

11+ English Practice Paper 1

Comprehension · Spelling · Punctuation · Sentence completion · Creative writing

Name _____

Date _____

Score / 50 _____

50

multiple-choice questions

50 min

for Sections A–D

30 min

optional writing task

Ages 9–11

Year 5 and 6

Instructions

1. You have **50 minutes** for Sections A to D. Work as quickly and carefully as you can.
2. Mark every answer on the **answer sheet** at the back of this paper, not on the questions. Draw a firm line through the box you choose.
3. If you want to change an answer, rub it out completely and mark your new answer.
4. If you get stuck, don't spend too long on one question. Make your best guess and move on — you can come back to it at the end.
5. Read the story in Section A carefully. You may look back at it as often as you like.
6. Section E (creative writing) is separate. Do it on another day, or after a break, with its own 30 minutes.

SECTION	QUESTIONS	SUGGESTED TIME
A · Comprehension	1–26	about 26 minutes
B · Spelling	27–34	about 8 minutes
C · Punctuation	35–42	about 8 minutes
D · Sentence completion	43–50	about 8 minutes
E · Creative writing	one task	30 minutes (separate)

This is a practice paper in the style of a GL Assessment 11+ English paper. It is not an official GL Assessment paper and is not endorsed by GL Assessment. Exam formats vary by area and school, so always check your target school's admissions guidance. Free to print and copy for home and classroom use. Answers and explanations are in the separate answers booklet.

Do not turn over until you are told to begin.

Read the story carefully, then answer the questions that follow. Line numbers are given in the margin to help you find your way.

The Causeway

An original story written for this paper.

The tide tables were pinned beside the kitchen door, and Nell had read them so often that she could have recited the week's numbers in her sleep. Low water at ten past four. By half past five the sea would be nosing at the causeway stones; by six, the road to the mainland would simply cease to exist. She glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece. Twenty to five.

Upstairs, Grandad was breathing in the shallow, rattling way that had begun after lunch and grown steadily worse. He had insisted, between coughs, that it was nothing – “a touch of the damp, that's all” – but his hands, usually as steady as the old harbour wall, had trembled so badly that he could not lift his cup. Nell had held it to his lips herself, and the tea had gone cold before he managed half of it.

The telephone line had been down since Tuesday's storm. There was no one else on the island: the Pritchards had shut up their cottage for the winter, and the boatman would not call again until Saturday. If anyone was going to fetch Dr Anwar from the village, it would have to be her.

She pulled on her father's old oilskin, which reached almost to her knees and smelled of tar and paraffin, and pushed a torch into the pocket. At the door she hesitated. Grandad had told her a hundred times never to cross the causeway alone, not with the tide on the turn. “The sea doesn't care how brave you are,” he would say, tapping the side of his nose as though passing on a secret. “It only cares how quick.”

Then she thought of the cold tea, and she ran.

The causeway was a mile of cobbles and weed laid across the sands like a grey ribbon, marked at intervals by tall wooden posts that leaned at crooked angles. In summer, visitors strolled along it eating ice creams. Now, in the iron light of a November afternoon, it looked like something that did not wish to be crossed. The wind came straight off the water and flung grit into her face, and the wet stones were treacherous underfoot; twice she slipped and caught herself on her palms, and the second time she felt the skin tear.

She counted the posts as she passed them, because counting was better than thinking. Seven. Eight. Nine. Somewhere to her left, out in the gloom, the sea was making a sound she had never noticed from the safety of the kitchen: a low, continuous hiss, like a breath being let out through

35 clenched teeth.

At the fourteenth post the cobbles vanished beneath a sheet of water no deeper than her ankle. It was moving – not in waves, but in a slow, purposeful slide from left to right, as though the whole bay were being tilted. Nell stopped. Ahead, she could just make out the dark line of the sea wall and, above it, a single lit window in the village. Behind her, the island was already a smudge.

It only cares how quick.

She splashed forward. The water rose to her shins, then to her knees, dragging at the hem of the oilskin as if it had hands. Her boots filled and became as heavy as buckets. She fixed her eyes on the lit window and did not look down, because she knew that if she saw how fast the water was moving she would freeze. Her breath came in ragged sobs, and she was distantly surprised to discover that she was talking aloud – to Grandad, to the sea, to nobody – telling them all that she was nearly there.

50 When her feet struck the slipway on the far side, she fell to her knees on the concrete, and for a long moment she simply knelt there, shaking, with the sea sighing at her heels. Then she got up and began to climb the hill towards the doctor's house, leaving a trail of wet footprints that the rain, beginning now in earnest, soon washed away.

Answer these questions about “The Causeway”. Choose the best answer for each and mark its letter on your answer sheet.

- 1 According to the tide tables, at what time was low water?
 - A Ten past four
 - B Twenty to five
 - C Half past five
 - D Six o'clock
- 2 Why does Nell glance at the clock in line 5?
 - A She needs to give Grandad his medicine.
 - B She is waiting for the boatman to arrive.
 - C She is working out how long she has before the causeway floods.
 - D She wants to check that the tide tables are correct.
- 3 Using lines 3–5, roughly how long does Nell have before the sea reaches the causeway stones?
 - A 10 minutes
 - B 30 minutes
 - C 50 minutes
 - D 80 minutes
- 4 In line 3, the sea is described as “nosing at the causeway stones”. This suggests the sea is...
 - A crashing violently against the stones.
 - B smelling strongly of salt.
 - C moving away from the causeway.
 - D creeping forward steadily, like an animal exploring.
- 5 In lines 7–8, Grandad insists his illness is “a touch of the damp, that’s all”. What does this suggest?
 - A He is playing down how ill he is.
 - B He is annoyed with Nell for fussing.
 - C He knows he has a serious illness.
 - D He wants Nell to fetch the doctor.
- 6 “usually as steady as the old harbour wall” (line 9) is an example of...
 - A a metaphor
 - B a simile
 - C personification
 - D alliteration
- 7 Why does the writer tell us that Grandad’s hands are usually “as steady as the old harbour wall”?
 - A To show that the harbour wall is very old.
 - B To suggest that Grandad once built walls.
 - C To describe the stormy weather.
 - D To make his trembling seem more unusual and worrying.

- 8 Which of these is NOT a reason why Nell has to go for help herself?
- A The telephone line is down.
 - B The Pritchards are away for the winter.
 - C The boatman is not due until Saturday.
 - D Dr Anwar is too ill to travel.
- 9 In line 13, “shut up their cottage” means the Pritchards had...
- A told everyone in the cottage to be quiet.
 - B closed and locked the cottage while they were away.
 - C sold the cottage to someone else.
 - D repaired the cottage after the storm.
- 10 “The sea doesn’t care how brave you are ... It only cares how quick.” (lines 19–21). What does Grandad mean?
- A Brave people are always the fastest swimmers.
 - B The sea is kinder to people who are quick.
 - C Courage cannot protect you from the tide; only speed can.
 - D You should never try to be brave near the sea.
- 11 Why do you think line 22 (“Then she thought of the cold tea, and she ran.”) is a paragraph on its own?
- A To make Nell’s moment of decision stand out.
 - B Because it is a line of dialogue.
 - C To introduce a new character.
 - D To show that time has passed slowly.
- 12 The causeway is compared to “a grey ribbon” (lines 23–24). This tells us it is...
- A long and narrow.
 - B soft and silky.
 - C brightly coloured.
 - D tied in a knot.
- 13 Why does the writer mention visitors eating ice creams in summer (line 25)?
- A To show that the island is popular with tourists.
 - B To explain why Nell is hungry.
 - C To suggest that Nell will meet someone on the causeway.
 - D To contrast the safe, cheerful summer causeway with how threatening it is now.
- 14 What does “the iron light of a November afternoon” (line 26) suggest about the light?
- A It is bright and sparkling.
 - B It is warm and golden.
 - C It is cold, grey and harsh.
 - D It is a rusty orange colour.

- 15** Which phrase gives the causeway human feelings?
- A** "a mile of cobbles and weed" (line 23)
 - B** "did not wish to be crossed" (line 27)
 - C** "marked at intervals" (line 24)
 - D** "laid across the sands" (line 23)
- 16** In "the wet stones were treacherous underfoot" (line 28), what word class is "treacherous"?
- A** Noun
 - B** Verb
 - C** Adjective
 - D** Adverb
- 17** Why does Nell count the posts as she passes them?
- A** Grandad told her to count them.
 - B** Counting helps to keep her mind off her fear.
 - C** She needs to know how far she has walked for Dr Anwar.
 - D** She is looking for one particular post.
- 18** The sea's hiss is "like a breath being let out through clenched teeth" (lines 34–35). What does this suggest?
- A** The sea is calm and sleepy.
 - B** The sea is laughing at Nell.
 - C** The sea is cold.
 - D** The sea is tense and threatening, like someone holding back anger.
- 19** Which word is closest in meaning to "purposeful" (line 38)?
- A** Determined
 - B** Aimless
 - C** Playful
 - D** Gentle
- 20** "as though the whole bay were being tilted" (lines 38–39) suggests that the water was...
- A** choppy, with large waves.
 - B** perfectly still.
 - C** sliding in one direction, smoothly but powerfully.
 - D** draining away from the causeway.
- 21** "Behind her, the island was already a smudge" (lines 40–41). This shows that...
- A** Nell has come a long way and it is hard to see clearly.
 - B** the island has been flooded.
 - C** Nell has left the cottage untidy.
 - D** the island is dirty after the storm.

- 22** Why does the writer repeat Grandad's words on line 42?
- A** To show that Grandad has followed Nell onto the causeway.
 - B** To show Nell remembering his warning at the most dangerous moment.
 - C** To show that Nell disagrees with Grandad.
 - D** To signal that the story is about to end.
- 23** Why does Nell keep her eyes on the lit window and not look down (lines 45–47)?
- A** Her torch has stopped working.
 - B** She is trying to see Dr Anwar.
 - C** The window is the only thing she can see.
 - D** She fears that seeing how fast the water moves would make her freeze.
- 24** Nell is "distantly surprised to discover that she was talking aloud" (lines 47–48). This suggests...
- A** she is talking to the people in the village.
 - B** she is so focused and frightened that she hardly notices what she is doing.
 - C** she is not surprised at all.
 - D** she is pretending to be calm for Grandad.
- 25** Which word best describes Nell in this passage?
- A** Reckless
 - B** Cowardly
 - C** Determined
 - D** Cheerful
- 26** The passage ends with Nell's footprints being "soon washed away" (line 54). What is the effect of this ending?
- A** It suggests her brave crossing leaves no trace, quietly showing how close she came to danger.
 - B** It suggests that Nell will get lost on the way.
 - C** It shows that the season is changing to summer.
 - D** It tells us that Dr Anwar will refuse to come.

Section B: Spelling

Questions 27–34

In these sentences there are some spelling mistakes. In each line, find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark its letter on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, mark N.

27	The moon's gravity A	pulls on the oceans, B	creating a buldge C	of water on each side D	N
28	of the planet. Becuse A	the Earth rotates, most B	coasts experience two C	high and two low tides D	N
29	every day. The interval A	between them is roughly B	six hours, although this C	varies from place to place. D	N
30	Tides are particularly A	powerful when the sun B	and moon are in line, C	which occurs twice a month. D	N
31	These are known as A	spring tides, wich have B	nothing to do with C	the season of spring. D	N
32	Many coastal communities A	have depended on B	understanding the tides C	for centuries. D	N
33	Fishermen, sailors and A	walkers on causeways B	must know exactly when C	the water will apear. D	N
34	Ignoring a tide table A	can have serious, even B	tragic, consequences C	for the unprepared. D	N

Section C: Punctuation

Questions 35–42

In these sentences there are some punctuation and capital-letter mistakes. In each line, find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark its letter on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, mark N.

35	dr Anwar opened the door A	before Nell had finished B	knocking, and one look C	at her face was enough. D	N
36	Within minutes they were A	in the doctors car, B	its headlights sweeping C	across the empty road. D	N
37	The tide was too high A	now for the causeway, B	so they drove to the C	harbour to find a boat. D	N
38	“Who has a boat that A	can go out tonight” B	the doctor called C	to the men on the quay. D	N
39	Old Mr Fenwick, who A	had known Grandad for B	fifty years didn’t C	hesitate for a second. D	N
40	They reached the island A	just after seven o’clock B	and found Grandad C	sitting up in bed. D	N
41	He looked pale and tired, A	but he managed a smile. B	“I told you never to C	cross alone.” he said. D	N
42	Nell laughed, and for A	the first time that day B	she felt, warm all the C	way down to her toes. D	N

Choose the word that best completes each sentence, and mark its letter on your answer sheet.

Keepers of the Light

Before satellite navigation, a lighthouse was often the only thing standing between a ship and disaster. Each lighthouse had its own (43) pattern of flashes, so that sailors could tell exactly which one they were looking at. Keeping the lamp lit was a (44) job. Keepers worked through the night, trimming wicks, polishing lenses and winding the clockwork that turned the light. In a storm, they might not (45) for days on end. Life at a lighthouse was often lonely, (46) many keepers found comfort in their routines. Some kept detailed diaries, (47) the weather, passing ships and even the birds that flew into the glass. Today, Britain's lighthouses are (48), controlled remotely from a central office. The last keepers left in 1998, and with them (49) a way of life that had lasted for centuries. Yet every night the great beams still (50) across the dark water, as faithful as ever.

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 43 | A identical | B distinctive | C invisible | D occasional | E similar |
| 44 | A demanding | B careless | C brief | D effortless | E idle |
| 45 | A sleep | B slept | C sleeping | D sleeps | E to sleep |
| 46 | A because | B therefore | C unless | D but | E so |
| 47 | A record | B recorded | C recording | D records | E have recorded |
| 48 | A abandoned | B demolished | C inhabited | D haunted | E automated |
| 49 | A go | B goes | C gone | D going | E went |
| 50 | A sweep | B swept | C extinguish | D slumber | E vanish |

End of Sections A–D. If you have time left, go back and check your answers.

Section E: Creative writing

30 minutes · 5 planning + 25 writing

Choose ONE of the tasks below. Spend about 5 minutes planning in the box, then about 25 minutes writing. Think about how the writer of “The Causeway” made you feel tense — you can use the same techniques in your own writing.

TASK 1 · STORY

Write a story that begins with these words: “Nobody else was coming. It would have to be me.”

TASK 2 · DESCRIPTION

Describe the island on the morning after the storm, when Nell and Grandad wake up safe. Help your reader see, hear and feel the place.

TASK 3 · LETTER

Nell’s father is away working on a fishing boat. Write the letter Nell sends him, telling him what happened that night and how she felt.

Planning — jot down words and ideas, not full sentences.

Opening (hook)

Build-up

Problem

Climax

Ending

Section E: your writing

Task number: _____

Draw a firm line through one box for each question, like this: **B**. Mark N if there is no mistake.

SECTION A — COMPREHENSION

- 1 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 4 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 7 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 10 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 13 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 16 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 19 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 22 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 25 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

- 2 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 5 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 8 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 11 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 14 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 17 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 20 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 23 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 26 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

- 3 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 6 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 9 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 12 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 15 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 18 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 21 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
 24 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

SECTION B — SPELLING

- 27 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 30 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 33 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N

- 28 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 31 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 34 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N

- 29 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 32 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N

SECTION C — PUNCTUATION

- 35 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 38 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 41 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N

- 36 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 39 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 42 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N

- 37 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N
 40 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ N

SECTION D — SENTENCE COMPLETION

- 43 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
 46 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
 49 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

- 44 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
 47 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
 50 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

- 45 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E
 48 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E