

THE  HINDU

STEP



LEARNER'S HANDBOOK



Grades 9 & 10



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**ENGLISH
OLYMPIAD**

LEARNER'S HANDBOOK

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

Welcome to The Hindu STEP English Olympiad – India's first and most comprehensive English Olympiad. It tests reading, listening, grammar and vocabulary skills using best-in-class technology, content and testing techniques and helps lay the foundation for a successful career by instilling stellar communication skills.

STEP from The Hindu Group is an award-winning digital education start-up which helps Indians assess and improve their English proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking. The personalised learning courses make learning English fun and easy. That's why it's no surprise that STEP has put more than 400,000 users on the path to learning good English skills. STEP courses are available for individuals, schools, colleges and corporates.

CONTENTS

(i) Exam Preparation	-	3
(ii) Understanding Listening	-	3
(iii) Understanding Reading	-	14
(iv) Practice Tests	-	28





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
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 get 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 *what* 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.

Woman : Look, I'm sorry. I thought we'd agreed on this. That I'd take my holiday between the 9th of November and the 17th of December. I can't change that now. Why? Well because I'm getting a discount on the hotel room and I've had confirmation of this in writing. Plus the travel service agency has already arranged all my airfares.

But when I first mentioned these dates you had no objection. Oh, you know the office can't be left unattended. Well I'm sorry, I'll have to talk to the boss. We'll see what he makes of this. You hear a woman talking on the phone.

1. Who is she talking to?

- A. A travel agent
- B. A hotel employee
- C. A colleague

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 detail.

Listen to an interview with a young professional football star called Peter Brady. For each question, choose the correct answer.

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

Interviewer : My guest today is the young football star Peter Brady. Peter, your father was into football too wasn't he?

Peter : Oh yes. Dad enjoyed football although he never quite reached the professional standard. I went along to few of the games he played in when I was young but to be honest in those days although I understood the rules and everything, I didn't pay much attention. And so I don't have clear memories of seeing him in action. I was too busy playing with my younger brothers. It was only later that I got seriously interested in football myself.

Interviewer : Did your father encourage you to play football?

Peter : Well, not exactly. Although he had stopped playing, he was my trainer and he always focused on my strong points but I never felt there was pressure on me to take it up professionally. My father was a very realistic man. He knew how tough it was to succeed in the world of sport. I was playing for a village team, scoring lots of goals. One day a scout from a big city team near to where we lived came to watch me. And I was offered a contract. Actually, dad wasn't sure if it was the right thing to do but in the end I joined the city club.

Interviewer : So how did playing for that big city team affect your studies?

Peter : I still went to school every day but I had to rush home and then get into the city for training. It was a really demanding schedule. Often I didn't get home until nearly 10 and everyone thought my school work would suffer quite a lot, though I wasn't that bothered. And in fact, my grades weren't too bad. I realized quite quickly that I actually enjoyed having to deal with the demands of school and football. And I didn't feel put off of football career at all. If anything, I got a taste for it.

Interview : When you were 16 you went abroad because you got a contract to play for one of the biggest clubs in the world, was it a difficult decisions?

Peter : Well, I talked to a lot of people and not everyone was in favour. But I knew in my heart it was time to leave. I wasn't being stretched. My team was winning games easily and I was scoring goals every week. I didn't feel that I was developing much. I was a bit frustrated because I wanted to be playing at a higher level, testing myself against older and better players. I knew playing abroad would offer me what I was looking for but at the same time you don't take a decision like this lightly. I hadn't really ever thought I'd get a chance like that at my age.

Interviewer : How did you feel when you first arrived at your new club?

Peter : When I arrived my new team had just lost 6 games. I didn't think that I'd get into the first team quickly though cause as you'd expect everyone there was so talented. I never imagined I'd be selected for the first team within a few months of arriving. Normally young players don't get a chance until they're at least 22. I just assumed it'll be the same for me. Now I'm playing in the first team. My ambition is to stay there and keep on improving all aspects of my game. One day I'd like to play for my country.

1. What does Peter remember about watching his father play football?

- A. He wasn't impressed by his father's skills.
- B. He wasn't clear about the rules of the game.
- C. He didn't really concentrate on the matches.

2. When Peter started playing football more seriously, his father:

- A. wanted Peter to join a big club if possible.
- B. understood the difficulties Peter might face.
- C. was very critical of Peter's performances.

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 Peter's interview in the previous section.

1. When talking about his studies, Peter admits:

- A. he was disappointed by the results.
- B. he felt he was under quite a lot of stress.
- C. he had a fairly relaxed attitude towards them.

2. *How did Peter feel about going to play abroad?*

- A. He thought he might be a bit too young to do it.
- B. He realised that he needed a greater challenge.
- C. He knew he could do it if he had a lot of support.

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 bought?”

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

As you are hearing this, in all probability, the "Planet of Distractions" has started exercising full power and control over you! Signals from various social media applications have begun to entice one to answer instant messages, view video links, respond to friend requests and hit the like/dislike button at frequent intervals. It has become so natural to be drawn into this orbit that it seems odd if our daily existence is not frequently interrupted by updates. Recently, while attending a driver's education class, we were shown a video of the various ways in which gadgets distract drivers and how accidents (often fatal) occur while responding to text messages while driving. If we shift the scene from the road to the various ways in which we get distracted while performing different tasks, we can see the "invisible" accidents that occur as we allow these distractions to take control.

While this might seem obvious, many of us are caught in this net, completely unaware of how these distractions hamper the quality of attention. Many work spaces complain of employees spending long hours using the internet for their own personal communication. In work scenarios where, one must directly deal with the customer/client, this becomes more obvious. A friend who was speaking to a counsellor, trying to resolve a personal crisis, was shocked when the counsellor began texting and answering calls, amid a session. She walked out, outraged by the lack of professionalism. At the very core, people have a need to be heard, and when we plunge ourselves in our distractions, we lose a valuable connection.

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

For listening for specific information, you could ask:

- What class did the author attend recently?

for listening in detail, you could ask:

- Was the video shown at the driver's education class about?

for listening for inferred meaning, you could ask:

- What does the author mean by "invisible accidents"?

- Why did the author's friend walk out of the counsellor's office?

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

- What is the author's opinion on the social media applications?

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:

SHORT EXTRACTS

In the listening part of the Olympiad test, your child will listen to a series of short unrelated neutral or informal dialogues, of approximately 30 seconds each, from monologues or exchanges between interacting speakers. There is one multiple-choice question per text, each with discrete three-option multiple choice.

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 : I've never wanted to walk around with an enormous mobile because that's socially embarrassing, isn't it? So, I was really taken with the Edmundson GP876 model which you can just slip in your inside pocket and it says in the blurb "satisfaction guaranteed should your mobile develop a fault in the first year we will replace it the next day." Well, to be honest, it wasn't exactly what you would call cheap, so I'm hoping that I don't need to find out how good that particular promise is. You hear a man talking about a mobile phone he has bought.

1. What most attracted him to this phone?

- A. Its size
- B. Its reliability
- C. Its price

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.

Listen to an interview with a young professional football star called Peter Brady. For each question, choose the correct answer. Refer to the interview transcript in the previous section.

1. How did Peter feel about going to play abroad?

- A. He thought he might be a bit too young to do it.
- B. He realised that he needed a greater challenge.
- C. He knew he could do it if he had a lot of support.

2. What has impressed Peter since arriving at his new club?

- A. the attitude of the other players in the team
- B. the speed with which his career has developed
- C. the facilities his new club offers to young people

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 categories of sub-skills within reading such as *reading for detail, deducing meaning from context, note-taking, skimming, proofreading, editing, reading for gist, 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 writer 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 won?" 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. Ask your learner to read the passage and answer the questions.

Magazine Editors

Fancy editing a magazine? Read about four successful editors...

A. Barbara Green, editor of Children First I started Children First, an online magazine for children, after looking at what was on offer for that age range and realising there aren't a lot of magazines out there publishing authors under the age of 17. I wanted my magazine to give them a chance, along with established children's writers. The magazine has fiction as well as poems, crafts, puzzles and games. From the next issue we'll also have interviews with children's book authors, though it's a bit of a risk as I'm not convinced this will be a winner with most readers. For anybody out there who might be interested in writing for this magazine, we'd welcome new talent. And for anyone who wants to start an online magazine, I'd say first make sure you know exactly what you want to get across in your publication, and the type of readers you want to attract.

C. Mark Feldon, editor of Hot Tunes As a teenager, I was an avid reader of music magazines, and as I didn't seem to know what to do with my life, my mother said: 'Why don't you do something in magazines?' And so I did, though I almost dropped the whole idea when a teacher told me I didn't have the confidence to make it as a journalist. Editing this magazine is the peak of my career and it's satisfying to see that the teacher's assessment of my abilities was mistaken. Apart from the usual editing work, I travel a lot, which I'd rather do without, but it's essential to the magazine's international flavour. One of my biggest challenges is deciding what goes on the cover every month – if I don't do it well, the negative effect on sales can be dramatic.

B. Anna Black, editor of *Girl's World*. Rather than promoting an image of what girls are supposed to look like, which is what other magazines tend to do, we give them the message that they are all cool – no matter what their height, their shape and their hair colour. I like to keep on top of the latest trends, and being the mother of two teenage girls isn't enough, so we send out written questionnaires and ask our readers what's cool and what's not. We also look at other magazines and see what they are writing about, which is not to say we steal their ideas. Soon I'm going to be looking for young people with exciting new ideas, but for the moment we are not commissioning new writers.

D. Luke Chappell, editor of *Style Today* My first job was great – I was chosen to be the editor of the student paper at university – but it wasn't easy finding work as an editor after graduation. Eventually I got a job as assistant editor on *Radio Fans* magazine, which I mistakenly thought would be dull, but it was here I developed into somebody who takes pride in analysing every page in the magazine every closely. People are much more visually literate these days, so editing isn't just about having good writers, but about designing pages that will attract readers. In the past I'd paid little attention to how things looked, but it's so true that a well-designed magazine sells more easily.

Which person:

1.	<i>compares magazine readers now and in the past?</i> A. Barbara Green B. Mark Feldon C. Anna Black D. Luke Chappell
2.	<i>is uncertain about the success of a future magazine item?</i> A. Barbara Green B. Mark Feldon C. Anna Black D. Luke Chappell
3.	<i>is proud to have reached the highest point in their working life?</i> A. Barbara Green B. Mark Feldon C. Anna Black D. Luke Chappell

Reading to understand attitude, opinion and writer 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. Ask your learner to read the passage and answer the questions. Refer to the Sally Melliott 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.

2. 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 activity: 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 an article such as the one below together:

When I was a 5-year-old, my elders said their olden days were gold. Now my son who is 30 years old says the same. I always wonder why everyone's olden days are better than their present. Old music and songs were good. Old films were outstanding. Old clothing is of better quality. Old craftsmanship was worthier. Old silk sarees were good. In the olden days, food was of high standards. Old vessels and wares were of high quality.

Old teachers were excellent. Old schools were better centres of learning. Old furniture pieces were more appealing. Old houses were user-friendly, airy and well ventilated. Old games with minimum but crude gadgets were more enchanting. The old All India Radio entertained us all with high quality programmes. Old friendships were more reliable. Old wine was tasty. Old is, and was, really gold. But why?

Times are changing fast. Values are eroding. Goodness is replaced and it is now measured by smartness to get on with life. We have become excessively vigilant, touchy and more suspicious for no real reason. Today, we frisk everyone, inwardly at least. We take things with a pinch of salt. Though today's material comforts — that could not even be dreamt of a decade ago — are aplenty, still something is amiss about life. What is it? Peace? Happiness?

Peace prevailed earlier, despite wars. There was trust. There was hope. There was no clamour for things that one did not possess. The absence of those, that were not deemed essential to own, never made any difference to a happy life.

We all walked to school, miles away, barefoot in the scorching sun. We never felt the pain. There were tragedies in families. People took them in their stride. No one rushed to the media. The media were more responsible and mature. Silly stories were never entertained. There was no sensationalism. Natural calamities did occur and sufferings were more severe. Yet people breathed easy. Even one-plus-one families are suffocating today. There were not many telephones. Mobiles were non-existent. Yet, people conversed joyously.

There was commitment in what one did those days.

There is commerce in everything we do today. Now there is Valentine's Day, sister's day, Father's Day, Mother's Day, friend's day, doctor's day, nurse's day, husband's day, wife's day, water day, sparrow's day, diabetes day, AIDS day, TB day and every other day. Then there were only Mondays, Tuesdays and so on. Forget the past, someone said. Why should one? Is it because the present is unbearable that the mind should not be tortured with the glory of the past? It is said not for nothing that old is gold.

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

For reading for gist, you could ask:

1. *If you had to give a title for this article, what would it be?*

For reading for detail, you could ask:

1. *What provided high quality entertainment in the past?*

2. *What occasions are celebrated today that were not celebrated in the past?*

For understanding writer's opinion, you could ask:

1. *What is the author trying to do in this poem?*

2. *What is the author's tone in the passage?*

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.

Please find below a sample of this type of question.

1. *Whose phone is that?*

- A. It's not there
- B. Wasn't it?
- C. I'm not sure

COMPREHENSION:

Your child will be 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. Ask your learner to read the passage and answer the questions. Refer to the Sally Melliott passage in the previous section.

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

MATCHING TEXTS AND DESCRIPTION

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 familiarise 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.

Given below is an example of an Olympiad question which focuses on this type of task. Ask your learner to read the passages and answer the questions. Refer to the passage on Magazine Editing in the previous section.

Which person:

1.	<i>is proud to have reached the highest point in their working life?</i> A. Barbara Green B. Mark Feldon C. Anna Black D. Luke Chappell
2.	<i>mentions a part of the job they would prefer to avoid?</i> A. Barbara Green B. Mark Feldon C. Anna Black D. Luke Chappell

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

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

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 four-option multiple-choice cloze items. Please find below a sample of this type of question.

Read the text.

For each space, choose the correct answer.

Backpack Adventures

Backpack Adventures is owned and (6) by experienced travellers who have a real interest (7) the world around us. It specialises in adventure tours to places which are little known.

Travelling in small groups means that it is possible to use local transport like canoes, horses and elephants, and this (8) to the enjoyment of the trip. Accommodation (9) usually be in the local style too: 'Bedouin' tents in the Sahara desert or traditional 'longhouses' in Borneo. Trips (10) from one to three weeks and all groups are accompanied.

- 6 A. handled B. done C. worked D. fun
7 A. at B. In C. on D. for
8 A. adds B. builds C. rises D. increase

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.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

The circus, Cirque du Soleil, began in Montreal, Canada. It was started (1) _____ the Canadian Guy Laliberte in 1984. When he left college, Laliberte travelled around Europe and earned money (2) _____ music in the streets. Not long after he returned home, he started Cirque with (3) _____ friend, Daniel Gauthier.

1. A. from B. by C. of
2. A. played B. plays C. playing
3. A. their B. his C. its

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!

READING

Part 1 5 questions

Listen to a radio interview with a woman disc jockey called Hillary Cotton.

For each question, choose the correct answer.

Read the transcript aloud to your learner.

Listen to a radio interview with a woman disc jockey named Hillary Cotton.

Interviewer : And today I'm talking to Hillary Cotton, a disc jockey with a national radio station. Hillary, tell us all about your work. How did you first start?

Hillary : I dreamed about being a disc jockey when I was at school. And when I left and went to university, I was given the chance to work on student radio as a disc jockey. Several years later I was asked to work the hospital radio, playing music for the patients and I really enjoyed it.

Interviewer : And did you move on to local radio?

Hillary : Yes, in my home town. I enjoyed it very much but after a while our new director discovered that two of the other disc jockey's programmes weren't getting many listeners. So he changed the timetable. I had a good working relationship with him but I didn't want to start early in the morning, which is what he'd suggested.

Interviewer : And you decided to move again to national radio?

Hillary : That's right, by then I felt I got all I could from the job I was in. So it was time to learn more and I moved on to a new challenge. Of course the increase in salary was nice too, but I was sad to leave my home and all my friends.

Interviewer : And do you enjoy your present job on national radio?

Hillary : Yes, it's an afternoon show which is better for me. Although I'd really prefer to work on an evening programme. I don't hear from my listeners so much as I did at my old job. People often used to ring up to say they'd enjoyed the show but I do love working on the programme, as now I can play exactly the kind of music I like.

Interviewer : So what's next for you?

Hillary : Well, although I love working at the radio station, I'm the sort of person who doesn't stay in one thing for long. It would be good to move into TV. I've already had a part in a TV series. Really I'd love to be a presenter on a music programme on TV. I'm open to offers.

Interviewer : Well, Hillary thank you for talking to us.

1. Hillary first worked as a disc jockey:

- A. in a hospital.
- B. at university.
- C. at school.

2. Hillary says that at the local radio station, she:

- A. didn't get on with the new director.
- B. didn't attract enough listeners to her programme.
- C. didn't agree with the changes that were planned.

3. Why did Hilary go to work at national radio?

- A. She wanted to get more experience.
- B. She needed to earn more money.
- C. She was tired of living at home.

4. What does Hilary like about her current job?

- A. She knows listeners really enjoy her show.
- B. She can choose what music she plays.
- C. She finds working in the afternoons suits her best.

5. What would Hilary like to do next?

- A. Stay at the radio station.
- B. Develop her acting career.
- C. Work on a TV music show.

Part 2

5 questions

You will hear people talking in different situations.

For each question, listen and choose the correct answer. Read the scripts aloud to your learner.

6. You hear a teacher talking to a group of students. What is he talking about?

Teacher : I'd like to say thanks to all the science classes who helped with the survey and removal of marine litter at the beach last weekend. As you know plastic is a nightmare for the marine environment. The power of the sea will constantly break it down into smaller pieces, which means each year the amount found on beaches is growing. This litter typically includes things such as drinks

bottle caps and snack wrappers. Even less common sights such as lost toys. We filled 18 bags of litter with plastic accounting for an astonishing 70% of the item removed. That's nearly 2000 pieces of plastic litter ready for recycling.

- A. A trip to a recycling plant
- B. A clean-up operation
- C. A scientific experiment

7. You overhear a woman talking to a friend about running. Why does the woman continue to find running motivating?

Man : You look full of energy.

Woman : I feel great. I've just done an 8 kilo metre run. I'm really proud of myself because I started running only recently and I was hopeless at first, but I've never been tempted to give up. I mean, one day I'll take a track through the wood and the next day I'll go along the river. I can decide there and then on the spot. I'm going on a Fun Run next month and I've persuaded some of my friends to do it too. So now they've got the bug. They're training too.

- A. It provides an outlet for surplus energy.
- B. There are many events she can enter.
- C. A fixed route is not required.

8. You hear a girl talking about going to a tennis match. What mistake did she make?

Girl : There's this international tennis event going on in my town. I couldn't get a ticket for the main match on Saturday, so I bought a ticket for one of the evening matches. I got to the sports centre early and sat in the café until the game was due to start. Then, I went to my seat except there

was a man sitting there. I argued with him and called one of the staff. She looked at my ticket and said "You've got the right seat number but it's for another court." I had to run but luckily that match started late, so I only missed the beginning.

- A. She went at the wrong time of day.
- B. She went on the wrong date.
- C. She went to the wrong place.

9. You hear a girl telling her friend about a new shopping centre. What does she say about it?

Girl : I went to NorthFields yesterday.

Boy : The new shopping centre?

Girl : Yeah, the outside's hardly impressive but inside is actually bigger than I thought.

Boy : Bigger doesn't necessarily mean better.

Girl : No but there's masses to do. All sorts of shops and plenty of places for people our age to hangout in. Me and Mum wandered around for hours. It's like a maze, you need maps to work out where you are.

Boy : Did you go on the bus?

Girl : Yeah, it's handy for public transport, though the area gets congested sometimes. We got held up on the way.

Boy : Well, it doesn't sound like my sort of thing.

- A. It can be difficult to get there.
- B. It's easy to find your way round.
- C. It's in a very attractive building.

10. You hear a man talking about his journey to work. How does he feel when he passes the lifeguards on the beach? Read this aloud to your learner.

Man : I live near the beach and every day I walk past the lifeguards sitting behind their windbreaks, chatting and laughing. They look so relaxed and I'm sure they don't get the boss ringing them at home demanding a report on something by 9 o'clock tomorrow morning. On summer days I forget that I'm actually not much of a swimmer and long to be on that beach with them. This year the water's been really warm here. We've had dolphins jumping a few metres from the beach. You don't get that in an insurance office.

- A. Irritated by their attitude to work
- B. Determined to go and work as one
- C. Envious of their working environment

Part 1

5 questions

READING

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.

11. 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

12. 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

13. 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

14. 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

15. What advice might Christopher give to someone trying to write?

A.



B.



C.



D.



Part 2

5 questions

Read the text.

For each space, choose the correct answer.

Crocodiles

All crocodiles live near water, whether it is a swamp or marshy area, lake or river, and they spend a considerable amount of their time there. All the same, on (6), crocodiles are able to move in a variety of ways. (7) being able to walk quite easily on their large flat feet, they can manage to run if necessary and sometimes slide on their stomachs. In the water, they are strong swimmers. They will often stay (8) still

in the water for long (9) with their bodies below the surface of the water. Only their nose, ears and eyes are visible, as these are all on top of the head. Although they need to breathe air, crocodiles have the ability to dive beneath the water and (10) there for some time.

- 16 A. earth B. ground C. beach D. land
 17. A. Also B. In addition C. Besides D. As well
 18 A. wholly B. highly C. fully D. perfectly
 19 A. times B. periods C. spaces D. terms
 20 A. keep B. remain C. last D. extend

Part 3

10 Questions

Read the text. For each question, choose the correct answer.

Which person:

21	is prevented from being arrogant by other people?	
22	doesn't like talking about their personal life?	
23	was determined to defeat a family member despite admiring them?	
24	recommends taking things slowly, to avoid getting injured?	
25	accepts the need to give up something for their sport?	
26	suggests setting challenges as a way of checking progress?	
27	believes you must never forget your good fortune?	
28	didn't mind the media interest after a successful competition?	
29	did not allow physical size to be a disadvantage?	
30	stresses the importance of having other interests?	

Sports winners

Four young sportspeople describe their early success and give advice to other teenage athletes.

A. Ben Maduiké – boxer

I wanted to start boxing from the time I watched videos of the famous boxer Muhammed Ali as a child. I thought he was amazing and I loved reading his autobiography. When I was older, the support from my teachers was brilliant. If I won a contest, I'd be praised by the school's headmaster and my classmates would say things like 'Yeah – go for it, Ben!' I also welcomed every single newspaper and TV interview after winning an important international competition. But although I've always been positive, I've never been over-confident. Fortunately, I've never really found that achieving success at such an early age has stopped other people from taking me seriously. If I ever step out of line or start to become big-headed, my parents are always there to remind me to keep my feet on the ground. I think success is something you really have to work at to achieve. My training routine is hard and for me the easiest path to failure would be losing focus. So, I have to be careful. I've always believed that if you work hard, you should treat yourself, and my passions are fast cars and posh watches. Juggling work and family commitments with cricket will be challenging but I'm sure I can do it.

B. Asmita Kapoor – cricketer

My parents say that even as a small girl, I always wanted to win against my brother at cricket. I really looked up to him, but when it came to cricket I was so competitive. I've also been very lucky with the cricket teams I've played with. It's been support and inspiration all the way! I started playing cricket competitively along with netball, hockey and tennis when I was eight, but not at school, because it was an all-girls one where they didn't play cricket. So, it had to be with the boys' teams, which was a really good thing in the end. It was hard sometimes though, especially when I wanted to stay out late with my friends on a Friday night, but couldn't because I had early training the next morning. But I've always understood how important that compromise was. It's essential to have things you enjoy outside your sport, otherwise it's easy to burn out. Women's cricket is semi-professional, so unfortunately I can't make a living from it and plan to do a science degree at university. But cricket has always been part of my long-term plan.

C . Ramona Vear – runner

At 10, my twin sister Kathryn and I joined an athletics club, and, by 15, we had won three gold medals between us – much to the amazement of my parents who don't have a sporty bone in their bodies! I realised I had a gift for running quite early on and, at 10, I told my mum I'd become an international sports champion! I hadn't done any real training up to then but, even so, was still faster than all the other girls who regularly did some running at the practice track. I can't say I have any particular sporting heroes and have tried to keep myself away from the celebrity lifestyle. My friends have had to be understanding and athletically minded themselves, because sport takes up so much of my time. My advice to other young runners is not to try to do too much too soon because this can lead to pulled muscles and so on. One way of feeling you're getting better is to establish a goal for yourself (however small) and, once you've achieved it, to decide on another.

D. Dylan Harrison – footballer

I was first spotted at my primary school by talentscouts when I was eight years old, and was one of the youngest people ever to play in a professional football league. My older brother Anthony was a footballer, and he used to let me play with him and his mates. I was comparatively small but I was driven to keep up. It taught me that it doesn't matter what problems you have to deal with; if you try and train hard enough you can succeed.

I'm not very vocal when it comes to myself and what I've achieved, and I tend to avoid the press, because I think it's what I do with the ball that counts. The greatest danger in this profession is that you can lose everything in a fraction of a second through a broken ankle or kneecap. So enjoy every minute and always bear in mind how lucky you are compared with others. For me, the greatest thing is being on the pitch with the most talented footballers in the world.

SECTION 4

Illustrator Joanne Carey talks to Michael Foreman, whose career as a children's illustrator spans over 40 years.

He's one of a handful of contemporary children's illustrators whose work, beyond the wit and warmth you'd expect, has real breadth and integrity. Combining watercolour with pastel, crayon, even oil paint, Foreman's illustrations create atmospheric shifts of mood and colour.

The key to his work is draughtsmanship. He makes few concessions to the very young. But his drawing is easy to read, and his line – usually soft pencil – has a subtle authority that delivers truckloads of information with eloquent economy. Meeting him, it's hard to believe that his career now spans more than forty years. But he had an early start, he tells me. He grew up in Suffolk, a rural area in eastern England, where his mother ran a village shop. As a teenager, he helped out after school by doing a newspaper delivery round in the village, even though he was never able to ride a bike. But it was doing the round on foot that brought him into contact with his mother's customers, one of whom was an art teacher who encouraged him to take up drawing in his free time.

Michael became obsessed with his new hobby, but never dreamed it could become 'a job' until he was invited to join a free Saturday art class in a nearby town. As he says, 'If I'd learnt to ride a bike as a child, I'd probably never have heard of an art school, let alone attended one.' In the event, he went on to study graphics at art college in London. 'Illustration as such wasn't taught in those days,' he explains, 'but I was lucky to have started at art school so young.' 'And luckier still,' he adds with some vehemence, 'that art colleges in those days involved a rigorous training – not just painting and drawing from life, but hours of anatomy and perspective – boring at the time, but you came away with a real understanding of what you were looking at. It's all changed now, of course, I've done a bit of teaching, but I gave up – I felt uneasy teaching illustration to people who had yet to learn to draw.'

With an astonishing number of publications to his name, Michael has illustrated everything from traditional stories to new fiction. 'I grew up

completely without books,' he explains. 'I never read any fairy tales or classics until I was an adult, all we ever had were comics... No television either,' he adds for good measure. 'If we wanted entertainment, we hung around the fish and chip shop,' he says. 'It was the only place that was lit up at night.' Coming late to literature meant that, as an illustrator, he could approach traditional works with a fresh eye, with none of the visual baggage that most of us carry from childhood. And does the work get easier? 'In many ways I keep making it more difficult for myself, trying to make things more real – not in a literal photographic sense, but in an emotional sense... telling a story by capturing the essence of the situation, giving it some meaning.'

Soft spoken, easygoing and straightforward, the only mystery about Michael Foreman is how he finds the time for such a colossal output with so many other commitments. 'No mystery,' says his wife Louise. 'It's a struggle to stop him working – even on public holidays.'

31. What makes Michael's illustrations of children's books so effective?

- A. His skill at drawing
- B. The materials he makes use of
- C. The age group he has in mind
- D. His sense of humour

32. What first led Michael to have an interest in drawing?

- A. The chance to attend art school
- B. His attempts to learn another skill
- C. His involvement in the family business
- D. Encouragement from a teacher at school

33. How does Michael view his art college training?

- A. He regrets its narrow focus
- B. He wishes he'd used his time better
- C. He thinks he'd enjoy it more now
- D. He appreciates its thoroughness

34. How did Michael's own childhood help him when he became a children's illustrator?

- A. He had been influenced by traditional stories
- B. It made him appreciate the value of books
- C. He had no preconceived ideas about the work
- D. It meant he regarded books as a form of entertainment

35. How can Michael's attitude towards his work best be described?

- A. He is dissatisfied with what he has achieved
- B. He believes in setting himself high standards
- C. He recognises that he needs to change direction
- D. He is conscious of trying to do too many things

ANSWER KEY

LISTENING

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

READING

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

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

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