

TEXT 1 — STORY

Questions 1–5

The Signal

The tower stood at the edge of Dunmore like a finger pointing at the sky, and for as long as Jonah could remember, nobody had climbed it. The council called it unsafe. The town called it a nuisance. Jonah called it the only interesting thing within forty kilometres.

Dunmore was the kind of town where nothing happened twice, because nothing had happened once. The shop closed at four. The bus came on Tuesdays. Jonah's mother worked double shifts at the clinic, and his friends had moved to the coast, so the evenings stretched out long and empty, and the tower loomed in his window like an unanswered question.

On the first night of the holidays, he found the gap in the fence. The wire was bent back, as though someone had done it many times before. He hesitated, then squeezed through, his heart thumping so loudly that he was sure the whole town could hear it.

The stairs groaned beneath him. Halfway up, a pigeon exploded from the shadows, and he almost fell, but he gripped the rail until his knuckles turned white. At the top, a small room opened before him, lit by a pale square of moonlight. In the middle of the floor sat a battered radio, its dial glowing a faint amber.

That was impossible. The tower had no power. Yet the radio hissed softly, and beneath the hiss, Jonah heard something that made his skin prickle: a voice, thin and far away, counting slowly. Seven. Four. Nine. Two. Then silence, and then the sequence began again.

He should have run. Every sensible part of him said so. But the numbers pulled at him like a hook, and he found himself kneeling beside the radio, pencil in hand, writing each digit on his palm. Whoever was sending the signal wanted somebody to listen. Tonight, apparently, that somebody was him.

1. How does Jonah get into the grounds of the tower?

- A over the locked front gate
- B with a key from the council
- C through a gap in the fence
- D by climbing the water tank

2. In the second paragraph, “hesitated” suggests that Jonah

- A rushed in without thinking
- B waited for a friend to come
- C paused because he was unsure
- D felt completely calm about it

3. “Like a finger pointing at the sky” is used to describe the tower’s

- A age and history
- B shape and height
- C danger and decay
- D owner and purpose

THE WORKED ANSWERS TO THOSE 3 QUESTIONS

1. How does Jonah get into the grounds of the tower? [Detail]

Correct answer: C — through a gap in the fence

- What is the question asking? It asks for a fact that the text states.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: “he found the gap in the fence”
- The second paragraph says how he gets in.
- So the correct answer is C (through a gap in the fence).
- Why the other options are wrong:
 - A (over the locked front gate): A locked gate would suit a tower the council calls unsafe, so it is an easy guess, but no gate appears in the text. Jonah finds wire bent back in the fence and squeezes through.
 - B (with a key from the council): The council is mentioned, which may make a key seem possible, but it gives Jonah nothing. He gets in without any help, squeezing through a gap in the fence.
 - D (by climbing the water tank): Climbing happens later, on the groaning stairs inside the tower, so it feels familiar. But getting into the grounds is done through the fence, and no water tank is ever mentioned.
- Check it against the evidence. Check the detail: “he found the gap in the fence” points to ‘through a gap in the fence’, so the other choices do not fit.

LOS: EN4-RVL-01: uses a range of personal, creative and critical strategies to read texts

KEY TAKEAWAY

Go back to the text and find the exact words that answer the question, then match them to an option.

2. In the second paragraph, “hesitated” suggests that Jonah [Vocab]

Correct answer: C — paused because he was unsure

- What is the question asking? It asks what a word means in this text.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: “He hesitated, then squeezed through”
- To hesitate is to pause because you are unsure.
- So the correct answer is C (paused because he was unsure).

- Why the other options are wrong:
- A (rushed in without thinking): 'Hesitated' is followed by 'then squeezed through', so he did not rush. His heart is thumping, which shows he stopped to think before going in.
- B (waited for a friend to come): Jonah is alone: his friends have moved to the coast. Nobody is mentioned waiting for him, and 'hesitated' describes his own pause, not a delay for company.
- D (felt completely calm about it): A pounding heart that he thinks the whole town can hear is the opposite of calm. The word 'hesitated' points to doubt, not ease.
- Check it against the evidence. Use the context clue: "He hesitated, then squeezed through" points to 'paused because he was unsure', so the other choices do not fit.

LOS: EN4-RVL-01: uses a range of personal, creative and critical strategies to read texts

KEY TAKEAWAY

Reread the sentence, put each option in place of the word, and see which one still makes sense.

3. "Like a finger pointing at the sky" is used to describe the tower's [Figurative]

Correct answer: B — shape and height

- What is the question asking? It asks how the writer's special language works.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: "The tower stood at the edge of Dunmore like a finger pointing at the sky"
- A finger is long and thin and points upward, like a tall tower.
- So the correct answer is B (shape and height).
- Why the other options are wrong:
- A (age and history): The tower is old and the council calls it unsafe, so 'age and history' is tempting. But the simile compares it to a finger, which is about how it looks, not its past.
- C (danger and decay): 'Unsafe' is used by the council, so danger seems close by, but a finger pointing at the sky says nothing about decay. It describes the tower's tall, narrow shape.
- D (owner and purpose): A finger can 'point' at something, which might suggest purpose, but nobody owns or uses the tower in the text. The comparison is only about its outline against the sky.
- Check it against the evidence. Think about what the comparison suggests: "The tower stood at the edge of Dunmore like a finger pointing at the sky" points to 'shape and height', so the other choices do not fit.

LOS: EN4-URA-01: analyses how meaning is created through language forms, features and structures

KEY TAKEAWAY

A comparison with like or as paints a picture. Ask what the two things have in common.

LIKED THIS SAMPLE?

The full paper is the real thing.

THIS FREE SAMPLE

A short extract: the opening questions of Paper 1, then their worked answers. 3 pages in all.

THE FULL PAPER

30 multiple-choice questions (A to D) in 45 minutes: three texts with five reading questions each, then 15 spelling, punctuation, grammar and word questions, plus a 15-minute writing task. 32 pages, with a worked solution for every question.

What you get with each paper

- A complete, timed paper in the real exam layout, not just a taste of it.
- A worked solution for every question: numbered steps, why each wrong option is wrong, and a key takeaway.
- 20 different papers in this set. Every one uses new questions, so each extra paper is new practice, not a repeat.
- An A4 PDF emailed straight after payment, made for printing.

Get Paper 1 now

A\$11.99 one-off, instant PDF download. Tap or click here.

Or see all 20 NSW Year 8 English papers: testpapershub.com/collections/nsw-year-8-english/

Getting the most from a practice paper

- 1 Print it and set the timer shown on the cover. Answer every question before looking at any solution.
- 2 Mark it against the worked solutions and note the topics that cost you marks.
- 3 Retry the questions you missed a day later, then use the next paper to check the fix held.

Not sure which paper to start with, or have a question before you buy? Email support@testpapershub.com and a real person will reply, normally within one business day. These are original practice papers, not official past papers, and are not affiliated with any exam authority.