

The Attic Door

Category: Fiction - Mystery & Suspense | Time Allowed: 45 Minutes | Total Marks: 35

Candidate Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____

READING EXTRACT - Read carefully before answering Section A questions

1 Mara had lived in the tall, draughty house for six years, but she had never once opened the attic door. It stood at the end of the landing, its brass handle dull with dust, and her grandmother always said the same thing whenever Mara asked about it: 'Some rooms like to keep their own secrets.'

One rainy Saturday, with nothing else to do, Mara finally turned the handle. The door creaked open
5 onto a narrow staircase, and a smell of old paper and cedar drifted down to meet her. She climbed slowly, one hand trailing along the peeling wallpaper, until she reached a room lit only by a small round window.

Boxes were stacked everywhere, but one was different from the rest: a wooden chest with her own name carved into the polished lid, though she was quite sure she had never seen it before. Her
10 fingers hesitated above the latch. Somewhere below, she heard her grandmother's footsteps stop at the bottom of the attic stairs.

11+ EXAMINER GUIDANCE & STUDY TIPS FOR THIS EXTRACT

1. Active Reading: Read the extract twice. Underline key verbs, adjectives, and character reactions.
2. VIPERS Focus: Look for context clues around unfamiliar words to deduce meanings accurately.
3. Evidence: For 2-mark and 3-mark questions, always quote directly or paraphrase specific evidence.
4. Timing: Spend ~15 minutes reading, 15 minutes on Comprehension, and 15 minutes on Creative Writing.
5. Need 1-to-1 preparation? Tailored tuition with Fiaraz Iqbal: www.themathsandsciencetutor.co.uk

Section A: VIPERS Comprehension Questions

Answer all questions in full sentences using evidence from the extract. Total: 15 Marks

[V] VOCABULARY**Question 1****[2 marks]**

What does the word "hesitated" mean in the final paragraph? Give one suitable synonym.

[R] RETRIEVAL**Question 2****[1 mark]**

How long had Mara lived in the house before she decided to open the attic door?

[I] INFERENCE**Question 3****[2 marks]**

What does the grandmother's phrase "Some rooms like to keep their own secrets" suggest about the attic?

[P] PREDICTION**Question 4****[2 marks]**

Predict what will happen immediately after the grandmother stops at the bottom of the stairs.

[E] EXPLAIN**Question 5****[2 marks]**

Why has the author chosen to set this scene on a "rainy Saturday"? How does this create atmosphere?

[S] SUMMARISE**Question 6****[2 marks]**

Summarise the key events of the passage in exactly two complete sentences.

Write the next 150-200 words of the story. Describe what Mara discovers inside the carved chest and how her grandmother reacts upon entering. Include dialogue with accurate speech punctuation, descriptive expanded noun phrases, and fronted adverbials.

Describe a mysterious hidden room discovered inside an old manor. Focus on sensory details: light filtering through dusty windows, smells of aged cedar, and quiet shadows.
Aim to create an atmosphere of wonder and suspense using similes and powerful imagery.

[] Varied Sentence Openers [] Figurative Language [] Fronted Adverbials [] Accurate Dialogue Punctuation
[] Sensory Imagery (Sight, Sound, Touch) [] Powerful Verbs [] Ambitious 11+ Vocabulary Choices

Section C: Examiner Mark Scheme & Model Answers

Comprehensive answers, acceptable variations, and 11+ mark allocation criteria.

Question 1 [V]

"Hesitated" means paused briefly due to uncertainty or nervous anticipation. Acceptable synonyms: paused, waited, faltered.

Question 2 [R]

Mara had lived in the house for exactly six years.

Question 3 [I]

It implies the grandmother is deliberately concealing important family history, memories, or confidential items in the attic.

Question 4 [P]

Credit plausible predictions: Grandmother climbs the stairs to confront Mara, calls up to warn her, or explains the family heirloom.

Question 5 [E]

A rainy setting evokes feelings of confinement, isolation, and quiet curiosity, naturally motivating Mara to explore forgotten indoor spaces.

Question 6 [S]

Bored on a rainy day, Mara opens a long-forbidden attic door and discovers a wooden chest inscribed with her name. As she hesitates to open it, she hears her grandmother arrive at the stairs.

CREATIVE WRITING BAND MARKING SCHEME (20 Marks Total):

- Band 1 (16-20 Marks): Exceptional atmosphere, compelling narrative voice, sophisticated vocabulary, diverse syntax.
- Band 2 (11-15 Marks): Clear narrative structure, good descriptive detail, accurate paragraphs and punctuation.
- Band 3 (6-10 Marks): Basic story progression, simple adjectives, occasional punctuation errors.
- SPaG (5 Marks): Award up to 5 additional marks for spelling accuracy, ambitious vocabulary, and neat handwriting.

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