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FREE PRINTABLE

Short Reading Passages with Questions

Sixteen everyday passages, new words, four questions each and a full answer key.



20 PAGES · ANSWERS INCLUDED

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How to use this book

For the grown-up and the child

Sixteen short passages about everyday things, each with four questions.

How to use it

1. **Read the three words first.** Say each one and its meaning.
2. **Read the passage aloud.** Then read it again alone, with a finger under the words.
3. **Answer the four questions.** Write a full sentence on the lines.
4. **Check with the key.** The answers are on the last pages. Talk about any that were different.

The four questions

1. **Questions 1 and 2:** the answer is in the passage. Find it and say it.
2. **Question 3:** asks why or how. Think, then answer in your own words.
3. **Question 4:** asks what a word means in the passage.

If an answer is right but written in different words, it is still a good answer.

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What this book is

It is reading practice for home, tuition and class. The passages are short and simple, and they are not matched to any school board, exam or age, and older beginners can use them too. The answers are on pages 19 and 20.

Why We Wash Our Hands

Passage 1 of 16

Our hands touch many things in a day. They touch doors, books, toys and food. Germs are very small, and we cannot see them. Some germs can make us ill. Soap and water wash many of them away. We should rub our hands for about twenty seconds. We wash before we eat and after we use the toilet. We also wash after we play outside. Clean hands help us stay well.

WORDS TO KNOW

germs tiny things that can make us ill

rub to move your hands against each other

ill not well

1. What does soap and water do to germs?

2. When should we wash our hands?

3. Why can we not see germs?

4. What does “ill” mean in the passage?

How a Seed Grows

Passage 2 of 16

A seed is small, but it holds a new plant inside. First, the seed needs water and some warmth. Then it opens, and a root grows down into the soil. The root takes in water. Next, a small stem grows up towards the light. Green leaves open on the stem. The leaves use sunlight to help the plant make its food. Slowly, the little seed becomes a tall plant.

WORDS TO KNOW

root the part of a plant that grows in the soil

stem the part that holds up the leaves

slowly not fast

1. What does a seed need to start growing?

2. Which part of the plant grows down into the soil?

3. How do the leaves help the plant?

4. What does “slowly” mean in the passage?

Where Does Rain Come From?

Passage 3 of 16

The Sun warms the water in rivers, lakes and seas. Some of the water turns into a gas that we cannot see. It rises into the air. High up, the air is cold. The water cools and turns into tiny drops. Many tiny drops together make a cloud. When the drops become heavy, they fall as rain. The rain fills the rivers and lakes again, and the story starts once more.

WORDS TO KNOW

cloud a mass of tiny water drops in the sky

rise to go up

heavy weighing a lot

1. What warms the water in rivers and seas?

2. What do many tiny drops make together?

3. Why does the water turn into drops high up in the air?

4. What does “heavy” mean in the passage?

Our Five Senses

Passage 4 of 16

We learn about the world with our five senses. We see with our eyes. We hear with our ears. We smell with our nose and taste with our tongue. We feel things with our skin. When you eat a mango, you use many senses together. You see its colour and smell its sweet smell. You feel its soft skin and then you taste it. Our senses also help us stay safe, for example when we hear a horn or smell smoke.

WORDS TO KNOW

senses the ways we find out about the world

taste to know a food by your tongue

safe not in danger

1. Which part of the body do we hear with?

2. What do we feel things with?

3. How can our senses help us stay safe?

4. What does “safe” mean in the passage?

Crossing the Road

Passage 5 of 16

Roads are busy, so we must be careful. We hold a grown-up's hand when we cross. First, we stop at the edge of the road. We look right and left and listen for cars and buses. We cross only when the road is clear. If there is a zebra crossing, we use it. A traffic light has three colours. Red means stop. Green means go. We never run across the road.

WORDS TO KNOW

careful taking care so nothing bad happens

clear with nothing in the way

crossing a place where people can cross the road

1. Who holds our hand when we cross the road?

2. What does a red light mean?

3. Why do we look and listen before we cross?

4. What does "clear" mean in the passage?

A Morning at the Market

Passage 6 of 16

On Sunday, Asha went to the market with her father. The market was full of colours and sounds. A woman sold green beans and red tomatoes. A man called out, “Fresh bananas!” Asha’s father bought a bag of rice and some onions. Asha carried the light bag of beans. At the end, they bought two mangoes. She smiled all the way home.

WORDS TO KNOW

market a place where many people sell things

fresh newly picked or made

carried held something and took it somewhere

1. Who did Asha go to the market with?

2. What did Asha carry?

3. Why do you think Asha smiled on the way home?

4. What does “fresh” mean in the passage?

Day and Night

Passage 7 of 16

The Earth is like a big ball. It turns slowly, once every day. The side that faces the Sun has daylight. The other side is dark, so it is night. When our side turns towards the Sun again, the morning comes. It looks as if the Sun is moving across the sky, but it is the Earth that turns. This is why we have day and night.

WORDS TO KNOW

Earth the planet we live on

daylight the light of the Sun

faces is turned towards

1. How often does the Earth turn once?

2. What happens on the side that faces the Sun?

3. Why do we have day and night?

4. What does “faces” mean in the passage?

Helping at Home

Passage 8 of 16

Ravi likes to help at home. In the morning, he makes his bed. After lunch, he puts his plate in the sink. On Saturdays, he waters the plants with his mother. Last week, his grandmother was tired, so Ravi brought her a glass of water. She said, “Thank you, Ravi. You are a great help.” Ravi felt proud. Helping at home is not hard when everyone does a little.

WORDS TO KNOW

sink the place in a kitchen where we wash things

proud happy about something good you did

a great help very helpful

1. What does Ravi do in the morning?

2. Why did Ravi bring his grandmother a glass of water?

3. How did Ravi feel after his grandmother thanked him?

4. What does “proud” mean in the passage?

Healthy Food

Passage 9 of 16

Our bodies need food to grow and to play. Fruits and vegetables give us vitamins. Rice, rotis and other grains give us energy. Dal, eggs and milk help our bodies grow strong. It is good to eat many kinds of food, and many colours. Too many sweets and fried snacks are not good every day. We should also drink water. A good meal helps us feel full of energy.

WORDS TO KNOW

energy the power to move and work

vitamins things in food that keep the body healthy

grains seeds of plants like rice and wheat

1. What do rice and rotis give us?

2. Which foods help our bodies grow strong?

3. Why is it good to eat many kinds of food?

4. What does “energy” mean in the passage?

A Rainy Day

Passage 10 of 16

It was a rainy day. Dark clouds covered the sky, and the wind was cool. Meena looked out of the window. The road was wet, and the trees were dripping. Her brother opened his umbrella and ran to the bus stop. Meena stayed inside and drank hot tea. Later, the rain stopped, and a rainbow shone across the sky. She ran outside to see it.

WORDS TO KNOW

dripping falling in small drops

rainbow a curve of many colours in the sky

shone gave out light

1. What covered the sky?

2. Where did Meena's brother go?

3. What did Meena see when the rain stopped?

4. What does "dripping" mean in the passage?

The Moon

Passage 11 of 16

The Moon goes around the Earth. It does not make its own light. It shines because it reflects the light of the Sun. Some nights we see a thin curve, and some nights we see a full, round Moon. The shape seems to change because we see different parts of the lit side. It takes about a month to go through all its shapes. Look up on a clear night and see which shape the Moon has.

WORDS TO KNOW

reflect to send light back

curve a bent line

clear night a night with no clouds

1. What does the Moon go around?

2. Why does the Moon shine?

3. Why does the shape of the Moon seem to change?

4. What does “reflect” mean in the passage?

Animals at Night

Passage 12 of 16

When it is dark, many people go to sleep. But some animals wake up. An owl sleeps in the day and hunts at night. It has big eyes that help it see in the dark. Many bats also come out at night. They fly and look for insects to eat. Some bats find their food by listening to sounds that bounce back. Animals that wake up at night are called nocturnal.

WORDS TO KNOW

hunt to look for animals to eat

insects small animals with six legs, like ants and flies

nocturnal awake at night

1. When does an owl hunt?

2. What do many bats look for?

3. How does an owl see in the dark?

4. What does “nocturnal” mean in the passage?

A Bus Ride to School

Passage 13 of 16

Every morning, Karan takes the bus to school. He waits at the bus stop with his friends. When the bus comes, they stand in a line. Karan says, “Good morning,” to the driver. He finds a seat near the window and looks out. He sees shops, a temple and a big banyan tree. After twenty minutes, the bus stops at his school. Karan says, “Thank you,” and gets down carefully.

WORDS TO KNOW

driver the person who drives a vehicle

banyan a very big tree with many roots hanging down

carefully with care

1. Where does Karan wait for the bus?

2. What does Karan say to the driver?

3. What does Karan see from the window?

4. What does “carefully” mean in the passage?

Why We Need Sleep

Passage 14 of 16

When we sleep, our bodies rest. We stop playing and running, and we lie still. But the body is still busy. It grows and mends itself while we sleep. Our brain also gets some rest, so we can think well in the morning. Children need more sleep than grown-ups do. If we do not sleep enough, we feel tired and cross. A good night's sleep helps us learn and play the next day.

WORDS TO KNOW

rest to stop and be calm

mend to fix something that is hurt or broken

cross a little angry

1. What does the body do while we sleep?

2. Who needs more sleep, children or grown-ups?

3. What can happen if we do not sleep enough?

4. What does "cross" mean in the passage?

Keeping Our Classroom Clean

Passage 15 of 16

Class Five wanted a clean classroom. Every day, two children are the helpers. They wipe the board and sweep the floor. Everyone puts their waste in the dustbin. At the end of the day, the children arrange their chairs neatly. Last week, a visitor said, "What a tidy classroom!" The children felt happy. A clean room is nice to sit in, and it is easier to find things.

WORDS TO KNOW

tidy neat, with everything in its place

waste things we throw away

arrange to put in order

1. What do the helpers do?

2. Where does everyone put their waste?

3. Why is a clean room nice?

4. What does "tidy" mean in the passage?

How Birds Build Nests

Passage 16 of 16

Most birds build a nest before they lay eggs. They use twigs, grass, leaves and sometimes mud. Some birds weave soft grass into a small hanging basket. Others make a nest in a hole in a tree. The mother bird lays eggs in the nest. The parents keep the eggs warm until the baby birds hatch. Then they bring food to the babies every day until they can fly.

WORDS TO KNOW

nest a bird's home for its eggs

weave to cross strips over and under each other

hatch to come out of an egg

1. What do birds use to build nests?

2. What do the parents do with the eggs?

3. How long do the parents bring food to the babies?

4. What does "hatch" mean in the passage?

Answers

Passages 1 to 8

1. Why We Wash Our Hands

1. It washes many of them away.
2. Before we eat, after we use the toilet and after we play outside.
3. They are very small.
4. Not well.

2. How a Seed Grows

1. Water and some warmth.
2. The root.
3. They use sunlight to help the plant make its food.
4. Not fast, taking a long time.

3. Where Does Rain Come From?

1. The Sun.
2. A cloud.
3. Because the air is cold there and the water cools.
4. Weighing a lot.

4. Our Five Senses

1. Our ears.
2. Our skin.
3. We can hear a horn or smell smoke, which warns us of danger.
4. Not in danger.

5. Crossing the Road

1. A grown-up.
2. Stop.
3. To check that no cars or buses are coming.
4. With nothing in the way.

6. A Morning at the Market

1. Her father.
2. The light bag of beans.
3. She had a nice morning, and they had bought mangoes.
4. Newly picked or made.

7. Day and Night

1. Once every day.
2. It has daylight.
3. Because the Earth turns, so each side faces the Sun and then faces away.
4. Is turned towards.

8. Helping at Home

1. He makes his bed.
2. She was tired.
3. He felt proud.
4. Happy about something good you did.

Answers

Passages 9 to 16

9. Healthy Food

1. Energy.
2. Dal, eggs and milk.
3. Different foods give the body different things it needs.
4. The power to move and work.

10. A Rainy Day

1. Dark clouds.
2. To the bus stop.
3. A rainbow.
4. Falling in small drops.

11. The Moon

1. The Earth.
2. It reflects the light of the Sun.
3. Because we see different parts of its lit side.
4. To send light back.

12. Animals at Night

1. At night.
2. Insects to eat.
3. It has big eyes that help it see.
4. Awake at night.

13. A Bus Ride to School

1. At the bus stop.
2. “Good morning.”
3. Shops, a temple and a big banyan tree.
4. With care.

14. Why We Need Sleep

1. It rests, grows and mends itself.
2. Children.
3. We feel tired and cross.
4. A little angry.

15. Keeping Our Classroom Clean

1. They wipe the board and sweep the floor.
2. In the dustbin.
3. It is nice to sit in, and it is easier to find things.
4. Neat, with everything in its place.

16. How Birds Build Nests

1. Twigs, grass, leaves and sometimes mud.
2. They keep them warm until the babies hatch.
3. Every day, until the babies can fly.
4. To come out of an egg.