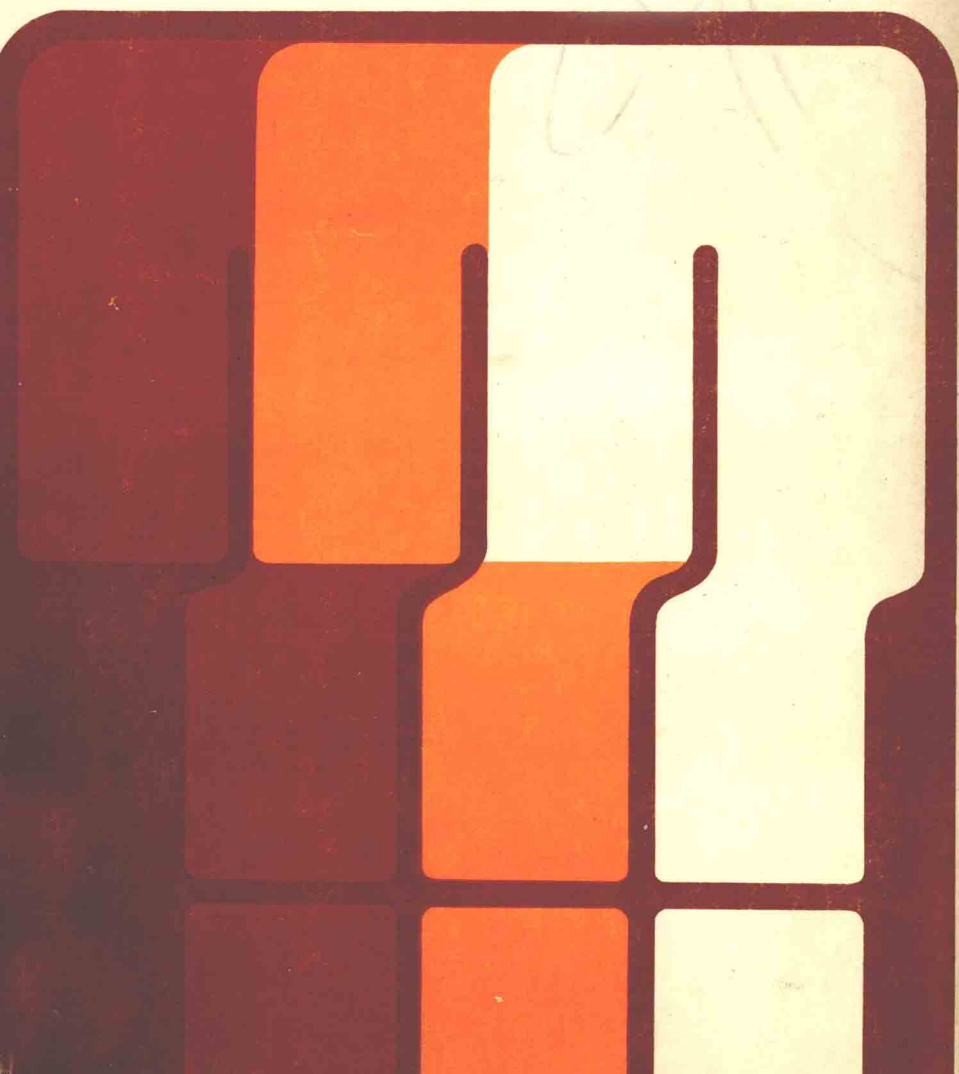


ADVANCED COMPREHENSION PRACTICE IN ENGLISH

PASSAGES OF MODERN ENGLISH
WITH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON
COMPREHENSION, VOCABULARY,
GRAMMAR AND USAGE SUITABLE
FOR STUDENTS PREPARING FOR
THE CAMBRIDGE CERTIFICATE OF
PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

JULIE HUXLEY



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ADVANCED
COMPREHENSION
PRACTICE IN ENGLISH

Twenty-one specially selected passages of modern English with questions and answers on comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and usage suitable for students preparing for the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English and for other advanced students of English



HAMISH HAMILTON
AND
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Editor's Introduction

This volume has been compiled for students whose level of English is about that of the Cambridge First Certificate, and who are continuing their studies in order to sit the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency and other advanced examinations, or simply broadening and deepening their knowledge of English for business or professional reasons and for their own satisfaction. It is designed to fulfil the need felt by students and teachers of English for a book which will take students on from the intermediate to the advanced stage by means of comprehension tests based on the same objective (multiple-choice) question technique as has been applied so effectively at previous stages of English learning. It is hoped that this book will, by means of the author's application of this multiple-choice method at a higher level, enable students to extend their command of English grammatical structure, idiom and usage to the point where they can easily cope with any difficult non-technical or semi-technical text and where they can enter for the above-mentioned examinations with some degree of confidence.

In using the multiple-choice techniques this book follows the pattern recently established in many public examinations in English and other subjects, and offers systematic training and practical tests along the same lines as its deservedly successful predecessors in this series.* But the author has had to bear in mind that certain types of question suitable for students at the lower and intermediate levels are not always suitable for advanced students, and that advanced students will be interested in being exercised and tested more on subtle distinctions of usage, idiom and vocabulary and less on straightforward points of grammar. She has therefore not slavishly followed the example of the other authors in this series, who themselves wrote all the passages in their textbooks: instead she has been

* J. Finch, *First Steps in English Comprehension* (Elementary)

J. Finch, *Modern Comprehension Practice in English* (Intermediate I)

J. Eynon, *Multiple Choice Questions in English* (Intermediate II)

at pains to offer a selection of already published texts which include as many different styles of modern writing as possible. She has not included a very high proportion of fiction, and only one excerpt from a play; but she has included a good deal of non-fiction in the form of semi-specialised writing by some of the best-known writers in their particular fields. She has also thought it might be helpful to include a sprinkling of journalistic pieces, selected for the innate interest or topicality of the material without any great regard for traditional stylistic standards. Indeed, whilst some of the journalism here reprinted is representative of the very best writing of its kind, the author has also made a point of including a couple of extracts in which the standard of writing is somewhat less than excellent. The student who is going to find himself dealing with good and bad in English writing will, it is hoped, be glad of at least a little practice in trying to understand a writer's intentions and subject matter in cases where this writer lacks either the will or the skill to express his thoughts in the most effective way.

The length of the passages is as varied as the subject matter and the style, ranging from about 400 words to about 1,000. Whilst this feature of the book coincides with the author's desire to achieve the greatest possible variety, the lack of uniformity in the length has also been conditioned by her determination to include only such pieces as are complete in themselves. In a few cases a magazine or newspaper article has been included in its entirety, but in the majority of cases the extracts are necessarily part of a larger whole. Here the compiler has done her best to ensure that each of these parts is complete, self-contained and unabridged, that is to say appearing here exactly as it was originally published, without any cuts or adaptations whatsoever. The passages have been graded into approximate order of difficulty, and all the questions have been researched and carefully tested in the classroom.

The questions following each passage are divided into three sections, of which Sections 1 and 2 cover more or less the same ground as, but at a more advanced level than, the corresponding sections in Mr Finch's and Mr Eynon's books. There is, however, one important difference: whilst in the previous volumes the order of the questions is the same as the order of the points they refer to in the text, it has not been thought either necessary or desirable to keep to this strict and logical order in the present volume. One further

point: some questions refer to specific places in the text, whereas others test students' comprehension of a whole paragraph at a time.

The ten questions in Section 1 require students to select the one single correct answer from four possible alternatives. This section tests the students' understanding of the passage as a whole: in most cases all four alternatives are correct from a linguistic or merely grammatical point of view; only one, however, has exactly the same sense as the context it refers to, and it is this answer which is to be noted down as the 'correct' one. The other alternatives, usually correct as far as the grammar is concerned, in fact say something rather different, often something illogical; these should thus be rejected.

The ten questions in Section 2 test students' knowledge of idiom, usage and advanced grammar. In this section, students should choose one, two, three or even all four of the answers if they have the same sense as the context they refer to. Students should first of all reject all answers containing a piece of incorrect or slipshod grammar or usage, then they must be careful to reject those answers which, whilst grammatically possible, convey a different meaning from the context they refer to. It cannot be insisted upon too strongly that, if a student neglects to note down a correct answer in the belief that it is a wrong one, it is just as serious a mistake, just as much a blemish in his knowledge of English, as if he notes down as correct an answer which in fact is incorrect.

Section 3 is to some extent similar to Section 4 in *Multiple Choice Questions in English*, though it is a good deal more elaborate. However, in the present volume the author has not thought it right to include the guidance for preparation of the summaries that was one of the features of the intermediate book. At this stage in their studies students should be capable of picking out for themselves all the relevant information and assembling it in an articulate form; indeed, at this stage they will probably resent being spoonfed with detail of this kind. Students should note, however, that, where a particular word limit is asked for, their teacher will take it as a courtesy if they will get into the habit of counting the words and writing down the total at the end of their summary.

Because of their varied style and subject matter, the twenty-one passages will prove an excellent starting-point in conversation classes. Most of them can also be utilised as dictation passages;

and in order that they should also serve as material for full-scale précis and summary work over and above the brief summaries asked for in Section 3, the total word-count for each passage has been appended.

As for the exercises, apart from the direct training they offer for examinations such as the Certificate of Proficiency, they will be found to form a very useful basis for general vocabulary and grammar work. It should be realised that at least as much trouble has gone into the preparation of the wrong answers in Sections 1 and 2 as of the right answers. Teachers will thus have at their disposal plenty of material for helping their students to distinguish between correct usage, incorrect usage, and that uneasy half-way point, merely slipshod usage. Many of the grammatically or idiomatically wrong answers contain common students' errors, which teachers will often be able to use in order to explain or revise some definite points in grammar or idiom. Most of the answers which are grammatically correct but wrong for other reasons can similarly be used to illustrate the often subtle distinctions between two or more near-synonyms and between similar constructions with different shades of meaning. The approach that all the answers provide will point the way for the teacher who might wish to apply the same analytical technique to the extensive material in the passages to which no reference is made in the exercises; for teachers will quickly come to recognise many other typical constructions, idioms and word forms in the passages which will turn out to offer points of didactic interest as useful as the ones actually incorporated in the exercises.

Students will gain great benefit from hearing their teacher's reasoned explanation why a wrong answer is wrong and a right one right. They will also derive help from hints about whether a certain 'wrong' answer can easily be made 'right' or not, and from suggestions as to how two 'right' answers may differ from one another in meaning or register. But at the same time students will have to be reminded that there are no absolutes in language and that concepts of correctness are changing almost every day. In preparing the detachable key, which is included at the end of the book, the author has had to keep continually on her guard against both a pedantic rejection of all but the most purist answers and a free-and-easy acceptance of a lot of sub-standard forms. Not all teachers will agree with all the author's choices of 'correct' answers; some will be

found to be more 'correct' than others; but in those cases where the teacher feels that the key does not include an answer which is, in his opinion, a valid one, or else includes an answer which is felt to be slipshod or even incorrect, the author begs indulgence in advance and suggests that the teacher simply make such improvements in the key as will fit in best with his own particular standards and methods of teaching.

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Passage I The Pasmores at Home

Pasmore was a big man; that is, he viewed himself as a big man, though he was one or two inches short of being six feet. He had broad shoulders and heavy legs, bowed it seemed from the weight of bone and muscle. His hair was dark, his eyes dark, too, and though this darkness gave him a somewhat melancholic look, the eyes themselves were set in a roundish, high-cheeked, even brightish face, full-lipped, almost pugnacious, with a jutting brow, his figure not unlike that of a wrestler's tensing to a fall.

His wife was of an altogether slighter build, fair-haired, blue-eyed, slim-featured, delicately boned; she had about her a startled, apprehensive look, the eyes bright, gleaming, like those of an animal peering from its burrow. About them both, at first sight, there was a feeling of self-division.

Pasmore was almost thirty. His wife was two years younger. They had met at college and had married one year later after Pasmore was finally settled in his job. The area in which they had chosen to live had previously been occupied by working-class families. The houses themselves had been quite small, formless, almost without shape. Now most of them had been restored. White, gleaming fronts confronted each other across narrow streets, or, in the case of the square, overlooked the cultivated patch of the central gardens. The sun shone most frequently into the rear windows of the house, into the large living area and the tiny garden, and into the Pasmores' bedroom on the floor above. At the front the two small rooms given over to the children looked out directly to the massive, coiling branches of the plane trees which stood like columns around the perimeter of the narrow square.

From the roof of the house—which, in the past, Pasmore had spent much of his spare time renovating—it was possible to see the roofs of the college buildings clustered amongst those of Bloomsbury below, and, further off, in the evening, the lights which lit up the sky in an orange sheen above the West End.

They had lived in the house for several years. In it, for most of that time, they had both been happy; in it their children had been born, in it they had celebrated their successes and consoled each other over their various defeats: only recently, it seemed, had anything gone wrong.

For some time—for longer, in fact, than he cared to remember—Pasmore had been troubled by his dreams; and of all his dreams, 40 by one in particular. He was running in a race, not unlike those races he had run, stoically though with no great enterprise, at school, when he had begun to be overtaken not merely by the runners but by all those idlers and dullards who jogged, or even walked along at the rear. Quite soon, despite all his efforts, he'd been left behind; each time he woke up with a sense of terror.

Kay herself could see nothing frightening in the dream at all. 'But it's not just the feeling,' he told her, 'of being passed that I find so awful, so much as the feeling that, despite being last, I don't want the race itself to finish. I know it sounds ridiculous. And I suppose 50 in a sense it can even be explained. But what I can't understand, despite the triviality of the dream, is its undiminishing sense of terror.'

Then, invariably, seeing her expression, he would laugh at his own misgivings and turn away. (588 words)

(from *Pasmore* David Storey)

SECTION 1

CHOOSE THE BEST ANSWER

i Pasmore . . . himself as a big man.

- A displayed
- B portrayed
- C had a vision of
- D thought of

ii Pasmore was . . .

- A weighed down by his legs.
- B overweight.

- C apparently bandy-legged.
D bowed.
- iii The Pasmores' house was . . .
A shapeless.
B formerly a working-class house.
C narrow.
D middle-class.
- iv Pasmore had . . . the roof of his house.
A restored
B rebuilt
C recuperated
D revived
- v The roofs of the college buildings were . . . amongst those of Bloomsbury.
A scattered
B grouped
C jumbled
D bunched
- vi In his dreams, Pasmore was . . .
A having a nightmare.
B running a race at school.
C partaking of a race.
D participating in a race.
- vii Kay . . .
A was not frightened by the dream.
B laughed at the dream.
C could not understand her husband's fear.
D was sympathetic to her husband.
- viii Pasmore could not understand . . .
A why his dream sounded ridiculous.
B the triviality of his dream.

- C his being passed by everyone in the dream.
- D why he was filled with such a sense of terror in his dream.

ix In times of sorrow, Pasmore and his wife . . .

- A were sympathetic.
- B comforted each other.
- C loved each other.
- D were kind to each other.

x The lights in the West End at night . . .

- A gave the sky an orange lustre.
- B turned the sky iridescent.
- C can be seen from the Pasmores' house.
- D light up the sky in an orange flash.

SECTION 2

WRITE DOWN EVERY CORRECT ANSWER

i Pasmore was . . .

- A approximately about five feet ten.
- B about five feet ten.
- C one or two inches short of six feet.
- D one or two inches short from six feet.

ii Pasmore was almost thirty; his wife was . . .

- A two years younger than he.
- B two years younger than he was.
- C two years younger than him.
- D two years his junior.

iii Pasmore's wife was . . .

- A not unlike her husband.

- B in the altogether slighter built.
- C slighter built than her husband.
- D of a slighter build than her husband.

iv . . . , they got married.

- A When Pasmore was finally settled to his job
- B One year after they met
- C One year after Pasmore was finally settled in his job
- D When Pasmore was at long last settled in his job

v . . . had been happy in the house for most of the time.

- A Both the Pasmores
- B Both Pasmores
- C Both of the Pasmores
- D Each of the Pasmores

vi Kay Pasmore's eyes were like those of an animal . . . its burrow.

- A peering out of
- B glaring from
- C peeping out of
- D peeping out from

vii Pasmore had . . .

- A a rounded face with high cheeks.
- B a somewhat round face with high cheekbones.
- C a cheeky, roundish face.
- D high rounded cheeks.

viii The two rooms at the front of the house . . .

- A looked at the branches of the plane trees.
- B looked out on the branches of the level trees.
- C looked out on the branches of the plane trees.
- D looked over the branches of the plane trees.

- ix The plane trees stood . . .
A in columns around the square.
B encircling the square.
C around the square.
D round the square.
- x Pasmore would laugh at his own misgivings, . . . his wife's expression.
A if he saw
B when he saw
C have seen to
D seeing to

SECTION 3

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, BEING CAREFUL TO KEEP TO THE SUGGESTED WORD LIMIT WHERE GIVEN

1. Why did Pasmore's dream trouble him? (*not more than 50 words*)
2. What kind of district did the Pasmores live in? (*not more than 40 words*)
3. What did Pasmore look like? (*not more than 40 words*)
4. Give the meaning of the following words as they are used in the passage:
 - i. melancholic (line 5)
 - ii. set (line 6)
 - iii. pugnacious (line 7)
 - iv. burrow (line 12)
 - v. gleaming (line 19)
 - vi. coiling (line 25)

5. What does the writer mean by the following?

- i. jutting brows (line 7)
- ii. tensing to a fall (line 8)
- iii. stoically though with no great enterprise (line 41)

Passage 2 The Linguistic Habits of a New Generation

In the year 1914 a young girl named Monica Baldwin entered a convent, remaining secluded there until 1941 when she was released from her vows and returned to the outer world. In the intervening twenty-eight years wars and revolutions had come and gone in Europe, her uncle, Stanley Baldwin, had guided the destinies of his country for some time, technical developments had altered the conditions of everyday life almost beyond recognition, but all these events had left virtually untouched the small religious community to which she had belonged. In 1949 Miss Baldwin published her
10 impressions of those first bewildering years of her return to a world in which the motor-car had ousted the horse and carriage, and where respectable women showed their legs and painted their faces.

Yet it was not only these odd sights that astounded her, for she was even more puzzled by what she heard. During a railway journey the term 'luggage in advance' meant nothing to her, so in desperation she implored the porter to do as he thought best. Reading the daily newspapers made her feel idiotic in the extreme, because the writers of reviews and leading articles used words and phrases such as Jazz, Gin and It, the Unknown Soldier, Lease-lend, Hollywood, Cocktail,
20 Striptease and Isolationism. These and many others were quite incomprehensible to Miss Baldwin, who was equally bewildered when friends said 'It's your funeral' or 'Believe it or not'. Advertisements on hoardings proclaimed the virtues of mysterious products named Vim, Rinso and Brasso, while in restaurants it was difficult to make any sense of the list of dishes available.

This is a rare and valuable reminder to the rest of us that the