



ENGLISH P2

PSLE OPEN-ENDED COMPREHENSION GUIDE

CRUCIBLE EDUCATION CENTRE

Teacher's Guide

Mastering Open-Ended (OE) Comprehension Questions

Comprehension has always been a key area where students struggle in. Ranging from failure to understand the passage, failure to identify question requirements, to being incapable of answering the question, the reasons for failing comprehension are aplenty.

In fact, we deem failure as anything less than 18 / 20.

Why? Mastery of our framework that outlines the **8 main categories** of Comprehension OE allows for straightforward application to almost all questions in the exam.

Why not strive for full marks? While we always aim for full marks in this section, we understand that there might be curveballs thrown once in a while which renders primary school students incapable of answering the question out of fear of the uncertain.

Then again, 18 / 20 is pretty decent!

Note that comprehension OE constitutes slightly over 20% of Paper 2!

8 Main Types of OE Comprehension Questions

1. Factual

- Factual questions are testing you on details that are easily obtained from the passage.
- **Step 1:** Identify the details
- **Step 2:** Remove irrelevant portions of the sentence

Questions 2 and 6 of Sample Practice 1

2. General Inference

- Inference questions are slightly more complicated than factual questions as students have to search for the concealed meaning behind the sentence.
- Key is to look for clues from phrases and sentences that suggest this hidden meaning

Question 10 of Sample Practice 1

3. Reference

- Students will be given a noun phrase or pronoun in the question and asked what it refers to.
- Common pronouns include:
 - i. he / she / they (people)
 - ii. it / they (situations / animals)
 - iii. this / that / these / those (situations / objects)
- **Step 1:** Look for the pronoun given in bold in the passage
- **Step 2:** Analyse the phrases and sentences before and after the pronoun according to the context
- **Step 3:** Identify the noun or noun phrase that can replace the pronoun

Question 4 of Sample Practice 1

4. Sequencing

- Students have to list the order of events that happened in the passage.
- All 3 statements have to be sequenced correctly for the mark to be awarded.
- Write “1” for the first event and then “2” and “3” for the subsequent events.
- Tip: Do not care about which event appeared first in the passage. They are often meant to be traps.

Question 8 of Sample Practice 1

5. True or False

- Students are required to identify the veracity of a given statement.
- **Step 1:** Understand the meaning of the statement
- **Step 2:** Go to the relevant part of the passage to find evidence to prove why the statement is true. If the details provided are false, identify the evidence that supports the true statement.
- **Step 3:** Write the evidence and / or reason after stating whether the statement is true or false.

Question 3 of Sample Practice 1

6. Vocabulary in Context

- Questions testing this will ask about the use of a word or phrase that can be found in the passage.
- **Step 1:** What is required? (how many words or phrases)
- **Step 2:** What is the given meaning stated in the question?
- **Step 3:** Look for the words / phrases that provide this meaning in the passage

Question 1 of Sample Practice 1

7. Applied Vocabulary

- Students have to analyse and use their own words to describe a situation or characters.
- Alternatively, the question will provide some possible answers and students have to tick the box(es) that best answers the question.

Questions 5 and 9 of Sample Practice 1

8. Information Transfer

Many examples include

- “Cause and effect” question where students have to identify the cause (what caused the happening?) and effects (results from the happening).
- “Before and after” question where students have to compare and identify how something has changed over time.
- “Similarities and differences”
- “Actions and reasons”
- “Feelings and actions”
- “Problems and solutions”
- “Advantages and disadvantages”
- Any other way information can be categorised, usually in a table format.

Question 7 of Sample Practice 1

Sample Practice 1

20 marks

Adapted from Red Swastika School 2020 Preliminary Examination

1 “Jinhang! How many times have I told you not to use the computer for so long? Do
2 you want thicker lenses for your glasses?” Mother’s voice shot out from the kitchen.

3 I got out of my seat and walked into the kitchen. Mother was making dumplings.

4 I sat down beside her and picked up some dough. Seeing this, Mother smiled at me, “Yes,
5 that’s a good girl.”

6 I started wrapping, finishing each dumpling off with a clumsy pinch. After I had
7 made ten dumplings, I looked at **my handiwork**, dissatisfied. Picking up my tray of
8 dumplings, I walked towards the wastepaper basket. Mother stopped me, saying, “They
9 don’t look like much, but they will be tasty nevertheless.” I sat back down, then tried to
10 continue making more dumplings, but I found myself unconsciously looking at the ugly
11 ones I had made earlier.

12 “Do you remember when you were younger? You were always sick,” Mother
13 started. “At school, the other kids kicked you, and snatched things from you, but you never
14 fought back.” I winced at the memory.

15 Growing up, I was a timid child. Once I had taken my favourite toy lion to
16 kindergarten. Everyone swarmed around me, admiring it. I loved the attention. That
17 afternoon, my classmate grabbed the lion, claiming it as hers. When I finally summoned
18 the courage to tell Mother about **this**, I expected her to comfort me. Instead, she gave
19 me **one of the worst telling-offs** of my life.

20 As if reading my thoughts, Mother continued, “Do you know why I reprimanded
21 you? You did nothing wrong. Father and I knew you were vulnerable, and needed you to
22 learn to defend yourself.” Then it hit me. All these years, I thought I had been scolded
23 because I was useless and unable to protect my belongings, but all Mother wanted was
24 to teach me to stand up for myself.

25 “Now look carefully at this big ball of dough,” Mother said, pointing to the bowl.
26 “That used to be me. Then I decided to sacrifice part of me for you.” She plucked off a
27 small piece of dough and flattened it with a rolling pin.

28 “Now examine this wrapper.” She held up the thin sheet of dough. “This was you
29 when you were born. At that time even a squeeze could scar you for life.” Mother loaded
30 a tablespoon of filling into the centre of the wrapper. “Then we started added in filling:
31 carrots, vegetables, and mushrooms. We taught you values and equipped you with all
32 the life skills you needed.”

33 “As a last move, we sealed **our gift from God** - with love.” Mother **pinched the**
34 **dumpling close**. I smiled, knowing that I now had to be independent.

OE Comprehension Questions & Answers

1 Which two-word phrase in the first paragraph suggests that the writer did not have good eyesight? (1m)

Solution:

Your glasses

Analysis:

Category (5) Vocabulary in context

- Step 1: What is required? (how many words or phrases)
 - Two-word phrase
- Step 2: What is the given meaning stated in the question?
 - The writer did not have good eyesight
- Step 3: Look for the words / phrases that provide this meaning in the passage
 - The words "your glasses" means that the writer did not have good eyesight.

2 List two actions which showed that the writer's mother approved of the writer helping out with the dumplings in the kitchen. (2m)

(1) _____

(2) _____

Solution:

- (1) Mother smiled at the writer.
(2) Mother said that the writer was a good girl.

Analysis:

Category (1) Factual

- Step 1: Identify the details
 - Paragraph 2 is relevant (chronological order of the paragraphs often provides a clue): Mother smiled at me, "Yes, that's a good girl."
- Step 2: Remove irrelevant portions of the sentence
 - Whole sentence is relevant.

3 Based on the story, state whether each statement in the table below is true or false, then give one reason why you think so. (3m)

Statement	True/False	Reason
(a) Mother agreed that the dumplings the writer made did not look beautiful.		
(b) The writer was able to focus on making more dumplings after she had completed wrapping her tray of ugly dumplings.		
(c) The writer was bullied in school because she was always sick.		

Solution:

Statement	True/False	Reason
(a) Mother agreed that the dumplings the writer made did not look beautiful.	True	She said that the dumplings did not look much.
(b) The writer was able to focus on making more dumplings after she had completed wrapping her tray of ugly dumplings.	False	She tried to focus on making more dumplings but found herself looking at her tray of ugly dumplings unconsciously.
(c) The writer was bullied in school because she was always sick.	False	The older kids kicked her and snatched things from her as she was very timid and never fought back.

Analysis:

Category (4) True or False

Example (b)

- Step 1: Understand the meaning of the statement
 - This means that the writer was not affected by her ugly dumplings and could focus on making more dumplings.
- Step 2: Go to the relevant part of the passage to find evidence to prove why the statement is true. If the details provided are false, identify the evidence that supports the true statement.
 - Statement is false since the passage stated "I sat back down, then tried to continue making more dumplings, but I found myself unconsciously looking at the ugly ones I had made earlier."
- Step 3: Write the evidence and / or reason after stating whether the statement is true or false.
 - Paragraph the statement in the passage to provide details of the truth instead.

4 Look at the table below. What do the words in the left column refer to in the passage? Write your answers in the column on the right. (3m)

Word(s) from the passage	What the word(s) refer to
My handiwork (line 7)	
This (line 18)	
Our gift from God (line 33)	

Solution:

Word(s) from the passage	What the word(s) refer to
My handiwork (line 7)	The writer's dumpling
This (line 18)	The writer's classmate grabbing the toy lion and claiming it as hers.
Our gift from God (line 33)	The writer

Analysis:

Category (3) Reference

Example (b)

- Step 1: Look for the pronoun given in bold in the passage
 - "This"
- Step 2: Analyse the phrases and sentences before and after the pronoun according to the context
 - Relevant sentences include "That afternoon, my classmate grabbed the lion, claiming it as hers. When I finally summoned the courage to tell Mother about **this**, I expected her to comfort me."
- Step 3: Identify the noun or noun phrase that can replace the pronoun
 - The relevant sentence is the one that is before the pronoun, being the incident that the writer's classmate grabbed the toy lion and claimed it as hers.

5 Which **two** of the following words best describe how the writer felt in lines 15 – 19? Put a tick in the box beside each of your answers. (2m)

DO NOT TICK MORE THAN TWO BOXES

excited		amused	
embarrassed		shocked	
awkward		frustrated	

Solution:

excited	✓	amused	
embarrassed		shocked	✓
awkward		frustrated	

Analysis:

Category (6) Applied vocabulary

- Relevant paragraph: Growing up, I was a timid child. Once I had taken my favourite toy lion to kindergarten. Everyone swarmed around me, admiring it. I loved the attention. That afternoon, my classmate grabbed the lion, claiming it as hers. When I finally summoned the courage to tell Mother about this, I expected her to comfort me. Instead, she gave me one of the worst telling-offs of my life.
- Evidence of excitement: "I loved the attention."
- Evidence of shocked: "I expected her to comfort me. Instead, she gave me one of the worst telling-offs of my life."
 - Reality differed greatly from expectations.

6 What was the misunderstanding the writer had when her mother gave her “one of the worst telling-offs” after sharing that she had been bullied? (2m)

Solution:

She thought that she had been given a telling-off after sharing that she had been bullied as she had been useless and was unable to protect her belongings but her mother actually wanted to teach the writer to stand up for herself.

Analysis:

Category (1) Factual

- Step 1: Identify the details
 - Lines 22-24 (chronological order of the paragraphs often provides a clue): All these years, I thought I had been scolded because I was useless and unable to protect my belongings, but all Mother wanted was to teach me to stand up for myself.
- Step 2: Remove irrelevant portions of the sentence
 - Whole sentence is relevant.

7 Based on information from lines 25 to 32, fill in the blanks in the following table. (3m)

Part of dumpling	What is represented
	The writer's mother
The thing dough wrapper	
Filling: carrots, vegetables, mushrooms	

Solution:

Part of dumpling	What is represented
the big ball of dough in the bowl	The writer's mother
The thing dough wrapper	The writer when she was born
Filling: carrots, vegetables, mushrooms	The values and life skills that the writer was equipped with

Analysis:

Category (7) Information transfer

Refer to lines 25-32

- ... big ball of dough," Mother said, pointing to the bowl. "That used to be me.
- ... She held up the thin sheet of dough. "This was you when you were born...
- ... "Then we started added in filling: carrots, vegetables, and mushrooms. We taught you values and equipped you with all the life skills you needed."

8 Write 1, 2 and 3 in the blanks below to indicate the order in which the events occurred in the story. (1m)

_____ The writer brought a toy lion to school.

_____ The writer made dumplings in the kitchen.

_____ The writer's mother scolded her harshly.

Solution:

_____1_____ The writer brought a toy lion to school.

_____3_____ The writer made dumplings in the kitchen.

_____2_____ The writer's mother scolded her harshly.

Analysis:

Category (3) Sequencing

Reminder: Do not care about which event appeared first in the passage. They are often meant to be traps.

Events are in chronological order as analysed from the passage:

(1) Lines 15-16: Once I had taken my favourite toy lion to kindergarten.

(2) Lines 18-19: Instead, she gave me one of the worst telling-offs of my life.

(3) Lines 29-34: Mother loaded a tablespoon of filling into the centre of the wrapper. "Then we started added in filling: carrots, vegetables, and mushrooms. We taught you values and equipped you with all the life skills you needed." "As a last move, we sealed our gift from God - with love." Mother pinched the dumpling close.

9 Fill in the box with a suitable word. (1m)

From the passage, we learnt that the writer's mother was trying to teach her how to be

Solution:

From the passage, we learnt that the writer's mother was trying to teach her how to be

Analysis:

Category (6) Applied vocabulary

- Relevant paragraph: Whole passage, in particular lines 23-24 - but all Mother wanted was to teach me to stand up for myself.

10 At the end of the story, the writer's mother "pinched the dumpling close" (lines 33-34). What did the pinching of the dumpling signify to the writer? (2m)

Solution:

It signified that the writer had to be independent and use the values and life skills she was equipped with.

Analysis:

Category (2) General Inference

Recall: Key is to look for clues from phrases and sentences that suggest this hidden meaning

Relevant lines: lines 33-34 - Mother pinched the dumpling close. I smiled, knowing that I now had to be independent.