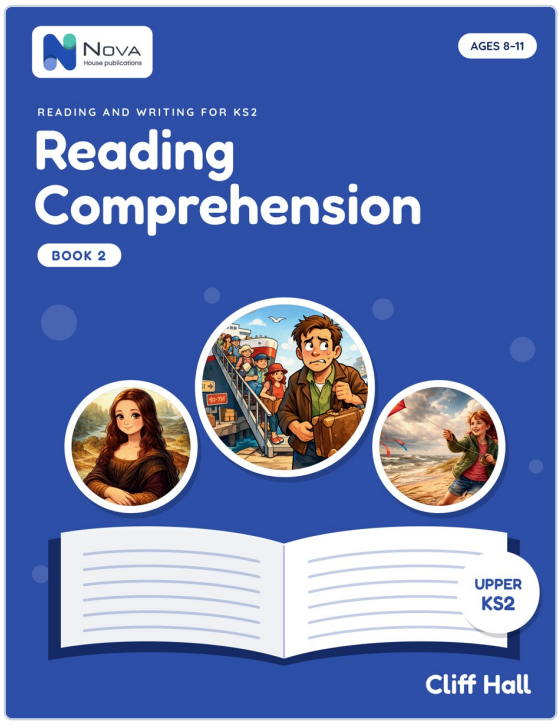
FREE SAMPLE PAGES

Reading Comprehension

Book 2 · Upper KS2 · Ages 8–11

Unit 1: The Arrival



Inside this sample

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1 Print

Print on A4 at home. Every page fits the sheet, so choose "Fit to page" if your printer asks.

2 Have a go

Do the warm-ups and talk about the discussion questions, then read the passage twice and answer the questions. Allow about 45 minutes.

3 Check together

Use the answers on page 8. The marks and explanations show how each answer is scored.

About the book

Ten richer, more demanding texts for Upper KS2 and the 11+: fiction, poetry, history, science and persuasive writing. Children learn to infer, analyse language and structure, compare texts and support every answer with evidence. Part of the Reading and Writing for KS2 series, for ages 8 to 11.

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Unit 1

The Arrival



Fiction

In this unit

1. Warm-up 1: Sensory Overload
2. Warm-up 2: The One Familiar Object
3. Discussion: Strangers and Kindness
4. Vocabulary Check
5. The Passage
6. Comprehension Questions

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Warm-up 1: Sensory Overload

Imagine stepping into a place where everything is completely unfamiliar: the buildings, the language, the food, even the animals. Fill in the table with words that describe what this overwhelming new place might be like.

Sounds	Smells	Sights	Feelings

Warm-up 2: The One Familiar Object

If you had to move to a new country and could take only one small object to remind you of home, what would it be? Explain why you would choose it.

Discussion: Strangers and Kindness

- How could you communicate with someone if you did not share a single word of the same language?
- Have you ever been the "new person": in a new school, club or country? What helped you to feel welcome?
- What small acts of kindness can make a big difference to a newcomer?

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Vocabulary Check

Draw a line to match each word from the story to its meaning.

surreal	very deep or strongly felt
decipher	in the middle of; surrounded by
melodic	strange and dreamlike, as if not quite real
profound	the state of being alone or cut off from others
isolation	pleasant to hear, like a tune
amid	work out the meaning of something difficult to read

Word forms: complete each sentence with isolate, isolated or isolation.

1. On his first night, the man felt completely _____.
2. Doctors sometimes _____ patients to stop an illness spreading.
3. A kind word can end someone's _____.

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The Passage

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

The Arrival

The man stepped off the great iron ship and into a world of impossible sounds and sights. The air did not smell of salt and home, but of sizzling spices and a sweet, smoky fuel he could not name. Towering above him were not the familiar buildings of wood and brick he had left behind, but structures of gleaming copper and glass that twisted towards the sky like frozen whirlwinds.

Strange, floating vehicles hummed silently past, while creatures that were half-bird, half-machine perched on shimmering wires, chirping metallic songs. The signs above the shops were a tapestry of bewildering curls and lines, an alphabet of secrets he could not decipher. Everyone moved with a sense of purpose, their conversations a rapid, melodic chatter that washed over him like a foreign sea. He stood motionless: a single still point in the rushing river of the crowd.

He clutched his small, worn suitcase, the only familiar weight in this surreal landscape. In his pocket, his fingers found the edges of a photograph of his family, an anchor to the world he had left behind. The feeling was not one of fear, but of profound isolation, as if he had landed on a distant moon. He was a puzzle piece from a different game, trying to find where he might fit.

For a long time, he did not move. The sun slid lower, painting the copper towers the colour of embers. His stomach growled. He had not eaten since the ship had left the grey harbour of his old life, nine days and a whole ocean ago. He did not know how to ask for food. He did not even know what the money in his pocket was worth.

Then, at the edge of the square, he noticed a girl standing beside a small cart. Clouds of warm, golden steam rose from it. She was watching him, her head tilted to one side. He must have looked very lost, because she picked up something round and soft, wrapped it in paper and walked straight across to him.

She held it out. It was a kind of bread, glazed and still warm. He fumbled for his coins, but she shook her head and pressed the bread into his hands. Then she pointed to herself and said a single word, slowly and clearly, as though offering him a second gift.

"Ama."

He placed a hand on his chest and told her his name. She repeated it carefully, getting it almost right, and they both laughed.

It was a small thing: a piece of bread, two names, a shared laugh. Yet, as he watched her return to her cart, the strange city seemed a little less strange. Amid the confusion, he felt something he had not expected to feel so soon: a flicker of wonder, and of hope. What incredible things might happen in such a place? What new stories would he become a part of?

Comprehension Questions

1 Name **two** things the man could smell when he stepped off the ship. Retrieval (1 mark)

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2 Give **two** objects that reminded the man of home. Retrieval (2 marks)

3 The signs were "an alphabet of secrets he could not decipher". What does **decipher** mean here? Vocabulary (1 mark)

- ☐ **A)** draw beautifully
- ☐ **B)** write quickly
- ☐ **C)** work out the meaning of
- ☐ **D)** ignore completely

4 Find and copy **one** word from the third paragraph that means "strange and dreamlike". Vocabulary (1 mark)

5 "He stood motionless: a single still point in the rushing river of the crowd." Explain how this metaphor shows the man's situation and feelings. Language (3 marks)

6 The man was "a puzzle piece from a different game". What does this suggest about how he feels? Language (2 marks)

7 Give **two** quotations that show how different the city is from the man's home. Retrieval and inference (2 marks)

8 How long had it been since the man had eaten? Retrieval (1 mark)

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9 "The sun slid lower, painting the copper towers the colour of embers." What does this sentence tell you about the time of day, and what mood does it create? Language (2 marks)

10 Why do you think the girl walked over to the man? Use evidence from the text. Inference (2 marks)

11 Why does the writer describe the girl telling him her name as "a second gift"? Inference (2 marks)

12 Explain how the man's feelings change from the beginning of the passage to the end. Refer to the text in your answer. Structure (3 marks)

13 Which word best describes the girl? Inference (2 marks)

- ☐ **A)** suspicious
- ☐ **B)** generous
- ☐ **C)** shy
- ☐ **D)** impatient. Give **one** piece of evidence.

14 Why do you think the writer ends the passage with two questions? Structure (1 mark)

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Answers and Explanations

Unit 1 The Arrival

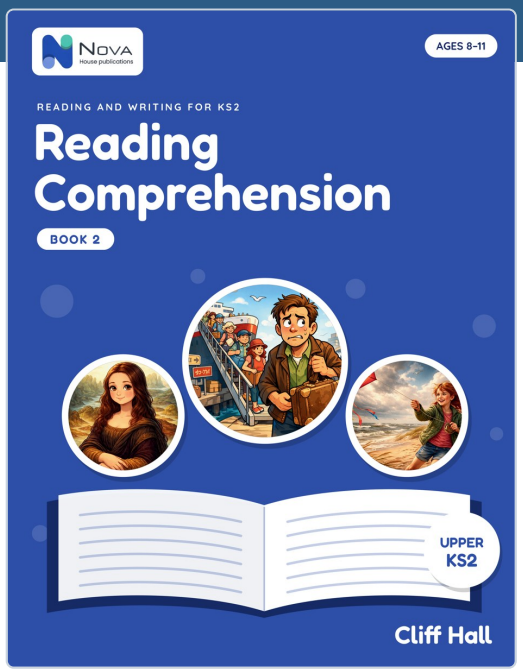
Vocabulary Check: surreal = strange and dreamlike, as if not quite real; decipher = work out the meaning of something difficult to read; melodic = pleasant to hear, like a tune; profound = very deep or strongly felt; isolation = the state of being alone or cut off from others; amid = in the middle of; surrounded by. Word forms: 1 isolated, 2 isolate, 3 isolation.

No.	Answer	Explanation	Marks
1	Sizzling spices and a sweet, smoky fuel.	Both needed.	1
2	His suitcase and the photograph of his family.	1 mark each.	2
3	C) work out the meaning of		1
4	surreal		1
5	Everyone else is moving quickly and with purpose, like a fast-flowing river, while he cannot move. It shows he is separate from the people around him, overwhelmed, and unsure where to go.	1 mark for the contrast (still/rushing); 1 mark for "separate / does not belong"; 1 mark for a feeling (overwhelmed, lost, frozen).	3
6	He feels he does not fit in or belong here, because he comes from a completely different world.	1 mark for "does not fit"; 1 mark for the reason.	2
7	Any two: "not the familiar buildings of wood and brick... but structures of gleaming copper and glass"; "floating vehicles"; "half-bird, half-machine"; "an alphabet of secrets".	1 mark each.	2
8	Nine days.		1
9	It is evening / sunset; the warm glowing colours create a calmer, slightly sad or reflective mood as the day ends and he is still alone.	1 mark for time; 1 mark for mood.	2
10	He looked lost and hungry; she had been "watching him, her head tilted", showing curiosity and concern, so she wanted to help.	1 mark for reason; 1 mark for evidence.	2
11	Telling him her name was an offer of friendship, as valuable as the bread, and a first step to communicating.	1 mark for friendship / connection; 1 mark for comparing it to the bread.	2
12	At first he feels isolated and overwhelmed ("profound isolation", "as if he had landed on a distant moon"); by the end, after Ama's kindness, he feels wonder and hope ("a flicker of wonder, and of hope").	1 mark for the start with evidence; 1 mark for the end with evidence; 1 mark for identifying the cause of the change.	3
13	B) generous: she gave him bread and refused his money.	1 mark for B; 1 mark for evidence.	2
14	To show his new curiosity and hope, and to make the reader wonder what will happen next.		1

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Book 2 · Upper KS2

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