

Comprehension Test B

Oliver Twist

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

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For many days, Oliver remained in the spare room, picking the marks out of the pocket-handkerchief, (of which a great number were brought home,) and sometimes taking part in the game already described: which the two boys played, regularly, every morning. At length, he began to languish for fresh air, and took many occasions of earnestly entreating the old gentleman to allow him to go out to work with his two companions.

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Oliver was rendered the more anxious to be actively employed, by what he had seen of the stern morality of the old gentleman's character. Whenever the Dodger or Charley Bates came home at night, empty-handed, he would expatiate with great vehemence on the misery of idle and lazy habits; and would enforce upon them the necessity of an active life, by sending them supperless to bed. On one occasion, indeed, he even went so far as to knock them both down a flight of stairs; but this was carrying out his virtuous precepts to an unusual extent.

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At length, one morning, Oliver obtained the permission he had so eagerly sought. There had been no handkerchiefs to work upon, for two or three days, and the dinners had been rather meagre. Perhaps these were reasons for the old gentleman's giving his assent; but, whether they were or no, he told Oliver he might go, and placed him under the joint guardianship of Charley Bates, and his friend the Dodger.

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The three boys sallied out; the Dodger with his coat-sleeves tucked up, and his hat cocked, as usual; Master Bates sauntering along with his hands in his pockets; and Oliver between them, wondering where they were going, and what branch of manufacture he would be instructed in, first.

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The pace at which they went, was such a very lazy, ill-looking saunter, that Oliver soon began to think his companions were going to deceive the old gentleman, by not going to work at all. The Dodger had a vicious propensity, too, of pulling the caps from the heads of small boys and tossing them down areas; while Charley Bates exhibited some very loose notions concerning the rights of property, by pilfering divers apples and onions from the stalls at the kennel sides, and thrusting them into pockets which were so surprisingly capacious, that they seemed to

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45 undermine his whole suit of clothes in every direction. These things
looked so bad, that Oliver was on the point of declaring his intention of
seeking his way back, in the best way he could; when his thoughts were
suddenly directed into another channel, by a very mysterious change of
behaviour on the part of the Dodger.

50 They were just emerging from a narrow court not far from the open
square in Clerkenwell, which is yet called, by some strange perversion of
terms, 'The Green': when the Dodger made a sudden stop; and, laying
his finger on his lip, drew his companions back again, with the greatest
caution and circumspection.

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