

English Paper 1

Warm-up level · 25 questions · 25 minutes

Plus an optional 15-minute writing task

FREE SAMPLE PAPER

Name _____

Date _____

Score

/ 25

Instructions

- You have 25 minutes for the 25 questions. Spend about 5 minutes reading the story first.
- Each question has five answers, A to E. Only one is correct.
- Mark your answers on the answer sheet at the back (or circle them on the paper).
- You can look back at the story as often as you like.
- If you get stuck, move on and come back to the question if you have time.
- The writing task at the end is optional. It takes 15 minutes and is marked separately.

For parents

These papers are half the length of a typical 11+ English paper, keeping a realistic pace – so practice fits into a busy week. Set a timer for 25 minutes for the questions. The writing task is separate: do it straight after, or on another day. It's ideal practice for schools and areas (such as Essex) that include a written task. Mark the paper with the answer guide, which explains every answer and gives a tip for getting it right next time.



Primary Tools



Read this story carefully, then answer the questions that follow.

The Lighthouse Key

Maya had never liked the wind. At home it rattled the windows and whistled under the back door, but at Grandad's cottage on the cliff it did something worse: it howled. On her first night there, she lay awake listening to it hurl itself against the walls, as if it were trying to get in.

- 5 In the morning, the storm had blown itself out. The sky was the pale, washed blue of an old pair of jeans, and the sea below the cliff had gone quiet and silver. Grandad was already in the kitchen, frying eggs in a pan that was older than he was.

"Sleep well?" he asked, without turning round.

"Not really," Maya admitted. "The wind sounded angry."

- 10 Grandad chuckled. "It always does up here. You get used to it." He slid an egg onto her plate. "I've got a job for you today, if you're brave enough."

After breakfast, he led her to the bottom of the garden, where an old shed leaned against the fence like a tired horse. Inside, among the rusty tools and tins of nails, hung a heavy iron key on a nail of its own.

- 15 "That," said Grandad, "opens the lighthouse."

Maya stared at him. The lighthouse stood on the rocks at the end of the bay, white and tall, with a red stripe around its middle. Nobody had lived in it for years.

- 20 "Your great-grandmother was the last keeper," Grandad went on. "Every night for twenty years she climbed a hundred and twelve steps to light the lamp. Ships could see it from miles away." He pressed the key into Maya's hand. It was cold and surprisingly heavy. "The council wants to turn it into a museum. They've asked me to check that everything inside is safe. I thought you might like to help."

Maya's fingers closed around the key. For the first time since she had arrived, she forgot all about the wind.

- 25 The path to the lighthouse wound along the edge of the bay. Seaweed lay in dark tangles on the sand, and gulls wheeled and shrieked above them. When they reached the heavy wooden door, Maya fitted the key into the lock. It would not turn. She tried again, gritting her teeth, and this time something gave with a loud clunk. The door swung open. Inside, a narrow staircase spiralled up into the gloom.
- 30 Somewhere near the top, a thin beam of sunlight was falling through a window, catching the dust as it drifted in the air.

Maya took a deep breath and began to climb.

Story written for PrimaryTools

**Section A: Comprehension**

Questions 1–12 · answer about the story

1 Why did Maya not sleep well on her first night?

A The wind was howling.

B She was hungry.

C Grandad was snoring.

D She was excited about the lighthouse.

E Her bed was uncomfortable.

2 “The sky was the pale, washed blue of an old pair of jeans.” What does this tell us about the sky?

A It was dark and stormy.

B It was bright and dazzling.

C It was covered in cloud.

D It was a soft, faded light blue.

E It had a pattern like denim.

3 Which word best describes how Maya felt about the wind at the start of the story?

A excited

B bored

C uneasy

D curious

E proud

4 Grandad was frying eggs “in a pan that was older than he was”. What does this suggest?

A Grandad had just bought it.

B The eggs were old.

C The pan was broken.

D Grandad is very young.

E The pan was very old.

5 The shed “leaned against the fence like a tired horse”. What kind of language is this?

A a metaphor

B a simile

C alliteration

D onomatopoeia

E a rhyme



6 How many steps did the lighthouse keeper climb each night?

A 20

B 100

C 112

D 120

E 212

7 Who was the last keeper of the lighthouse?

A Maya's great-grandmother

B Grandad

C Maya's mother

D someone from the council

E nobody ever lived there

8 Why has Grandad been asked to go into the lighthouse?

A to light the lamp

B to repaint the red stripe

C to find the key

D to check that it is safe

E to sell it to the council

9 "For the first time since she had arrived, she forgot all about the wind." What does this sentence show?

A She had become too tired to notice it.

B She was still eating her breakfast.

C She was angry with Grandad.

D She could not hear very well.

E She was so excited about the lighthouse that she stopped worrying.

10 "Gulls wheeled and shrieked above them." Which word is closest in meaning to "wheeled" here?

A rolled

B circled

C landed

D dived

E rested



- 11 What happened the first time Maya tried the key in the lock?
- A It would not turn. B It snapped in half.
- C The door opened straight away. D She dropped it in the sand.
- E Grandad had to do it for her.
- 12 Which phrase best describes how Maya feels at the very end of the passage?
- A terrified and wanting to go home B bored and impatient
- C angry with Grandad D nervous but determined
- E sad and lonely

Section B: Spelling

Questions 13–16

Each sentence is split into four parts. Find the part with a spelling mistake. If there is no mistake, choose E.

- 13 Grandad carried the heavy key in his pockit all morning. *No mistake*
- A B C D E
- 14 The seagulls were making a terrible noise above the harbour. *No mistake*
- A B C D E
- 15 Maya climbed the narrow staircase very carefully to the top. *No mistake*
- A B C D E
- 16 The council beleives the museum will open in May. *No mistake*
- A B C D E

**Section C: Punctuation**

Questions 17–20

Each sentence is split into four parts. Find the part with a punctuation mistake. If there is no mistake, choose E.

- 17 Maya asked, “can I come with you?” No mistake
A B C D E
- 18 For the picnic we packed sandwiches apples and juice. No mistake
A B C D E
- 19 The lighthouse stood on the rocks at the end of the bay. No mistake
A B C D E
- 20 The keepers lamp could be seen from miles away. No mistake
A B C D E

Section D: Grammar and vocabulary

Questions 21–25

- 21 Choose the word that completes the sentence correctly: Maya and her grandad _____ to the lighthouse yesterday.
A walk B walks C walked D walking E will walk
- 22 Choose the word that completes the sentence correctly: The storm was _____ than the one the night before.
A loud B loudest C more louder
D louder E loudly
- 23 Which word is the adverb in this sentence? The gulls shrieked noisily above the boats.
A gulls B shrieked C above D boats E noisily



24 Which word is closest in meaning to ANCIENT?

A very old

B tiny

C modern

D noisy

E broken

25 Choose the correct word: Maya couldn't decide _____ to climb the stairs or wait outside.

A weather

B wether

C wheather

D whether

E whither

End of the questions - go back and check your answers.



Optional writing task

15 minutes · marked out of 10

Continue the story. Maya has started to climb the lighthouse stairs. Write what happens next, including what she finds at the top.

- Plan for 2 minutes: what does Maya see, hear and feel as she climbs?
- What is at the top? Something surprising, something from the past, or something to do with her great-grandmother?
- Use at least one simile and some interesting verbs (creaked, spiralled, glittered).
- Leave 2 minutes to check spelling and punctuation.

Plan here



Ideas /3 · Structure /2 · Vocabulary /2 · Spelling, punctuation and grammar /3



Answer sheet

Name _____

Date _____

Fill in one box for each question, like this: 1

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18

A	B	C	D	E
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Score: / 25

Mark with the PrimaryTools answer guide for English Paper 1.