

THE  HINDU

**STEP**



**LEARNER'S HANDBOOK**



**Grades 7 & 8**



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**STEP**

**ENGLISH  
OLYMPIAD**

**LEARNER'S HANDBOOK**



STEP (Standardised Test of English Proficiency) is a digital education startup, chartered by The Hindu Group. Our mission is to solve one of the most challenging problems of our time – closing India's skills gap. English language communication skills, in particular are a leading cause of unemployment and underemployment. STEP helps bridge the English skill gap by providing online tools to assess and improve their reading, writing, listening and speaking proficiency. STEP was publicly launched on Aug 15, 2016 with free assessment for reading, writing and listening skills. More than 400,000 users have already joined STEP to assess and improve their English proficiency.

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## ***Dear Parent,***

Congratulations! You have taken the right step to help your children benchmark their English to global standards.

Welcome to your guide to The Hindu STEP English Olympiad – India’s first and most comprehensive English Olympiad.

Research shows that children develop language in stages. Children at the same age often have very different levels of language ability. Even more importantly, children learn best when given challenging tasks near or just above their current ability level. While the content of each Olympiad test is different and finely graded, we have grouped examples from two years in this book so that students of varying ability across two grade levels can access both foundational and challenge materials. Students with advanced abilities will find some examples useful for review, as well as examples included from more difficult material to push them to explore further. Children at grade level, especially in the lower grade bound, will find material in their zone of proximal learning as well as useful preparation for further study.

The goal of these guides is to review, confirm, and challenge young learners across the range of language ability observed and benchmarked by our research with tens of thousands of Indian students.

## EXAM PREPARATION

Performance in exams to some extent depends on exam preparation. Preparing specifically for an exam includes familiarising yourself with the format of the exam. By taking practice tests, your child can get a feel for the test pattern and know what to expect, as well as how to manage their strengths and weaknesses towards success in the exam.

1. Log in to [www.steptest.in](http://www.steptest.in)
2. Click on Login at the top right corner of the site
3. Enter your email address, or registered phone number and your PIN
4. Click Submit
5. You will now be able to access the Olympiad test.

### Improving language skills

The Olympiad is a test of communicative language and focuses specifically on listening, reading and use of English. Your child can improve their performance in the Olympiad by building general reading and listening skills as well as the ability to use English effectively. We will look at each of these in detail.

## UNDERSTANDING LISTENING

Listening is the key to all effective communication. Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated, or important points lost.

Listening is an active process. Listening requires us to be able to grasp, understand and judge the meaning of information inputs. While hearing is a passive process and takes place automatically, listening is a conscious choice that demands your attention and concentration.

For students, good listening is extremely important. Listening is how you understand, learn and grow. Students are taught how to read and write in school, but often we don't teach how to 'listen', even though it is such an important thing.

The Olympiad focuses on this skill from an early age as it is proven that children who begin learning language skills young achieve higher levels of proficiency.

## WHAT ARE LISTENING SUB-SKILLS?

Listening is one of the four language macro skills (the others are reading, speaking and writing). The language skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading are often divided into sub-skills, which are specific behaviours that language users do in order to be effective in each of the skills.

It's important to understand that in real life there's no such thing as just 'listening' or 'reading'. In fact, there are several different kinds of listening, which we call sub-skills. There are several categories of sub-skills for listening such as *deducing meaning from context*, *inferring attitude and feeling*, *predicting etc.* Let's look at some of the basic listening sub-skills which young children can easily develop:

- **Listening for gist:** This is when we listen to something to get a general idea of what it's about, of what's being said. We don't want or need to understand every word, just the main idea. Example: listening to a summary of the day's news on the radio.
- **Listening for specific information:** This is when we listen to something because we want to discover a piece of information. We know in advance what we're hoping to find out. We can ignore other information which doesn't interest us. Example: listening to a weather report to find out about the weather in your city.
- **Listening in detail:** This is when we listen we listen very closely, paying attention to all the words and trying to understand as much information as possible. Example: listening to directions when driving.

To get a better understanding about these, think about these listening situations.

Situation	Listening sub-skill	Reasons
You're at the airport, listening for information about your flight.	Listening for specific information, then listening in detail	You're only interested in your own flight. Then, when your flight is mentioned, you listen carefully for information about the boarding gate, possible delays, etc.
You're driving to a place you are unfamiliar with. You are using Google maps to help direct you.	Listening in detail	You can't afford to miss any of the information given as every detail i.e. road, landmark etc. are important to you.
Your friend has already watched a movie and is giving you a review on it. Based on what your friend says you will decide whether to watch it or not.	Listening for gist	Here you only need to understand the core or the essence of what your friend is saying in order to make a decision.

*Note: More than one reason may be possible. Sometimes different people might listen in different ways, or they might start listening using one sub-skill and then switch to another.*

## Which listening sub-skills are tested in the Olympiad?

The primary listening sub-skills tested include *listening for specific information, listening for detailed meaning and listening for opinion/feelings/attitude.*

## How can I support my child's listening skills?

To support the development of your child's listening skills, you need to give them opportunities to practice 'active listening'. Active listening is hearing information, processing it, and then doing something about it, for example, answering a question.

In the Olympiad test, students need to listen to information, process it, and perform an action (i.e. complete a question) based on what they have heard and processed.

Let's look at each of the sub-skills covered in the Olympiad tests and some simple activities that can be done to develop each of these sub-skills.

## Listening for specific information

Specific information is often factual in nature, for example, a name, a place, a profession, an object, a number or a quantity. When you listen for specific information, you need to have some idea of what you're listening for before you listen and while you're listening. In an exam situation, children will need to predict and anticipate the kind of information that will answer the question, while also being aware that the idea that they are listening for could be expressed in the recording in a number of different ways.

Given below is an example of an Olympiad question which focuses on the sub-skill listening for specific information.

Please read the script below aloud to your learner and ask them to answer the question.

*Girl : Hi Cam, did you get the football game you wanted?*

*Boy : It isn't available yet. I found a good skiing one but it was too expensive.*

Girl : *And I suppose you didn't take my advice and buy the one that would help you with your science course.*

Boy : *Well, I did in fact. It was only £7.50p so I still got enough to buy the football game.*

### 1. What computer game has the boy just bought?

		
A	B	C

### Listening in detail

Listening in detail is the ability to listen with attention to all the details. In this listening situation, the emphasis is on the various elements of what is heard and not just facts.

Given below is an example of an Olympiad question which focuses on the sub-skill listening in details. Please read the script below aloud to your learner and ask them to answer the questions.

*Lucy – Today as part of our series of programmes about things to do at the weekend, I want to tell you about my recent trip on a balloon. I arrived at the take-off site at about a quarter past 5 on a cool misty morning. Our balloon had to take off early at 6 because after 7 o'clock the sun would be too hot. It took about three quarters of an hour to get ready and that was quite hard work. When the balloon was full of air, our pilot asked me to get into the basket with two other people, Suzanna and her husband Steve. Suzanna looked a bit frightened at first, but I thought that everything looked fine and couldn't wait to get started. Steve had been on trips like this before and wasn't at all worried. In fact he was quite proud of the fact that this was his 10th trip. Our pilot was called Pete. There aren't many rules about going up in a balloon. Pete told us not to touch the red rope and that was all he said we needed to know.*

*He also told us that he really enjoys taking people up in the balloon and that it's possible to get a pilot's license in two months if you work hard. We had a map but we just had to go where the wind took us. The map did help us though because it was easy to see where we were. Luckily there were no clouds in the sky. We wanted to go towards the nearest big city. But instead found ourselves flying over an airport. Pete wasn't worried, he'd flown over it once before and he'd had to land there in a hurry. We passed the airport safely and sometime later landed in a field. The farmer was waiting for us. He said our noisy arrival had interrupted his sleep. He also told us that once a balloon had landed in his field, injured one of his cows and knocked over a fence. Fortunately, the people in the balloon had paid for the damage.*

**1. The balloon left at**

- a. 5.15
- b. 6.00
- c. 7.00

**2. How did Lucy feel when she got into the balloon basket?**

- a. afraid
- b. excited
- c. proud

**Listening for opinion, attitude and feeling**

Listening for opinion, attitude and feeling is the ability to listen to understand the speaker's opinion, attitude and feelings both through what is explicitly said as well as that which is implied.

Given below is an example of an Olympiad question which focuses on the sub-skill of listening for opinion, attitude and feeling.

**Refer to the Lucy's Balloon trip passage in the previous section**

**1. What does Lucy tell us about the pilot?**

- a. He got his pilot's licence two months ago.
- b. He often breaks the rules.
- c. He likes taking passengers in the balloon.

## Developing Good Listening Habits

Developing the active listening habit is simple. You can do this with your child while listening to the radio or watching TV. Here are some ideas on how this could be done:

- **Listening:** Ask your child to listen to advertisements, news announcements, or an interview or conversation between people on the TV or radio. If on the TV, ask them not to look at the screen so that they only hear the audio.
- **Post-listening activity:** Once your child listens to any of the above, ask him/her questions which focus on:
  - *Listening for specific information:* You can do this by asking direct and indirect questions about a name, a place, a profession, an object, a number or a quantity mentioned in what they heard. For example, “What was the price of the product in the advertisement?”, or, “What was the occupation of the person being interviewed?”
  - *Listening in detail:* You can do this by asking probing questions about some of the details from the audio such as descriptions, narration of incidents etc. For example, “How did the sports person react to getting a gold medal match at the Olympics? What happened during the match?”
  - *Listening for opinion, feelings and attitude:* You can do this by asking probing questions about what the speaker feels and thinks about various aspects of what is being spoken about. For example, “How did the teacher feel about the new system? What does the chef think about the new equipment?”

Let’s see a real example. Suppose you and your child hear a talk such as:

*To understand the best diet, I did extensive research on the various thoughts behind the various diets.*

*Researchers investigated eating patterns of over 2500 adults between the ages of 70 and 79 over a ten-year period and found that certain diets were associated with reduced mortality.*

*By determining the consumption frequency of 108 different food items, researchers were able to group the participants into six different groups as per their food choices - healthy foods, high-fat dairy products, meat, fried foods, and alcohol, breakfast cereal, refined grains and sweets and desserts.*

*'Healthy foods' group ate more low-fat dairy products, fruit, whole grains, poultry, fish, and vegetables, and lower consumption of meat, fried foods, sweets, high-calorie drinks, and added fat. 'High-fat dairy products' group had higher intake of foods such as ice cream, cheese, and 2 per cent and whole milk and yoghurt, and lower intake of poultry, low-fat dairy products, rice, and pasta.*

*End results indicated that 'High-fat dairy products' group had a 40 per cent higher risk of mortality than the Healthy foods cluster and the 'Sweets and desserts' group had a 37 per cent higher risk.*

*The verdicts from research such as this vary and this adds to the confusion of what we can and can't eat. There is no consistency in good dietary practices over the years and what is beneficial in one era is proven detrimental in the next. This lack of clarity is what throws the common man off track.*

You can ask different post-listening questions to focus on the different subskills.

For listening for specific information, you could ask:

- 1. How long was the research conducted for?**
- 2. What were the six different food groups?**

For listening in detail, you could ask:

- 1. What kinds of food were included in the healthy foods group?**
- 2. What kinds of food were included in the high-fat dairy products?**

For listening for opinion, feelings and attitude, you could ask:

- 1. What does the writer feel about the dietary advice in general?**

## What else can I do to improve my child's listening on the Olympiad?

The Olympiad is a test of real-life listening skills and as your child's listening skills improve so will their performance in the tests. However, in order to prepare your child for the exam, you could familiarise your child with the Olympiad test format. The best way to do so is by using the practice test papers provided.

The question format or task types used in the Olympiad are quite unusual and it may be useful to ensure that they understand each task type.

Here are some of the task types that your child may encounter in the Listening portion of the test:

### Comprehension With Pictures

In the listening part of the Olympiad test, your child will listen to a series of short neutral or informal dialogues. For each of the dialogues, there will be one question to be answered. The question is a 3-option multiple choice where each answer option will be a picture.

Please find below a sample of this type of question.

Please read the script below aloud to your learner and ask them to answer the question.

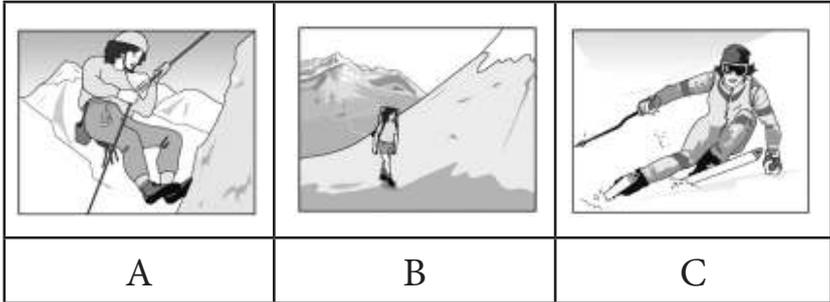
*Man : Have you got any plans for the weekend?*

*Woman : Yes, I'm staying in the mountains. Two nights at the White Peak Hotel. It's the same place I stayed at the last time I went skiing. I'm going on a special walking weekend.*

*Man : Hmmm interesting. Actually there's a good climbing centre near there. I've never used it myself, maybe you could try it out this weekend.*

*Woman : Thanks, but I'll keep both feet on the ground*

**1. What does the woman plan to do in the mountains?**



**Longer Monologue**

In the listening part of the Olympiad test, your child will listen to a longer monologue or interview (with one main speaker) and answer 3-option multiple-choice items.

Please find below a sample of this type of question. Please read the script below aloud to your learner and ask them to answer the question.

**1. When they were in the air, they:**

- a. used a map to check their position.
- b. went over a large city.
- c. couldn't see because of the clouds.

**UNDERSTANDING READING**

Reading refers to the ability to understand written text. The development of reading skills is vital to children's development.

When we comprehend or understand written text, and combine our understanding with prior knowledge, we can identify simple facts presented in written text (literal comprehension), make judgments about the written text's content (evaluative comprehension) and connect the text to other written passages and situations (inferential comprehension).

It is advisable to develop reading fluency at an early age as this skill has implications both on performance in academics and later in the workplace.

## What are Reading sub-skills?

As with listening, reading is also one of the four language macro skills which are often divided into sub-skills, which are specific behaviours that language users do in order to be effective in each of the skills.

Becoming a proficient reader requires mastery of several skills that need to be applied simultaneously. Obviously, this doesn't happen overnight. These basic skills should be learned first in isolation. As readers become more adept at each one, they can progress and combine skills until they can read independently with full comprehension of what they read.

There are several categorization of sub-skills such as *reading for detail, deducing meaning from context, note-taking, skimming, proofreading, editing, reading for gist, global understanding, inferring attitude, feeling, mood predicting, scanning etc.* Let's look at some of the basic reading sub-skills which young people can easily develop:

- **Reading for main meaning:** This represents reading for the essential point that the author is trying to convey. The main idea is usually reinforced by a series of other points or details which support the premise of the main idea. These are called supporting ideas and may also be stated or implied.
- **Skimming/reading for gist:** Skimming is reading a text quickly to get a general idea of meaning. Skimming is a specific reading skill which is common in reading newspapers, messages and e-mails, the key factor being that there is no need to read every word while skimming, as long as the general idea is understood.
- **Scanning/reading for specific information:** Reading in order to find specific information, e.g. figures or names. When we read a train timetable, we would use this subskill as we look for specific information like times and places.
- **Reading to understand attitude, opinion and purpose:** This is the ability to pick up the nuances and understand why the writer is writing what he is writing and what the writer feels about the topic he is writing about. When we read an editorial, we would use this subskill to understand what the writer is conveying often in a subtle way.

- *Inferring meaning:* This means either guessing the meaning of new vocabulary in a text or understanding meaning or a message in the text that is not immediately obvious.

To get a better understanding about these, think about the following reading situations:

Situation	Reading sub-skill	Reasons
You're at the bus stand, trying to determine if the 1A bus stops here	Reading for specific information	You're only interested in your bus.
You're reading an article about the Indian cricket team's performance in last night's T20	Skimming for gist	You're interested, but the exact number of runs scored is less important than the big ideas, such as "who one?" and "who played well?"
You're reading a movie review online that mentions that the Film Board may not allow the release because of 'excessive profanity'	Inferring meaning	You're not sure what 'excessive profanity' means, but you can make an educated guess based on the fact that the movie might not be allowed to be screened.

*Note: As with listening, more than one reason may be possible, and readers will switch between sub-skills as needed or desired.*

## **Which reading sub-skills are tested in the Olympiad?**

The primary reading sub-skills tested include reading for main meaning, reading for gist, reading for specific information, reading to understand attitude, opinion and writer purpose, and inferring meaning.

## **How can I support my child's reading skills?**

To support the development of your child's reading skills, you need to give them opportunities to practice reading. While students may be used to reading their regular textbooks, the Olympiad contains reading contexts that students may not be exposed to if their main text is their textbook. Exposure to real-life reading content will help in developing reading skills.

Let's look at some of the sub-skills covered in the Olympiad test and some simple activities that can be done to develop each of these sub-skills.

### **Reading for main meaning**

Reading for main meaning is simply understanding the main message from what you read. In most passages, an author will have a central idea or main point that they want to make. For example, a political poster may want to convey that this particular politician is trustworthy and not corrupt. The main point often appears near the beginning of a passage, and is the idea that is reinforced or supported by the other details in the body of text. When you're trying to read for main meaning, ask yourself, "what is the big idea?".

Given below is an example of an Olympiad question which focuses on the sub-skill of reading for main meaning. Ask your learner to read the passage and answer the questions.

Music teacher Sally Melliott has just got an extra job – as a singer in a musical. Sally, who is head of the music department at a local school, will be the main female singer in *Me and My Girl* at the Victoria Theatre.

Sally first thought about becoming a singer at the age of 14, after watching a singing competition on television. Before that, she says, she had no interest in singing but quite liked playing the piano. Her parents, who were not musical, took her to a teacher who said she had a good voice. This made Sally decide she wanted to go to a school where she could study both singing and piano.

Sally sang in operas while she was studying music at university, and passed several examinations in singing. When she left, though, her parents suggested she train as a teacher as well, and she agreed. 'At first it was because I wanted to be sure I would get a job, but once I started I realised I liked teaching very much, and I worked hard to get to the top.' Sally continues to enjoy her busy life of teaching and performing, and is currently working hard to make the musical a success, too.

1. What is the writer trying to do in the text?
  - a. provide information about a new musical
  - b. discuss a teacher's problems in having two jobs
  - c. describe the career of a part-time singer
  - d. explain how to become a successful singer
2. What can a reader find out from this text?
  - a. why Sally became a teacher
  - b. why Sally gave up singing in operas
  - c. why Sally's parents wanted her to be a singer
  - d. why Sally was chosen by the Victoria Theatre

## Reading for specific information

Whether listening or reading, specific information is typically factual, for example, a name, a place, a profession, an object, a number or a quantity. When you read for specific information, you should have some idea of what you're looking for before you read and while you're reading. In an exam situation, children will need to predict and anticipate the kind of information that will answer the question, while also being aware that information can be presented in a passage in a variety of different ways.

Given below is an example of an Olympiad question which focuses on the sub-skill reading for specific information.

*Refer to the Sally Mellott passage in the previous section.*

1. Why did Sally choose to study singing?
  - a. She sang well in a competition on TV.
  - b. She had become bored with the piano.
  - c. She was told she could sing well.
  - d. She went to a school that taught singing.

## Reading to understand attitude, opinion and purpose

Most writers have a point of view. This point of view or opinion informs how they write. For example, someone who is vegetarian will write a very different cookbook than someone who is not. However, the fact that the author is vegetarian may not be explicitly stated. Rather, the conclusion can be inferred from the fact that there are no meat recipes in the book. Understanding attitude, opinion, and purpose is a vital part of critically evaluating information, as the purpose and point of view also affect the way we respond to writing. This often means looking deeper than just the words, towards thinking about motivation and goals of the author.

Given below is an example of an Olympiad question which focuses on the sub-skill reading to understand attitude, opinion and writer purpose.

*Refer to the Sally Mellott passage in the previous section.*

1. How did Sally feel about training to become a teacher?
  - a. She wondered whether she would be successful.
  - b. She thought it would help her to find work.
  - c. She wasn't keen but her parents made her do it.
  - d. She was afraid she might have to give up singing.

### **Developing Good Reading Habits**

Developing good reading habits is simple. Encourage your child to read with you and to also read independently. You can do this by reading stories to your child at night, or by asking them to read along with you while you read a newspaper or magazine. Here are some ideas on how this could be done, noting that, as with active listening, all reading should be followed by questioning:

**Reading:** When choosing reading material, keep the following in mind:

- real life contexts e.g. such as interviews, songs, speeches etc.
- correct length and level for the students for e.g. if a speech, interview etc. is too long, shortening it will help make it the right level for students

The texts used in the Olympiad are mostly adapted from authentic reading texts. Therefore, in order to develop your child's reading skills in a real environment as well as to prepare them effectively for the Olympiad, you could use following kinds of texts for practice:

- notices and signs
- packaging information
- notes, emails, cards, text messages, postcards
- newspapers and magazines
- simplified encyclopedias and other non-fiction books
- brochures and leaflets
- websites

You can ask your child to read aloud road signs as you travel, or find details in advertisements you receive in the post.

**Post-reading activity:** Once your child reads any of the above, ask him/her questions which focus on the:

- specific information that they have read e.g. on numbers, names, places etc. from the text
- detailed information that they have read such as descriptions etc.
- understanding of the main message from what they read
- meaning that needs to be inferred from what they read

Let's see a real example. Suppose you and your child read this article together:

*Biswajit Ghosh sits in his dark, cramped little bookshop in College Street, worrying about the decline in the sale of books. On a hot summer afternoon, the shop wore a deserted look. Ghosh was constantly on the phone in an effort to secure an order of books published by him from a state education board. He had seen better days in the past. His shop, 'Indian Book Concern' — located in one corner of a dilapidated 200-year-old building — was set up by his family 70 years ago and is one of 103 bookstalls situated in the narrow Ramanath Majumdar Street in the College Street area.*

*"We have seen how books themselves have undergone a change in appearance but now we are at the juncture where we are facing a threat from online book-sellers," says Ghosh. His friend and fellow bookseller, Debobroto Som, joins the conversation. "The book trade today is not like what it was earlier. Today many big sellers are not able to sell enough from the counters and have been forced to enter into agreements with online companies," says Som. He owned a printing press, which he closed down last year. "There was a time, when I printed only books sold in my shop; but now that has become financially un-viable."*

*Both agree that, though the city's publishers and shopkeepers are feeling the heat due to the competition with online business, the situation for traditional booksellers in Kolkata is not as bad as in other metro cities.*

*Ghosh feels that the publishers of Kolkata and the readers are both “very conservative and still like to buy books from counters of book shops.”*

You can ask different post-reading questions to focus on the different subskills for e.g.

For reading for specific information, you could ask:

- 1. What is the name of Ghosh’s bookshop?**
- 2. How many book stalls are situated in Ramanath Majumdar St?**

For inferring meaning, you could ask:

- 1. According to Som, was printing books for his shop to sell a profitable venture?**
- 2. How has the online book business affected Kolkata’s book sellers?**

For understanding writer’s opinions, you could ask:

- 1. How does Ghosh feel about the situation of book publishers and sellers in Kolkata as opposed to other cities?**

## **What else can I do to improve my child’s reading on the Olympiad?**

The question format or task types used in the Olympiad are quite unusual and it may be useful to ensure that they understand the task types.

Here are some of the task types that your child may encounter in the Reading portion of the test:

### **Conversational language:**

The child is tested on their understanding of conversations and identifying appropriate responses. Candidates do a matching task with discrete 3-option multiple-choice items focusing on verbal exchange patterns.

1.	What did you do last night, Daisy?	a. I watched television b. I'm watching television c. I don't watch television
----	------------------------------------	--

**Comprehension:**

Your child is tested on reading for detailed comprehension including understanding attitude, opinion and writer purpose as well as reading for gist and global understanding. The child reads an adapted longer authentic text and then answers four-option multiple choice items.

Please find below a sample of this type of question.

Refer to the previous passage about Sally.

**1. How would the Victoria Theatre advertise Me and My Girl?**

a	VICTORIA THEATRE Famous opera star sings in our latest musical
c	VICTORIA THEATRE New opera performed by music school

b	VICTORIA THEATRE competition
d	VICTORIA THEATRE Local music teacher is star of new show

**Matching Texts And Descriptions**

In all probability, your child would not have encountered this task type and may find it unusual and challenging. It will be very beneficial to familiarize your child with this task type.

Your child will be tested for reading for specific information and detailed comprehension. They will need to read multiple texts and then match statements with the correct text.

### Fill in the blanks:

Your child may be more familiar with this task type. There are 2 variations of this type of question.

#### PNY EXPRESS

Before 1860 there was no quick way of getting mail between the east and the west of the

United States. There were no railways at that (1) \_\_\_\_\_ and most mail was sent by coach. It usually (2) \_\_\_\_\_ at least 25 days for coaches to (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the coast. So in 1860 it

(4) \_\_\_\_\_ decided to send mail by 'Pony Express', which was much faster. Riders (5) \_\_\_\_\_

very fast horses were placed along the route. They were at (6) \_\_\_\_\_ distances from each

other and the mail was handed from one rider to the next. Riders were all (7) \_\_\_\_\_ to travel between twenty and thirty kilometres (8) \_\_\_\_\_ day on very bad roads. At each stop two minutes were (9) \_\_\_\_\_ for exchanging the mail bags, but riders were often held up by awful weather (10) \_\_\_\_\_ closed the roads. With the invention of the telegraph in 1861, the demand for the Pony Express disappeared.

In the first type, your child will be tested on their understanding of vocabulary and grammar in a short text, and word patterns in the text. They will need to read an adapted-authentic text which is of factual or narrative nature and answer a four-option multiple-choice cloze items. Please find below a sample of this type of question.

1. a. time      b. date      c. age      d. season
2. a. spent      b. lasted      c. took      d. passed
3. a. get      b. arrive      c. come      d. reach

In the second type, your child will complete sentences with the connecting link of topic or story line by choosing from three-option multiple-choice cloze items. Please find below a sample of this type of question.

During the 1990s, Cirque grew quickly. It now does shows (5) .....over the world and the number of people working for it has grown from 73 to (6).....than 3,500.

The Cirque does not have any animals, but (7)..... is music and dance and each show tells a story. (8).....how, which is called Varian, is about a man who could fly. The show starts with him falling from the sky and tells the story of how he (9).....to learn to fly again.

- |            |         |          |
|------------|---------|----------|
| 5. a. in   | b. at   | c. all   |
| 6. a. up   | b. more | c. much  |
| 7. a. here | b. so   | c. there |

### A Final Note

Thank you for carefully reading this Olympiad guide. Remember, the best way to help your child prepare is to give them rich opportunities to read and listen. Encourage their reading with plenty of newspapers, books, and magazines in your house. Encourage their active listening by involving them in your conversations and (gently) quizzing them on their understanding. But most of all, keep in mind that the Olympiad should be a fun experience. No matter how your child performs, your Olympiad report will give you valuable insight into their current skills, and opportunity to compare their skills with children across India.

HAPPY TEST TAKING!

# LISTENING (Practice Test)

## Part 1 5 questions

You will hear people talking in different situations.

For each question, listen and choose the correct answer.

*(Instructor notes: Read the transcript aloud to your learner.)*

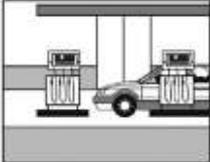
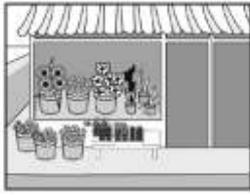
### 1. What will Ben do this evening?

Transcript:

Woman : *Hello Ben, would you like to come and play tennis this evening? You said you wanted to start playing.*

Ben : *I'd love to but I've got orchestra practice. I ought to do some research on the internet for an assignment, but I'll have to go. We're performing in a concert next week.*

### 2. Where will the woman go first?

		
A	B	C

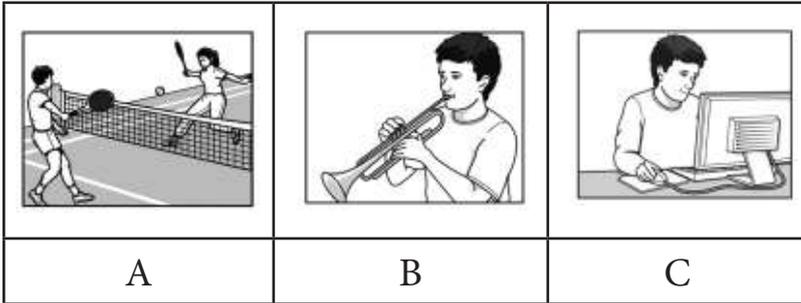
Transcript :

Woman : *John, I'm just going to collect Billy from his football match. I must leave now because I need to get some petrol on the way there.*

John : *Could you get some flowers for my mother's birthday while you're out?*

Woman : *I think you'll have to do that. I won't have time.*

**3. Which instrument does the girl play?**



Transcript :

*Girl : Hi Damien, how's the guitar going?*

*Damien : Great, thanks. I'm in a band now. We practice in my uncle's garage.*

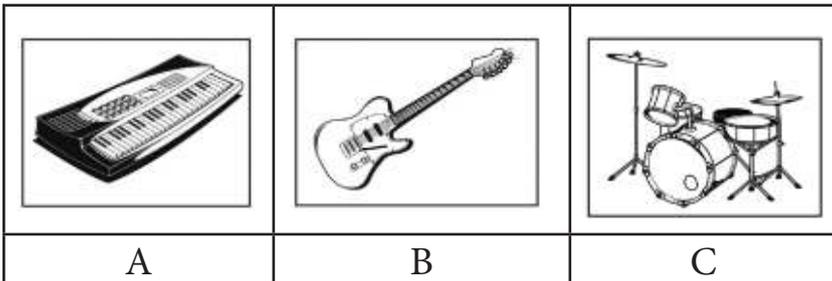
*Girl : Wow, you are lucky. I wish I could be in a band.*

*Damien : Well, we're not that good. In fact, the drummer's pretty awful and the other guitarist's broken his wrist and can't play at all. We could do with someone on keyboard to give us a fuller sound. You'd be great.*

*Girl : That'd be brilliant. So you're the lead guitarist then?*

*Damien : Yeah, the drummer writes the songs.*

*Girl : Okay*



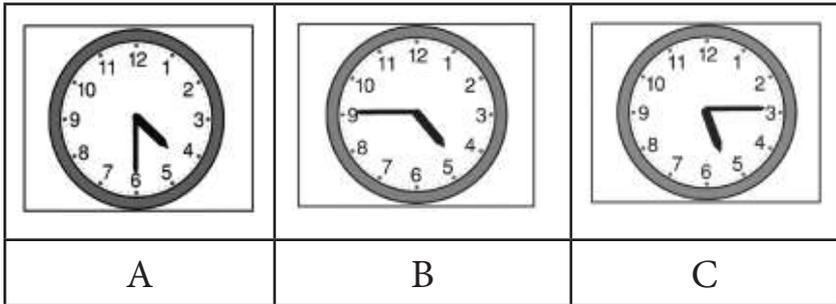
#### 4. What time is the dance class today?

Transcript:

Girl : *Hi Judy, do you want to play tennis after school? Say about 4:15?*

Judy : *That would be fun, but I've got a dance class. It's usually at a quarter past 5 but it's half an hour earlier this evening at a quarter to 5. It takes ages to get into my dance clothes, so I really don't think I'll have time today. Let's try tomorrow?*

Girl : *okay.*



#### 5. How are the couple travelling?

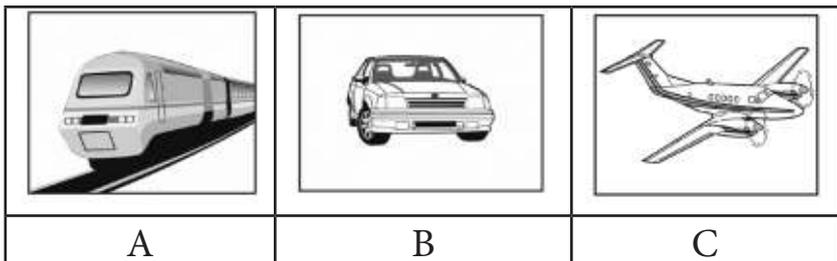
Transcript:

Man : *What a fantastic view?*

Woman : *Yes, it's great. Look down there, you can even see the train line running through the valley between the mountains.*

Man : *I know flying's quicker but there's so much more to see from here. Can we find somewhere to park soon to take some photos?*

Woman : *Of course, I'll stop at the very next place.*



## Part 2

# 5 questions

**(Instructor notes: Read the transcript aloud to your learner.)**

**Listen to an interview with a man called Jeffrey Martel, who works as a taster in a chocolate company.**

*Interviewer : I'm talking to Jeffery Martell, who works for a chocolate company as a professional taster. Can you tell us what your job involves Jeffery?*

*Jeffery : All food companies need professional tasters like me, to taste their food for quality and check that their products are the same from factory to factory. The consumer wants to know that a bar of their favourite chocolate bought today in Arizona tastes the same as the one they bought yesterday in New York. I don't tell them how to make the product better, that's someone else's job.*

*Interviewer : What qualities do professional tasters need to have?*

*Jeffery : Professionals need to be conscientious, they've got to be discerning people who take time over their food. Apart from the tongue and the mouth, they're using all their senses. They start by looking at the product, analysing its appearance before going on to the tasting. It's intensive work and generally tasters are only used for about an hour a day in total. You can't just sit down there and do it for four or five hours on end.*

*Interviewer : Tell me about your role in the development of a new chocolate bar.*

*Jeffery : Confectionery is a competitive industry. New products are coming out all the time and all the companies are looking to make theirs really special. But you need to be careful, because if there's a mistake with a new chocolate product, it's disastrous for the company. I'm conscious that my role is very responsible, that I am the one who should pick up signs of trouble when they first appear.*

*Interviewer : Are there any other tasters in your company apart from you?*

*Jeffery : At present I have two trainees who work in our new factory. I enjoy teaching them the skills. Both of them were born to be tasters but I'd take them gradually through the step involved in the job and tell them how to describe what they're experiencing. First they look at the product, then they smell it. About 80% of taste is smell. The freshest chocolates have the most intense, rich smells. Finally I tell them to close their eyes and take a bite. Moving the chocolate around their mouth because there are different taste buds in different areas of the mouth. They're very serious and will be excellent at the job.*

*Interviewer : Do you ever get people from outside the company to taste the chocolate?*

*Jeffery : Yes, it's not all down to me thank goodness. My knowledge of the company is useful but it's sometimes difficult for me to be objective. There's always a possibility that I'll judge the products too favourable. We ask members of the public to evaluate them because they can be depended on to tell the truth. And sometimes we get outside professional chocolate tasters in for an assessment. But not often because there's a lot of secrecy around new chocolate products.*

For each question, choose the correct answer.

**6. Jeffrey's job is to help the company**

- a. improve the flavour of its products
- b. respond to feedback from consumers
- c. guarantee that the products maintain their quality.

- 7. In Jeffrey's opinion, a good professional taster is someone who**
- a. is willing to work at any time of the day.
  - b. knows a lot about food preparation.
  - c. eats slowly and carefully.
- 8. What is Jeffrey's role in the development of a new chocolate bar?**
- a. recognising problems at an early stage
  - b. analysing the products of other companies
  - c. making sure it's different from all the others
- 9. What does Jeffrey say about the people he is training to be tasters?**
- a. They are learning the skills quickly.
  - b. They have a natural ability for the job.
  - c. They will be valuable assistants for him.
- 10. Jeffrey is glad that his company sometimes uses outside tasters because**
- a. they can be trusted to give an honest opinion.
  - b. he doesn't have time to do all the tests by himself.
  - c. it's useful to have people with experience in other fields.

# READING (Practice Test)

## Part 1 4 questions

For each question, read and choose the correct answer.

1.	She's asked me to go to the party.	a. Is it alright? b. I'll ask her. c. Has she really?
2.	How long are you here for?	a. Since last week. b. Till tomorrow. c. Ten days ago.
3.	I hope you have a great day windsurfing.	a. I'm sure I will. b. I think so. c. It's fine, thanks.
4.	That's my coat over there.	a. Will you take it off? b. No, you haven't! c. Here you are.

## Part 2

### 5 questions

Read the text.

For each question, choose the correct answer.

#### Zoë's Story

"I never believed we'd leave the city. But my mum was offered a job as a bank manager in a town five hundred kilometres away on the south coast. My dad had always wanted to live by the sea and so it was decided.

At first, I was excited about moving to the seaside but as departure day got nearer, the idea seemed less attractive. As we drove south, I cried and cried. I was leaving behind the first 14 years of my life.

I didn't like our new house and there weren't any neighbours of my age. The first day at my new school was like a bad dream. I had to stand up in front of the class and introduce myself, but no one could understand the way I spoke because of my northern accent. Luckily, there was another new girl in the class so we sat together. But it was more than a week before I had the courage to chat with the others.

It's been a difficult six months. At first, I argued even more than usual with my mum and dad, but it hasn't all been bad. They've learnt to trust me and they now give me much more independence than my old city friends have. I visited them during the holidays and I've made many new friends here. So, a part of me has really enjoyed this fresh start."

## Part 3

# 10 questions

Read the text.

For each space, choose the correct answer.

According to the article, which person:

10	is involved with the administrative side of the sport?	
11	admits that sometimes the experience is unpleasant?	
12	is still gaining the necessary skills?	
13	finds the sport as suitable for beginners as for experts?	
14	was introduced to the sport by another member of the family?	
15	wants to become an expert?	
16	is modest about their achievements in the sport?	
17	thinks bad conditions are part of the fun?	
18	found it boring to be just a spectator?	
19	says the scenery is an enjoyable part of the sport?	

### The Joys of Orienteering

Orienteering, in which competitors follow a course marked on a map, typically through woodland or rough countryside, helped only by their map and a compass, is becoming increasingly popular in Britain. Helen Pickles talks to four people out in the cold one Sunday morning to find out what they think about it.

<p>A. <b>Anna Peirce</b>, ten years old and out of breath, is lost. Admittedly her mother is standing only a metre away, but Anna has the map and her mother is refusing to help. 'If she is to learn to orienteer, she must do it herself,' she says. The Peirces took up orienteering three years ago at the suggestion of a friend. Now the family attends events each weekend, anything up to 150 kilometres away. 'It's such fun,' says Anna. 'Much better than being bored at home playing with other kids my age. Now I want to be as good as the top competitors.'</p>	<p>C. A year ago, <b>Julia Wigley</b> had no intention of orienteering - 'I'd never even heard of it' - when she began taking her 11-year-old daughter to local events. 'But I got fed up with simply watching,' she says. Now Julia enjoys getting wet and muddy as much as her daughter. 'We do the compass work together. It's fresh air, exercise and it takes more skill than just going for a Sunday morning walk,' gasps Julia as she runs under the finishing tape.</p>
<p>B. 'It is as much a competition against the course, yourself and your judgment, as it is against other people,' says <b>Jerry Newcombe</b>, vice-chairman of Southampton Orienteering Club and organiser of the course which is currently challenging Anna Peirce and her mother. 'The great thing about orienteering is that you can do it at any level. On the easiest routes, typically a couple of kilometres, the control points, where the organisers mark you off on their list as you go past, are often on paths and it can be a pleasant little walk. At the top level, around 10 to 12 kilometres, the course is hard and you've got to map-read on the run!' According to Jerry, family membership is the fastest growing area. 'Often the children learn at school and then persuade their parents to take them to events. Then mum and dad end up joining in.'</p>	<p>D. <b>Ian Diamond</b>, a tall, strong-looking professor at Southampton University, enjoys taking part in a sport in which a 50-year-old who is better at map-reading can beat a 21-year-old. 'It always amuses me that you get really fit people diving in and out of trees while you just keep jogging along and then end up beating them.' Ian is not really fair to himself. He does not jog, he runs, competing at the top level in events most weekends. He denies that it is a loner's sport. 'You always meet up with friends and get together afterwards for a chat and a drink.' He goes on, 'Sure, when it's pouring with rain and you're on a bare hillside and totally lost, you can get a bit miserable. But you just swear at yourself, tell yourself the map is right and go back to where you know your position. And this is such a beautiful forest, I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing on a Sunday.'</p>

## Part 4

### 5 questions

Read the text.

For each question, choose the correct answer.

#### Christopher Webb: a young writer

My writing career began with a visit to a library, a place I rarely go to. While I was there I read an exciting short story. I could see the characters and hear their words because I was so imaginative, so I started writing my own short stories. I realise now most of them were awful. I made the mistake of writing down some of the things I dreamt about. However, these stories always stopped after four or five pages, mainly because I had no idea what should happen next. I began writing the novels as a challenge for myself, but I never thought about becoming famous. I wrote the first at great speed; this was because I didn't want to find fault with my work. When I had completed it and read it through, I felt the story was fine, but there were some mistakes. My second novel took another year and I was sure I was developing my own individual style. I handed it over to my parents, as they are both writers. They suggested some changes but I didn't follow their advice. Later they were amazed at the success of both books.

I read reviews of my work, although sometimes I wish I hadn't, even when they're positive. Everyone thinks about your work in a slightly different way and what they say can upset you. Now I try to respect a range of opinions and learn from what people don't like about my work. To be a successful writer, you don't need to go to classes you just need to write every day, even if you don't have lots of brilliant ideas. And write about what excites you, otherwise you might not feel positive enough to keep going.

**20. Why has Christopher written this article?**

- a. to show how his writing skills have improved
- b. to advertise a creative writing class he goes to
- c. to explain why his books have been so successful
- d. to encourage more people to read his books

**21. Christopher says that when he first wrote short stories ?**

- a. he found it hard to make his stories exciting.
- b. he was unable to bring the stories to a conclusion.
- c. he was too influenced by stories he had read.
- d. he had difficulties imagining what the characters would say.

**22. What does Christopher say about writing his novels?**

- a. He wanted to prove something to himself.
- b. He failed to improve his written style.
- c. He needed more support from his family.
- d. He lacked confidence in his ability.

**23. What is Christopher's attitude to reviews of his work?**

- a. He feels that people don't really understand him.
- b. He believes the reviews are extremely unfair.
- c. He concentrates only on the positive aspects.
- d. He accepts that there may be value in them.

**24. What advice might Christopher give to someone trying to write?**

A

Regular visits to the library will help you write better and you should not focus too much on becoming well-known.

B

It's good to start by writing short stories about the things you have dreamt of, but write very slowly and carefully.

C

Don't listen too much to your family's opinions. Write about the things you love and they may be surprised by your success.

D

Try to write once a week and focus on writing imaginative adventure stories.



## ANSWER KEY

### LISTENING

- 1 B
- 2 A
- 3 A
- 4 B
- 5 B
- 6 C
- 7 C
- 8 A
- 9 B
- 10 A

### READING

- 1 C
- 2 B
- 3 A
- 4 C
- 5 D
- 6 B

- 7 A
- 8 C
- 9 B
- 10 B
- 11 D
- 12 A
- 13 B
- 14 C
- 15 A
- 16 D
- 17 C
- 18 C
- 19 D
- 20 A
- 21 B
- 22 A
- 23 D
- 24 C



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