



English Reading

Advanced Worksheets

Worksheet - 1

1. The following is an adapted excerpt from a description by Winston Churchill, one of the greatest prime ministers of Great Britain, of his experiences as a schoolboy in Harrow, a famous school in Britain that he attended.
2. I had just passed 12 when I entered the inhospitable regions of examinations which was destined to be my habitat for the next seven years of my life. These examinations were a great trial to me. The subjects which enamoured the examiners were almost invariably those I liked least. I would have liked to have been examined in history, poetry and writing essays in English. The examiners, on the other hand, liked Latin (a foreign language) and mathematics. Moreover, the questions which they asked on both these subjects were almost always those to which I was unable to suggest a satisfactory answer. I would have liked to be asked to say what I knew. They always tried to ask what I did not know. When I would have willingly displayed my knowledge, they tried to explore my ignorance. This sort of treatment had only one result: I did not do well in examinations.



3. This was especially true of my entrance examination to Harrow. The headmaster, Dr.Weldon, however, took a broadminded view of my Latin: he showed discernment in judging my general ability. This was very remarkable, because I was unable to answer a single question in the Latin paper. I wrote my name at the top of the page. I wrote down the number of the question '1'. After much reflection I put a bracket around it thus '(1)'. But after that I could not think of anything that was connected to the question, that was either relevant or true. I gazed for two whole hours at this sad spectacle, and then mercifully the invigilator collected my piece of foolscap with all the others and carried it up to the headmaster's table. It was from these slender indications that Dr.Weldon drew the conclusion that I was worthy to pass into Harrow. It is very much to his credit. It showed that he was a man capable of looking beneath the surface of things. I have always had the greatest regard for him.

4. I first went to Harrow in the summer term. The school had the biggest swimming-bath I had ever seen. It was more like the bend of a river than a bath and it had two bridges across it. We used to bathe there for hours and bask in the sun in between, eating enormous buns. Naturally it was a good joke to come up behind some naked friend, or even enemy, and push him in. I made quite a habit of this with boys of my own size or less. One day when I had been no more than a month in the school, I saw a boy standing in a meditative posture, wrapped in a towel on the very brink. He was no bigger



than I was, so I thought him fair game. Coming stealthily behind, I pushed him into the water, holding on to his towel out of humanity, so that it should not get wet. My amusement at pushing him in was abruptly cut short when I saw his furious face emerge from the water, followed by a strong body swimming fiercely back to the shore, in my direction. I fled, but in vain. Swift as wind, my pursuer overtook me, seized me in ferocious grip and hurled me into the deepest part of the pool. I soon scrambled out on the other side, and found myself surrounded by an agitated crowd of younger boys. “You’re in for it,” they said. “Do you know what you have done? It’s Amery, he’s in the Sixth Form. He is head of his House; he is champion at gym; he has got his football colours. “

5. I was convulsed with terror. He had looked so small. I determined to apologize immediately. “I am very sorry,” I said. “I mistook you for a Fourth Form boy. You are so small.” He did not seem at all placated by this; so I tried again most cleverly. “My father, who is a great man, is also small.” At this he laughed, and after some general remarks about my ‘cheek’ and how I had better be careful in future, signified that the incident was closed.
6. I have been fortunate to see a good deal more of him, in times when three years’ difference in age is not so important as it is at school. We were afterwards to be Cabinet colleagues for a good many years.



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7. It was around this time that I got a prize in a competition open to the whole school, for reciting to the headmaster twelve hundred lines of Macaulay's 'Lays of Ancient Rome', without making a single mistake. I also succeeded in passing the preliminary examination for the army while still almost at the bottom of the school. I seemed to have put in a lot of dedicated effort for this exam, since many boys far above me in school failed in it. I also had a piece of good luck. We knew that among other questions, we would be asked to draw from memory a map of some country or other. The night before, by way of final preparation, I put the names of all the maps in the atlas into a hat and drew out New Zealand. I applied my good memory to the geography of that dominion. Sure enough, the first question in the paper was: Draw a map of New Zealand'.

 8. I spent nearly four and a half years at Harrow, of which three were in the army class. To this I was admitted in consequence of having passed the preliminary examination. It consisted of boys of the middle and higher Forms of the school and of very different ages, all of who were being trained for a higher examination. We were withdrawn from the ordinary movement of students in the school from lower Forms to higher Forms. In consequence, I got not promotion, and remained quite low down upon the school list, though working with boys nearly all in the fifth or sixth Form.

 9. Meanwhile, I found an admirable method of learning my Latin translations. I was always very slow at using a dictionary: it was just like using a telephone



directory. It is easy to open it more or less at the right letter, but then you have to turn backwards and forwards to peer up and down the columns, and very often find yourself three or four pages the wrong side of the word you want. In short, I found it most laborious, while to other boys it seemed no trouble. But now I formed an alliance with a boy who was in the Sixth Form. He was very clever and could read Latin as easily as I could read English. He was as much troubled by English essays that he had to submit to the headmaster, as I was by my Latin puzzles. We agreed together that he would help me with my Latin translations, and that I would do his essays. This arrangement worked admirably. The Latin master seemed quite satisfied with my work, and I had more time to myself in the morning. Once a week or so, I had to compose the essays of my Sixth Form friend. I used to walk up and down the room dictating. He would sit in the corner and write it down.

10. For several months no difficulty arose; but once we were nearly caught out. One of these English essays was thought to have merit. It was noted by the headmaster, Dr. Welldon. He summoned my friend and proceeded to discuss the topic with him at great length and with great enthusiasm. "I am interested in the point you make here. You could have expanded it further. Tell me exactly what you had in mind when you wrote this." Dr. Welldon, in spite of very chilling responses, continued in this way for some time, to the apprehension and great discomfort of my friend. Thankfully, after some time, not wishing to turn an occasion of praise to one of admonishing, the headmaster finally let him go with the remark, 'you seem to be better at



written than at oral work.” He came back to me like a man who had a very narrow squeak, and I was most careful ever afterwards to keep to the beaten track while writing English essays for my friend.

(From ‘Harrow’ by Winston Churchill (adapted), in ‘Western Literature’ edited by Carlsen, Tovatt, Alm and Carlsen)

From paragraph 1

1. Why were examinations ‘a great trial’ to the author?
2. Which two subjects were disliked by the author?
3. Write down what the author means by “explore my ignorance.”

From paragraph 2

4. Why does the author say that Dr. Welldon took a broad-minded view of his Latin?
5. Why did the author consider the invigilators ‘merciful’?
6. The headmaster, Dr Welldon, was ‘a man capable of looking beneath the surface of things.’ Pick out and write down, another sentence from this paragraph that describes the headmaster along the same lines.



From paragraph 3

7. 'Naturally it was a good joke to come up behind some naked friend, or even enemy, and push him in.' Write down 6 consecutive words from this paragraph that tell us that the author did this quite often.
8. The author pushed a boy into the swimming-bath because he thought him 'fair game.' Quote two words or short phrases that show that the author was mistaken.

From paragraph

9. What did the author say finally, so that he was forgiven by the Sixth Form boy?

From paragraph 6

10. The author gives two reasons for passing the preliminary examination for the army. Write down these two reasons.

From paragraph 7

11. Why was there 'no promotion' for the author at Harrow?

From paragraph 8

12. Give two reasons why the 'alliance with a boy in the Sixth Form' proved satisfying to the author.



From paragraph 9

13. What does the word 'chilling' tell us about the author's friend's responses to the headmaster?
14. Explain fully why the author decided to 'keep to the beaten track' while preparing essays for his friend?
15. Choose **FIVE** of the following words. For each, give one word or short phrase of not more than seven words, which has the same meaning as it has in the passage
 1. inhospitable (line 1)
 2. invariably (line 7)
 3. reflection (line 16)
 4. relevant (line 18)
 5. in vain (line 35)
 6. placated (line 43)
 7. laborious (line 72)
 8. admonishing (line 90)
16. Imagine you are the author. You have been asked to write a report of your academic success and failure in Harrow and how you coped with your difficulties. Draw your material from line 50 to the end of the passage.



Your report, which should be in continuous writing, must not be longer than 160 words, including the following words.

Begin as follows;

“During my school years I had a few academic successes.....”



Answers

1. Why were examinations 'a great trial' to the author?

The subjects which were dearest to the examiners were almost invariably those I liked least.

Moreover, the questions which they asked on both these subjects were almost invariably those to which I was unable to suggest a satisfactory answer.

2. Which two subjects were disliked by the author?

Latin and mathematics

3. Write down what the author means by "explore my ignorance."

Test what I did not know

4. Why does the author say that Dr. Welldon took a broad-minded view of his Latin?

Even though the writer had not written any answer, the headmaster still admitted him into the school.

5. Why did the author consider the invigilators 'merciful'?



It had been a torture to sit for two hours without knowing what to write and the invigilators ended that torture.

6. The headmaster, Dr Welldon, was ‘a man capable of looking beneath the surface of things.’ Pick out and write down, another sentence from this paragraph that describes the headmaster along the same lines.

He showed discernment in judging my general ability.

7. ‘Naturally it was a good joke to come up behind some naked friend, or even enemy, and push him in.’ write down 6 consecutive words from this paragraph that tell us that the author did this quite often.

‘made quite a habit of this’

8. The author pushed a boy into the swimming-bath because he thought him ‘fair game.’ Quote two words or short phrases that shows that he was mistaken.

Strong body/swift as wind/ferocious grip

9. What did the author say finally, so that he was forgiven?

The author said that his father, who was a great man, was also small.

10. The author gives two reasons for passing the preliminary examination for the army. Write down these two reasons.



He had put in great dedicated effort

He had a piece of good luck

11. Why was there 'no promotion' for the author at Harrow?

He was in the army class which did not follow the movement of the school from lower level to higher level

12. Give two reasons why the 'alliance with a boy in the Sixth Form' proved satisfying to the author.

His Latin master seemed happy

He had more time to himself in the mornings

13. What does the word 'chilling' tell us about the author's friend's responses to the headmaster?

The author's friend's responses did not encourage further conversation.

14. Why did the author decide to 'keep to the beaten track' while preparing essays for his friend?

If he wrote something extra ordinary the headmaster would call his friend and ask him about it and he would not be able to answer, as he had not written it.



15. Choose **FIVE** of the following words. For each, give one word or short phrase of not more than seven words,

inhospitable (line 1) - unfriendly, uncomfortable

invariably (line 7) - inevitably, unchangeably, always

reflection (line 16) - thought

slender (line 20) - little

in vain (line 35) - useless, of no use

placated (line 43) - satisfied/pacified

laborious (line 72) - painstaking/time-consuming

admonishing (line 90) - scolding

16. Imagine you are the author,. You have been asked to write a report of your academic success and failure in Harrow and how you coped with your difficulties. Draw your material from line 50 to the end of the passage.

Your report, which should be in continuous writing, must not be longer than 160 words, including the following words.

Begin as follows;

“During my school years I had a few academic successes.....”

1. got a prize in a competition open to the whole school, for reciting
2. without making a single mistake



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3. I also succeeded in passing the preliminary examination for the army
 4. while still almost at the bottom of the school
 5. I seemed to have put in a lot of dedicated effort for this exam
 6. since many boys far above me in school failed in it.
 7. also had a piece of good luck
 8. three were in the army class
 9. working with boys nearly all in the fifth or sixth Form.
 10. always very slow at using a dictionary
 11. found it most laborious,
 12. formed an alliance with a boy in the Sixth Form
 13. he would help me with my Latin translations,
 14. I would do his essays
 15. Once caught by the headmaster
 16. Thereafter kept his English essays ordinary