

*The Roche School 11+ and
English support at home*



What does English in the 11+ look like?

During the 11+, children are expected to take exams, pass interviews and provide a reference (which the school writes). In term of English, they are often required to sit a comprehension exam and complete an unseen writing task.

As the process is becoming more competitive, selective secondary schools are trying to prevent children from being overly tutored, which is why the unseen writing task can vary from: continuations, letter writing, persuasive speeches, diary writing, descriptive settings and short stories. Further on in this booklet, we will explain in detail what skills are required and looked at in the writing task.

The comprehension task is usually a list of questions based on a short passage. This passage is often not known to the children. The questions will test the children's' ability to retrieve information,

What children do in school at The Roche

There is a **strong** link between writing and reading. Confident and experienced readers make more imaginative and confident writers. At The Roche it is our aim to foster a love of reading and use this to support the writing.

Further reading/resources

There are many websites and resources you can use with your children at home to help them through the 11+ process. We would suggest the following books to use as extra work with the children:

- Bond 11+: English Comprehension Papers: 10-11+ years
- Bond 11+: CEM English Comprehension 10 Minute Tests: 10-11 Years
- New 11+ GL 10-Minute Tests: English - Ages 10-11 Book 1 (with Online Edition) (CGP 11+ GL)
- KS2 English Targeted Question Book: Year 6 Comprehension - Book 1 (CGP KS2 English)
- Bond 11+: English Focus on Writing: 9-11 years
- New 11+ GL 10-Minute Tests: English Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar - Ages 10-11 (with Online Ed) (CGP 11+ GL)
- 11+ Essentials Creative Writing Examples Book 1 (First Past the Post)
- Descriptosaurus: Supporting Creative Writing for Ages 8–14
- Pobble 365—images to support writing

Discussions continued

- Which part of the story was the funniest/scariest/saddest/ happiest? Find some evidence in the text to support your opinion.
- What is the purpose of this book? How do you know?
- Why is this page laid out in this way? Could you improve it?
- Pick three favourite words or phrases from this chapter. Can you explain why you chose them?
- Have you read anything else by this author? Is anything similar?
- Does this book remind you of anything else? How?
- When do you think this book was written? How do you know? Does it matter? What would it be like if it was written now?
- Do you think the title of the book is appropriate? What would you have called it?
- Is the plot fast or slow moving? Find some evidence in the text, which supports your view.
- If the author had included another paragraph before the story started what do you think it would say?
- Would you like to read another book by this author? Why/ why not?

Writing

- There are opportunities to talk before writing. The children share their ideas and discuss what they have imagined.
- The children play vocabulary games such as Just a Minute or Speech Tennis.
- Children are given vocabulary journals to write down new and interesting vocabulary
- Dictionaries and thesauruses are provided to help improve their vocabulary in lessons
- Drama is often used to inspire writing
- The teachers model writing with the children and look at modelled examples
- Children are exposed to a variety of styles and are given plenty opportunities to write in these styles
- Unseen Writing tasks are used more frequently in Year 6

Reading

- In class, children read a variety age appropriate and enriching texts to support their learning
- All children have library sessions with a team of librarians to advise on book choices and support children
- Children have focussed extra reading sessions with a dedicated teacher
- Children have regular comprehension lessons where different skills are taught
- Unseen texts used in Year 6
- Exam techniques are taught and revised
- The build up to the 11+ tests begins in Year 5. This means we may not focus on the time to begin with, we will work with the children to answer together before slowly increasing independence when they are ready to tackle test by themselves.

What skills does a child need in creative writing?

In the 11+ exams, children will be asked to complete a writing task. This could be one of the ones listed below:

- A continuation of the passage they have read
- Short story
- Describing a setting or character
- Letter
- Diary entry

For this the children need to have the following skills.

- Ability to quickly plan
- Strong use of vocabulary
- Neat handwriting
- Ability to imagine a variety of situations
- Strong grasp of different text types and the features of these
- Grammar knowledge and how to apply these confidently in their writing

Discussions

Reading is an important part of the process, but the discussion after this is the most valuable part. It helps children to build a mental image of the text and imagine themselves in the book, something which is key when answering comprehension questions. On the next page there are some ideas for discussions to have with your child after reading together. This can be at the end of the book or at the end of a passage you have read.

- What has happened in the story so far?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- Who is the character you like least? Why?
- Do you think the author intended you to like / dislike this character? How do you know?
- Does your opinion of this character change during the story? How? Why?
- Find two things the author wrote about this character that made him / her likeable?
- If you met one of the characters from the story, what would you say to him / her?
- Which part of the story is your favourite / least favourite? Why?
- Would you change any part of the story/ characters? How?

What can I do at home?

- Read with your child for a minimum of 30 mins every day and **discuss the book**
- Read to your child/children, listening to audio books together. When you read to your child, they can access books of a higher level and complexity that they may not reach alone
- Watch the news and discuss what is happening in the world. Talk about facts vs opinions. Look at different points of view.
- Make connections with other books and patterns they have noticed
- Look at pictures of the news, in paintings, and make assumptions about what is happening and how people are feeling
- Vocabulary—looking at new words, discussing the meaning, games to build deeper understanding of vocab, have complicated conversations with the children, model ambitious vocabulary
- Looking for writing opportunities e.g. holiday journals, letters, book making, postcards, diaries, shared writing
- Support by giving them a quiet space and the time to do

What are the grammar skills?

There are many grammar and punctuation skills that the children should confidently use in their 11+ writing exams. We have listed these below with a short explanation of them.

Grammar devices:

- Nouns—a person, place or thing
- Adjective—a word to describe a noun
- Verb—an action (**run** to the park, **went** to the park)
- Adverb—describes a verb
- Similes—comparing one noun with another (*Owls hooting like an alarm*)
- Metaphors—comparing one noun with another without using **as** or **like** (*owls were alarms in the dark*)
- Personification—giving the features of a person to a non-living noun (*the sun smiled down at me*)
- Alliteration—when two or more words begin with the same sound (*the wary whales waited wearily*)
- Simple sentences—one main clause (*I sat down*)
- Compound sentences—two or more main clauses (*I sat down so Jenny went to play*)
- Complex sentences—one main clause and one subordinate clause (*I didn't see Jenny because she was sat*)

Punctuation

- Colons: Introduces a list
- Semi-colons; Takes the place of a joining word (conjunction)
- Ellipses... Trailing off of thoughts, Shows an interruption, Shows when a word has been removed.
- Exclamation marks! Ends a shocking/surprising sentence
- Apostrophes ' shows ownership and replaces letters
- Question marks? Ends a sentence which is a question.

The different parts of reading comprehension

There are many parts to comprehension. On the next few pages, we have listed the skills children must master and what they mean.

Retrieval

These questions ask children to find information in the text. They are usually worth 1 mark and require children to give an answer that shows a basic understanding of what they have read.

These questions may begin with:

- Who is...?
- Where is...?
- How many...?
- What is...?
- List...

Summary

Summary style questions ask children to summarise several pieces of information from all of the passage. Children will need to find information and then put this succinctly into their own words.

These questions may begin with:

- Summarise...
- Describe in your own words...

Children should be ensure that if they are asked to, they use their own words with these style of questions as using quotes here can lose marks

Looking at the marks

In school children are told to annotate the question, paying particular attention to the marks.

6. Does Stolly think that his interview is good? Write down two short quotations which support your answer. (2)

7. Ian says Stolly has 'mad ideas'. What else do you learn about Stolly's character? Use information from the whole passage in your answer. (4)

8. Why do you think the writer brings in Sophie's comments (lines 36 and 38)? (4)

As you can see from the above example, we ask children to highlight the important parts of the question as well as the marks.

Purpose and Structure

Different texts have different purposes and structures which the children may need to comment on. It is important for the children to thinking about who the writing was intended for and how the structure helps the reader understand it.

Purpose = why it was written

Structure = how it is laid out

These questions may begin with:

- Why do you think the author wrote this...
- How do you know that this text was written for..
- Why has the author used...
- What is the purpose of...
- Who is the text aimed at?

Word meaning in context

When undertaking a comprehension test, children may encounter vocabulary that they haven't heard of before. They may directly be asked to deduce the meaning of the work, or they may need to work out the meaning to help them answer another type of question.

These questions may begin with:

- Give a definition for...
- Give an alternative word for...
- Write a synonym of...
- Give a word that means the same as...

Inference

Inference questions are usually worth more than 1 mark. Children need to form an opinion or judgement about something based on what they have read as a whole. This may be about a character or a setting. These questions may begin with:

- Why do you think...
- In your opinion...
- What does ____ suggest about...
- What does ___ tell us about...
- What does the quotation ' ____ ' tell us about...

Often these questions require the children to give evidence (usually a quote) from the text to support their opinions. Depending on the marks, they may need to give more than one piece of evidence.

Authors use of language

Children may get asked about how the author has chosen to write. They may be asked to find an example of a technique and then comment on why it is effective. This can be tricky as children need to be specific and refer to the impact on the reader and/or the passage.

These questions may begin with:

- What is the effect of...
- Why do you think the author used the word/phrase...
- How does the author build a picture of...
- Find an example of... and explain why it is effective.
- What does the phrase....tell you about...
- How does the author make the character/setting seem...
- Why has the author repeated the phrase...