YEAR 7 READING

Narrative Comprehension

Read a short story closely for plot, character and language

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Score:** _____ / 11

The Last Bus

The 9:40 bus was the last one out of Merrigum, and Jai had missed it by eleven seconds. He knew it was eleven because he had counted them, sprinting past the bakery with his school bag thumping against his spine like a second heartbeat.

Now the street was empty. The bakery lights blinked off one by one. His phone had died at lunchtime, and Mum was working a night shift at the hospital forty minutes away.

Jai sat on the bench and tried not to think about the long dark road home. A car rolled past, slowed, then kept going. Somewhere a dog barked twice and gave up.

"You look like someone who's lost a war."

He jumped. Mrs Kowalski from the newsagency was locking her door, a bunch of keys jangling in her fist. She had once caught him reading comics without paying and made him sweep the footpath for a week. He had avoided her ever since.

"Missed the bus," he mumbled.

She studied him for a long moment. Then she held out her phone. "Ring your mother. Then I'll drive you. And don't you dare tell anyone I'm soft."

In the car she played old Polish songs far too loudly and sang every word. Jai stared out at the paddocks rushing past, silver under the moon, and realised he was smiling.

When they reached his gate, she said, "Footpath still needs sweeping on Saturday." But she winked when she said it.

Choose the best answer.

1. Why does Jai know he missed the bus by eleven seconds?
   (a) he counted the seconds (b) he checked his phone (c) the driver told him

2. 'his school bag thumping against his spine like a second heartbeat' is an example of...
   (a) a simile (b) a metaphor (c) onomatopoeia

3. Why had Jai avoided Mrs Kowalski?
   (a) she had made him sweep the footpath as a punishment (b) she drove too fast
   (c) she was rude to his mum

4. Which word best describes Mrs Kowalski by the end?
   (a) secretly kind (b) forgetful (c) cruel

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Narrative Comprehension

Read a short story closely for plot, character and language (continued)

5. What is the main idea of the story?

ⓐ always charge your phone ⓑ people can surprise us ⓒ buses are unreliable

True or false?

6. Jai's mum was at home asleep. True False

7. Mrs Kowalski sang along to the music in the car. True False

Write your answer.

8. Find two details that make the setting feel lonely.

9. Why does Mrs Kowalski say 'don't you dare tell anyone I'm soft'?

10. What does the wink at the end suggest?

11. How does Jai's attitude towards Mrs Kowalski change? Use evidence.

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Choose the best answer.

1. a) he counted the seconds
2. a) a simile
3. a) she had made him sweep the footpath as a punishment
4. a) secretly kind
5. b) people can surprise us

True or false?

6. False
7. True

Write your answer.

8. The street was empty; the bakery lights blinked off; a car slowed then kept going; a dog barked twice and gave up.
9. She wants to keep her tough reputation even though she is being kind.
10. She is joking. Their relationship has become friendly.
11. Answers will vary. Example: At first he avoids her and mumbles. By the end he is smiling in her car, which shows he now likes and trusts her.

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