1.22 Comprehension: Classic-Style Fiction: 1-hour Pack

GL ASSESSMENT / CSSE 11+ Entrance English (GL Assessment / CSSE style) · about 60 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

The Clockmaker's Apprentice

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It was upon a raw morning in November, when the fog lay heavy upon the cobbles of Elmsworth and the last leaves clung stubbornly to the churchyard elms, that young Thomas Redfern first presented himself at the door of Mr. Absalom Grieve, clockmaker, of No. 4 Vellum Row.

He had walked the whole distance from the coaching inn, his portmanteau banging against his knee at every third step, and had rehearsed his little speech of introduction some dozen times upon the road, until the words had quite lost their meaning and rattled about his head like coins in an empty tin. He was an orphan of thirteen years, sent from his uncle's parish in Norfolk with a letter of indenture and precious little else besides.

The shop, when at last he found it, wore an aspect scarcely less forbidding than the fog without. Its window, crowded with clocks of every size and temper, ticked and chimed in such discordant chorus that Thomas fancied the very building must be alive, and none too pleased at his arrival. He knocked twice upon the door, and, receiving no answer, ventured a third time, whereupon it was opened by a woman of uncertain years, her apron dusted with flour, who looked him over with the frank suspicion generally reserved for tinkers and other itinerant persons.

"You'll be the Norfolk boy," said she, in a manner that made the observation sound almost an accusation. "You had best come in out of the wet, though I daresay Mr. Grieve will have plenty to say to you before the day is out."

She led him through a narrow passage, thick with the smell of oil and beeswax, into a workshop where a small, stooped gentleman sat hunched over a bench, a jeweller's glass screwed into one eye, examining the innards of a longcase clock with the tender concentration other men reserve for the sickbed of a beloved relation. He did not look up at once, and Thomas stood, cap in hand, not daring to speak, while the multitude of clocks about the walls ticked on, each a fraction out of step with its neighbour, so that the room seemed to hum with a hundred small, disagreeable arguments.

At length Mr. Grieve set down his glass and regarded the boy with eyes of a pale, watery blue, though not unkind for all their coldness. "So," said he, "you are the article my cousin the rector has seen fit to send me. Well, you are thin, which is no bad thing in this trade, for a stout finger will not thread a hairspring. Can you write your name?"

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"Yes, sir," said Thomas, and did so, upon a scrap of paper offered him, in a hand rather better than his years might have promised.

"Hum," said the clockmaker, examining the signature as though it were itself a mechanism requiring adjustment. "It will serve. You will begin, Thomas Redfern, by learning to be silent, for I have found that boys who talk overmuch generally think but little, and a clock, you will discover, has no patience whatsoever with a careless hand." He rose, with some difficulty, and beckoned the boy nearer to the bench, where a hundred minute wheels and springs lay arrayed upon a cloth, gleaming faintly in the grey light from the window. "Here," said he, not unkindly, "is where you shall learn what patience truly means."

Thomas looked upon the scattered wheels, so small and so many, and felt, for the first time since his uncle's letter had summoned him from all he knew, something that was not quite fear, and not quite hope, but partook a little of each; and he resolved, standing there amid the ticking and the oil-smell and the old man's watchful eye, that he would not be found wanting.

1 Re-read the paragraph beginning "You'll be the Norfolk boy,' said she...'. What does the housekeeper's manner of speaking suggest about her attitude towards Thomas's arrival? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

(3)

2 What does the detail of Thomas's portmanteau 'banging against his knee' alongside the description that he had 'precious little else besides' suggest about his circumstances as he arrives at the shop? Explain your answer.

(3)

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3 Explain how the simile 'the words had quite lost their meaning and rattled about his head like coins in an empty tin' conveys Thomas's state of mind as he approaches the shop.

(4)

4 Look at the paragraph beginning 'The shop, when at last he found it...'. Explain how the writer's use of personification here creates a particular impression of the shop.

(4)

5 Explain the effect of the simile describing how Mr Grieve examines Thomas's signature 'as though it were itself a mechanism requiring adjustment'.

(3)

6 What does Mr Grieve's statement that 'boys who talk overmuch generally think but little' suggest about the values he expects Thomas to learn?

(3)

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7 List four separate details the writer gives about the workshop and the objects within it.

(4)

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8 Re-read the final paragraph of the extract. Explain what this paragraph suggests about Thomas's feelings as he looks upon the scattered wheels.

(4)

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9 In your own words, summarise the impression the reader forms of Mr Grieve's character across the whole extract.

(4)

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10 Are the following statements about the opening of the extract True or False? Write True or False for each.

(a) Thomas Redfern has travelled from Norfolk. **(1)**

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

(b) Thomas is Mr Grieve's grandson. **(1)**

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

(c) Mr Grieve himself opens the shop door to Thomas. **(1)**

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

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11 'he resolved... that he would not be found wanting' - to be 'found wanting' means to be judged as:

- ☐ A) curious about something
- ☐ B) generous and kind
- ☐ C) inadequate or not good enough
- ☐ D) desperate for money
- ☐ E) exceptionally clever

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12 Give the clockmaker's full name and the name of the street on which his shop stands.

(2)

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13 Look closely at the wording of the extract.

(a) Find and copy one phrase from the second paragraph that shows Thomas had practised his introduction many times before arriving. **(1)**

(b) Find and copy one phrase from the paragraph beginning 'She led him through a narrow passage...' that shows the clocks in the workshop were not ticking in time with one another. **(1)**

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14 In the sentence '"Hum," said the clockmaker, examining the signature...', the word 'Hum' is used to show that Mr Grieve is:

- ☐ A) humming a tune to himself
- ☐ B) making a thoughtful, considering sound, similar to hesitation
- ☐ C) complaining loudly
- ☐ D) greeting Thomas warmly
- ☐ E) correcting a mistake in the signature

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15 Number the following events 1 to 4 to show the order in which they happen in the extract: 'Mr Grieve beckons Thomas nearer to the bench of wheels and springs', 'Thomas knocks upon the shop door', 'the housekeeper leads Thomas through the passage to the workshop', 'Thomas writes his name on a scrap of paper'.

(4)

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16 In the sentence 'his portmanteau banging against his knee at every third step', the word 'portmanteau' most nearly means:

- ☐ A) a pocket watch
- ☐ B) a walking stick
- ☐ C) a pair of boots
- ☐ D) a letter of introduction
- ☐ E) a stout travelling bag or case

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17 In the phrase 'a letter of indenture', the word 'indenture' refers to:

- ☐ A) a sum of money paid in advance
- ☐ B) a map showing the route from Norfolk
- ☐ C) a letter of complaint
- ☐ D) a formal written agreement binding an apprentice to a master
- ☐ E) a certificate of good health

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18 The phrase 'other itinerant persons' suggests these people are:

- [ ] A) elderly and infirm
- [ ] B) employed inside the shop
- [ ] C) travelling from place to place with no settled home
- [ ] D) related to the clockmaker
- [ ] E) wealthy and well-connected

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19 'ticked and chimed in such discordant chorus' - 'discordant' is closest in meaning to:

- [ ] A) rhythmic and steady
- [ ] B) clashing and out of harmony
- [ ] C) silent and still
- [ ] D) faint and barely audible
- [ ] E) harmonious and pleasing

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20 When Mr Grieve calls Thomas 'the article my cousin the rector has seen fit to send me', he is using 'article' to mean:

- [ ] A) the person or thing that has been sent to him
- [ ] B) a piece of furniture
- [ ] C) a newspaper report
- [ ] D) a type of clock part
- [ ] E) a legal document

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21 'something that was not quite fear, and not quite hope, but partook a little of each' - 'partook' here means:

- [ ] A) forgot instantly
- [ ] B) opposed strongly
- [ ] C) replaced entirely
- [ ] D) avoided completely
- [ ] E) shared in or had a little of

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22 Compare the mood created by the writer at the very beginning of the extract with the mood at the very end. Use evidence from across the text to support your ideas.

(5)

23 Explain how the writer structures the extract as a whole to move the reader from a sense of unease to a sense of quiet resolve.

(5)

24 A reader said, 'This extract makes Mr Grieve seem harsh and unwelcoming right until the final lines.' To what extent do you agree? Support your response with detailed reference to the text, including the writer's use of language and structure.

(8)

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Mark scheme · 1.22 Comprehension: Classic-Style Fiction: 1-hour Pack

Question 1

Level 1 A simple, general comment about the housekeeper's attitude, with little or no reference to the text. **1**

Level 2 A clear and, at the top of the band, detailed explanation of her attitude, supported by relevant and, where appropriate, embedded quotation. **2-3**

Indicative content:

- Her opening remark sounds like an accusation rather than a welcome, suggesting suspicion or weariness rather than warmth
- The narrator notes the observation is made 'in a manner that made the observation sound almost an accusation'
- Her warning that Mr Grieve 'will have plenty to say' hints that Thomas may face a stern reception, suggesting she is not entirely sympathetic
- Her brisk, practical instruction to 'come in out of the wet' suggests functional politeness rather than genuine warmth
- Answers may also note her earlier suspicious look, 'the frank suspicion generally reserved for tinkers and other itinerant persons', reinforcing an unwelcoming attitude

Question 2

Level 1 A simple comment that Thomas is poor or has few belongings, with little or no reference to the text. **1**

Level 2 A clear and, at the top of the band, detailed explanation of Thomas's circumstances, supported by relevant quotation. **2-3**

Indicative content:

- The detail suggests Thomas is travelling with very few possessions, implying poverty or a lack of family support
- The cumbersome, banging portmanteau suggests he is unused to travelling such a distance alone, adding to a sense of vulnerability
- Being an orphan sent away with 'precious little else besides' reinforces how alone and unsupported he is
- The contrast between how little he owns and the significant new life he is entering emphasises the scale of the change facing him

Question 3

Level 1 Simple identification of the simile with limited or undeveloped comment on effect. **1-2**

Level 2 Clear and detailed explanation of how the simile conveys Thomas's nervous, unsettled state, with precise reference to the language used. **3-4**

Indicative content:

- The simile suggests Thomas's rehearsed words have become hollow and meaningless through repetition, just as coins rattling in an empty tin produce noise without purpose
- 'Empty tin' suggests hollowness, echoing his own anxious, unsettled inner state as he approaches the unfamiliar shop
- The auditory image of rattling suggests restlessness and nervous repetition, mirroring his anxiety about the meeting ahead
- The comparison to something small, metallic and mechanical subtly foreshadows the world of clockwork and precision he is about to enter

Question 4

Level 1 Simple identification of personification with limited or undeveloped comment on effect. **1-2**

Level 2 Clear and detailed explanation of how the personification creates an unsettling or animate impression of the shop, with precise reference to the language used. **3-4**

Indicative content:

- Describing the clocks as ticking and chiming 'in such discordant chorus' personifies them as if quarrelling or arguing with one another
- The idea that 'the very building must be alive' makes the shop itself seem animate, watchful and unwelcoming
- This personification creates the impression of the shop as a strange, almost living presence, deepening Thomas's unease before he even enters
- The personification is extended later, when the workshop is described as humming with 'a hundred small, disagreeable arguments', unifying the impression across the extract

Question 5

Level 1 A simple comment that Mr Grieve looks closely at the signature, with little explanation of effect. **1**

Level 2 A clear explanation of how the simile reveals Mr Grieve's mindset and its effect on the reader's impression of him. **2-3**

Indicative content:

- Comparing the signature to a mechanism reveals how completely Mr Grieve's clockmaker's mindset shapes the way he views the world, even ordinary handwriting
- It suggests he approaches everything, including Thomas himself, with the same exacting, professional scrutiny he gives to his clocks
- The comparison hints, with gentle humour, that Thomas may be treated rather like a piece of machinery to be adjusted and trained
- It reinforces the extended motif of clocks and mechanisms that runs throughout the whole extract

Question 6

Level 1 A simple comment that Mr Grieve wants Thomas to be quiet, with little or no reference to the text. **1**

Level 2 A clear, and at the top of the band detailed, explanation of the values suggested by the statement, supported by relevant quotation. **2-3**

Indicative content:

- The statement suggests Mr Grieve values careful thought, patience and discipline over idle chatter
- It implies he connects quietness with concentration and diligence, qualities essential to the delicate craft of clockmaking
- It suggests he holds strict, perhaps old-fashioned, expectations of an apprentice's conduct
- The statement foreshadows the direct lesson in patience that follows, when he tells Thomas 'Here... is where you shall learn what patience truly means'

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Question 7

the smell of oil and beeswax in the passage leading to the workshop **B1**

Mr Grieve has a jeweller's glass screwed into one eye **B1**

he is examining the innards of a longcase clock **B1**

a hundred minute wheels and springs are arrayed upon a cloth on the bench (accept: the multitude of clocks on the walls, each out of step with its neighbour) **B1**

Answer: Any four of: the smell of oil and beeswax; Mr Grieve's jeweller's glass; the longcase clock he is examining; the hundred minute wheels and springs on the bench; the multitude of mismatched clocks on the walls.

Question 8

Level 1 Simple identification that Thomas feels uncertain or nervous, with limited reference to the text. **1-2**

Level 2 Clear and detailed explanation of Thomas's mixed feelings and his resolve, with precise reference to the language used. **3-4**

Indicative content:

- The phrase 'not quite fear, and not quite hope, but partook a little of each' shows his feelings are complex and mixed, rather than simply frightened or excited
- His resolve that he 'would not be found wanting' suggests determination and a wish to prove himself despite his uncertainty
- The reference back to 'his uncle's letter' reminds the reader of his displacement, suggesting his resolve is partly born of necessity rather than pure confidence
- The calm, deliberate tone of the final sentence suggests a turning point, as Thomas moves from apprehension towards quiet determination

Question 9

Level 1 A simple summary of Mr Grieve, largely lifted from the text, with little sense of a rounded character. **1-2**

Level 2 A clear summary in the student's own words, showing understanding of both his strictness and his underlying kindness. **3-4**

Indicative content:

- He appears strict, exacting and demanding, expecting silence and discipline from his apprentice
- He is deeply devoted to his craft, treating small mechanisms, and even Thomas's signature, with careful scrutiny
- Beneath his gruff exterior there are hints of kindness, shown by his 'not unkind' eyes and his later actions described as 'not unkindly'
- Overall he seems a demanding but not unfair master, whose sternness is bound up with professional standards rather than cruelty
- Good answers will be expressed in the student's own words rather than copied directly from the text

Question 10

(a) True **B1**

(a) Answer: True

(b) False **B1**

(b) Answer: False

(c) False **B1**

(c) Answer: False

Question 11

C - identifies 'found wanting' as being judged inadequate or not good enough **B1**

Answer: C) inadequate or not good enough

Question 12

Mr Absalom Grieve **B1**

Vellum Row (accept 'No. 4 Vellum Row') **B1**

Answer: Mr Absalom Grieve; No. 4 Vellum Row.

Question 13

(a) accept: 'rehearsed his little speech of introduction some dozen times upon the road' **B1**

(a) Answer: rehearsed his little speech of introduction some dozen times upon the road

(b) accept: 'each a fraction out of step with its neighbour' **B1**

(b) Answer: each a fraction out of step with its neighbour

Question 14

B - identifies 'Hum' as a thoughtful, considering sound **B1**

Answer: B) making a thoughtful, considering sound, similar to hesitation

Question 15

correctly places 'Thomas knocks upon the shop door' as event 1 **B1**

correctly places 'the housekeeper leads Thomas through the passage to the workshop' as event 2 **B1**

correctly places 'Thomas writes his name on a scrap of paper' as event 3 **B1**

correctly places 'Mr Grieve beckons Thomas nearer to the bench of wheels and springs' as event 4 **B1**

Answer: 1: Thomas knocks upon the door; 2: the housekeeper leads him to the workshop; 3: Thomas writes his name; 4: Mr Grieve beckons him to the bench.

Question 16

E - identifies 'portmanteau' as a travelling bag or case **B1**

Answer: E) a stout travelling bag or case

Question 17

D - identifies 'indenture' as a formal apprenticeship agreement **B1**

Answer: D) a formal written agreement binding an apprentice to a master

Question 18

C - identifies 'itinerant' as travelling with no settled home **B1**

Answer: C) travelling from place to place with no settled home

Question 19

B - identifies 'discordant' as clashing or out of harmony **B1**

Answer: B) clashing and out of harmony

Question 20

A - identifies 'article' as referring to Thomas himself, as the person sent **B1**

Answer: A) the person or thing that has been sent to him

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Question 21

E - identifies 'partook' as sharing in or having a little of something **B1**

Answer: E) shared in or had a little of

Question 22

Level 1 A simple comparison identifying that the mood changes, with limited or no supporting reference. **1-2**

Level 2 A clear comparison supported by relevant evidence from both the beginning and the end of the extract. **3-4**

Level 3 A perceptive, well-developed comparison that selects precise evidence from across the extract and explores the shift in mood in a nuanced way. **5**

Indicative content:

- At the start the mood is bleak and unwelcoming, established through the raw November fog and the leaves clinging 'stubbornly' to the churchyard elms
- The shop continues this unease, with its forbidding aspect and the discordant, quarrelling clocks
- By the end, though the physical setting has not changed, the mood shifts towards quiet resolve and cautious hope, shown in Thomas's calm, reflective final thoughts
- The earlier oppressive, animate imagery of the shop contrasts with the calmer, more personal tone of the closing sentence
- The strongest answers will select well-chosen evidence from both ends of the extract and discuss the shift in mood precisely

Question 23

Level 1 A simple comment on the order of events, with limited explanation of structural effect. **1-2**

Level 2 A clear explanation of more than one structural feature and its effect, with relevant reference to the text. **3-4**

Level 3 A perceptive, well-developed explanation of how structure builds and then resolves tension across the whole extract, with precise reference. **5**

Indicative content:

- The extract opens with bleak, atmospheric description of weather and setting, establishing unease from the very first line
- Obstacles and suspicious figures, such as the housekeeper, are introduced before Mr Grieve himself is even seen, delaying and building tension
- The central encounter with Mr Grieve is structured like a test, through his silence, his scrutiny of the signature, and his questions, mirroring the apprenticeship Thomas is about to begin
- The final paragraph slows the pace, turning inward to focus on Thomas's private thoughts, providing a reflective and satisfying close
- The recurring motif of clocks and mechanisms threads through the whole structure, unifying setting, character and theme

Question 24

Level 1 A simple statement of agreement or disagreement with limited or no textual support. **1-2**

Level 2 A clear response with relevant reference to language or structure, showing some understanding of how Mr Grieve is presented. **3-4**

Level 3 A detailed, well-supported evaluation exploring more than one aspect (for example his dialogue and the narrator's description), with well-chosen quotations. **5-6**

Level 4 A perceptive, well-structured evaluation that considers different aspects of the extract in a balanced way, with precise textual support and a convincing, considered personal judgement. **7-8**

Indicative content:

- Consideration of evidence for harshness: his blunt manner of speech, his focus on Thomas's usefulness rather than his welfare, for example 'you are thin, which is no bad thing in this trade'
- Consideration of evidence against a purely harsh reading: the narrator notes his eyes are 'not unkind for all their coldness', and the word 'not unkindly' is repeated as he speaks to Thomas near the end
- Discussion of how the writer balances gruffness with small signs of consideration, creating a more ambiguous, layered impression rather than a simply harsh one
- Discussion of structure: the final image of him beckoning Thomas 'not unkindly' to the bench could be read as a subtle shift, or as consistent with an already complex portrayal established earlier
- Reward well-supported personal judgements in either direction, provided they are backed by precise textual evidence

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