

## Aural Comprehension Tests

### Aural Comprehension Passages

(a)

Last year three friends of mine decided to spend a holiday in the mountains. They set off by car early in the morning and by the late afternoon they had almost reached the village where they were going to stay. After stopping for a quick cup of tea at a wayside café, they set off again along the winding road that led to the mountains. They had a map with them and according to this the village they were going to stay in was only about fifteen miles away.

It got dark not long after this, and it began to rain too, which of course made it more difficult to see the road clearly. After they had driven for about fifteen miles, there was still no sign of the village. Obviously the map they had was not a very good one.

They went on for another five miles and then the car suddenly stopped. At first my friend thought that they had run out of petrol but, on examination, they found that this was not the trouble. Something else was wrong with the car. Since they could not start the car again, they decided to spend the night in the car, though they had very little food with them and there was not much room for three people.

Early in the morning, a car came along the road. They stopped the driver and asked him where the village was. He told them that it was just on the other side of the hill. They tied their car to his and he pulled them to the top of the hill. After that their car ran all the way downhill to the village, where they found a hotel and had a good breakfast. Of course, if they had walked up the hill the night before, they would not have had to spend an uncomfortable night in the car. (After CPT)

1 Say whether the following statements are true or false.

- a They drove all day without stopping until the car broke down.
- b They forgot to take a map with them.
- c Their car did not stop because they had run out of petrol.
- d They spent a comfortable night in the car.
- e They had to push their car to the top of the hill.

2 Answer the following questions.

- a Where were they going to spend their holiday?

- b Why was it difficult to see the road?
- c What did they ask the driver of the passing car?
- d What did the driver tell them?
- e What was the first thing they did when they reached the village?

(b)

One cold winter afternoon, the postman was slowly pushing his bicycle up the hill that led out of the village. He was walking very carefully because there was a lot of ice on the ground. He had only one more letter to deliver: this was for an old lady who lived at the top of the hill. Everyone called her "grandmother". She had lived alone ever since her daughter had emigrated to Australia many years before. She always used to invite the postman in for a cup of tea whenever he took her a letter and tell him about her two grandchildren in Australia, whom she had never seen. Of course she had lots of photographs of them, which she used to show him.

Just as the postman approached her gate, a small boy came running down the hill. Suddenly the boy slipped on the icy road and fell. The postman let his bicycle fall and hurried across the road to help the boy. After a quick examination, he found that the boy had hurt his leg very badly. In fact he thought that the boy's leg might be broken. He knew that "grandmother" did not have a telephone, so he stopped a passing motorist and asked him to take the boy to Dr Stone, who lived in the village. Dr Stone had just retired, after returning from a voyage round the world, but he looked after the boy until they could get an ambulance to take him to hospital. (After CP6)

1 Say whether the following statements are true or false.

- a The postman had almost finished his day's work.
- b "Grandmother's" daughter was on holiday in Australia.
- c Her grandchildren often used to come to see her.
- d The postman soon found out that the boy had hurt his leg.
- e Dr Stone had never been abroad.

2 Answer the following questions.

- a Why was the postman walking up the hill carefully?
- b Where did "grandmother" live?
- c How many grandchildren did she have?
- d What did the postman do when the boy fell?
- e Why did the postman stop a passing motorist?

(c)

Shortly after the war, a friend of mine returned to England after working abroad for most of his life as a doctor. He decided to retire to the country, where he bought himself a small cottage. The cottage was in quite good condition, except for the roof, which leaked rather badly when it rained hard. But my friend, who had led an adventurous life, did not seem to mind that.

Not so long after he had moved in, one of his nephews came down to visit him, without even sending a letter to warn him that he was coming. As his nephew's car drew up outside his gate, my friend saw it from the kitchen window, and for a moment he wondered if he should pretend to be out. He had a good idea what his nephew wanted: he was going to try to borrow some money.

In spite of the fact that the cottage was not very comfortable, my friend's nephew decided to stay for two or three days. As they sat round the fire after supper, my friend told his nephew about some of the exciting adventures he had had abroad. He was just in the middle of one of his stories when there was a tremendous crash upstairs. They both rushed up to the bedroom, where a strange sight met their eyes: part of the ceiling had collapsed, falling right on to the bed where the young man was going to sleep.

After that my friend's nephew did not even want to stay the night, but his uncle persuaded him that it was quite safe to sleep downstairs. The young man went back to London in the morning, however, saying that he had to visit a sick relative.

(After CP10)

1 Say whether the following statements are true or false.

- a There was nothing wrong with the cottage except that the roof leaked.
- b The writer's friend knew that his nephew was coming to visit him.
- c He knew that his nephew wanted to borrow money.
- d They did not go to bed immediately after supper.
- e The nephew enjoyed having exciting adventures!

2 Answer the following questions.

- a What was the writer's friend doing before he returned to England?
- b Where was he when he saw his nephew's car draw up?
- c What was he doing when they heard the tremendous crash?
- d What did they discover when they opened the bedroom door?
- e What excuse did the young man make for going back to London?

the next morning?

(d)

One day Mr and Mrs Brown went up to London to do some shopping. They had a busy day, though in the end they did not buy very much, and by about four o'clock they were both looking forward to having a cup of tea. They found a restaurant but, just before they went in, Mrs Brown remembered that she had to buy some medicine for their son, who had a bad cough.

While she was in the chemist's, her husband noticed a bookshop on the other side of the street. He went across to have a look in the window and saw a copy of a novel written by an author who was famous in the last century. He had always been especially interested in this writer, so he went in and bought the book. His wife was waiting for him when he came out. He showed her the book, but she did not look at all pleased: she always used to say that the old books he bought made her house look dirty.

After they had had their cup of tea, they caught the train back to the seaside town where they lived. Much to their surprise, an ex-neighbour of theirs, whom they had not seen for years, got into the same compartment. They were both pleased to see him, after all these years, but, as they soon remembered, he was a great talker. If he got the opportunity, he would talk for hours. However, he happened to notice the book which Mr Brown had bought and he picked it up to examine the title. He opened the book and as he did so, his eyes lit up. He asked Mr Brown how much he had paid for it. Mrs Brown told him: only a few shillings. The man said he was very lucky: the book was a rare edition and was worth several pounds.

(After CPI3)

1 *Say whether the following statements are true or false.*

- a Mr and Mrs Brown bought a lot of things in London.
- b Mrs Brown did not like her husband to buy old books.
- c They got into the same compartment as an ex-neighbour.
- d Mr Brown showed his ex-neighbour the book he had bought.
- e The book was worth much more than Mr Brown had paid for it.

2 *Answer the following questions.*

- a Why did Mrs Brown go to the chemist's?
- b What did Mr Brown do while his wife was at the chemist's?
- c Why didn't Mrs Brown like old books?
- d What did they remember about their ex-neighbour?

e Why did the ex-neighbour say that Mr Brown was lucky?

(e)

It was Monday morning. Edna left home early that day because she was going to start work at an office in the city. She was only sixteen and this was her first job. There were a lot of people at the bus-stop and she nearly took a taxi which was passing; but afterwards she was glad that she waited for the bus. The traffic was so dense that even if she had taken a taxi, she would not have arrived much earlier. As it was, she was only a few minutes late.

She caught the lift up to the eighth floor and went along to the office where she had been interviewed by Mr Crump two weeks before. This was the man she was going to work for. She tapped on the door and waited, but there was no reply. Just then she heard the sound of someone's voice from the next office. She opened the door and looked in. There was Mr Crump, speaking to the people in the office in an angry voice. Then he turned round and left the room.

Later in the day, Edna found out what had happened. Apparently Mr Crump came to the office as a rule about nine-thirty, because he lived a long way out in the country and came up by train every day. That morning, however, he happened to catch an earlier train, and when he arrived in the office, not a single person was working. They were all standing around, smoking, chatting and telling jokes.

1 *Say whether the following statements are true or false.*

- a Edna had to take a taxi to the office.
- b There was a lot of traffic that morning.
- c There was somebody in Mr Crump's office.
- d Mr Crump did not live in London.
- e Mr Crump had arrived early that morning.

2 *Answer the following questions.*

- a Why was Edna glad that she did not take a taxi?
- b Who was Mr Crump?
- c Why did Edna open the door of the next office?
- d What time did Mr Crump usually arrive?
- e What did Mr Crump see when he arrived that morning?

(f)

I went to a meeting of our Literary Society last night. We had a most interesting speaker, a man by the name of Weston, who has written several books. He is in fact the person who was invited to address the society on the occasion of our fifth anniversary, but unfortunately he

was ill at the time. He had been overworking and as a result his doctor ordered him to take a complete rest for at least three months.

However, he was recovered from his illness now and last night he told us about his most recent work. It is a book about the famous traveller, Colonel Manning, who lived in India in the early part of this century. Weston said that for years he had been planning to write a book about Colonel Manning but, apart from a collection of letters and notes which the family had provided him with, he did not have much material.

Then one day he got a letter from one of Colonel Manning's nephews, saying that his uncle had kept a diary. Weston at once went round to see Manning's daughter to enquire about them. She was not aware that her father had kept a diary but she suggested that he should look in the attic, where some of his boxes were stored. One of these was locked, but Miss Manning managed, after searching through a number of drawers, to find the right key. When they opened the box, Weston was delighted to find a bundle of exercise books inside. They were the diaries he was looking for, and with the help of these he was able to write a very full account of Colonel Manning's life.

(After CP16)

1 *Say whether the following statements are true or false.*

- a Weston was not able to address the Literary Society on the occasion of its fifth anniversary.
- b Weston had been ill because he worked too hard.
- c Colonel Manning's family had given Weston enough material to write an account of their father's life.
- d Colonel Manning's daughter knew where her father's diaries were.
- e It took Colonel Manning's daughter a little time to find the key to the box.

2 *Answer the following questions.*

- a Why wasn't Weston able to address the Literary Society on the occasion of their fifth anniversary?
- b Who was Colonel Manning?
- c How did Weston come to hear about Colonel Manning's diaries?
- d What did they find inside the locked box?
- e How did the diaries help Weston?

(g)

For three days Inspector Robinson had been completely in the dark. A man had been found unconscious in the car park of the Swan Hotel. He had been robbed and his car had been stolen. The police had no idea of his identity until at last the man was able to tell them who he was and

what had happened. He was also able to give them a description of the man, which the police sent to all the newspapers.

The next day Inspector Robinson got a message to say that the man had been seen in a small seaside town. Inspector Robinson immediately went there. When he reached the police-station, the inspector in charge had a second message for him. The owner of a small restaurant on the seafront had just telephoned. According to him, a person like the wanted man was having dinner in his restaurant.

The police at once rushed round to the restaurant. Two policemen stayed outside the front entrance, while Inspector Robinson and another man entered through the kitchen. Very excited, the owner of the restaurant showed Inspector Robinson the man he had been watching. He was sitting at a corner table, reading a newspaper. Without doubt it was the right man.

Inspector Robinson did not want to disturb the other people in the restaurant. He let the man finish his meal. Then, as he left the restaurant, Inspector Robinson followed him into the street and arrested him.

1 *Say whether the following statements are true or false.*

- a The police had no idea at first who the unconscious man was.
- b The wanted man was soon seen.
- c All the four policemen went into the restaurant.
- d Inspector Robinson had a look at the man before he arrested him.
- e Inspector Robinson arrested the man in the restaurant.

2 *Answer the following questions.*

- a What had happened to the man in the car park?
- b How was the injured man able to help the police?
- c Why did the owner of the restaurant telephone the police?
- d What was the wanted man doing when Inspector Robinson saw him?
- e Why did Inspector Robinson let the man finish his meal?

(h)

It is a strange experience coming back to the place where you were born and brought up, after an absence of several years. This happened to me a few months ago when I decided to return to Dunley to take up the post of chief reporter on a newspaper there.

I got the job through the father of an old schoolfriend of mine. I met him at his son's wedding and when I finally decided to go back to Dunley, principally because I was tired of living in London, I wrote

to him in the hope that he might be able to put me in touch with people. By a strange coincidence he knew that the editor of the newspaper wanted a reporter. As it turned out, I was just the right person because I had had wide experience and at the same time I knew Dunley.

In a way, however, this was not true. I quickly discovered that I did not know the town at all well when I came to look for somewhere to live. Many parts of it had completely changed. Having to look for a flat helped me to rediscover it, for I had to search hard before I found what I wanted.

In the end I got the right sort of place: a flat in a large house in a very quiet street. It looked on to the park and I felt at once that this was just the place for me. Moreover, the rent was very moderate, so I took the flat without any hesitation. (After CP23)

1 *Say whether the following statements are true or false.*

- a The writer had not lived in Dunley for quite a long time.
- b He went back to work for the father of a schoolfriend.
- c He found that he still knew Dunley well.
- d It was not easy for him to find somewhere to live.
- e The flat he found was expensive.

2 *Answer the following questions.*

- a What job did the writer take up when he went back to Dunley?
- b Where did he meet his friend's father?
- c Why was he the right person for the job?
- d How did he get to know Dunley again?
- e What were the things that he liked about the flat?

(i)

When Tom decided to go on a holiday to England, he wrote to a friend of his who was living in London and asked if he could meet him at the airport. The friend wrote back to say that he would be there. So Tom was rather surprised when he reached the airport to find that his friend had not turned up.

He walked around for a short while and then, because he had a slight headache, went into the restaurant and had a cup of strong, black coffee. After that he felt much better. He bought a couple of magazines at the bookstall and went into the lounge to read them. He felt sure that his friend would come fairly soon, though he was beginning to get worried.

He had just started to read his magazine when his friend arrived, with a young lady. Tom's friend apologised for being late and explained what

had happened. Apparently he had arranged to meet the young lady at six o'clock, just outside the underground station not far from where he was living. The young lady, who had only travelled on the underground once before, had set out in good time but unfortunately she had got on a train going in the wrong direction. She travelled for several stops before she realised this, because the train was very crowded and she could not see the names of the stations. By the time she got to the right station, she was nearly three-quarters of an hour late. (After CP25)

1 *Say whether the following statements are true or false.*

- a Tom expected to find his friend waiting at the airport.
- b He went to look for his friend in the restaurant.
- c He went back to the restaurant to read his magazines.
- d Tom's friend lived near the underground station.
- e If the train had not been crowded, the young lady would have been able to see the names of the stations.

2 *Answer the following questions.*

- a Why did Tom write to his friend?
- b Why did he want a cup of black coffee?
- c What did Tom's friend do when he arrived?
- d Why was the young lady late?
- e At what time did the young lady reach the right station?

(j)

Henry's interview ought to have begun at eleven, but the librarian was on the phone when Henry was shown into his office. Henry sat down in one of the armchairs near the window and waited. It sounded as if this was a long distance call, because at times the librarian was having to shout to make himself heard, and he was beginning to get rather impatient.

Henry had come about a job in the reference library, for which he had seen an advertisement in the paper. At present he was working as a clerk in the accounts section of a big office, and he did not enjoy the work at all. He rather liked the idea of having a job in the reference library. He used to spend quite a lot of time there in the evenings, studying especially the books on photography, which was one of his hobbies.

While he was waiting for the librarian to finish his long distance call, Henry picked up one of the new books which were lying on a coffee table at his side. It was a book of adventure stories for boys. Henry

began to read one of them—a story about two boys who were cut off by the tide after spending the day on a deserted beach, and he had almost finished it by the time the librarian was ready to begin the interview.

(After CP27)

1 *Say whether the following statements are true or false.*

- a Henry's interview began punctually at eleven.
- b The librarian had to shout while he was speaking on the phone because there was a lot of noise outside.
- c Henry liked his present job.
- d He knew the reference library quite well already.
- e He sat and listened to the librarian's telephone conversation all the time.

2 *Answer the following questions.*

- a Why did Henry have to wait?
- b Why had Henry come to see the librarian?
- c How did he hear about the job in the reference library?
- d Where was Henry working at present?
- e What was the story which he read about?

## Dictation Passages

(a)

Of the four other people at our table, / two were men / and two were women. / One of the men was a doctor, / travelling round the world for the last time, / before he retired to a quiet country village. / The other man was an engineer, / with such a loud laugh / that I could hear it in my cabin, / which was next to his. / One of the women was a grandmother, / though she looked remarkably young, / She was on her way / to visit her daughter, / who had emigrated to Australia / several years before. / The other woman was going / to join her husband in India. / She only spoke / when she wanted to consult the doctor / about her children's ailments. (After CP3)

(b)

First of all I waded downstream / to the place where our boat was hidden / in the shelter of some overhanging bushes. / I then rowed the boat back / to the old bridge, / where the water was shallow. / and we loaded it / with the provisions for the expedition. / It took about half an hour. / Dawn was just breaking / as we set off down the river. / When we reached the forest / three hours later, / we decided to go ashore / to make some tea. / I tied the boat up, / while the other boys gathered wood. / Unluckily, / although they found plenty of sticks, / we could not light a fire after all, / because we had forgotten to bring any matches. (After CP4)

(c)

A young lady was waiting at the bus-stop / with her small suitcase beside her / on the pavement. / She kept glancing anxiously / at her watch. / Her train left at two-thirty / and it was already ten past two. / She did not want to miss her train, / so she decided to telephone for a taxi, / although the fare to the station / was more than she could afford. / She had already walked some distance / in the direction of a friend's house, / where there was a telephone, / when a bus came into sight. / She ran back at once / towards the bus-stop, / and managed to catch the bus, / which had stopped / to let some passengers get off. (After CP7)

(d)

One day when I got home, / tired after a morning's shopping, / I found I had lost my purse. / I at once retraced my steps / as far as the chemist's in the main road, / where I had bought some medicine, / but there was no sign of the purse / on the pavement. / Luckily, / there was not much money in it, / only some small change; / but it also contained / a photograph of my daughter, / taken when she was twelve years old, / which

I was very fond of / and always carried with me. / Later in the day, / I called at the police station / to enquire if the purse had been found. / I was pleased to learn / that someone had handed it in. / The sergeant had made a note / of the man's name and address, / so I was able to write / and thank him.

(After CP11)

(e)

I went last summer / to spend my holidays at the seaside. / Just before the train reached the station, / I took my suitcases / out of the compartment / and carried them / to the end of the corridor. / After I had done this, / I stood by the open window, / breathing in the fresh sea air. / Imagine my surprise / when a familiar voice greeted me. / It was my neighbour! / He was not only going for his holiday / to the same seaside town, / but also, / as I soon discovered, / had chosen the same hotel / to stay in. / It was a remarkable coincidence.

(After CP12)

(f)

In our grandfather's house, / there was an attic, / the door to which was always kept locked. / One day, / however, / my sister found the key in a drawer, / so with great excitement / we set off up the stairs / to explore the locked room. / When we managed to open the door / we could see nothing at first. / Then I noticed a small window, / high up in the roof. / It was dirty, / so that hardly any light came through. / I climbed on to a box / and pushed it open, / thus letting in more light. / But we found nothing of interest; / even the large box / which was I standing on / contained only old papers.

(After CP15)

(g)

As I was walking along the road / the other day / my curiosity was aroused / by a small crowd which had gathered / around the entrance to the park. / On crossing the road, / I discovered that the centre of attraction / was an old man / with a performing monkey. / The monkey's tricks / were quite remarkable, / so that in a short time / the hat which the old man had placed on the pavement / was half filled with coins, / many of them silver. / It seemed to me an easy way / of making a good living.

(After CP17)

(h)

As soon as the ship began to turn round, / most of the passengers / left the dining-room / and rushed up on deck. / There they found / that a lifeboat had been lowered / into the sea. / An officer shouted an order / to the four sailors sitting at the oars / and they began to row / in the direction of the man / who had been seen / floating in the sea. / After what seemed an age, / they reached the man, / pulled him on board, / and rowed back to the ship. / The lifeboat was raised out of the water, / and the rescued man, / wrapped only in a blanket, / was carried to the

ship's hospital.

(After CP19)

(i)

The cry seemed to come from the trees / at the far end of my garden. / I stood by the window / and listened. / Again I heard the cry. / It sounded / as if someone was in trouble, / so I decided to go out / and have a look in the garden. / Since it was getting dark, / I took the torch / which we keep for going into the cellar, / where there is no electric light, / and with the help of this, / I examined the far end of the garden / and the lower branches of the trees. / But there was no sign of anybody. / In the end, / I came to the conclusion / that one of the boys / who lived in the neighbourhood / was playing a joke on me. (After CP21)

(j)

As Peter glanced down the newspaper / which he had bought from the station bookstall, / a notice in bold capital letters / caught his eye. / It gave the name and address / of an accommodation agency / which had flats and rooms to let. / After breakfast, / therefore, / he set out in search / of the agency. / He found it, / without much difficulty, / in a narrow street / just off the main road. / He explained to the woman at the desk / exactly what kind of room he wanted, / and for the small fee of five shillings / she gave him a list / of about half a dozen landladies / who had rooms to let. (After CP23)

(k)

I shall never forget the first time / I travelled by tube / in London. / I had to wait in a long queue / to get my ticket, / and when at last my turn came, / I had some difficulty / in pronouncing the name of the station / which I wanted to go to. / I got the right ticket in the end, / however, / and I also managed to find the right platform, / though I had to ask several people the way. The tram train emerged from the tunnel with a terrifying roar, / and I was swept on to the train / by people pushing from behind. / The train moved off / before I could get my breath back. / It was packed tight with people / and I could not even see the names of the stations / where we stopped. / Luckily, / I had counted the number of stops, / so I knew exactly / where to get off. (After CP24)

(l)

After lunch, / the two boys set off along the beach / which lay beyond the headland. / It was like discovering a new world. / They explored innumerable caves, / half expecting in each / to come across smugglers there. / They looked for fish / and other sea-creatures / in the small pools among the rocks. / They examined all the objects / which had been washed up by the tide / and lay upon the beach. / In this way / the afternoon passed quickly, / and the sun was already beginning to set / as they reluctantly decided / to make their way homewards. (After CP27)