

ELEMENTARY COMPREHENSION PIECES

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NAIROBI DAR ES SALAAM CAPE TOWN

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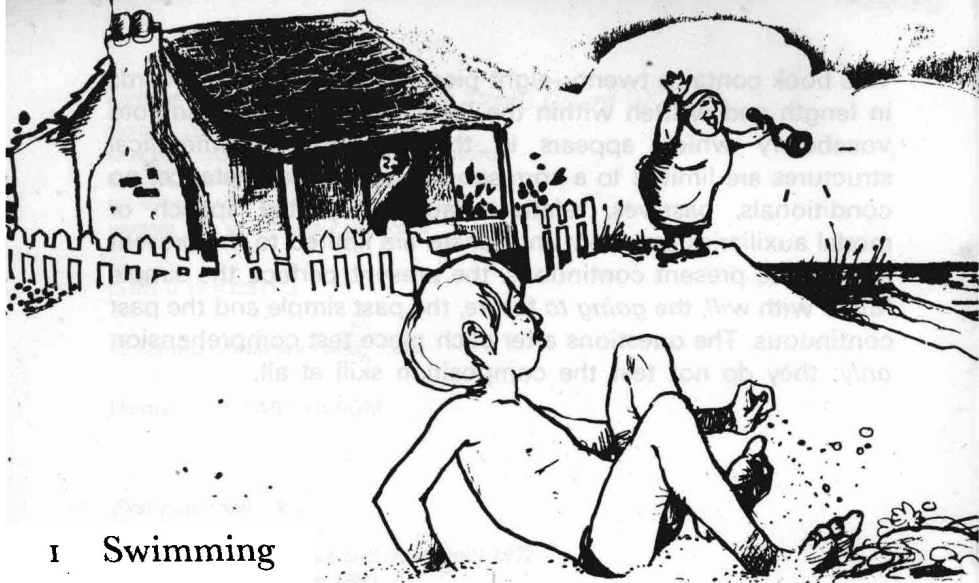
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This book contains twenty-eight pieces, each about 200 words in length and written within the limits of the 1 000 headword vocabulary which appears in the Appendix. Grammatical structures are limited to a corresponding level: for instance, no conditionals, passives, relative clauses, reported speech or modal auxiliaries are used; and tenses are limited to the present simple, the present continuous, the present perfect, the simple future with *will*, the *going to* future, the past simple and the past continuous. The questions after each piece test comprehension *only*; they do not test the composition skill at all.



I Swimming

When I was a boy, I liked swimming very much. One year my two brothers and I spent the summer holidays with my uncle and aunt in their house by the sea. It was only twenty metres from the water. Every day we put on our swimming-shorts before breakfast, ran down to the sea across the sand and jumped in. From then until late at night, we were in the sea or on the beach most of the time. When our aunt rang a bell, we went back to the house for food, but we ate it in our swimming-shorts and were soon back in the sea again.

The water was warm, the sun shone every day, and on most days there were no waves. In the middle of the day a wind always began to blow, but it was not strong and did not make the sea rough.

Three times during our holidays we had strong winds. They blew the sand against our legs when we ran down to the sea, and made big waves with white tops. We were all very good swimmers. We dived through the waves or rode towards the beach on top of them until we were tired and hungry.

1 Put one word from this story in each empty place in these sentences:

- a The boys wore in the sea.
- b The strong winds made on the sea.
- c The beach between the sea and the house had on it.



- d On most days the sea was not
- e The boys did not spend much time in the during the day.

2 Find words in the story which mean the opposite of:

- a smooth b full c weak d little e cold.

3 Choose the right sentence from a, the right sentence from b, etc.

- a The boys' home was near the sea.
Their uncle's home was near the sea.
Their uncle's home was a long way from the water.
- b The boys had breakfast on the sand.
The boys did not have breakfast.
The boys had breakfast in the house.
- c The boys put on their swimming-shorts before each meal.
The boys put other clothes on before every meal.
The boys did not do anything to their clothes before meals.
- d There was a wind every day.
There was a wind on three days.
There was a wind on most days.
- e The waves rode on top of the boys towards the beach.
The waves carried the boys towards the beach.
The boys rode on top of their brothers towards the beach.



2 The Picnic

It was Sunday and the weather was fine, so Mrs Smith said, 'Let's go for a picnic.' 'Oh, yes!' said Mary and John, her two children. Mr Smith said, 'Yes, let's go to the woods and have our picnic there.' 'Good,' said Mrs Smith. 'Help me to get the things ready.' 'All right,' said the children. John brought the basket for the food and the bottles for the water; and Mary brought a blanket, while Mother made the sandwiches, and Father put water and oil into the car.

Soon everything was ready and they left the house. They drove along small roads until they came to the woods. Mary put the blanket on the ground, John took the food out of the car, Father made a fire, and Mother made tea.

'Isn't it beautiful here?' said Mother. 'It's very quiet and green.' John had a kite, and soon he was running across the grass with it. 'Be careful!' shouted Mother, but it was too late! John fell over the basket of food, and everything fell out. 'Look!' cried Mary. 'There are ants in the food!' Yes, there were! There were hundreds of them. The blanket was on an ants' nest!

1 *Put one word from this story in each empty place in these sentences:*

- a** Mrs Smith had two
- b** The Smiths had a picnic in the
- c** The Smiths' water for making tea was in
- d** John fell over the basket because he was playing with his
- e** The ants came from their

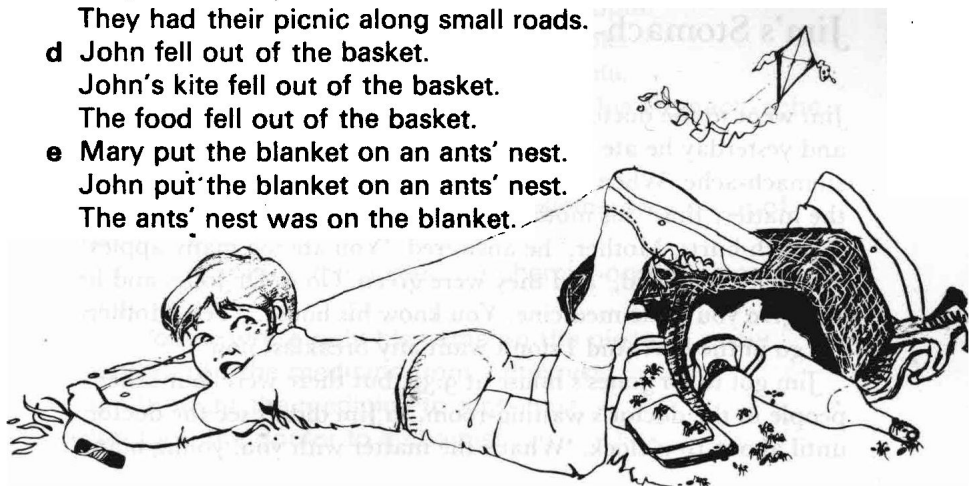


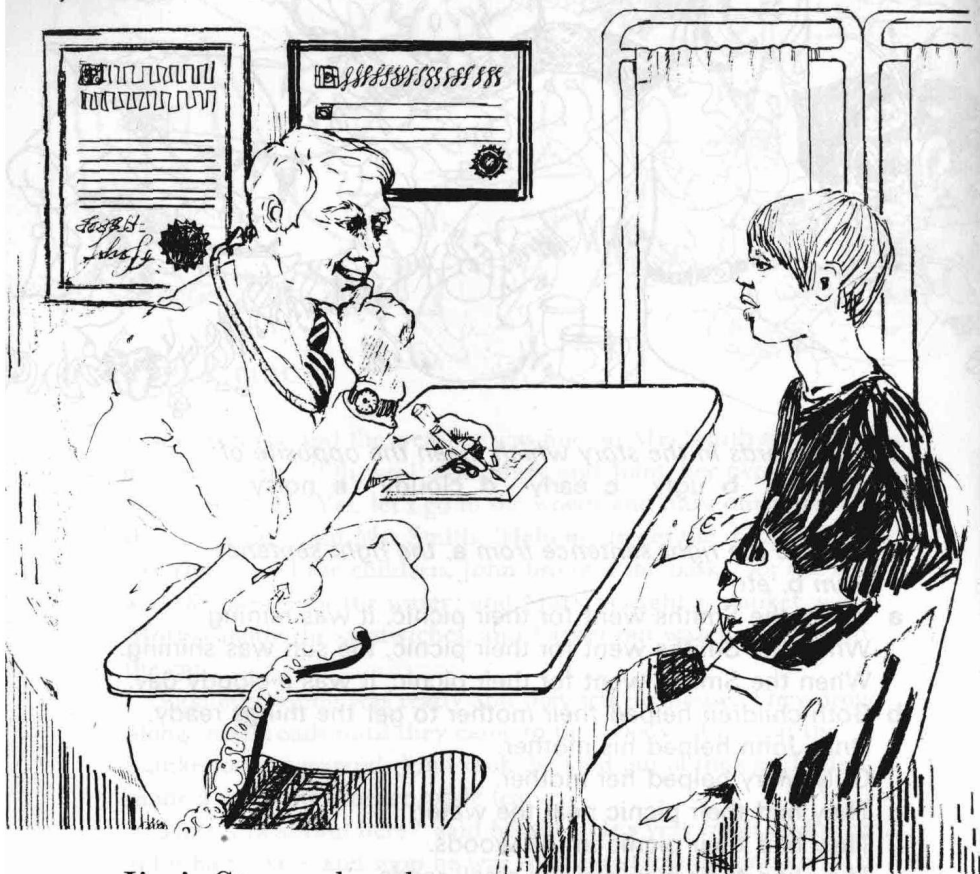
2 Find words in the story which mean the opposite of:

a careless **b** ugly **c** early **d** cloudy **e** noisy.

3 Choose the right sentence from a, the right sentence from b, etc

- a** When the Smiths went for their picnic, it was raining.
When the Smiths went for their picnic, the sun was shining.
When the Smiths went for their picnic, it was a cloudy day.
- b** Both children helped their mother to get the things ready.
Only John helped his mother.
Only Mary helped her mother.
- c** They had their picnic near the water.
They had their picnic in the woods.
They had their picnic along small roads.
- d** John fell out of the basket.
John's kite fell out of the basket.
The food fell out of the basket.
- e** Mary put the blanket on an ants' nest.
John put the blanket on an ants' nest.
The ants' nest was on the blanket.





3 Jim's Stomach-ache

Jim went to the doctor this morning. He likes apples very much and yesterday he ate too many green ones, so this morning he had a stomach-ache. When he came to breakfast he was crying. 'What's the matter, Jim?' his mother said. 'Why are you crying?' 'My stomach hurts, Mother,' he answered. 'You ate too many apples yesterday,' she said, 'and they were green. Go to Dr Jones and he will give you some medicine. You know his house.' 'Yes, Mother. I'll go in the bus. And I don't want any breakfast now.'

Jim got to Dr Jones's house at 9.30, but there were four other people in the doctor's waiting-room, so Jim didn't see the doctor until about 10 o'clock. 'What's the matter with you, young man?'

said Dr Jones. 'I have a stomach-ache,' said Jim. 'Have you eaten any green apples?' asked the doctor. 'Yes, I ate a lot yesterday,' Jim said, and smiled. The doctor smiled too. He wrote on a piece of paper and said, 'Take this to a chemist, and he will give you some medicine.' Jim thanked the doctor, went to a chemist and bought the medicine. His stomach-ache was soon better.

1 *Put one word from this story in each empty place in these sentences:*

- a Jim ate a lot of green
- b He was crying because he had a
- c He went to the doctor's house in a
- d The doctor gave Jim a piece of
- e The made Jim's stomach-ache better.

2 *Find words in the story which mean about the same as:*

- a pain b trouble c loves d quickly e a lot of.

3 *Choose the right sentence from a, the right sentence from b, etc.*

- a Jim went to the doctor because he did not want any breakfast.
Jim went to the doctor because he did not want any medicine.
Jim went to the doctor because he had a pain.
- b Jim saw the doctor before four other people.
Jim saw the doctor with four other people.
Jim saw the doctor after four other people.
- c The doctor gave Jim some medicine for his stomach-ache.
The doctor gave Jim a piece of paper.
The doctor gave Jim some apples.
- d The doctor wrote the name of a medicine on a piece of paper.
The doctor wrote the name of a chemist on the piece of paper.
The doctor wrote only his name on the piece of paper.
- e Jim bought the medicine from a chemist.
Jim brought the medicine to a chemist.
Jim took the doctor to a chemist.



4 My Bees

I live in the country, and there is a large garden round my house. I have a lot of bees in this garden, and they make honey for me. It is very good honey, because there are a lot of flowers in my garden, and the bees make their honey from these flowers. Sometimes a bee stings me, but I don't mind. When I collect the honey, I wear a net over my face and cover my hands. Then the bees do not sting me.

When I have collected a lot of honey, I put it in pots and take most of it to the town. I put a small table at the side of the road and put my pots of honey on it. Then I shout, 'Honey! Beautiful honey! Who wants my sweet honey?' My honey is not expensive, and soon I have sold all the pots.

Of course, I keep some of my bees' honey at home, and my family and I eat it. We never buy any honey or jam in the shops, because my wife makes all our jam from the fruit in our garden. It tastes much better than the jam from shops, we think.

1 *Put one word from this story in each empty place in these sentences:*

- a** When bees people, it hurts.
- b** If you put a over you, bees do not sting you.
- c** I sell my honey in, not in bottles.
- d** I sell my honey in the, not in the country.
- e** Honey has a very taste.

2 Find words in the story which mean the opposite of:
a worse **b** small **c** cheap **d** sour **e** bought.

3 Choose the right sentence from a, the right sentence from b, etc.

- a** I keep bees in the country.
I keep bees in a town.
I keep bees in the country and in the town.
- b** When I wear a net, the bees do not sting me.
The bees never sting me.
The bees never sting my hands.
- c** I sell my honey in a shop.
I sell my honey in the street.
I sell my honey at home.
- d** I sell all my honey.
I sell a little of my honey.
I sell most of my honey.
- e** My family and I like jam from the shops best.
My family and I like our jam best.
My family and I do not eat jam. We eat honey instead.





5 Our Zoo

Jane's class is going to visit the zoo tomorrow. Our town has a big zoo with lots of animals in it. There are some beautiful tigers and two old lions. Lions and tigers are fierce animals, so when they are in zoos, they live in strong cages. They eat a lot of meat every day.

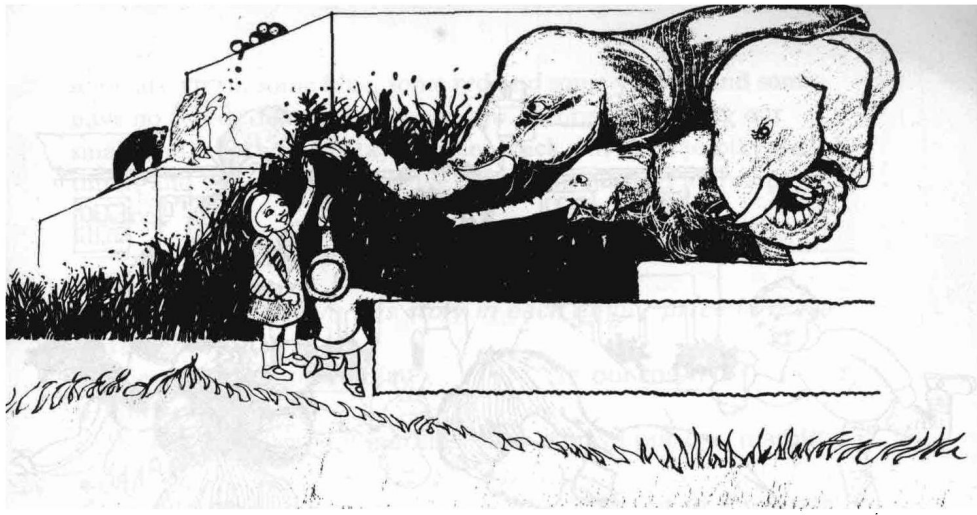
There are also two big elephants and a baby one. Jane wants to ride on one of the elephants. The elephants are tame and kind. They eat a lot of grass every day. They like children because they sometimes give them bread and bananas. Elephants like bananas very much.

In our zoo there are also brown bears, black bears and white bears. They stand on their back legs, hold up their arms and ask for food. They like cake very much.

There is also a Children's Corner in our zoo. There children ride horses and donkeys and watch the monkeys. The monkeys are very funny. They climb up ropes and jump down again and play with each other like small children. They love nuts and bananas and bread. Jane is going to take a basket to the zoo with stale bread, cake, nuts and a bunch of bananas.

1 *Put one word from this story in each empty place in these sentences:*

- a** Jane is going to visit the zoo with her
- b** One of the elephants is a
- c** The bears love
- d** Children can ride donkeys in the



e Jane is going to take some food to the zoo for the

2 Find words in the story which mean the opposite of:

a hate **b** fresh **c** wild **d** big **e** front.

3 Choose the right sentence from **a**, the right sentence from **b**, etc.

a Jane is going to visit the zoo alone.

Jane is going to visit the zoo with other pupils.

Jane is not going to visit the zoo tomorrow.

b Lions live in strong cages because they are fierce.

Lions live in strong cages because they are animals.

Lions live in strong cages because they eat a lot of meat.

c Bears love cake.

Bears like bananas very much.

Bears don't like cake very much.

d Children watch the monkeys.

Horses watch the monkeys.

Donkeys watch the monkeys.

e Jane is going to get bread, cake, nuts and bananas in the zoo.

Jane is going to take bread, cake, nuts and bananas to the zoo.

Jane is going to take bread, cake, nuts and bananas from the zoo.



6 Marbles

The boys in our town often play marbles, and sometimes the girls play too. My brother George plays marbles very well. He has won 112 marbles in two months. He plays better than any of the other boys in our street. He shoots the marbles very straight and hits the other boys' marbles almost every time, although he is only ten years old.

When the boys in our town play marbles, they first draw a circle on the ground with a stick, and then one boy puts one of his marbles in it. Then the other boy shoots at it with one of *his* marbles and tries to knock it out of the circle. It is not easy, because the marbles are quite small, and the ground is never quite flat. When I play marbles with George, my marbles usually roll to one side or the other, and he wins.

George has marbles of all colours. Some are white like milk,

some are green, some blue, some red and some yellow; and some have no colour, like glass in a window. George is teaching our small brother, Dick, to play marbles. Dick will learn to play well, I think; and then George will give him all his marbles and stop playing.

1 *Put one word from this story in each empty place in these sentences:*

- a** The girls sometimes play in our town.
- b** George is my
- c** When the boys play marbles, they always put one marble in a
- d** George the other boy's marble out of the circle almost every time.
- e** I do not play marbles

2 *Find words in the story which mean the opposite of:*

- a** seldom **b** loses **c** begin **d** worse **e** always.

3 *Choose the right sentence from a, the right sentence from b, etc.*

- a** George usually loses when he plays marbles.
George usually wins when he plays marbles.
George has stopped playing marbles.
- b** When I play marbles with George, I usually knock his marbles out of the circle.
When I play marbles with George, I seldom knock his marbles out of the circle.
When I play marbles with George, I never knock his marbles out of the circle.
- c** I play marbles better than George does.
George plays marbles better than I do.
I play marbles as well as George does.
- d** George's marbles have no colour.
All George's marbles have a colour.
Some of George's marbles are like glass in a window.
- e** George will stop playing marbles.
Dick will stop playing marbles.
I will stop playing marbles.



7 Aeroplanes

Singapore
Wednesday, 28th September

Have you ever been in an aeroplane? *I* have. Last Monday I flew to Singapore. Twelve days ago I went to the office in Kuala Lumpur and bought my ticket. Then, very early on Monday morning, I went to the office again with my luggage and got into the bus with the other passengers.

The bus took us to the airport. There people took our luggage and put it in the aeroplane, and then, after about twenty minutes, we got in too. I was a little afraid at first, because it was my first ride in an aeroplane, but a kind lady (she was the air-hostess) brought us some sweets and spoke to me, and soon I was quite happy again.

Then the captain of the aeroplane came and spoke to me too. That made me afraid again. 'Is nobody driving the aeroplane?' I asked. The captain laughed kindly and said, 'Another officer is there. Don't be afraid.'