



A2Z Learning: 11+
English
Reading Comprehension
Never Let me Go (F)

These comprehensions will help you to experience the type of texts that are usually used in 11+ exams or independent school entrance exams.

The number of marks next to each question will give you an idea about how detailed your answer will need to be. Therefore, if a question is worth 3 marks then the answer will need at least 3 separate points/pieces of evidence from the text.

School selection tests are usually timed, so working within a time limit is something you will need to practise.

A reading comprehension of this length (just over a page) will be expected to be completed in 25-30 minutes.

Make sure you **read the questions carefully**. If it asks you to write a sentence make sure you do!

Good luck! You can do this!



Never Let me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

Read the following then answer all the questions that follow.

In this part of 'Never Let Me Go' by Kazuo Ishiguro, the storyteller, Cathy, describes the trouble her friend, Tommy, had when he was younger. They were both at an unusual school where the pupils always lived, never visiting or knowing their parents.

1 Tommy and I talked about all this not so long ago, and his own account of how his
2 troubles began confirmed what I was thinking that night. According to him, it had
3 all started one afternoon in one of Miss Geraldine's art classes. Until that day,
4 Tommy told me, he'd always quite enjoyed painting. But then that day in Miss
5 Geraldine's class, Tommy had done this particular watercolour – of an elephant
6 standing in some tall grass – and that was what started it all off. He'd done it, he
7 claimed, as a kind of joke. I quizzed him a lot on this point and I suspect the truth
8 was that it was like a lot of things at that age: you don't have any clear reason, you
9 just do it.

10 Anyway, he did his elephant, which was exactly the sort of picture a kid three
11 years younger might have done. It took him no more than twenty minutes and it got
12 a laugh, sure enough, though not quite the sort he'd expected. Even so, it might
13 not have led to anything if Miss Geraldine hadn't been taking the class that day.

14 Miss Geraldine was everyone's favourite guardian when we were that age. She
15 was gentle, soft-spoken, and always comforted you when you needed it, even
16 when you'd done something bad, or been told off by another guardian. If she ever
17 had to tell you off herself, then for days afterwards she'd give you lots of extra
18 attention, like she owed you something. It was unlucky for Tommy that it was Miss
19 Geraldine taking art that day and not, say, Mr Robert or Miss Emily herself – the
20 head guardian – who often took art. Had it been either of those two, Tommy would
21 have got a bit of a telling off, he could have done his smirk, and the worst the others
22 would have thought was that it was a feeble joke. He might even have had some
23 students think him a right clown. But Miss Geraldine being Miss Geraldine, it didn't
24 go that way. Instead, she did her best to look at the picture with kindness and



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25 understanding. And probably guessing Tommy was in danger of getting stick from
26 the others, she went too far the other way, actually finding things to praise, pointing
27 them out to the class. That was how the resentment started.

28 “After we left the room,” Tommy remembered, “that’s when I first heard them
29 talking. And they didn’t care I could hear.”

30 My guess is that from some time before he did that elephant, Tommy had had
31 the feeling he wasn’t keeping up – that his painting in particular was like that of
32 students much younger than him – and he’d been covering up the best he could
33 by doing deliberately childish pictures. But after the elephant painting, the whole
34 thing had been brought into the open, and now everyone was watching to see what
35 he did next. It seems he did make an effort for a while, but he’d no sooner have
36 started on something, there’d be sneers and giggles all around him. In fact, the
37 harder he tried, the more laughable his efforts turned out. So before long Tommy
38 had gone back to his original defence, producing work that seemed deliberately
39 childish, work that said he couldn’t care less. From there, the thing had got deeper
40 and deeper.

41 For a while he’d only had to suffer during art lessons – though that was often
42 enough, because we did a lot of art in the Juniors. But then it grew bigger. He got
43 left out of games, boys refused to sit next to him at dinner, or pretended not to hear
44 if he said anything in his dorm after lights-out. At first it wasn’t so relentless. Months
45 could go by without incident, he’d think the whole thing was behind him, then
46 something he did – or one of his enemies, like Arthur H. – would get it all going
47 again.

48 I’m not sure when the big temper tantrums started. My own memory of it is that
49 Tommy was always known for his temper, even in the Infants, but he claimed to me
50 they only began after the teasing got bad.

1) In lines 1-3, two phrases, of three words each, make it clear that Cathy was NOT giving her own view but Tommy's explanation for how his troubles started. Write out the two phrases.

i)

ii)

(2)

2) In the rest of the paragraph, Cathy makes it clear that she does not fully believe Tommy. Find two ways (lines 6-9) in which she shows she doubted his explanation.

i)

ii)

(2)

3) Tommy's picture 'got a laugh' (lines 11-12), but 'not quite the sort he'd expected.' What do you think was the difference between the laugh Tommy expected and the way the students actually laughed?

He expected

but in fact

(2)

4) Choose three adjectives, each of ONE word only, to describe Miss Geraldine, all of which help to explain why she was 'everyone's favourite guardian.' The words you choose can either come from the passage, if appropriate, or from your own understanding of what Miss Geraldine was like.

i)

ii)

iii)

(3)



5) If Mr Robert or Miss Emily had been taking the art class, Tommy would have got 'a bit of a telling off' (line 21). What for?

For

and for

(2)

6) Tommy could have 'done his smirk' (line 21). What is a 'smirk'? (Try to answer with an adjective and a noun.)

A 'smirk' is a

(2)

7) Does the phrase 'a right clown' in line 23 mean (choose one answer).

A. A man in a circus.

B. A future comedian.

C. Too lazy.

D. Truly funny.

E. Just silly.

(1)

8) What does 'getting stick' (line 25) mean?

A. Being hit.

B. Being criticised.

C. Being friendless.

D. Being forced to work.

E. Being ignored.

(1)

9) Clearly explain what Miss Geraldine did to try to help Tommy, and why it worked out badly for him.

She tried to help him by

It worked out badly because

(4)



10) 'That was how the resentment started.' (line 27)

Which ONE answer is the best meaning of 'resentment' in this instance?

- A. A jealous feeling that Tommy got better treatment.
- B. An angry feeling that Tommy's art was poor.
- C. A cruel feeling that they wanted to make Tommy suffer.
- D. A feeling of hatred that they had only just discovered.
- E. A feeling of despair that they would never be praised like Tommy. (1)

11) Explain what is meant by 'deliberately childish pictures' (line 33-39).

'Deliberately childish pictures' are

(2)

12) When Tommy did make an effort 'there'd be sneers and giggles all around him' (line 36). You do not need to write in sentences for this.

- A) What are 'giggles'?
- B) What are 'sneers'?

(2)

13) In lines 39-40 it says 'the thing had got deeper and deeper'.

A) What is meant by the thing?

It means

(2)

13B) 'How did it get 'deeper and deeper'? (Choose ONE answer)

- A. Tommy did not know about it.
- B. More and more students talked about Tommy.
- C. Tommy was trapped.
- D. Tommy had no friends.
- E. Only Cathy liked Tommy. (1)



14) The sentence beginning at the end of line 42 ('He got...') and going to the middle of line 44 (alter lights out') describes Tommy being **ostracised**, although the writer does not use that word. By looking at the way he was treated, see if you can explain, in words of your own, what **ostracised** means, (Do not just copy out examples of how he was treated.)

Ostracised means

(3)

15) There are two ways in which teachers at the school described in the passage are not named or talked about in the same way as you would mention teachers at your own school. What are these two ways?

i)

ii)

(2)

16) Select from the passage **ONE WORD** which most closely corresponds to the word on the left. Guidance is given on the lines within which the word can be found. (8)

A.	Description	lines 1-4
B	Questioned	lines 4-9
C.	Kind	lines 10-14
D.	Weak	lines 18-23
E.	Bitterness	lines 23-29
F.	Purposely	lines 30-35
G.	Ridiculous	lines 35-40
H.	Persistent	lines 42-47

Total 40 Marks



Question	Answer	Marks
1i & 1ii	"his own account" and "according to him". (1 mark each.)	2 marks
2i & 2ii	Any two of these. She says "he <u>claimed</u> " it was a joke. She "quizzed" (questioned) him a lot on this claim. Both of these imply doubt. She also gives her own version of "the truth", which implies that she doesn't trust him. She suspects the truth was different from what he said. (1 mark each.)	2 marks
3.	He expected the others to find his picture funny (1) but in fact they were laughing <u>at</u> him. (1)	2 marks
4.	gentle, kind, understanding, protective, attentive, motherly, comforting, generous, helpful. Not soft-spoken. (Any three of these.)	3 marks
5.	For doing a deliberately bad picture (1) for doing the kind of picture a kid three years younger would have done (1), for trying to be funny (1), for not trying hard enough (to do a good picture). (Any two of these.)	2 marks
6.	A cheeky (1) grin (1). Also naughty/mischievous (1) smile (1).	2 marks
7.	D.	1 mark.
8.	B	1 mark
9.	She tried to help him by praising his picture/finding things to praise in his picture/pointing out things to praise in his picture (praising <i>and</i> pointing out for 2 marks and not 1). It worked out badly because it led to the others resenting him/disliking him/continuing to tease him... since he seemed to be given special favour/undeserved praise (resentment and reason for 2 more marks).	4 marks
10.	A	1 mark
11.	'Deliberately childish pictures' are pictures that have been made to look like the work of quite a young child (1), although the artist is in fact older than that (1). (They should not repeat "deliberately".)	2 marks
12.	Giggles: laughter/quiet laughter/suppressed laughter/mocking laughter/laughter which they don't want the teacher to hear (1). Sneers: mocking comments/rude remarks (about his art) and his ability/comments that are meant to hurt him (1).	2 marks
13.	(a) It means the poor work he did in Art (1) and the other students' attitude to/comments about it (1), or his growing unpopularity (1), their targeting of him (1). (Any two of these.) (b) B	2 marks 1 mark
14.	Being left out/ignored. Not being allowed to belong. Not being spoken to. Not being listened to. Treated as an outcast/as someone who does not exist. (Any three of these.)	3 marks
15.	They are known by 'Mr' or 'Miss' in front of their first/fore/Christian names (1) as if they are friends (1), called guardians (1). (Any two of these three.)	2 marks
16.	A: account B: quizzed C: sort D: feeble E: resentment F: deliberately G: laughable H: relentless (1 each = 8)	8 marks
	TOTAL	40 marks