ADVANCED COMPREHENSION SKILLS:

QC Linked Extracts

Book 1

20 units of work to challenge and stimulate students

SAMPLE

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Contents

Introduction v

UNIT 1 Water 1
UNIT 2 Colour 4
UNIT 3 Family 7
UNIT 4 Food 10
UNIT 5 Nature 13
UNIT 6 Buildings 15
UNIT 7 Curiosity 18
UNIT 8 Kindness 21
UNIT 9 Animals 24
UNIT 10 Speed 26
UNIT 11 School 29
UNIT 12 The future 31
UNIT 13 Winter 34
UNIT 14 Imprisonment 37
UNIT 15 Magic 40
UNIT 16 Birds 43
UNIT 17 Deception 46
UNIT 18 Dragons 49
UNIT 19 Intelligence 52
UNIT 20 Transformation 55

Answers 59
Image & Extract Credits 80

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Introduction

This book is designed to help students develop their reading comprehension skills. It will also help to familiarise students with the new question type featured in the current format of the Reading section of the NSW Opportunity Class Placement Test.

At the time of writing, the Reading section of the test comprises 25 questions to be answered within 30 minutes.

The final section of the Reading paper consists of four short extracts which are linked by a common theme and labelled A, B, C and D. Each extract consists of one or two paragraphs and may be taken from any genre of writing.

Students are required to read all four extracts before answering 8 multiple choice comprehension questions. In each case, the answer will be extract A, B, C or D.

It is worth noting that this section of the test consists of more than 30% of the whole paper so adequate time should be left to complete it. As a rough guide, this section should take about 10 minutes. As you work through this book you might like to time yourself to see how long each set takes. Don't be disheartened if the first few take longer than you think they should; you will find that you get much faster with practice!

How to approach the task:

- The theme that links the four extracts will be identified so keep it in mind as you read.
- Read each extract through quickly but carefully.
- As you read, take note of the following:-
  - What type of text is it? Is it fiction or non-fiction? Is it persuasive? Is it obviously a specific genre, like science fiction or autobiography? How can you tell?
  - How does the extract relate to the given theme?
  - What is the overall tone of the text? Does it change or remain consistent?
  - What are the characters like? How do they interact with each other? How do they feel? Is their behaviour/mood consistent, or does it change during the extract?
  - Are the extracts similar to each other or wildly different?
  - Has the writer used figurative devices like onomatopoeia, repetition or alliteration? What effect have they created?
- Once you have finished reading the texts, read through the questions.
- Then answer the questions by marking your paper with A, B, C or D.

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Marking your work:

We have included comprehensive explanations for each answer at the back of the book. Take your time with this bit and read through all the explanations. Even if you've got the answer right, just check to see if we came up with a different way of getting there. This is a good opportunity to re-read the extracts and see if you missed anything important. If you got a question wrong, go back and see why; you will find it helpful for next time.

Good luck!

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UNIT 1 WATER

Read the four extracts below on the theme of *water*.
Answer questions **1–8** by choosing the correct option, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

Which extract…

describes water in terms of its geological importance?	**1.** _____
would readers most likely read on a sign at the beach?	**2.** _____
uses alliteration to describe a living thing?	**3.** _____
offers a pessimistic vision of the future?	**4.** _____
is written from a child's point of view?	**5.** _____
takes place on board a boat?	**6.** _____
advises readers about their behaviour?	**7.** _____
uses a word that means the same as majesty?	**8.** _____

Extract A

I watched as he masterfully raised the rod over his head before flicking it back out across the water. A satisfied smile crossed my father's face as he gazed across the lake, his reel whirring as the hook flew. The glistening water, smooth and still, seemed to wake as the hook touched down; a lone ripple rousing the surface, gliding ever outwards, keen to get out of our way.

The once vibrant greens of the surrounding area were blanketed by an autumnal coat of red and gold; exposed skeletal limbs reached aimlessly for the skies. The irregular chatter of kookaburras filled the air around us, warning that rain was on its way. But for now the warmth of the low, evening sun brushed at my cheeks and burnished the water in gold.

'This is the one!' my father exclaimed. His excitement was contagious and drew my attention back to the water. His rod bent and bowed and Dad patiently, cautiously, reeled and pulled, reeled and pulled. Eventually we were rewarded with a startling flash of rainbow as a sleek, silver-scaled beauty seemed to leap from the water. Sometimes patience pays off.

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Extract B

Safety Tips for Rock Pool Adventurers

- Remember that rock pools are a part of nature and this means marine life inhabits these small spaces. Whilst rock pools are a tactile experience, familiarise yourself with any potentially toxic creatures before you go. Keep a look out for bluebottles, sea urchins, blue-ringed octopus and DO NOT TOUCH!
- Even in shallow rock pools, make sure kids, especially younger ones or weak swimmers, stay within arm's reach of an adult.
- Rock pools are usually surrounded by slippery, mossy rocks, so no running!
- Children and weak swimmers should wear floaties or a life vest, even in shallow water.
- When rock-pooling somewhere unfamiliar, ask a lifeguard or a local where to go and which areas are safe.

Rock pools attached to the ocean can be subject to unpredictable waves, so avoid them unless the water is calm and stable.

Extract C – from *The Term of His Natural Life* by Marcus Clarke

The sight was one of wild grandeur. The huge black cloud which had hung all afternoon on the horizon had changed shape. Instead of a curtain it became an arch. Beneath this vast and magnificent dome shone a dull phosphorescent light. Across this livid space, pale flashes of sheet lightning passed noiselessly. Behind it, a dull threatening murmur of grumbling thunder, falling rain and the roar of churning wind and water. The lights of the island had already disappeared, so rapidly had the vessel progressed under the steady breeze. The ocean stretched out around us, black and desolate. Gazing upon this gloomy expanse, Rufus Dawes observed the strangest thing – lightning, seeming to burst upwards from the sullen depths of the sea. At intervals, the darkly-rolling waves flashed fire, and streaks of flame seemingly shot upwards into the sky. The violence of the wind increased and each arc of light was fringed with rain. Suddenly, a tremendous peal of thunder, accompanied by a terrific downfall of rain, rattled across the sky.

Extract D

About 20,000 years ago, much of Europe, Asia and both North and South America were covered by huge sheets of ice that were many kilometres thick. Since then, the ice has gradually melted and the ice sheets have become much smaller. Today, the only ice sheets on Earth's land masses are found in Antarctica and Greenland. Some ice also occurs as glaciers in mountainous regions and as floating ice in the Arctic Ocean and around the continent of Antarctica.

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At first glance, these remote remnants of the last Ice Age seem unimportant to most of us today. But scientists believe that our planet is warming as a result of the greenhouse gases that we are pumping into the atmosphere. If the planet becomes warmer, the remaining ice sheets will start to melt, causing sea levels to rise, possibly by several metres by the end of this century. This rise would cause widespread flooding of low-lying coastal areas and threaten many large cities.

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UNIT 1 WATER

1. **D** Geological refers to the study of the Earth's physical structure and substance. Extract D is about changes to that structure.

2. **B** Infers that the information in Extract B is from a public service notice board and that the beach is one of the most likely places where such information would be useful.

3. **A** Alliteration refers to a literary device where a sound is repeated in words that are close together, to create a pleasing image or effect. In Extract A, the freshly caught fish is described as – 'a sleek, silver-scaled beauty seemed to leap'.

4. **D** Extract D is the only extract that makes predictions about the future.

5. **A** That the narrator in Extract A refers to his Dad doesn't necessarily make him a child but the context and removing the other extracts through a process of elimination should remove doubt.

6. **C** Infers that the 'vessel' referred to is a boat.

7. **B** Identifies that Extract B is persuasive in nature with the single intention of influencing the behaviour of readers around rockpools.

8. **C** 'Grandeur' is a noun that refers to something large and impressively splendid in appearance and so does majesty.

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