

## Reading Week 2 Home Learning

### Session 1

During the first reading session, you need to read the poem 'The Listeners' by Walter de la Mare. Try reading aloud, practising varying your voice to make your reading interesting and thinking about the meaning and tone as you read. Do you want to sound mysterious or bright and bouncy? If there are any words you are not sure about while you read, underline them and save these for one of today's tasks.

Next, look at the page titled 'Glossary Definition Match' and see if you can correctly link each word to its definition. Now check your answers using the Glossary Definition Match Answers. Did we cover all of the words which you had underlined? If not, look the remaining words up using a dictionary or the internet.

Now that you understand the vocabulary better, read the poem again... does it make sense?

Walter de la Mare wrote this when his children asked him to write something spooky. Do you think he succeeded?

### Session 2

Read the poem again and try to make a picture in your mind of the traveller in the woods, calling out in the darkening night to the empty house. Look at the images and see if they match your own ideas. Choose one of the images to copy, or using your imagination, draw a scene from the poem. It could be of the whole poem, or it could be one line - like the turret image.

### Session 3

Complete the comprehension questions. You can use the answer sheet to check your answers when you are finished.

### The Listeners by Walter de la Mare

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,  
Knocking on the moonlit door;  
And his horse in the silence champ'd the grasses  
Of the forest's ferny floor:  
And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
Above the Traveller's head:  
And he smote upon the door again a second time;  
'Is there anybody there?' he said.  
But no one descended to the Traveller;  
No head from the leaf-fringed sill  
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,  
Where he stood perplexed and still.  
But only a host of phantom listeners  
That dwelt in the lone house then  
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight  
To that voice from the world of men:  
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,  
That goes down to the empty hall,  
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken  
By the lonely Traveller's call.  
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
Their stillness answering his cry,  
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,  
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;  
For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
Louder, and lifted his head: -  
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,  
That I kept my word,' he said.  
Never the least stir made the listeners,  
Though every word he spake  
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house  
From the one man left awake:  
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,  
And the sound of iron on stone,  
And how the silence surged softly backward,  
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

### Glossary Definition Match

Word

Champed
Forest's ferny floor
Turret
Smote
Leaf-fringed sill
Perplexed
Phantom
Dwelt
Thronging
Hearkening
Cropping
'Neath
Spake
Stirrup
Surged
Plunging

Definition

spoke
lived
part of the saddle where a rider places his foot
underneath
swept, rolled
ate noisily
eating
listening
ghost
forest ground covered with ferns/vegetation
struck, hit
moved swiftly
window sill with leaves, plants growing around or over
crowding
small tower
confused, unsure

Glossary Definition Match ANSWERS

<i>Champed</i>	<i>ate noisily</i>
<i>Forest's ferny floor</i>	<i>forest ground covered with ferns/vegetation</i>
<i>Turret</i>	<i>small tower</i>
<i>Smote</i>	<i>struck, hit</i>
<i>Leaf-fringed sill</i>	<i>window sill with leaves, plants growing around or over</i>
<i>Perplexed</i>	<i>confused, unsure</i>
<i>Phantom</i>	<i>ghost</i>
<i>Dwelt</i>	<i>lived</i>
<i>Thronging</i>	<i>crowding</i>
<i>Hearkening</i>	<i>listening</i>
<i>Cropping</i>	<i>eating</i>
<i>'Neath</i>	<i>underneath</i>
<i>Spake</i>	<i>spoke</i>
<i>Stirrup</i>	<i>part of the saddle where a rider places his foot</i>
<i>Surged</i>	<i>swept, rolled</i>
<i>Plunging</i>	<i>moved swiftly</i>

Images



Comprehension - The Listeners by Walter de la Mare

1. Find and copy one word meaning chewed.

\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

2. Where he stood perplexed and still

Which word most closely matches the meaning of the word 'perplexed'? Circle one  
*peculiar / confused / motionless / excited* (1 mark)

3. Find and copy one word/group of words that tells you there is greenery growing around the window.

\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

4. What does the word 'thronging' suggest about *The Listeners*?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

5. Give the meaning of the word 'smote' in the context of the poem.

\_\_\_\_\_ (1 mark)

6. Using information from the text indicate whether the following statements are true or false:

\_\_\_\_\_ The Traveller only knocked on the door twice

\_\_\_\_\_ The house was in a town

\_\_\_\_\_ The events of the poem take place at night time (1 mark)

7. According to the text, what is disturbed by the Traveller's first knock on the door?

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(1 mark)

8. How do the Listeners respond to the Traveller?

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(1 mark)

9. Who is 'the one man left awake'?

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(1 mark)

10. What is meant by 'the sound of iron on stone'?

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(1 mark)

11. Using information from the whole text, who do you think the Listeners are?

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(1 mark)

12. How can you tell that the Traveller was expecting to meet somebody at the house?

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(1 mark)

13. What evidence is there that the Listeners aren't living beings?

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(1 mark)

14. How do you think the Traveller feels at the end of the poem? Explain why.

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(2 marks)

15. What does the phrase *'that voice from the world of men'* suggest about the Traveller and the Listeners?

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(1 mark)

16. What evidence is there that the Traveller knows the Listeners are there? Give *two* examples from the text.

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(2 marks)

17. How can you tell that this poem might have been written a long time ago?

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(1 mark)

18. If the Traveller were to return, do you think the Listeners would answer? Use evidence in the text to explain your answer.

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(2 marks)



19. *For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
Louder, and lifted his head*

What impact does this section have on the text as a whole?

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(1 mark)

20. Both the Traveller and the Listeners are described as 'still'. What impact does this 'stillness' have on the poem as a whole?

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(1 mark)

21. Look at the line containing the words *'the silence surged softly backward'*. Why did the author choose to use these words?

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(1 mark)

22. The air is *'stirred and shaken'* by the Traveller's call. What does this tell us about the house?

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(1 mark)

23. How does the mood of the Traveller change through the text? Use examples from the poem to support your answer.

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(3 marks)

## Comprehension ANSWERS - The Listeners by Walter de la Mare

1. Champed **(1 mark)**
2. Confused **(1 mark)**
3. Leaf (*minimum*) the leaf-fringed sill (*maximum*) **(1 mark)**
4. There are lots of them **(1 mark)**
5. Knocked **(1 mark)**
6.        F The Traveller only knocked on the door twice  
             F The house was in a town  
             T The events of the poem take place at night time **(1 mark)**
7. A bird **(1 mark)**
8. They didn't respond / didn't do anything **(1 mark)**
9. The traveller **(1 mark)**
10. The horse's hooves on the ground / Metal hooves on stone ground **(1 mark)**
11. Ghosts / people who used to live in the house **(1 mark)**
12. Pupil answers could include reference to:
  - He says, 'Tell them I came.'
  - He says, 'Tell them I kept my word.' **(1 mark)**
13. Pupil answers could include reference to:
  - They are described as 'phantom listeners'
  - They don't move (never the least stir made the listeners)
  - It says the traveller is, 'the one man left awake'
  - It describes the traveller as a, 'voice from the world of men'
  - The traveller felt their 'strangeness' **(1 mark)**

14. Pupil answers could include reference to:

- Confused / annoyed – he expected to meet someone there / no one answered
- Scared / worried – he felt their ‘strangeness’, the house was empty and spooky
- Lonely – he was on his own / no one answered / everything was still **(2 marks)**

15. The traveller is human and the listeners are not **(1 mark)**

16. Pupil answers could include reference to:

- He felt their strangeness
- He spoke to them (Tell them I came...)
- He felt their stillness answering him **(2 marks)**

17. Pupil answers could include reference to:

- It uses old-fashioned language like ‘smote’
- The man travels on horseback **(1 mark)**

18. Pupil answers could include reference to:

No because:

- They do not talk this time
- It says they are phantom listeners so they are not real
- They are called ‘the listeners’ so maybe they cannot talk
- It says only the traveller is awake

Yes because:

- He was told to go there and he expected someone to answer **(2 marks)**

19. Pupil answers could include reference to:

- Creates a sense of urgency
- Increases the speed / pace
- Makes you think something is going to happen **(1 mark)**

20. Makes it spooky / creepy / creates tension **(1 mark)**

21. Pupil answers could include reference to:

- Repetition of 's' sound sounds like 'shh'
- Alliteration **(1 mark)**

22. It is empty / There is no one else there / It was completely still before **(1 mark)**

23. Pupil answers could include reference to:

- He feels confused (perplexed)
- He feels alone (lonely)
- He feels worried / scared (he felt in his heart their strangeness)
- He feels confused ('tell them I came, and no one answered' - he was expecting someone to be there) **(3 marks)**