

PROBEGREYTM

reading comprehension assessment

COMPANION ASSESSMENT TO PROBE**BLUE**

STUDENT TEXTS

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PROBE **GREY** Reading Comprehension Assessment™ **Student Texts**

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COMPANION TO PROBE **BLUE**

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The children were enjoying themselves in the swimming pool.
They splashed water at each other.
They yelled at the top of their voices.

It was very noisy.

Finn was sitting on the side of the pool.

He wanted to join in, but didn't want to get in the pool yet.
He was afraid.

But after a while, he let himself down into the water.
He held tightly to the slippery side of the pool with his fingertips.

Then suddenly he lost his grip and slid down into the water.

His head went under, but before he could feel any fear,
his feet touched the bottom and he stood up.

Then Finn knew he didn't have to be able to swim
to be with his friends in the pool.

He just had to stay where the water was not deep.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did he slide down into the water?
2. What two things were the children enjoying doing in the swimming pool?
3. Why didn't Finn want to get into the pool?
4. Was Finn happy sitting on the side of the pool? How do you know that?
5. Was Finn in the deep part of the pool? How do you know that?
6. '...yelled *at the top of their voices*.' What do the words ***at the top of their voices*** mean?
7. Has Finn been in this swimming pool before? How do you know that?
8. Should Finn learn how to swim? Why do you think that?

Windows have a long history. When people first built houses, there was usually just one room, with no windows at all. Sometimes they had an opening in the roof to allow light in. This was covered when it rained.

Over time, bigger houses were built with openings in the walls. Before the invention of sheets of glass, different coverings were used to stop the wind blowing through, and to keep rooms warmer when it was cold outside.

Materials such as animal skins, cloth, paper, and timber were used to cover these windows.

In England, cow horns were sometimes used. They were soaked in water until they softened, then heated, and rolled out very thinly. Then they were cut into strips and placed in the window openings. They let in a soft light, but you couldn't see through them.

Romans made thick glass windows nearly two thousand years ago.

A thousand years later clear glass windows began to be made. These windows used to be expensive. They were only used in important buildings, cathedrals, and in the homes of the rich.

Now glass windows are everywhere.

QUESTIONS

1. What were houses built with as they got bigger?
2. What were windows covered with before the invention of sheets of glass?
3. What were the reasons for covering the openings in the roof and walls of houses?
4. Did the first houses always have just one room? How do you know that?
5. Could you see through the glass windows that the Romans made? How do you know that?
6. 'Sometimes they had an *opening* in the roof...' What does the word ***opening*** mean here?
7. '...homes of *the rich*' What do the words ***the rich*** mean?
8. Can you see through window coverings made from cow horns? How do you know that?
9. Was it easy to make window coverings out of cow horn? How do you know that?
10. Would you like to live in a house with windows made with strips of cow horn? Why do you think that?

A strong wind blew through the city streets, whistling around the corners.

It pushed into doorways and rushed out again.

It lifted scraps of paper from where they lay
and blew them along the avenues and down the alleys.

Sometimes it blew them up high between the skyscrapers
before carrying them away.

Sometimes it found them a new place to lie,
waiting for the next gust of wind to come along.

Oscar leant into the wind.

A page of a newspaper hit him – slapping against his ankles.

He kicked it into the gutter as more paper swirled past.

Then a piece of paper hit his chest and stayed there, pushed flat by the wind.

He picked it off and looked at it. It was a shopping list.

He imagined someone holding it up to read.

He could 'see' it being torn from their grasp and blown away.

Maybe it had flown up into the air before being whisked away from them,
too fast to give chase. It looked like a list of every-day items.

He was about to toss it back into the wind when he saw the last item on the list.

It was as if the wind had delivered a message to him – a reminder.

He stopped. Then he turned and headed for the gift store.

There he chose a birthday card for his mother.

QUESTIONS

1. What slapped against his ankles?
2. What was waiting for the next gust of wind to come along?
3. What things blown by the wind hit Oscar?
4. Was the wind noisy? How do you know that?
5. Did he see the shopping list being torn from a person's grasp? How do you know that?
6. '...the next *gust of wind*...' What do the words ***gust of wind*** mean?
7. '...before being *whisked away*...' What do the words ***whisked away*** mean here?
8. Did he see everything on the shopping list when he first looked at it? How do you know that?
9. What was the message the wind delivered?
10. Was it a good idea for Oscar to be walking in the city on this day? Why do you think that?

One of the New Seven Wonders of the World, the Great Wall of China is about twenty-one thousand kilometres long and on average six metres high and ten metres wide.

A massive structure, it includes a series of gates, shelters, and fortifications. Built on what was once China's northern border, it runs from the coast across to the dry, mountainous west.

Construction began around 2500 years ago as a series of hard-packed soil walls; it was built to deter feared invaders from attacking the country.

As building techniques improved, the walls were extended, and eventually joined together. Made of brick, soil, and stone, it blends almost perfectly into the surrounding landscape of mountains and rivers.

As impressive as the wall is, it failed in its original purpose.

Today it is a great tourist attraction. Many stories, both factual, and fanciful, have sprung up about it. Long before there were any manned space missions, it was claimed that because of its immensity, it was the only man-made structure able to be seen from space.

From the International Space Station, astronauts can identify lights of cities at night, bridges over long stretches of open water and a huge area in Spain covered in plastic greenhouses. They can only just make out the Great Pyramids in Egypt – appearing as tiny dark shadows.

Astronauts from several countries, including China, have been on many missions to space, but not one has reported seeing the Great Wall.

QUESTIONS

1. How did construction begin?
2. Why was the Great Wall built?
3. Was the claim that the Great Wall could be seen from space correct? How do you know that?
4. Did the wall succeed in doing what it was designed to do? How do you know that?
5. Are the Great Pyramids easily seen from space? How do you know that?
6. Many stories, both factual, and *fanciful*...' What does the word **fanciful** mean here?
7. '...because of its *immensity*...' What does the word **immensity** mean here?
8. In which direction does China's Great Wall run?
9. Why can't the Great Wall be seen from space?
10. Was building the Great Wall worth all the time and effort? Why do you think that?