1.37-3 Comprehension: Mixed-Genre Set 3: 1-hour Pack

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

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

Reading texts

Text 1: The Bottle on Blackrock Sands

Original short fiction written for Revision Library.

The tide had pulled back further than Ellie had ever seen it, leaving long ribbons of wet sand stretching out towards the horizon. She picked her way across the exposed rock pools, checking each one for the crabs that sometimes hid beneath the seaweed, when something caught the low winter sun and threw a flash of light straight into her eyes.

It was a bottle, half buried in the sand, its glass the deep green of old medicine jars. Ellie knelt down and worked it free, brushing away the wet sand with her sleeve. Something pale was curled inside it, rolled tight and held in place with a strip of faded string.

Her first thought was that someone was playing a trick, the kind of thing her older brother might do to wind her up before laughing about it at tea. But the glass was cloudy with age, scratched by years of being rolled and tumbled across some unknown seabed, and the cork had crumbled to little more than dust around its rim.

Ellie sat back on her heels and turned the bottle over in her hands. Through the green glass she could just make out looping handwriting, though the words themselves refused to come clear. She would have to break the bottle to get at the paper inside, and something about that felt wrong, like breaking a promise she had not been asked to keep.

Instead, she carried it home cradled against her chest, careful as though it might shatter with every step, while the wind off the sea pushed at her back and the gulls wheeled and cried overhead. Her grandad was the one who finally worked the cork loose, easing it out with the patience of a man who had spent forty years mending clocks.

The paper inside was thin and yellowed, and it took both of them to unroll it without tearing the delicate creases. The handwriting, when it finally lay flat on the kitchen table, was faded to the colour of weak tea, but every word was still just readable.

"Grandad," Ellie said slowly, tracing the date written at the top of the page. "This says nineteen sixty-three."

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Her grandad went very still, and for a long moment he said nothing at all, staring at the letter as though he, too, had been carried a great distance by the tide.

Text 2: Adrift: How the Ocean Carries Its Secrets

Original non-fiction text written for Revision Library.

Every year, thousands of objects slip from ships, are washed from beaches, or are deliberately released into the sea as part of scientific experiments. Long after they vanish from sight, many of them are still travelling, carried for months or even years by a vast, invisible network of ocean currents that circles the globe.

Perhaps the most famous example took place in 1992, when a cargo ship crossing the Pacific Ocean lost several containers overboard during a storm. One of them was carrying nearly thirty thousand plastic bath toys, including yellow ducks, which spilled into the sea and began an extraordinary journey. Over the following years, the toys washed ashore on beaches thousands of miles apart, from Alaska to Hawaii, and some were even reported frozen into Arctic ice.

Oceanographers seized the unexpected opportunity. By tracking where and when the toys were found, scientists were able to map ocean currents with far greater accuracy than ever before, using data that would otherwise have cost millions of pounds to collect using specialist equipment.

"Drift experiments like this teach us things that computer models alone cannot," explains Professor Daniel Okafor, an oceanographer who has studied ocean currents for over twenty years. "An object floating freely on the surface responds to wind, waves and currents all at once, in exactly the way a shipwreck survivor or a piece of debris would. That combination is remarkably difficult to simulate."

Long before plastic toys, sailors and scientists released glass bottles containing notes, asking whoever found them to record the date and location before sending the details back to the sender. Some of these deliberately released "drift bottles" have travelled for over a century before being discovered; one bottle, dropped from a German research ship in 1906, was not found until 2018, having drifted for more than a hundred years.

Not every discovery is celebrated, however. Marine scientists warn that most of what now washes up on beaches is not a curious scientific artefact but ordinary plastic waste, and that the same currents once used to study ocean movement are now carrying millions of tonnes of rubbish around the world each year. Even so, for a lucky few beachcombers, the ocean still occasionally delivers something as strange and wonderful as a bottle that has been travelling since before their grandparents were born.

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1 Look at the final paragraph of Text 1: grandad 'went very still... as though he, too, had been carried a great distance by the tide'. What does this suggest about grandad's reaction to the letter?

(3)

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2 Which word class best describes 'looping' as it is used in the phrase 'looping handwriting' (paragraph 4 of Text 1)?

(a) Choose the correct word class. **(1)**

- ☐ A) Noun
- ☐ B) Verb
- ☐ C) Adjective
- ☐ D) Preposition

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3 Give the meaning of each of the following words as they are used in Text 2.

(a) 'oceanographers' (paragraph 3) **(1)**

(b) 'debris' (paragraph 4) **(1)**

(c) 'artefact' (paragraph 6) **(1)**

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4 Explain why, according to paragraph 3 of Text 2, scientists found the toy spill a useful opportunity.

(2)

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5 Explain the effect of the writer including a direct quotation from Professor Daniel Okafor in paragraph 4 of Text 2.

(3)

6 How does the writer structure the final paragraph of Text 2 to present a balanced view of what the ocean's currents carry? Refer to the order of ideas in your answer.

(3)

7 Look at paragraph 5 of Text 2: "Some of these deliberately released 'drift bottles' have travelled for over a century before being discovered; one bottle, dropped from a German research ship in 1906, was not found until 2018." Explain the function of the semicolon in this sentence.

(2)

8 Both texts describe something that travelled for a very long time before being found. Find one phrase from Text 1 and one phrase from Text 2 that show this idea.

(2)

9 Text 1 is fiction and Text 2 is non-fiction. Give one feature of Text 1 that shows it is fiction, and one feature of Text 2 that shows it is a non-fiction, informative text.

(2)

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10 Compare the purposes of the two texts. What is Text 1 trying to do, and what is Text 2 trying to do?

(3)

11 Text 1 ends with grandad going still 'as though he, too, had been carried a great distance by the tide'. Text 2 states that a bottle 'was not found until 2018, having drifted for more than a hundred years'. Explain the effect of each of these descriptions.

(3)

12 Give the meaning of each of the following words as they are used in Text 1.

(a) 'exposed' (paragraph 1) **(1)**

(b) 'crumbled' (paragraph 3) **(1)**

(c) 'cradled' (paragraph 5) **(1)**

(d) 'delicate' (paragraph 6) **(1)**

13 Look at paragraph 5 of Text 1: Ellie carries the bottle home 'careful as though it might shatter with every step'. Explain the effect of this simile.

(2)

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14 Look at paragraph 4 of Text 1: breaking the bottle would feel 'like breaking a promise she had not been asked to keep'. Explain the effect of this simile.

(2)

15 Look at paragraph 3 of Text 1. Why does Ellie first think that someone is playing a trick on her?

(1)

16 Explain the effect of the comparison in paragraph 5 of Text 1: grandad works the cork loose 'with the patience of a man who had spent forty years mending clocks'.

(3)

17 Look at paragraph 1 of Text 1. What does Ellie notice about the tide at the start of the extract?

(1)

18 According to paragraph 7 of Text 1, what date is written at the top of the letter?

(1)

19 According to paragraph 2 of Text 2, in what year did the cargo ship lose its containers?

(1)

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20 Find and copy the phrase from paragraph 2 of Text 2 that describes what one of the lost containers was carrying, and name two of the places mentioned where the toys washed ashore.

(3)

21 According to paragraph 5 of Text 2, in what year was the drift bottle dropped from a German research ship, and in what year was it found?

(2)

22 Find and copy the phrase from paragraph 1 that describes the sunlight reflecting off something in the sand.

(1)

23 According to paragraph 2 of Text 1, what does Ellie find half buried in the sand?

(1)

24 According to paragraph 5 of Text 1, how does Ellie's grandad finally get the cork out of the bottle?

(1)

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25 Using details from both texts, explain two ways in which the passing of time is handled differently in Text 1 and Text 2.

(4)

26 Which text do you think is more effective at engaging its reader, Text 1 or Text 2? Support your answer with evidence and language analysis from at least one text.

(6)

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Mark scheme · 1.37-3 Comprehension: Mixed-Genre Set 3: 1-hour Pack

Question 1

Suggests grandad is shocked or deeply moved by the letter, perhaps recognising it **B1**

The comparison to being 'carried a great distance by the tide' suggests he feels suddenly transported back to the past, perhaps to a memory linked to 1963 **B1**

Suggests the letter has some personal significance to him that has not yet been explained, creating mystery for the reader **B1**

Answer: It suggests grandad is shocked or deeply moved, perhaps recognising the letter. The comparison to being 'carried a great distance by the tide' suggests he feels suddenly transported back to the past, hinting that the letter has some personal significance that has not yet been explained, creating mystery for the reader.

Question 2

(a) C **B1**

(a) Answer: C) Adjective

Question 3

(a) Meaning close to 'scientists who study the ocean' **B1**

(a) Answer: scientists who study the ocean

(b) Meaning close to 'scattered pieces of wreckage or rubbish' **B1**

(b) Answer: scattered pieces of wreckage or rubbish

(c) Meaning close to 'an object of historical or scientific interest, often old or made by people' **B1**

(c) Answer: an object of historical or scientific interest

Question 4

By tracking where and when the toys were found, they could map ocean currents far more accurately than before **B1**

This data would otherwise have cost millions of pounds to collect using specialist equipment **B1**

Answer: By tracking where and when the toys were found, scientists could map ocean currents far more accurately than before, using data that would otherwise have cost millions of pounds to collect with specialist equipment.

Question 5

Adds authority/credibility, since he is an expert (an oceanographer) with over twenty years of study **B1**

Makes the information feel more personal and engaging than a plain statement of fact **B1**

His explanation of why drifting objects are 'remarkably difficult to simulate' gives a clear, expert reason that supports the article's point about the value of drift experiments **B1**

Answer: Including an expert's direct words makes the information more credible, since Professor Okafor speaks from over twenty years of study; his explanation of why drifting objects are 'remarkably difficult to simulate' gives a clear, expert reason that supports the article's point about the value of drift experiments.

Question 6

Identifies that the paragraph opens with a negative/concerning point (most washed-up material is plastic waste, not scientific treasure) **B1**

Identifies that this is followed by the connective 'Even so' and a return to a positive, wonder-filled conclusion about rare finds **B1**

Explains the effect, e.g. acknowledging the serious problem of ocean pollution before ending on a hopeful note leaves the reader with a more balanced, thoughtful final impression **B1**

Answer: The paragraph opens by acknowledging the serious problem of plastic waste in the ocean, then uses the connective 'Even so' to pivot back to a hopeful, wonder-filled conclusion about rare discoveries like drift bottles. Placing the concern first and the positive note last gives the article a balanced, thoughtful final impression.

Question 7

Identifies that the semicolon links two closely related independent clauses (each of which could stand alone as a sentence) **B1**

Explains that the second clause gives a specific real example that supports the general claim made in the first clause **B1**

Answer: The semicolon links two closely related independent clauses; the second clause gives a specific real example (the 1906 bottle) that supports the general claim made in the first clause.

Question 8

Valid phrase from Text 1, e.g. 'carried a great distance by the tide' **B1**

Valid phrase from Text 2, e.g. 'having drifted for more than a hundred years' **B1**

Answer: Text 1: 'carried a great distance by the tide'. Text 2: 'having drifted for more than a hundred years'.

Question 9

Valid fiction feature of Text 1, e.g. a named character (Ellie), descriptive narrative language, or dialogue between characters **B1**

Valid non-fiction feature of Text 2, e.g. specific dates/statistics (1992, thirty thousand toys), a named expert (Professor Daniel Okafor), or an explanatory, factual tone **B1**

Answer: Text 1 (fiction): has a named character, Ellie, and uses descriptive narrative language and dialogue. Text 2 (non-fiction): uses specific dates and statistics (e.g. 1992, thirty thousand toys) and quotes a named expert, Professor Daniel Okafor.

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Question 10

Identifies that Text 1's purpose is to entertain and build a sense of mystery through narrative **B1**

Identifies that Text 2's purpose is to inform the reader about ocean currents and drift experiments, using facts and expert opinion **B1**

Makes a valid comparative point, e.g. both texts engage the reader's curiosity about the sea, but through very different techniques: narrative mystery versus factual explanation **B1**

Answer: Text 1's purpose is to entertain and build mystery through narrative, leaving Ellie's grandad's reaction unexplained. Text 2's purpose is to inform the reader about ocean currents and drift experiments using facts, dates and expert opinion. Both engage the reader's curiosity about the sea, but through very different techniques.

Question 11

Explains the effect of the simile in Text 1, e.g. it creates a moment of quiet mystery, suggesting a personal, unexplained connection to the past **B1**

Explains the effect of the precise detail in Text 2, e.g. the exact dates make the length of the bottle's journey feel striking and almost unbelievable **B1**

Makes a valid comparative/overall point, e.g. both descriptions create a sense of wonder about time and distance, but Text 1 does so emotionally/imaginatively while Text 2 does so factually **B1**

Answer: The description in Text 1 creates a moment of quiet mystery, hinting at a personal, unexplained connection to grandad's past, while the precise dates in Text 2 make the length of the bottle's real journey feel striking and almost unbelievable. Both create a sense of wonder about time and distance, but Text 1 does so emotionally and Text 2 does so factually.

Question 12

(a) Meaning close to 'uncovered, no longer hidden or protected' **B1**

(a) Answer: uncovered, no longer hidden by the water

(b) Meaning close to 'broken down into small pieces or dust' **B1**

(b) Answer: broken down into small pieces or dust

(c) Meaning close to 'held gently and protectively, as if precious or fragile' **B1**

(c) Answer: held gently and protectively, as if precious or fragile

(d) Meaning close to 'easily damaged, fragile' **B1**

(d) Answer: easily damaged, fragile

Question 13

Identifies that the simile emphasises how fragile Ellie believes the bottle to be **B1**

Explains the effect, e.g. shows how much care and importance Ellie now places on the bottle, suggesting she already senses it is special **B1**

Answer: The simile emphasises how fragile Ellie believes the bottle to be, showing how carefully and seriously she now treats it, as though she already senses it is something special.

Question 14

Identifies that the simile compares breaking the bottle to breaking an unspoken promise **B1**

Explains the effect, e.g. suggests Ellie feels an instinctive sense of responsibility or respect towards the bottle and its unknown owner, even though nobody has asked this of her **B1**

Answer: The simile compares breaking the bottle to breaking an unspoken promise, suggesting Ellie feels an instinctive sense of responsibility towards it and its unknown owner, even though nobody has actually asked this of her.

Question 15

Because it is the kind of thing her older brother sometimes does to tease/wind her up (accept similar valid inference about her brother's character) **B1**

Answer: Because it is the kind of thing her older brother sometimes does to tease her.

Question 16

Identifies that this compares grandad's careful handling of the cork to the skilled patience of a clockmender **B1**

Explains that it suggests grandad has great skill, care and steady hands **B1**

Explains the wider effect, e.g. it hints at grandad's long experience and calm character, and quietly builds the reader's trust that he will handle the fragile bottle correctly **B1**

Answer: Comparing grandad's careful handling of the cork to the patience of a clockmender suggests he has great skill and steady hands, hinting at his long experience and calm character and building the reader's trust that he will handle the fragile bottle correctly.

Question 17

It has pulled back further than she has ever seen it **B1**

Answer: The tide has pulled back further than Ellie has ever seen it before.

Question 18

Nineteen sixty-three (1963) **B1**

Answer: Nineteen sixty-three (1963).

Question 19

1992 **B1**

Answer: 1992.

Question 20

nearly thirty thousand plastic bath toys **B1**

Alaska **B1**

Hawaii **B1**

Answer: 'nearly thirty thousand plastic bath toys'; the toys washed ashore in Alaska and Hawaii, among other places.

Question 21

Dropped in 1906 **B1**

Found in 2018 **B1**

Answer: It was dropped in 1906 and found in 2018.

Question 22

caught the low winter sun and threw a flash of light **B1**

Answer: caught the low winter sun and threw a flash of light

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Question 23

A bottle (made of deep green glass) **B1**

Answer: A bottle, made of deep green glass.

Question 24

He eases it out patiently (accept: with the patience of a man who has spent forty years mending clocks) **B1**

Answer: He eases it out slowly and patiently.

Question 25

Identifies that in Text 1 the letter's age (from 1963) is revealed but its full meaning/significance is left unresolved at the end **B1**

Develops this point with reference, e.g. grandad's silent, still reaction raises a question that the extract does not answer **B1**

Identifies that in Text 2 the passage of time (1906 to 2018, or 1992 onwards) is fully explained using precise dates and scientific reasoning **B1**

Develops this point with reference, e.g. facts and expert testimony are used to explain exactly how and why objects travel for so long, leaving no mystery **B1**

Answer: In Text 1, the letter's age is revealed, but why it affects grandad so deeply is left unresolved, ending on his silent, unexplained reaction. In Text 2, by contrast, the passage of time (such as the bottle drifting from 1906 to 2018) is fully explained using precise dates and expert reasoning, so nothing about the process is left mysterious.

Question 26

Level 1 States a preference with little or no justification; minimal or no textual reference. **1-2**

Level 2 Gives a clear opinion supported by relevant reference or quotation from at least one text, with some comment on effect. **3-4**

Level 3 Gives a well-reasoned, developed opinion supported by precise, well-chosen references from at least one text (ideally both), with perceptive analysis of language or structure and its effect on the reader. **5-6**

Indicative content:

- Text 1: mystery, sensory imagery, dialogue, an unresolved ending, e.g. 'as though he, too, had been carried a great distance by the tide'
- Text 2: precise dates and statistics, expert quotation, balanced argument, e.g. 'having drifted for more than a hundred years', real-world relevance
- Either viewpoint is acceptable if well supported by precise textual evidence
- Credit comparative analysis of how narrative technique (Text 1: imagery, mystery, character) versus factual exposition (Text 2: statistics, expert opinion, balanced structure) engages the reader differently
- Reward a genuine personal response with clear textual justification and understanding of the writer's craft

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