

# Reading Booklet

Key stage 2 reading  
practice paper

Includes extracts from:

The Short and Bloody History of Pirates  
The Railway Children  
and  
Little Women



Contents

The Railway Children ..... 3

The Short and Bloody History of Pirates ..... 5

Little Women ..... 6

Key stage 2 - English reading practice paper ..... 7

Extract from: *The Railway Children* by E. Nesbitt

*Because their father has been taken away under mysterious circumstances, three children – Roberta, Peter and Phyllis – have had to leave their home in London and travel to a new house in the country with their mother.*

“Wake up, dears. We’re there.”

They woke up, cold and melancholy, and stood shivering on the draughty platform while the baggage was taken out of the train. Then the engine, puffing and blowing, set to work again, and dragged the train away. The children watched the tail-lights of the guard’s van disappear into the darkness.

This was the first train the children saw on that railway which was in time to become so very dear to them. They did not guess then how they would grow to love the railway, and how soon it would become the centre of their new life, nor what wonders and changes it would bring to them. They only shivered and sneezed and hoped the walk to the new house would not be long. Peter’s nose was colder than he ever remembered it to have been before. Roberta’s hat was crooked, and the elastic seemed tighter than usual. Phyllis’s shoe-laces had come undone.



“Come,” said Mother, “we’ve got to walk. There aren’t any cabs here.”

The walk was dark and muddy. The children stumbled a little on the rough road, and once Phyllis absently fell into a puddle, and was picked up damp and unhappy. There were no gas-lamps on the road, and the road was uphill. The cart went at a foot’s pace, and they followed the gritty crunch of its wheels. As their eyes got used to the darkness, they could see the mound of boxes swaying dimly in front of them.

A long gate had to be opened for the cart to pass through, and after that the road seemed to go across fields—and now it went down hill. Presently a great dark lumpish thing showed over to the right.

“There’s the house,” said Mother. “I wonder why she’s shut the shutters.”

“Who’s *she*?” asked Roberta.

“The woman I engaged to clean the place, and put the furniture straight and get supper.”

There was a low wall, and trees inside.

“That’s the garden,” said Mother.

“It looks more like a dripping-pan full of black cabbages,” said Peter.

The cart went on along by the garden wall, and round to the back of the house, and here it clattered into a cobble-stoned yard and stopped at the back door.

There was no light in any of the windows.

Everyone hammered at the door, but no one came.

The man who drove the cart said he expected Mrs. Viney had gone home.

“You see your train was that late,” said he.

“But she’s got the key,” said Mother. “What are we to do?”

“Oh, she’ll have left that under the doorstep,” said the cart man; “folks do hereabouts.” He took the lantern off his cart and stooped.

“Ay, here it is, right enough,” he said.

He unlocked the door and went in and set his lantern on the table.

“Got e’er a candle?” said he.

“I don’t know where anything is.” Mother spoke rather less cheerfully than usual.

He struck a match. There was a candle on the table, and he lighted it. By its thin little glimmer the children saw a large bare kitchen with a stone floor. There were no curtains, no hearth-rug. The kitchen table from home stood in the middle of the room. The chairs were in one corner, and the pots, pans, brooms, and crockery in another. There was no fire, and the black grate showed cold, dead ashes.

As the cart man turned to go out after he had brought in the boxes, there was a rustling, scampering sound that seemed to come from inside the walls of the house.

“Oh, what’s that?” cried the girls.

“It’s only the rats,” said the cart man. And he went away and shut the door, and the sudden draught of it blew out the candle.

“Oh, dear,” said Phyllis, “I wish we hadn’t come!” and she knocked a chair over.

“*Only* the rats!” said Peter, in the dark.

**Section 2: Extract from: *The Short and Bloody History of Pirates* by John Farman**

**THE PICK OF THE BUNCH**

There were thousands of pirates terrorising the seven seas during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but some stood out head and shoulders above the rest. Here's the pick of the best – or worst – of 'em!

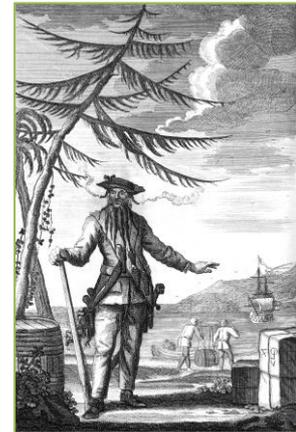


**Blackbeard – The Weirdest**

Blackbeard was the nickname given to a nasty piece of work called Edward Teach, who was born in Bristol sometime in the late seventeenth century. In a way he was a failed sailor who turned lawbreaker because he wasn't getting anywhere in the Navy. Nonetheless, he was to gain a reputation as one of the most terrifying of all pirates and is now more talked about than any of the famous proper naval captains of the day. Here are just a few of the stories about the old devil.

***Appearance***

Not content with being fierce, Blackbeard had to *look* fierce as well. He had a good start, for he was built like an all-in wrestler with a horribly twisted nose and big sticky-out ears. He added to this by sporting a huge, shaggy beard (black obviously) which he wore in filthy ringlets. To set all this off, Blackbeard would wear a black wide-brimmed pirate hat pulled down right to his eyes and, best of all, when in fighting mode, he would weave hemp cords soaked in saltpetre and limewater into his hair and beard and light them, so surrounding his massive head with an eerie glow and thick black smoke.



His demonic appearance was accompanied by a bandoleer with three braces of pistols ready for action and a wide belt with even more pistols and various nasty-looking daggers and cutlasses. Not someone you'd want to meet on a dark night in a small boat, I'll wager.

***Fun and Games***

In order to show his crew who was boss, Blackbeard would think up daft tests of bravery and endurance. Like creating a 'hell' of his very own, which he did by challenging the toughest sailors to accompany him down below, where he battened down all the hatches and lit pots of lethal brimstone. As the choking yellow fumes filled the pirates' parlour, one by one the crew dashed gasping in to the fresh air, while Blackbeard remained laughing fit to burst.

***Gaining Respect***

Another time, he was sitting at a table, down below, having a pleasant after-work drink with his mates, when he suddenly blew out the candles and pulled out his two huge pistols. Before anyone could get a word out, he shot right under the table, smashing the knee of Israel Hands, his second in command, who was taken immediately to the wooden leg department.

**Section 3:** Extract from *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

*In this story, Jo has fallen out with her younger sister, Amy, because Amy has destroyed one of Jo's most treasured possessions. Jo goes to skate on the frozen river with her friend Laurie, and Amy follows them to ask Jo for forgiveness.*

It was not far to the river, but both were ready before Amy reached them. Jo saw her coming, and turned her back; Laurie did not see, for he was carefully skating along the shore, sounding the ice, for a warm spell had preceded the cold snap.

'I'll go on to the first bend, and see if it's all right, before we begin to race,' Amy heard him say, as he shot away, looking like a young Russian, in his fur-trimmed coat and cap.

Jo heard Amy panting after her run, stamping her feet, and blowing her fingers, as she tried to put her skates on; but Jo never turned, and went slowly zigzagging down the river, taking a bitter, unhappy sort of satisfaction in her sister's troubles. She had cherished her anger till it grew strong, and took possession of her, as evil thoughts and feelings always do, unless cast out at once. As Laurie turned the bend, he shouted back:

'Keep near the shore; it isn't safe in the middle.'

Jo heard, but Amy was just struggling to her feet, and did not catch a word. Jo glanced over her shoulder, and the little demon she was harbouring said in her ear: 'No matter whether she heard or not, let her take care of herself.'

Laurie had vanished round the bend; Jo was just at the turn, and Amy, far behind, striking out toward the smoother ice in the middle of the river. For a minute Jo stood still, but with a strange feeling at her heart; then she resolved to go on, but something held and turned her round, just in time to see Amy throw up her hands and go down, with the sudden crash of rotten ice, the splash of water, and a cry that made Jo's heart stand still with fear. She tried to call Laurie, but her voice was gone; she tried to rush forward, but her feet seemed to have no strength in them; and, for a second, she could only stand motionless, staring, with a terror-stricken face, at the little blue hood above the black water. Something rushed swiftly by her, and Laurie's voice cried out:

'Bring a rail; quick, quick!'



## Key stage 2 - English reading practice paper

First name	.....		
Middle name	.....		
Last name	.....		
Date of birth	Day.....	Month .....	Year .....
School name	.....		

## Instructions

You have one hour to complete this test. You must answer the questions in the answer booklet. Read one text and answer the questions about that text before you move on to the next text. There are three texts and three sets of questions.

In this booklet, there are different types of question for you to answer in different ways. The space for your answer shows you what type of answer is needed. Write your answer in the space provided.

### Short answers

Some questions are followed by a short line or box. This shows that you need only write a word or a few words in your answer.

### Several line answers

Some questions are followed by a few lines. This gives you space to write more words or a sentence or two.

### Longer answers

Some questions are followed by more answer lines. This shows that a longer, more detailed answer is needed to explain your opinion. You can write in full sentences if you want to.

### Selected answers

For some questions you do not need to write anything at all and you should tick, draw lines to, or circle your answer. Read the instructions carefully so that you know how to answer the question.

As this is a reading test, you must use the information in the texts to answer the questions. When a question includes a page reference, you should refer to the text on that page to help you with your answer.

### Marks

The number under each line at the side of the page tells you the maximum number of marks for each question.

Questions 1 – 14 are about *The Railway Children* by E. Nesbitt (pages 3 – 4)

1. *Roberta's hat was crooked, and the elastic seemed tighter than usual.*

Which word is closest in meaning to **crooked**?

Tick **one**.

upside-down

lopsided

ragged

soaked

1 mark

2. Look at page 3. Why does Mother tell the children that they have to walk?

.....

1 mark

3. Look at the paragraph that begins: *This was the first train...*

In what ways can you tell that the children felt uncomfortable? Name **two**.

1. ....

2. ....

2 marks

4. Look at the paragraph that begins: *The walk was damp and muddy.*

Name three things that make the family's walk more difficult.

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

2 marks

5. *The cart went at a foot's pace.*

What does this mean? Tick **one**.

The cart only travelled a short distance.

The cart was travelling too fast for the children to keep up with it.

The cart travelled at walking speed.

The cart was pulled by a horse.

1 mark

6. *Presently a great dark lumpish thing showed over to the right.*

What does *a great dark lumpish thing* tell you about how the family feel about the first sight of their new home?

.....

1 mark

7. *"That's the garden," said Mother.*

*"It looks more like a dripping-pan full of black cabbages," said Peter.*

How does this tell you that Peter doesn't like the garden?

.....

1 mark

8. *There was no light in any of the windows.*

Why is Mother surprised by this?

.....

1 mark

9. Why did the cart man think that Mrs Viney had gone home?

Tick **one**.

Because the family's train was so late arriving.

Because she'd already made the dinner.

Because she didn't have the key.

Because she was worried about the rats.

1 mark

10. "Oh, she'll have left that under the doorstep," said the cart man; "folks do hereabouts."

What does the cart man mean by *folks do hereabouts*?

Tick **one**.

You hear about people leaving things under the doorstep.

It is traditional to leave the house unlocked.

People lose keys all the time.

People do that kind of thing around here.

1 mark

11. Look at the paragraph beginning: *He struck a match...*

Name **two** things about the kitchen that the family finds disappointing.

1. ....

2. ....

2 marks

12. Look at the paragraph beginning: *He struck a match...*

Find and copy the word that is closest in meaning to 'gleam'.

.....

1 mark

13. *'Only the rats!'* said Peter, in the dark.

What does Peter think about the rats?

Tick **one**.

He thinks that rats aren't anything to worry about.

He thinks that it is normal to have rats in the country.

He thinks there are lots of other animals as well as the rats.

Unlike the cart man, he thinks that the rats are a problem.

1 mark

14. Number the following events 1 – 5 to show the order in which they happened. The first one has been done for you.

Phyllis knocks a chair over.

The family's baggage is taken off the train.

They hear the sound of rats in the walls.

The cart man shows them the key under the doorstep.

The children's mother wakes them up.

1 mark

17 marks total for this section

Questions 15 – 27 are about *The Short and Bloody History of Pirates* by John Farman (page 5)

15. *As the choking yellow fumes filled the pirates' parlour, one by one the crew dashed gasping in to the fresh air.*

Find and copy two different words from the sentence above which show how desperate the crew were to be able to breathe.

1. ....

2. ....

1 mark

16. Look at the paragraph which begins: *Blackbeard was the nickname...*

Why did Blackbeard become a lawbreaker?

.....

1 mark

17. Look at the paragraph beginning: *There were thousands of pirates...*

Find and copy one word which is closest in meaning to 'scaring'.

.....

1 mark

18. Using information from the text, put a tick in the correct box to show whether information is true or false.

	True	False
Blackbeard's real name was Edward Teach.		
Blackbeard was born in the eighteenth century.		
Blackbeard cut off the leg of his second in command with a cutlass.		
Blackbeard set challenges to test his crew's bravery and endurance.		

2 marks

19. Name **two** features of Blackbeard's appearance that were frightening.

1. ....
2. ....

2 marks

20. **Find** and **copy** a group of words that tells you that Blackbeard found it funny to torture his crew with brimstone fumes.

.....

1 mark

21. Look at the section headed *Gaining Respect*.

What did Blackbeard do **before** he pulled out his two huge pistols?

.....

1 mark

22. Look at the section headed *Appearance*.

Put a tick in the correct box to show whether each of the following statements is a **fact** or an **opinion**.

	True	False
Blackbeard had a huge black beard.		
Blackbeard's weapons included pistols, cutlasses and daggers.		
Blackbeard wore a black wide-brimmed pirate hat.		
You wouldn't want to meet Blackbeard on a dark night in a small boat.		

2 marks

23. In what city was Blackbeard born?

.....

1 mark

24. Look at the paragraph beginning: *Another time, he was sitting at a table...*

Find and copy **one** word which means 'without delay'.

.....

1 mark

25. Blackbeard could become violent without warning.

Give one piece of evidence from the text which shows this.

.....

1 mark

26. Which of the following would be the most suitable summary of the whole text?

Tick **one**.

The Nastiest of Pirates

What Blackbeard Looked Like

The Death of Blackbeard

How to Fight a Pirate

1 mark

27. Draw lines to match each section to its content.

One has been done for you.

Appearance

Gives an example of the ways in which Blackbeard tested and frightened his crew.

Gaining Respect

Gives information about what Blackbeard looked like and the weapons he wore.

Fun and Games

Tells a story about a time that Blackbeard injured his second in command.



1 mark

16 marks total for this section

Questions 28 – 38 are about *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (page 6)

28. *...Jo never turned, and went slowly zigzagging down the river, taking a bitter, unhappy sort of satisfaction in her sister's troubles.*

Choose the best word to match the description above. Circle your choice.

Jo was skating ...

fiercely

dangerously

steadily

speedily

1 mark

29. *Laurie did not see, for he was carefully skating along the shore, sounding the ice, for a warm spell had preceded the cold snap.*

What does *sounding the ice* mean? Tick **one**.

Tapping to see if it makes a musical sound.

Checking to see whether it is strong enough to skate on.

Making patterns in the ice.

Looking for fish in the water below.

1 mark

30. Look at the paragraph beginning: *Jo heard Amy panting after her run...*

**Find** and **copy two different** groups of words that show that Amy is cold.

1. ....

2. ....

2 marks

31. *...as he shot away, looking like a young Russian in his fur-trimmed coat and cap.*

What does the word 'shot' tell us about the way that Laurie skated?

.....

1 mark

32. Look at the paragraph beginning: *Jo heard Amy panting...*

What does this paragraph tell you about how Jo is feeling at this point in the story?

Explain **two** feelings that Jo has, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3 marks

33. Look at the paragraph beginning: *Jo heard Amy panting...*

Find and copy a phrase which means ‘thrown away’.

.....

1 mark

34. Look at the paragraph beginning: *Jo heard, but Amy was just struggling to her feet...*

What do you think the *little demon* is that speaks in Jo’s ear? Choose **one**:

A magical animal

A bad fairy

Jo’s good conscience

Jo’s feeling of anger towards Amy

1 mark

35. Look at the paragraph beginning: *Laurie had vanished round the bend...*

How do we know that Jo truly cares for her sister?

Explain **two** ways, giving evidence from the text to support your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3 marks

36. *She tried to call Laurie, but her voice was gone...*

This tells us that when Amy falls through the ice, Jo:

Tick **one**.

Feels too shocked to speak.

Has a very sore throat.

Doesn't want Laurie to help.

Is too far away for Laurie to hear her.

1 mark

37. *Something rushed swiftly by her...*

Who or what rushes past Jo at the end of the story?

Tick **one**.

Amy

Laurie

A bird

A boat

1 mark

38. Tick **one** box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Laurie did not see that Amy had followed them down to the river.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amy asked Jo to wait for her to put her skates on.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laurie thought the ice was safe in the middle of the river.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amy was wearing a blue hood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 marks

17 marks total for this section

50 marks total for entire paper

## Answers

Questions 1 – 14 are about *The Railway Children* by E. Nesbitt (pages 3 – 4 ) (check page numbers)

Question	Answer	Mark
1	lopsided	1
2	<p><b>Award 1 mark</b> for reference to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because in the countryside there are no cabs to take them home.</li> </ul> <p><b>Do not accept</b> answers which just state that they are in the countryside without reference to cabs.</p>	1
3	<p><b>Award 1 mark</b> for each of the following points, up to a maximum of <b>2 marks</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They sneezed</li> <li>• They shivered</li> <li>• They were worried about how long the walk was going to be</li> <li>• Peter's nose felt cold</li> <li>• Roberta's hat elastic seemed tight</li> <li>• Phyllis's shoe-laces had come undone.</li> </ul> <p><b>Do not accept</b> references to the fact that the children are cold without evidence from the text to back this up.</p>	2
4	<p><b>Award 1 mark</b> for any <b>two</b> and <b>2 marks</b> for any <b>three</b> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the road was rough</li> <li>• there were puddles</li> <li>• there were no gas lamps</li> <li>• the road was uphill</li> </ul>	2
5	The cart travelled at walking speed	1
6	<p><b>Award 1 mark</b> for answers which explain that the family think the cottage looks unpleasant, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They think it looks ugly like a nasty lump.</li> <li>• They think it looks gloomy and unattractive.</li> </ul>	1

- 7 **Award 1 mark** for answers which explain that Peter is comparing the garden to things he doesn't like, or that he's saying it doesn't look like a garden should, e.g. 1
- 'He's saying it reminds him of a horrible vegetable.'
  - 'Gardens should be green and colourful but Peter says this one looks black.'
- 8 **Award 1 mark** for answers which make reference to the fact that Mother had arranged for a woman to be there and to make them dinner. 1
- 9 Because the family's train was so late arriving. 1
- 10 People do that kind of thing around here. 1
- 11 **Award 1 mark** for each of the following points, up to a maximum of **2 marks**: 2
- The kitchen was bare.
  - There were no curtains.
  - There was no hearth-rug.
  - The fire wasn't lit.
  - The fire grate was dirty with ashes.
- 12 glimmer 1
- 13 Unlike the cart man, he thinks that the rats are a problem 1
- 14 **Award 1 mark** for all numbers placed correctly as follows:
- 5 Phyllis knocks a chair over.
- 2 The family's baggage is taken off the train.
- 4 They hear the sound of rats in the walls. 1
- 3 The cart man shows them the key under the doorstep.
- 1 The children's mother wakes them up.

Questions 15 – 27 are about *The Short and Bloody History of Pirates* by John Farman (page 5) (check page numbers)

- 15      **Award 1 mark** for **any two** of the following:
- choking 1
  - dashed
  - gasping
- 16      **Award 1 mark** for reference to his failed career in the Navy, e.g. 1
- Because he wasn't getting anywhere in the Navy.  
Because he had failed as an ordinary sailor.
- 17      terrorising 1
- 18      **Award 1 mark** for **three** correct or **2 marks** for **all four** correct 2

	True	False
Blackbeard's real name was Edward Teach.	✓	
Blackbeard was born in the eighteenth century.		✓
Blackbeard cut off the leg of his second in command with a cutlass.		✓
Blackbeard set challenges to test his crew's bravery and endurance.	✓	

- 19      **Award 1 mark** for any of the following features up to a maximum of **2 marks**:
- built like a wrestler
  - horrible twisted nose
  - big sticky-out ears 2
  - huge, shaggy beard
  - hat pulled right down to his eyes
  - hemp cords woven into his hair and beard and set alight
  - wore many weapons

- 20 Blackbeard remained laughing fit to burst. 1
- 21 Blew out the candles 1
- 22 Award 1 mark for **three** correct or 2 marks for **all four** correct. 2

	Fact	Opinion
Blackbeard had a huge black beard.	✓	
Blackbeard's weapons included pistols, cutlasses and daggers.	✓	
Blackbeard wore a black wide-brimmed pirate hat.	✓	
You wouldn't want to meet Blackbeard on a dark night in a small boat.		✓

- 23 Bristol 1
- 24 immediately 1
- 25 Blackbeard suddenly shot his second in command during a pleasant after-work drink.
- 26 The Nastiest of Pirates 1

27

Appearance	Gives an example of the ways in which Blackbeard tested and frightened his crew.	1
Gaining Respect	Gives information about what Blackbeard looked like and the weapons he wore.	
Fun and Games	Tells a story about a time that Blackbeard injured his second in command.	

Questions 28 – 38 are about *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (page 6) (check page numbers)

- 28 Steadily 1
- 29 Checking to see whether it is strong enough to skate on. 1
- 30 **Award 1 mark for each** of the following: 2
- stamping her feet
  - blowing her fingers
- 31 **Award 1 mark** for answers which compare Laurie’s movement to a bullet or an arrow, e.g. ‘He was moving very fast’; ‘He was speeding like a bullet’. 1
- 32 **Acceptable points:** Up to 3
1. Bitter / unhappy
  2. Satisfied / pleased
  3. Angry
- Award 3 marks** for **two acceptable points**, at least **one** with evidence, e.g.
- She’s pleased because Amy is having trouble catching up with her and Laurie.
  - Jo feels angry with Amy so she doesn’t help her put her skates on. In fact, she doesn’t even turn around and just skates off as if she hasn’t seen her.
- Award 2 marks** for either **two acceptable points**, or **one** acceptable point with evidence, e.g.
- Jo is bitter and angry.
  - She is satisfied because she thinks that Amy deserves to have a hard time.
- Award 1 mark** for **one** acceptable point, e.g.
- Jo is very angry.

33 Award 1 mark for the following: 1

*cast out*

34 Jo's feeling of anger towards Amy 1

35 Acceptable points: 1

1. Jo hesitates / turns round, rather than skating on around the bend.
2. Jo's heart stands 'still with fear' when Amy falls through the ice.
3. Jo tries to call Laurie for help.
4. Jo tries to rush forward to help Amy.
5. Jo is so horrified that she cannot speak or move.
6. Jo is 'terror-stricken'.

**Award 3 marks for two acceptable points, at least one with evidence, e.g.**

- Jo could have carried on skating round the bend after Laurie, but instead she stopped and turned round to see whether Amy was okay.
- When Amy fell through the ice, Jo was so horrified that she could not even speak or move.

**Award 2 marks for either two acceptable points, or one acceptable point with evidence, e.g.**

- Jo's heart stands 'still with fear' when Amy falls through the ice, which shows that she is frightened of Amy coming to harm.
- Jo tries to call for Laurie and she also tries to run forward to help her sister.

**Award 1 mark for one acceptable point, e.g.**

- Jo is terror-stricken.

36 Feels too shocked to speak. 1

37 Laurie 1

38 Award 1 mark for three correct or 2 marks for all four correct. 1 or 2

	True	False
Laurie did not see that Amy had followed them down to the river.	✓	
Amy asked Jo to wait for her to put her skates on.		✓
Laurie thought the ice was safe in the middle of the river.		✓
Amy was wearing a blue hood.	✓	

Total out of 50 marks: .....