



## A. READING COMPREHENSION (15 marks)

### THE TEXT

1. The moment I realized A was for apple was incredible. Such a simple thing; such a life-changing moment. I was a pensioner, a grandma, and had spent a lifetime keeping the terrible secret that I couldn't read or write. For the whole of my adult years, I'd lived a half-life, never daring to socialize, apply for jobs or even try new recipes for fear of being discovered. As a child, I can remember being totally baffled. The teachers quickly classed me as stupid and lazy, and I switched off. I was terribly bullied by other children, and had no friends. My self-esteem was at rock bottom and I left school at 15, unable even to recognize the alphabet.
2. When I got married, my husband remained unaware of my inability to read for the whole of our marriage. I organized it so he did all the paperwork and I did the housework—I was sure he'd leave me if he found out the truth. My two sons, Kevin and David, came along and I felt awful that I couldn't help as they started to learn to read themselves.
3. The turning point came at 60, during a period of depression. Christine, a volunteer from a local charity, came to read for me, for company. When she suggested we read to each other, I refused, but she was so persistent, in such a warm way, that I finally confessed I didn't know how. She arranged adult learning classes but I was so petrified. To my relief, my tutor, Christine, was nothing but encouraging. We started with a picture book about the English alphabet, and to my delight, after six months I could write a sentence.
4. A year later I won an adult learners award. Finally I can read all those books I'd wondered about. The world has opened up to me. It's such a joy to read to my little grandson Freddie, and my goal is to take my GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). Now I feel I can hold my head up high. I just wish my teachers were alive so I could tell them that I wasn't stupid. I could learn to read. I just needed someone to show me how.

Adapted from

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## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Tick (✓) the right alternative. (1 mark)

The most appropriate title to the text is :

- a. Better late than never ☐  
b. Prevention is better than cure ☐  
c. A friend in need is a friend indeed ☐

- 2) Pick out 4 negative effects that illiteracy had on the narrator as a child. (4 marks)

- a. ....  
b. ....  
c. ....  
d. ....

- 3) Complete with words from paragraphs 2, 3 and 4. (4 marks)

It was only after she had ..... her illiteracy to her tutor that the narrator gradually overcame her ..... to read and write. Now she is so motivated that she has set herself a ..... : sitting for the GCSE exams; thus proving to everyone that she wasn't stupid; she simply ..... somebody to help her.

- 4) Find in the text expressions that mean the same as : (3 marks)

- a. The lowest point or level (par.1) .....  
b. The time when an important change takes place (par.3) .....  
c. Feel proud of what I have achieved (par.4) .....

- 5) What do the following words underlined in the text refer to? (2 marks)

- a. The truth (par.2) refers to .....  
b. She (par.3) refers to .....

- 6) Give a personal justified answer to the following question (1 mark)

If you were the narrator, would you spend a lifetime keeping your illiteracy secret ?

If I were the narrator, I .....

because .....

.....