



Reading comprehension  
example questions



Literary devices

- 1
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- 3
- 4

Two on Track

Everything is dark.

The crowd roars like the ocean during a storm. Every voice, every whistle and cry rolls over me like tropical thunder, and I can feel every hair on my body stand to attention like soldiers at drill as I step out onto the track.

5 It's August but the Tokyo National Stadium is still freezing compared to the place I love to run, free on my outdoor track under the blazing Jamaican sun. A pang of homesickness explodes in my chest and I can almost taste the heat. Before the Paralympics, the training and the fame, running was my way of pushing my body to capacity. When you feel the

10 wind swoosh over your skin, the powerful pounding of your heart and the friction of the ground beneath your feet you feel — well, invincible.

My eye mask doesn't let through any light, but I don't need it. All visually impaired sprinters get the same eye-covering to level the playing field, and besides, I have never needed my eyes to achieve race wins.

15 A warm, familiar hand squeezes my right hand and swings it up to the sky.

Which literary device has been used in the following quotation?

'I can feel every hair on my body stand to attention'

- A simile
- B metaphor
- C anecdote
- D repetition
- E personification





Vocabulary: Define a word

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

30 An attendant’s voice tells everyone to get ready, and Omario guides me to my starting blocks. This is one of the most important parts of the race; my feet have to be angled perfectly, and we can’t cross the line until the starting pistol, at risk of disqualification.

Omario’s rough hands slip on the tether that holds us together during the  
35 race. This is how we have always trained, synchronising every movement and swinging our arms in time as we sprint. I need him there to make sure I run in my lane, but Omario is more than that. He shouts how far we have left to go — 20 metres, 10 metres, finish line — and cheers me on all the way to the end. I can’t imagine running without him.

40 I visualise the race like I have done a million times before, feeling the grain of the synthetic rubber track beneath my fingertips. Not being able to see my other competitors feels like a blessing; it’s just me, Omario, and the track.

Read the passage, then answer the question below.

Which of the following is the best definition of ‘visualise’ (line 40)?

- A to draw a picture on paper
- B to create an image using various media
- C to restore an image to its original state
- D to create a painting for others
- E to form a picture in the mind





Vocabulary: Choose a synonym

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Which of the following words is an antonym for ‘**synthetic**’ (line 41)?

- A man-made
- B substitute
- C manufactured
- D artificial
- E authentic





Vocabulary: Identify a word from a definition

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- 3
- 4

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Find the word that means ‘occurring in unison’.

- A movement
- B together
- C trained
- D always
- E synchronising





Retrieval

- 1
- 2
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Which of these statements is true? Choose **two**.

- A

The narrator is running the first half of the race then his friend will take over.
- B

The narrator is taking part in a special race where they are blindfolded to make it more challenging.
- C

The narrator has difficulty seeing and needs a friend to help him run.
- D

The narrator is a runner competing in a race alone.
- E

The narrator is a runner competing in an international race.





Inference

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‘Omario’s rough hands slip on the tether that holds us together...’ (line 34)

Why do you think Omario does this?

- A To help keep Caleb steady so he doesn’t fall before the race.
- B To tie the coloured band on Caleb so the attendants know which runner he is.
- C It’s Caleb’s lucky mascot and he never runs without it.
- D To guide Caleb during the race as he is visually impaired.
- E It is a metaphor for the close bond Omario and Caleb share.





## Structure

- 1
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Below are five statements which describe key events in the text. Choose the event which happened **third**.

- A    Omario raises Caleb’s hand to get a cheer from the crowd.
- B    Caleb discusses his emotions as he enters the stadium.
- C    Omario attaches the rope to join him and Caleb together before the race begins.
- D    Caleb is guided to his starting blocks and focuses on setting his feet up correctly.
- E    The noise in the stadium becomes quiet as the race is about to begin.



## Parts of speech

1 2 3 4

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Which word in this sentence is a **preposition**?

**'I can't imagine running without him.'**

A can't

B him

C imagine

D running

E without





Prediction

- 1
- 2
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- 4

45      Around me, the crowd starts to hush, even my Jamaican supporters. This  
is it.

“On your marks,” the announcer calls over the tannoy, and as one we get  
steady on our blocks.

“Set.”

50      I inhale and so does Omario, every nerve buzzing like a live wire. But the  
panic stays where it is. This is all I have ever wanted to do, whether  
under cameras and lights or my beloved home sun.

Bang! There goes the gun —

And we run.

If the text were to continue, which of the following  
might the author write about next?

- A    how they won the race
- B    the crowd’s reaction to starting the race
- C    how they felt after the race
- D    Omario’s experience of the race
- E    Caleb’s thoughts and feelings during the race





# Authorial intent

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Bang! There goes the gun —

And we run.

## ‘And we run.’ (line 52)

Why did the author choose to end the story this way?

- A

To keep the reader interested in what may have happened, allowing them to create their own ideas about the storyline.
- B

To reduce the amount of detail because the story has a lot of detail in previous paragraphs.
- C

To include as much detail about the actual race as possible to keep the reader interested in the story.
- D

To add some poetry to the story because it rhymes with the previous sentence.
- E

To stop the reader from getting bored because the story is too long.



## Literary devices

1 2 3 4

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50      under cameras and lights or my beloved home sun.

Bang! There goes the gun —

And we run.

What literary device is used in the quotation below?

**‘Bang! There goes the gun –’**

A simile

B metaphor

C alliteration

D hyperbole

E onomatopoeia





Evidence

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# Talking Trees

You might be unaware, but trees are actually very social creatures and have been shown to communicate with one another in underground networks. Having grown up in the British countryside, I have been passionate about ecology for most of my life, and when studying trees I

5 have noticed that much like the networks within the human brain, trees communicate in a large, complicated web.

Take this for example. When researchers studied the Douglas Fir tree closely, they found that when a tree has been injured by insects, it sends chemical messages to a nearby Ponderosa Pine. The Pine tree can then

10 activate its own defence mechanisms, namely by releasing certain enzymes, to protect itself against the insects. Similarly, there have been reports of Fir trees helping other tree species protect themselves against other afflictions, such as Armillaria Root disease, within the forest.

Extensive studies were carried out to examine whether Birch trees were

15 helping the Fir trees to survive, and it was found that the Birch trees were indeed sharing carbon below ground to protect the Firs against the life-threatening disease. Individual trees, therefore, appear to share information to benefit the health of the whole forest.

Read the passage, then answer the question below.

What evidence is there to suggest that trees protect themselves against insects? Choose **two**.

- A

They send out signals to alert nearby trees when they are being attacked.
- B

They produce chemicals to protect themselves.
- C

There is no evidence to suggest this.
- D

They release a poisonous gas that kills insects that are attacking them.
- E

They communicate with larger animals who come and eat the insects found on the trees.





Summary

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- 2
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# Lionel Messi

Lionel Messi is a professional footballer. After a successful career at Barcelona, he now plays for Paris Saint-Germain and is captain of the Argentina national football team.

Childhood

- 5
- Messi was born in Argentina on 24 June 1987. He began playing football with his older brothers and cousins and joined his local club when he was four, later moving to Newell’s Old Boys club. His formidable team at Newell’s, nicknamed ‘The Machine of ‘87’, was almost invincible. Skilled and determined, Messi scored almost 500 goals for Newell’s.
- 10
- When Messi was nine, he stopped growing. This led him to be diagnosed with a growth hormone deficiency, a condition that can lead to short stature and other health problems. Treatment was expensive but another team, Barcelona, had spotted Messi’s potential. They told the Messi family that if Lionel signed with the club, they would pay for his treatment. The family gratefully took up the offer and moved to Spain in
- 15
2001.

Read the passage, then answer the question below.

Which of the following best summarises paragraph 3 (lines 10-16)?

- A

The author gives details of Messi’s happy childhood in Argentina.
- B

The author highlights the adversity Messi experienced as a child.
- C

The author makes us feel really sorry for Lionel Messi.
- D

The author lists Messi’s skills and talents.
- E

The author explains how many goals Messi scored for Newell’s.





# Parts of speech

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Messi was shy and quiet and initially found it hard to settle into his new life in Spain, but after persevering with his football training and growth hormone treatment, he began playing for Barcelona’s youth side in 2002.

20 **Career**

Messi joined Barcelona’s world-famous senior team when he turned 18, the same age he gained Spanish citizenship. His deft and skilful playing was noticed by fans and professionals around the world and his accomplished performance on the field led to another team, Inter Milan,

25 putting in a bid to buy him. Inter Milan offered to triple his wages but a loyal Messi chose to stay at Barcelona.

During the 2006-07 season, Messi scored a tremendous 17 goals in 36 games and Barcelona increased his wages. Messi continued to perform extraordinarily well and Spanish newspapers began to call him ‘Messiah’.

30 In the 2008-09 season, Messi was the Champions League top scorer and won the monumental title of the youngest top scorer in the tournament’s history.

What type of words are the following?

**Messi** (line 17), **Spain** (line 18), **Barcelona** (line 26), **Champion’s League** (line 30)

A adjectives

B pronouns

C articles

D prepositions

E proper nouns