

In this task, you will:

- retrieve information and draw inferences from the text, justifying answers with evidence
- identify figurative language
- make predictions.

The following passages are taken from *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Read them carefully and answer the questions. If you're anxious about your comprehension skills, read both passages and answer questions 1-8. If you're feeling confident, do questions 1-10. If you're raring to go, try the challenge too!

'They bought, indeed, a great many more things than Sara needed; but Captain Crewe was a rash, innocent young man, and wanted his little girl to have everything she admired and everything he admired himself, so between them they collected a wardrobe much too grand for a child of seven. There were velvet dresses trimmed with costly furs, and lace dresses, and embroidered ones, and hats with great, soft ostrich feathers, and ermine coats and muffs, and boxes of tiny gloves and handkerchiefs and silk stockings in such abundant supplies that the polite young women behind the counters whispered to each other that the odd little girl with the big, solemn eyes must be at least some foreign princess' (p.10)

1. How is Captain Crewe related to Sara? How do you know?

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2. Name three fabrics featured in the passage.

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3. What do you think the author means by the word 'wardrobe' here?

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4. What impression do you get of Captain Crewe? Why?

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5. What impression do you get of Sara? Why?

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Now you're feeling confident, read this passage and answer the questions.

'It was not until long afterward that she realized that her bed had been so hard that she turned over and over in it to find a place to rest, that the darkness seemed more intense than any she had ever known, and that the wind howled over the roof like something which wailed aloud. Then there was something worse. This was certain scufflings and scratches and squeakings in the walls and behind the skirting boards.' (pp. 107-108)

6. What do you think might be behind the walls and skirting boards?

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7. What impression do you get of the room Sara finds herself in? What gives you this impression?

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8. ‘... *the darkness seemed more intense than any she had ever known*’ Can you rewrite this sentence using a simile or a metaphor?

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9. Can you find an example in the passage of onomatopoeia?

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10. Can you find a simile?

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Challenge:

How do your impressions of Sara and her circumstances change between the first and second passages? What might have happened to bring about this change in circumstances?

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Answers

1. How is Captain Crewe related to Sara? How do you know?
Captain Crewe is Sara's father. The writer refers to her as 'his little girl'.
2. Name three fabrics featured in the passage.
Any three of: velvet, fur, lace, ermine, silk.
3. What do you think the author means by the word 'wardrobe' here?
Clothes or outfits.
4. What impression do you get of Captain Crewe? Why?
Answers will vary but should include references to his wealth, to his spoiling his daughter, to the words 'rash' and 'innocent' and to the fact he is described as a young man. Children might also describe him as kind or generous.
5. What impression do you get of Sara? Why?
Answers will vary but might include references to her being spoiled, rich and/or lucky. Children should also make reference to the description of her being 'odd' with 'solemn eyes' and the fact that she is seven years old.
6. What do you think might be behind the walls and skirting boards?
Rats and mice.
7. What impression do you get of the room Sara finds herself in? What gives you this impression?
Answers will vary but should include references to the room being dark and in a poor state. Reference should be made to the rats and mice.
8. 'the darkness seemed more intense than any she had ever known' Can you rewrite this sentence using a simile or a metaphor?
Answers will vary.
9. Can you find an example in the passage of onomatopoeia?
'Scufflings' or 'squeakings'.
10. Can you find a simile?
'the wind howled over the roof like something which wailed aloud'.