

The harbour bell

Fiction | 6 questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read once for the main idea. Look back at the passage while answering. Find words that support each answer.

Ruth had promised to meet her cousin at the harbour steps before the town walk. She arrived early, carrying the map they had printed the night before. Beyond the wall, boats tugged gently at their ropes.

A bell rang from the clock tower. Ruth counted eleven strokes, then checked her watch. It showed half past ten. She frowned. Her cousin was usually punctual, but perhaps the tower was right and she was already late.

A man on a nearby bench looked up from his newspaper. "That bell isn't giving the time today," he said. "They're testing it after a repair."

Ruth glanced towards the tower. Two workers stood in the open window beneath the clock face. One lifted a hand, and another uneven burst of ringing followed.

She sat down to wait. A minute later, her cousin hurried round the corner, holding a paper bag. "Still warm," he said, offering her a bun. "I thought we could eat before we start."

Ruth folded the map so that the first part of their route was visible. She had nearly left to catch up with a walk that had not begun. As they climbed the steps together, she checked the map's meeting time once more, then put her watch back beneath her sleeve.

Questions

Choose one answer for each question. You can refer to the passage. The answer notes start on a separate page.

1. Where was Ruth waiting?

- A. At the harbour steps
- B. Inside the clock tower
- C. Outside the bakery
- D. Beside the final stop on the walk

2. What were the workers doing?

- A. Printing new town maps
- B. Calling boats into the harbour
- C. Testing the bell after a repair
- D. Changing the walking route

3. What does “punctual” mean?

- A. Knowing every route
- B. Speaking very quietly
- C. Arriving at the expected time
- D. Carrying plenty of food

4. Why did Ruth initially worry she was late?

- A. The number of bell strokes disagreed with her watch
- B. The boats had already left
- C. The newspaper announced a new meeting place
- D. Her cousin had changed the plan

5. Which detail supports the man’s explanation?

- A. The cousin brings a warm bun
- B. Ruth has a printed map
- C. The boats pull on their ropes
- D. Workers signal before an uneven burst of ringing

6. What does Ruth learn to do in this situation?

- A. Ignore every clock in the town
- B. Follow any group leaving the harbour
- C. Replace the map with her watch
- D. Check what a signal means before changing her plan

Answers and explanations

Try the questions before reading these notes. A practice score is not an exam grade.

1. A. At the harbour steps

Ruth had arranged to meet at the harbour steps and arrived there early.

2. C. Testing the bell after a repair

The man explains that the bell is being tested after a repair; Ruth then sees the workers.

3. C. Arriving at the expected time

Ruth's worry about being late contrasts with her cousin usually arriving on time.

4. A. The number of bell strokes disagreed with her watch

Eleven strokes suggest eleven o'clock, while her watch shows half past ten.

5. D. Workers signal before an uneven burst of ringing

The visible workers and uneven ringing support the explanation that this is a test, not a time signal.

6. D. Check what a signal means before changing her plan

The bell sounds familiar but has a different purpose that day, so checking prevents a mistaken decision.

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