

Sample Multiple Choice Comprehensions

Comprehension 1 - Romans



After the Romans had successfully invaded Britain in about AD 43, they began a massive campaign of building and construction. The roads in Britain were merely dirt tracks at the time and the Romans were used to having good, straight roads, as they realised that journeys would always be faster if they travelled in a straight line. So they set about building a new efficient network of 16,000km of new roads.

The Roman soldiers who built the roads used special surveying equipment to help them lay out a straight route. Then, they would dig a deep ditch, to make room for strong foundations. Then they filled it with layers of differently sized stones, all packed down tightly. The Roman soldiers dug ditches on either side, in order for the rainwater to drain away. Finished roads were measured carefully, to give an accurate idea of how long it would take to travel along them. The Romans calculated distances in Roman miles — which were 1,000 paces long — and were equivalent to a modern mile, or around 1.5km.

At the time of the Roman invasion, most Britons lived in small settlements in distinctive round houses made from wood plastered with mud and straw. Even their fortifications — huge hilltop fortresses, called hillforts — were simply made from earth and wood or piled up rocks.

To the Romans however, the only civilised way to live was in proper towns and they set about building new settlements all over the country. Like their forts, the Roman towns were laid out in a grid design, with streets at right angles and parallel to each other. At the centre of every town was the forum — a busy market square where people would meet up and buy and sell goods and learn about what was happening in the other parts of the locality. The forum was lined with shops and businesses on three sides and on the fourth side was the Roman equivalent of the town hall — the basilica. Aqueduct bridges were built to transport clean water to the town.

Wealthy Romans would have lived in large, luxurious town houses with water piped directly into their homes. But most people lived in small dwellings, working in trades and services. They sold their wares — from metalwork and pottery to meat and fresh bread — from shops at the front of their houses and lived at the back or upstairs. They would have used the public toilets and baths.

The Romans built many towns and every town in Britain whose name ends in 'chester', 'caster' or 'cester' would have been originally constructed by the Romans.

Go to the next page.



Comprehension 1 - Romans

1 Julius Caesar first invaded Britain in 54 BC, but not very successfully. How many years later was it before the Romans finally conquered Britain?

- A 97 years
 - B 150 years
 - C 75 years
 - D 90 years
-

2 Why did the Romans favour straight roads?

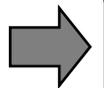
- A Because they were easier to build.
 - B Because they knew that travelling would be quicker in a straight line.
 - C Because the foundations would be stronger.
 - D Because straight roads would be easier to measure.
-

3 What did the Romans do to prevent the roads from flooding?

- A They dug ditches on both sides of the roads.
 - B They constructed the roads using only waterproof materials.
 - C They built all the roads on hills.
 - D They built the roads on a slope so the rainwater could drain away.
-

4 How long was a Roman mile?

- A 1 kilometre.
- B A thousand paces.
- C 1000 footsteps.
- D 500 metres.



Comprehension 1 - Romans

5 What shape were the Briton's houses at the time of the Roman invasion?

- A Rectangular.
 - B Square.
 - C Oval.
 - D Round.
-

6 What were the Briton's fortifications called?

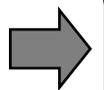
- A Forts.
 - B Hillforts.
 - C Castles.
 - D Keeps.
-

7 What was the Roman name for the building that functioned as the town hall?

- A The forum.
 - B The basilica.
 - C The baths.
 - D The county court.
-

8 How many sides were there in a forum?

- A Two.
- B Three.
- C Four.
- D Eight.



Comprehension 1 - Romans

9 What kind of bridges brought clean water into the towns?

- A Viaducts.
 - B Aqueducts.
 - C Suspension bridges.
 - D Pontoon bridges.
-

10 Which of the following towns was originally built by the Romans?

Option 1: Stratford.

Option 2: Bicester.

Option 3: Warwick.

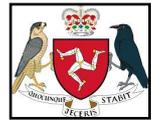
Option 4: Lancaster.

- A Option 1 only.
 - B Options 2 and 3.
 - C Options 2 and 4.
 - D Options 2, 3 and 4.
-

Comprehension 2 - The Isle of Man



The Isle of Man



The Isle of Man, otherwise known simply as Mann, is a self-governing British island located in the Irish Sea. The island is almost equidistant from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. It is 52 kilometres long and, at its widest point, 22 kilometres wide. It has an area of around 572 square kilometres.

At the 2011 census, the Isle of Man was home to 84,497 people, of whom 27,600 resided in the island's capital, Douglas, and 9,200 in the adjoining village of Onchan. The rest of the population live in villages dotted all around the island.

The Isle of Man has a temperate climate with cool summers and mild winters. Average rainfall is higher than that of mainland Britain, because the Isle of Man is far enough from Ireland for the prevailing south-westerly winds to accumulate moisture. Average rainfall is highest at Snaefell, where it is around 1,900 millimetres a year. At lower levels it can be around 800 millimetres a year. Temperatures remain fairly cool with the recorded maximum being 28.9°C on the runway at Ronaldsway on 12 July 1983.

The Fairy Bridge

Quaint traditions litter the Isle of Man; for good luck, Manx folk always wave at and say hello to the 'little people' who live under the Fairy Bridge near Santon. The Fairy Bridge has been a part of Manx folklore for many years and it is considered very unlucky if you don't say hello to the fairies as you pass over the bridge.

Sea Kayaking

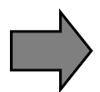
One of the finest ways to enjoy the coast is in a sea kayak and given the island's amazing water clarity, very often it's possible to see way down to the bottom. Discover secret coves and caverns and observe marine life close up — the unobtrusive kayak has minimal impact on its surroundings and often attracts the more inquisitive seals. Coastal trips offer views like nowhere else in the world and can be arranged for anyone aged 8 to 80.

Tynwald

The Manx Parliament, Tynwald, has been around for over 1,000 years and is the world's oldest continuous parliament. The Branches of Tynwald, the Legislative Council and the House of Keys, sit in their separate chambers in Douglas to consider bills. Bills that are passed by a majority then receive Her Majesty's Royal Assent and become law in the Isle of Man.

The Manx Cat

The Manx cat is tailless, if not friendless! It is in demand all over the world by breeders while its origins are the subject of folklore. Legend has it a pair of cats were the last to enter Noah's Ark and the door was suddenly slammed, severing their tails.



Comprehension 2 - The Isle of Man

1 In which body of water is the Isle of Man situated?

- A The English Channel
 - B The Irish Sea
 - C The Atlantic Ocean
 - D The Bristol Channel
-

2 Which country is nearest to the Isle of Man?

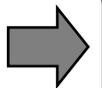
- A Scotland.
 - B Wales.
 - C England.
 - D The Island is almost the same distance from all of the above.
-

3 To the nearest thousand, how many people live on the Isle of Man?

- A 85,000
 - B 90,000
 - C 84,000
 - D 80,000
-

4 How many times greater is the population of Douglas than the population of Onchan?

- A 4 times
- B 2.5 times
- C 3 times
- D 2 times



Comprehension 2 - The Isle of Man

5 What is the range of the annual rainfall on the Island?

- A 1,900 millimetres.
 - B 900 millimetres.
 - C 1,100 millimetres.
 - D 800 millimetres.
-

6 Where is the airport located on the Isle of Man?

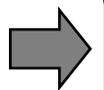
- A Snaefell.
 - B Ronaldsway.
 - C Douglas.
 - D There is no airport on the Island.
-

7 According to legend, who lives under the Fairy Bridge?

- A The goblins.
 - B The elves.
 - C The snow fairies.
 - D The little people.
-

8 Where does the Manx parliament meet to discuss passing new laws?

- A Douglas.
- B Onchan.
- C Santon.
- D Under the Fairy Bridge.



Comprehension 2 - The Isle of Man

9 Which of the following statements is **not** true?

- A In the Isle of Man, rainfall, on average is higher than in the British Isles.
 - B The Island has an area of over 500km².
 - C Snaefell has the most rain annually.
 - D The Isle of Man is more than 60km long.
-

10 How is it possible to see right down to the bottom of the sea when kayaking?

- A The water is especially shallow.
 - B The water is particularly clear.
 - C You can see through the bottom of the kayaks.
 - D You can hire some special goggles that allow you to see underwater.
-

11 What is the distinctive characteristic of a Manx cat?

- A It has no whiskers.
 - B It has no tail.
 - C It can see in the dark.
 - D It is an endangered species.
-

12 Which of the following statements is **not** true?

- A The last census was carried out in 2011.
- B The Manx people have many curious traditions.
- C The Manx cat is a very unpopular breed of cat.
- D Tynwald is the world's oldest continuous parliament.

End of comprehension 2.

Below is a reproduction of the front page of the Times newspaper from 21 July 1969.

Monday 21 July 1969

The Times

London Hospital to be rebuilt.

The London Hospital is to be rebuilt and extended. It will contain 1,300 beds in new buildings ranging from one to seven storeys. Two new 16-storey blocks will be used as nurses' homes and a third for research. The Greater London Council's Planning Committee has granted outline planning permission for the development on a site of over 25 acres.

The hospital authorities already own the property within the area, and the occupants of the houses, now being demolished, are being found new homes.

The project is expected to cost £5 million and completion is expected in July 1971.

Divers bring up more gold coins

Divers investigating the wreck of H.M.S Romney off the Isles of Scilly found gold and silver coins, gold rings and pieces of eight during the weekend.

The Romney, one of the ships of Rear Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell's fleet, sank off the Scillies in 1707 after striking rocks. Five ships and 2,000 men were lost, including the Rear Admiral and his flagship, the Association.

Man Takes First Steps on the Moon

Neil Armstrong became the first man to take a walk on the moon's surface early today. The spectacular moment came after he had inched his way down the ladder of the fragile lunar bug Eagle while colleague Edwin Aldrin watched his movements from inside the craft.

The landing, on the Sea of Tranquility, was near perfect and the very first words from the moon came from Aldrin: "Tranquility base, the Eagle has landed".

Armstrong reported that they were all in good shape and there was no need to worry about them. They had experienced no difficulty in manoeuvring the module in the moon's gravity. There were tense moments in the mission control centre at Houston while they awaited news of the safe landing. When it was confirmed, one ground controller was heard to say: "We're breathing again."

It was 03:56 a.m. when Armstrong stepped off the ladder from Eagle and onto the moon's surface. The module's hatch had opened at 03:39 a.m.

The astronauts spent 25 minutes exploring the area and they then planted a flag and unveiled a special plaque which contained President Nixon's signature and an inscription which read: "Here man from planet earth". "First set foot upon the moon, July, 1969, A.D. We came in peace for all mankind".

New 50p coins stolen

Thieves got away with 87 sacks all containing new 50p coins from a container train as it was waiting at South Lambeth goods yard on Saturday night. The coins value is £21,750 in total. The theft was discovered as the train arrived at Leeds at 05:23 a.m.

Wilson announces new pollution initiative

Downing Street announced today that the government will be establishing a Commission on Environmental Pollution. An advisory council is also to be established to deal with pollution by noise — no bad thing, perhaps, with Concorde and the Jumbo Jet about to darken our skies.

Women's National Cancer Control Campaign success

Since the mobile screening caravan went on the road on July 1, 270 women have been screened in the London Borough of Hackney and the campaign is having to turn away many women because the demand has been so great. They say they need six more caravans to give other councils an opportunity to screen women.



Comprehension 3 - 1969

1 What day of the week would 2nd August 1969 have been?

- A Monday
 - B Thursday
 - C Saturday
 - D Tuesday
-

2 Who was the British Prime Minister at the time of the moon landings?

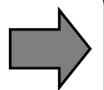
- A Harold Wilson
 - B Winston Churchill
 - C Sir Edward Heath
 - D James Callaghan
-

3 How many minutes elapsed between the lunar bug's hatch opening and Neil Armstrong stepping onto the moon's surface?

- A 17 minutes
 - B 13 minutes
 - C 15 minutes
 - D 19 minutes
-

4 How many 50p coins were stolen?

- A 21,750
- B 42,750
- C 43,500
- D 41,000



Comprehension 3 - 1969

5 How long is the rebuilding of Whitechapel hospital scheduled to take?

- A Eighteen months
 - B Two years
 - C One year
 - D Six months
-

6 How many floors will each of the new nurses' home have?

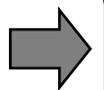
- A Seven
 - B Three
 - C Twelve
 - D Sixteen
-

7 What will the Royal Commission of Environmental Pollution be set up to deal with?

- A Water pollution
 - B Land pollution
 - C Air pollution
 - D Noise pollution
-

8 How many years before the newspaper was published did the H.M.S. Romney come to grief?

- A 262 years before
- B 362 years before
- C 402 years before
- D 162 years before



Comprehension 3 - 1969

9 Who was President of the United States when the Eagle landed on the moon?

- A President Barack Obama
 - B President Richard Nixon
 - C President John F. Kennedy
 - D President Lyndon B. Johnson
-

10 What caused the sinking of H.M.S Romsey?

- A The ship collided with some rocks.
 - B The ship was captured by pirates.
 - C The vessel was shot at and gunned down by the Scilly Islanders.
 - D The ship hit a violent storm and sank.
-

11 If the men sailing in Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell's fleet were evenly distributed among all the vessels in his fleet, how many men would there have been on each ship?

- A 500 men
 - B 400 men
 - C 450 men
 - D 375 men
-

12 Which of the following statements is **not** true?

- A The first words spoken from the surface of the moon were those of Edwin Aldrin.
- B The new 50p coins were stolen in the early hours of the morning.
- C The refurbishment of the London Hospital will cost in excess of £3,000,000.
- D Concorde and the Jumbo Jet first flew in the 1950s.

End of comprehension 3.

June 2, 1910.

THE TIMES

OBITUARY

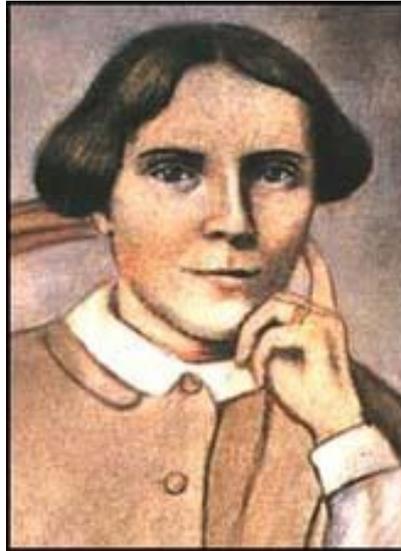
DR. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL.

We regret to announce that Elizabeth Blackwell, M.D. died on Tuesday, in her 90th year, after a long illness, at Rock House, Hastings. The funeral will take place on Wednesday 9th June at Kilmun, Argyll.

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell was in the fullest sense of the word, a pioneer. She was to become the first woman whose name was placed on the British Medical register.

Elizabeth was born in Bristol on February 3, 1821, the third daughter and third child in a family which afterwards numbered nine brothers and sisters. Her father was a successful sugar refiner and in 1832 the family emigrated to the United States. Sadly, a few years later, in 1838, Mr Blackwell died, leaving his widow and children wholly unprovided for. Elizabeth was then 17.

She and her two elder sisters courageously took upon themselves the maintenance of the family. They opened a school, and by hard and strenuous work managed to keep the wolf from the door and to provide an education for the younger children. In 1843, a friend persuaded Elizabeth to pursue a career in medicine.



After tremendous efforts and numerous failures Blackwell obtained entrance in 1847 into the medical school attached to the University of Geneva in the State of New York, where her 'carefully hoarded earnings' just sufficed for her maintenance during her period of study. When Elizabeth received her degree, it was in the presence of a great crowd and the event caused a considerable stir in England as well as in America. The seemingly impossible was now accomplished — the world now had its first woman doctor.

Elizabeth shared her good friend Miss Florence Nightingale's belief that "cleanliness is the supreme goal in medicine, its foundation and its crown".

How to keep people well and healthy was her aim rather than cure them after they were ill. Whenever she could, Elizabeth toured the country lecturing on "Medicine as a profession for women."

Elizabeth Blackwell was a great woman, a great pioneer, and a great example to her fellow citizens. She retained to extreme old age remarkable mental powers, but an accidental fall in Scotland in 1907 enfeebled her physical strength. She never married and her adopted daughter tended her to the last with unflinching devotion, and kept her constantly acquainted with the various phases of the campaign for women's suffrage in which she took to the last the keenest interest. Her later years were spent in a pretty, large, charmingly situated house at Hastings, and it was there that Elizabeth passed away.

Elizabeth Blackwell will be buried in the Highlands of Scotland. Her life, has changed medicine forever. America now has over 7000 women doctors - a dramatic testament to the power and success of her steadfast dedication to her goals in the face of overwhelming obstacles.



Comprehension 4 - Doctor Elizabeth Blackwell

1 Where was Elizabeth born?

- A Argyll.
 - B Hastings.
 - C Bristol.
 - D Geneva.
-

2 How many siblings did Elizabeth have?

- A Eight
 - B Nine
 - C Three
 - D Six
-

3 How old was Elizabeth when the family emigrated to America?

- A Seventeen
 - B Eleven
 - C Fifteen
 - D Nine
-

4 "They opened a school, and by hard and strenuous work managed to keep the wolf from the door." What does 'keep the wolf from the door' mean in this context?

- A To have just enough money to be able to make ends meet
- B To make enough money to be able to enjoy a lavish lifestyle
- C To keep the neighbours away from the house
- D To keep animals away from the house



Comprehension 4 - Doctor Elizabeth Blackwell

5 How old was Elizabeth when she entered the medical school at the University of Geneva?

- A 24
 - B 26
 - C 36
 - D 17
-

6 "Cleanliness is the supreme goal in medicine". What is the meaning of the word 'supreme' in this context?

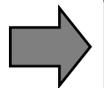
- A Ultimate
 - B Hidden
 - C Unattainable
 - D Affordable
-

7 What did Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell do to encourage women to train to become doctors?

- A She gave lectures to promote the profession to women
 - B She opened up a medical school solely for women students.
 - C She asked Florence Nightingale to spread the word in the Crimea.
 - D She wrote a book encouraging women to enter the profession.
-

8 "Where her 'carefully hoarded earnings' just sufficed for her maintenance during her period of study? What does the phrase 'carefully hoarded earnings' mean in this context?"

- A Money that she had saved from her wages
- B Money that she had borrowed from the bank
- C Funds that she had been gifted by friends and had saved carefully
- D Money that she had been granted by the University



Comprehension 4 - Doctor Elizabeth Blackwell

9 Which of the following statements is not true?

- A Elizabeth had a very active mind in her old age
 - B Elizabeth was a keen follower of the progress of suffrage for women
 - C Elizabeth passed away alone in a nursing home
 - D Elizabeth's physical health deteriorated after a fall
-

10 How many children did Elizabeth Blackwell have?

- A None
 - B One — an adopted daughter
 - C Three sons
 - D Two daughters
-

11 Which of the following statements is not true?

- A Elizabeth Blackwell was a pioneering woman
 - B Elizabeth Blackwell became terribly senile in her later years
 - C Elizabeth Blackwell was a great woman
 - D Elizabeth Blackwell was a terrific role model to people around her
-

12 How old was Elizabeth Blackwell when she died?

- A Ninety
- B Ninety-one
- C Eighty-nine
- D Eighty-eight

Answers

Comprehension 1 - Romans

- 1 A 97 years
 - 2 B Because they knew that travelling would be quicker in a straight line
 - 3 A They dug ditches on both sides of the roads.
 - 4 B A thousand paces.
 - 5 D Round.
 - 6 B Hillforts.
 - 7 B The Basilica.
 - 8 C Four.
 - 9 B Aqueducts.
 - 10 C Options 2 and 4, Bicester and Lancaster.
-

Comprehension 2 - The Isle of Man

- 1 B The Irish Sea
 - 2 D The Island is almost the same distance from all of the above.
 - 3 C 84,000.
 - 4 C 3 times.
 - 5 C 1,100 millimetres.
 - 6 B Ronaldsway.
 - 7 D The little people.
 - 8 A Douglas.
 - 9 D The Isle of Man is more than 60km long.
 - 10 B The water is particularly clear.
 - 11 B It has no tail.
 - 12 C The Manx cat is a very unpopular breed of cat.
-

Answers

Comprehension 3 - 1969

- 1 C Saturday
 - 2 A Harold Wilson
 - 3 A 17 minutes
 - 4 C 43,500
 - 5 B Two years
 - 6 D Sixteen
 - 7 D Noise pollution
 - 8 A 262 years before
 - 9 B President Richard Nixon
 - 10 A The ship collided with some rocks.
 - 11 B 400 men.
 - 12 D Concorde and the Jumbo Jet first flew in the 1950's.
-

Comprehension 4 - Dr. Elizabeth Blackett

- 1 C Bristol
- 2 A Eight
- 3 B Eleven
- 4 A To have just enough money to be able to make ends meet
- 5 B 26
- 6 A Ultimate
- 7 A She gave lectures to promote the profession to women
- 8 A Money that she had saved from her wages
- 9 C Elizabeth passed away alone in a nursing home
- 10 B One - an adopted daughter
- 11 B Elizabeth Blackwell became terribly senile in her later years
- 12 C Eighty-nine