

TEXT 1 — STORY EXTRACT

Questions 1–5

Farewell Spit

The phone call had come at dawn, and by the time Hana and her mother reached the beach, the sky was the colour of dishwater. Along the edge of the tide, as far as she could see, lay dark, shining shapes like boulders. It took a moment for her to understand that they were not rocks. They were whales, dozens of them, lying on their sides in the shallows, their flippers flopping weakly against the sand.

A woman in an orange vest strode towards them, clipboard in hand. “Pilot whales,” she said briskly. “Over eighty of them. We are going to try to get them back out on the tide, but they need help to survive until then. Can you carry water?” Hana nodded. She had expected to feel afraid, but all she felt was a fierce, quiet urgency. Someone thrust a bucket into her hand, and she ran.

The work was simple, and it was relentless. The volunteers dug small hollows in the sand beneath the whales’ flippers to take the weight off their bodies. They laid wet sheets over their backs and poured buckets of seawater across the sheets, careful never to touch the blowhole. “Their skin dries out and burns,” the woman in the vest explained. “And their own weight can crush them if they lie too long.” Hana poured and poured, until her arms ached.

Beside her, her mother knelt next to a small whale, perhaps a calf, whose eye was fixed on Hana’s face. It was large and dark and wet, and it seemed to hold a whole world of understanding. Hana found herself talking to it softly, the way she would to a frightened child. “It is all right,” she whispered. “We are here. Just hold on.” The whale let out a long, rattling breath, and her heart clenched.

At midday, the tide began to rise. The volunteers formed a line and, with infinite care, rolled each whale onto a pontoon and eased it into deeper water. One by one, they were released, and one by one, they hesitated, as if unsure whether to trust the sea. Hana watched until her calf rolled upright, flicked its tail and slid beneath the surface. She did not know if it would survive. But she knew that it had been given a chance.

1. What kind of whales were stranded on the beach?

- A blue whales
- B orca
- C pilot whales
- D humpback whales

2. In the third paragraph, “relentless” means

- A full of joy
- B easy and calm
- C without any pause
- D very slow

3. Why must volunteers avoid touching the blowhole?

- A It is a sensitive eye.
- B The whale needs it to breathe.
- C It is where the whale hears.
- D It is where the whale feeds.

THE WORKED ANSWERS TO THOSE 3 QUESTIONS

1. What kind of whales were stranded on the beach? [Detail]

Correct answer: C — pilot whales

- What is the question asking? It asks for a fact that the text states.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: "Pilot whales," she said briskly. "Over eighty of them."
- The second paragraph names them.
- So the correct answer is C (pilot whales).
- Why the other options are wrong:
 - A (blue whales): The text says pilot whales.
 - B (orca): The text says pilot whales.
 - D (humpback whales): The text says pilot whales.

LOS: Reading: finding information stated in the text

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 third paragraph, "relentless" means [Vocab]

Correct answer: C — without any pause

- What is the question asking? It asks what a word means in this text.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: "The work was simple, and it was relentless."
- The volunteers pour water until their arms ache.
- So the correct answer is C (without any pause).
- Why the other options are wrong:
 - A (full of joy): 'Relentless' means never stopping.
 - B (easy and calm): 'Relentless' means never stopping.
 - D (very slow): 'Relentless' means never stopping.

LOS: Reading: understanding word meaning in context

KEY TAKEAWAY

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

3. Why must volunteers avoid touching the blowhole? [Inference]

Correct answer: B — The whale needs it to breathe.

- What is the question asking? It asks what the clues in the text show.
- Go back to the text and find the evidence: “careful never to touch the blowhole”
- A blowhole is the whale’s breathing hole.
- So the correct answer is B (The whale needs it to breathe).
- Why the other options are wrong:
- A (It is a sensitive eye.): A blowhole is used for breathing.
- C (It is where the whale hears.): A blowhole is used for breathing.
- D (It is where the whale feeds.): A blowhole is used for breathing.

LOS: Reading: working out what the text suggests

KEY TAKEAWAY

When the text does not say it directly, use the clues it gives, then ask: what must be true?

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 on three texts (a story or novel extract, a poem and a non-fiction text) and 15 language questions, plus a writing task with a marking guide and model response, with worked solutions. 30 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 NZ Curriculum Year 8 English papers:
testpapershub.com/collections/nz-curriculum-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.