design process begins with a discussion between an architect and client to determine needs. Many things need to be decided initially in terms of looks, materials, budgets and especially environmental considerations.

The next stage involves the architect drawing initial plans for consent. There may be a few sets of plans, known as blueprints. Once a plan is accepted, the finer details are worked out and the detailed plans are drawn up to be submitted to the appropriate government departments for approval.

The final plans include very complex drawings showing the internal structure and systems within the building such as air conditioning and ventilation as well as plumbing and electrical systems.

Although architects must have good drawing skills, pencils and paper are gradually replaced by computer software which aids in the design process. Initially, most of an architect's time is spent in the office but once a plan is approved, the architect works with a construction team and often spends time on site wearing full safety gear including a hard hat, ensuring the building is being constructed according to the plans.

Architects need a variety of skills including creativity, the ability to think conceptually as well and communication since taking a building from idea to completion involves a large team of people. It is, however, a very rewarding career.



Exercise 1 - questions

Which of the following is correct. Underline the answer.

- (A) Architects always stay in the office.
- (B) Approval of plans for a building is made by the client.
- (C) Architects nowadays use technology in their work.
- (D) Pollution is not of concern to architects when designing buildings.

Give short answers

In addition to appearance, what two main things do architects need to consider when designing buildings? _____

Which verb in the last paragraph means 'be able to imagine in real life'?

Where do architects work? _____

Answer in complete sentences

Why does an architect need to work with the construction team on site?

What ability NOT mentioned in the final paragraph is necessary if you want to become an architect?

Which word in the text is used to refer to structures architects build for people to live in?

Would you think being an architect is a rewarding career?

Exercise 2

Read the following advertisement and answer the questions in complete sentences.

Adventure Land Special offers for you and your family Simply present these coupons to enjoy the benefits! Validity: 1 st – 28 th February	
<p>Buy 2 get 1 free on admission tickets One adult can enjoy free admission with two adult ticket prices.</p>	<p>\$20 off in all retail outlets Present this coupon to get \$20 cash discount on all products.* *Offer does not apply to sale items.</p>
<p>Free child admission ticket With any purchase of a child ticket, another child can enjoy free admission.</p>	<p>Free photo key chain souvenir For every \$20 spent at one of our photo developing booths, you will receive a free photo key chain.</p>
<p>Fast Access Ticket Present this coupon and get on priority entry to the River Rapids ride or the Mountain Train ride*. *Offer applies during peak hours only (before 11 am and after 3 pm).</p>	<p>Special price on tea-sets Visit our Coffee Shop and enjoy special prices on all tea-sets. Available every day except holidays from 3.00 p.m. until 5.30 p.m. Present the coupon when placing order.</p>



SAMPLE

Exercise 2 - questions

If Peter's family (with three adults and two children) visits Adventure Land, how many admission tickets do they need to buy?

What does Peter have to do to obtain a free photo key chain?

Peter wants to buy a T-shirt. The original price is \$200 but it is now on offer for \$100. With this coupon, how much will Peter have to pay for it?

Peter visits Adventure Land on a weekday in January. He goes to the coffee shop at 4.00 pm. Can he get a special price for his tea set? Explain your answer.

and her family visited Adventure Land on the 1st February and went to the Coffee Shop at 3.30 pm. They presented their coupon when they asked for the bill but the waiter said there was a problem. What was the problem?

Exercise 1 - answers

Which of the following is correct. Underline the answer.

- (A) Architects always stay in the office.
- (B) Approval of plans for a building is made by the client.
- (C) Architects nowadays use technology in their work.
- (D) Pollution is not of concern to architects when designing buildings.

Give short answers

In addition to appearance, what two main things do architects need to consider when designing buildings? Safety and environmental considerations.

Which verb in the last paragraph means 'able to imagine 'real life'?' 'conceptualise'

Where do architects work? In offices and on site

Answer in complete sentences

Why does an architect need to work with the construction team on site?

An architect needs to work with the construction team on site to ensure the building is being constructed according to the plans.

What ability NOT mentioned in the final paragraph is necessary if you want to become an architect?

Good drawing skills necessary. (accept any similar answer containing 'drawing skills')

Which word in the text is used to refer to structures architects build for people to live in?

The word 'residences' is used to refer to structures architects build for people to live in.

Why do you think being an architect is a rewarding career?

I think being an architect is a rewarding career because you can see an idea on paper turn into a real building. (accept any logical answer)

Exercise 2 - answers

If Peter's family (with three adults and two children) visits Adventure Land, how many admission tickets do they need to buy?

They need to buy two adult tickets and one child ticket.

What does Peter have to do to obtain a free photo key chain?

He needs to spend \$100 at one of the/their photo developing booths.

Peter wants to buy a T-shirt. The original price is \$200 but it is now on offer for \$100. With this coupon, how much will Peter have to pay for it?

Peter will have to pay \$100 for it. (Note: 50% discount on sale items = on offer)

Peter visits Adventure Land on a weekday in January. He goes to the coffee shop at 4.00 pm. Can he enjoy a special price for his tea set? Explain your answer.

No, he can't. The coupon is only valid in February. (accept any similar answer)

Jane and her family visited Adventure Land on the 1st February and went to the Coffee Shop at 3.30 pm. They presented their coupon when they asked for the bill but the waiter said there was a problem. What was the problem?

The problem was that the coupon stated that the coupon must be presented when placing the order (not after). Accept any similar answer.