Year 6 English Reading Comprehension

Original fiction passage: interpretation and evidence | Suggested time: 40-50 minutes | Name: _____ Date: _____

Student instructions: Work independently where possible. Show your reasoning and explain your ideas. You may leave a question and return to it.

Read the passage

1. THE LIGHTHOUSE NOTE

Every Thursday, Mara visited the abandoned lighthouse with her grandfather. He repaired the weather station nearby, while she sketched the birds circling the cliffs. One afternoon, a folded note appeared beneath the lighthouse door. It read: “When the tide is low, look where the shadows point.”

Mara wanted to race down to the beach, but her grandfather studied the sky. “The tide is turning,” he said. “A clue is no reason to forget the sea.” They waited until the following morning, when the harbour notice confirmed a safe low tide.

On the beach, Mara noticed that the lighthouse shadow stretched towards a cluster of black rocks. Between them sat a small metal box, scratched by years of salt. Inside were faded drawings of seabirds, each labelled with a date. The newest drawing was fifty years old.

Her grandfather smiled when he saw the handwriting. “Your grandmother made these,” he whispered. “She recorded the birds long before anyone thought the cliffs needed protecting.” Mara looked again at the sketches. What she had expected to be treasure was something quieter: proof that someone had cared enough to notice.

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Understanding and inference

1. Why did Mara visit the lighthouse every Thursday? Give two details from the passage.

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2. What does the grandfather mean by “A clue is no reason to forget the sea”?

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3. How does the writer build suspense before Mara finds the box? Give two examples.

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4. What does “scratched by years of salt” suggest about the box?

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5. How does Mara’s idea of “treasure” change by the end? Use evidence.

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6. What can we infer about Mara’s grandmother from the drawings?

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7. Explain the effect of the phrase “something quieter” in the final paragraph.

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8. Write a short summary of the story in 45-60 words.

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Parent Guide | English Reading Comprehension

This is a formative assessment, not a standardised examination. Encourage independent thinking, record useful observations, and avoid comparing children solely by total score.

Suggested responses

1. Mara accompanied her grandfather to the weather station and sketched birds.

2. Safety comes before curiosity; tides can be dangerous.

3. The mysterious note, delayed search, shadows and hidden rocks build anticipation.

4. The box has been exposed to the sea for many years.

5. Mara expected valuables or excitement but discovers a meaningful family and environmental record.

6. Grandmother was observant, patient, and concerned about birds.

7. “Quieter” contrasts flashy treasure with subtle historical and emotional value.

8. Accept accurate, concise summaries with key events and no unnecessary detail.

Reading skills to assess

Literal retrieval: locate details accurately. Inference: support interpretations with text. Vocabulary: explain meanings in context. Writer’s craft: describe how language affects the reader. Summary: select essentials.

For open-ended responses, accept alternative interpretations if supported by specific textual evidence.

After the assessment

Ask: Which question felt easiest? Which needed a different strategy? What would you try next time? Celebrate clear explanations as well as correct answers. Revisit one or two specific skills in short, supportive sessions.

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