

Close reading comprehension

Below, there are some extracts from a gothic horror story. Read each sentence closely, and RE-READ it before you answer each question. GOOD LUCK!

“It had been precisely 5 minutes since the clock on the wall had struck 11pm, when Jane first heard the sound of slow footsteps in the snow. She gasped. They came closer and closer, through the nearby forest towards the great mansion that Jane stood within, the snow crunching beneath their feet like a blanket of brittle bones.”

1. What season is it most likely to be in this extract?
 - a. Winter
 - b. Summer
 - c. Autumn
2. The people travelling in the snow are likely...
 - a. Running
 - b. Walking
 - c. Jumping
3. True or false: the footsteps are going into the forest
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Write down one simile in this extract.
5. Which word best describes how Jane feels when she first hears the footsteps:
 - a. Confident
 - b. Shocked
 - c. Furious
 - d. Contented
6. We are not told who the approaching people are, yet we know they are coming. How does this make you feel as you read it? Why?



“Jane hid behind the blood-red silk curtain, and peered out at the trio of unfamiliar shadows standing in the snow, bathed in the pale moonlight. She clutched the loaded pistol close to her pounding chest. Outside, the wind wailed, the trees quivered, and the moon hung like a great accusing eye. Still clutching the pistol, Jane hastily wiped the sticky mix of sweat and blood and still wet mud off of her hands and onto her once-white dress.”

1. How many men could Jane see standing in the snow?

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Three



2. Which of these statements are true? Circle TWO.

- a. Jane recognizes the people standing in the snow
- b. Jane is trying to avoid being seen by the people standing outside
- c. Jane does not recognize the people standing in the snow
- d. Jane is outside



3. True or false: There are bullets inside the pistol

- a. True
- b. False

4. What tells you that it is nighttime in this extract?

5. Give an example of personification in this extract.

6. Which phrase shows us that Jane is scared?

7. What three colours do we know are now on Jane's dress?

8. Jane's hands are covered in a sticky mix of sweat and blood and wet mud. What do you think has happened?

Caroline hurried into the room, her chest heaving and panting, but with a joyous look upon her face. "I've found it! I've found it! Marcus's key! The key Edgar told us of in that letter, before he ..." She paused and looked at the pool of blood on the floor, "Oh that letter! It..."

"SHHHHH!!!!" Jane whispered. She raised her finger to her lips, and then pointed one finger out the window, at the shadows standing in the snow.

"Oh no! They're here! They're early! We should've had more time!" Caroline rasped. "We must go to The Red Room immediately! Come, Jane! Come now!"

1. Which of these are true? Circle TWO:
 - a. Caroline has been running
 - b. Jane has been running through the house
 - c. Caroline has just been looking for a letter
 - d. Caroline has just been looking for a key
2. Write down the phrase that shows Caroline is feeling out of breath
3. Which of these words best describes Caroline's emotions when she FIRST ENTERS the room:
 - a. Terrified
 - b. Ecstatic
 - c. Lethargic
 - d. Anxious
4. What do you think has happened to Edgar? Why do you think this?
5. Which of these best describes Caroline's emotions when she sees the men in the snow:
 - a. Joyful
 - b. Curious
 - c. Panicked
6. Who finds out that the three men are outside first?
 - a. Caroline
 - b. Jane
7. Who owned the key that Caroline had found?
 - a. Jane
 - b. Marcus
 - c. Edgar
8. Who TOLD Caroline about the key?
 - a. Jane
 - b. Marcus
 - c. Edgar



“Jane! Edgar! Caroline!” the man in the green scarf called out, his voice quaking as his body shivered. “We know you have broken into this awful house! Please, come out. We mean you no harm, but PLEASE! Do not unlock the Red Room! What you have heard is all lies; there is no fortune within, no glory, no hope. It is a trap! There is a dark and hungry evil inside that room, and if you enter, you will die. Leave the house and go.” But Jane and Caroline had fled downstairs before he had even opened his mouth.

1. Who is talking?
2. How many people does the man think he’s talking to?
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four
3. What phrase shows us that this is NOT Jane’s house?
4. Which word best describes the way the man is speaking? Circle one:
 - a. Threateningly
 - b. Aggressively
 - c. Anxiously
 - d. Joyously
5. Which phrase shows us that the man in the green scarf is probably cold?
6. Why did Jane and Caroline not hear his warning?
7. What does the man claim will happen if Jane and Caroline unlock the Red Room?
8. What does the man think is the reason that Jane and Caroline are trying to enter the Red Room?:
 - a. They love the colour red
 - b. They set a trap
 - c. They believe it will make them rich
 - d. They are hiding from the police
9. What do you think will happen next?



EXTENSION TASK: Use the image below to create your own gothic-inspired opening. You should use ambitious vocabulary and varied sentence types and pay close attention to your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

