

Practice Questions — Fiction

Read this extract from a story, then answer the questions below.

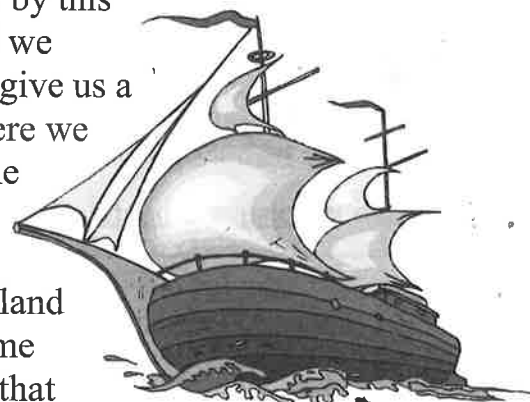
This is an extract from *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean* by R. M. Ballantyne, written in 1858. The narrator, Ralph, has been shipwrecked on an island in the Pacific Ocean, along with his friends, Jack and Peterkin. After many days stranded on the island, Peterkin sees a boat sailing towards them.

The Coral Island

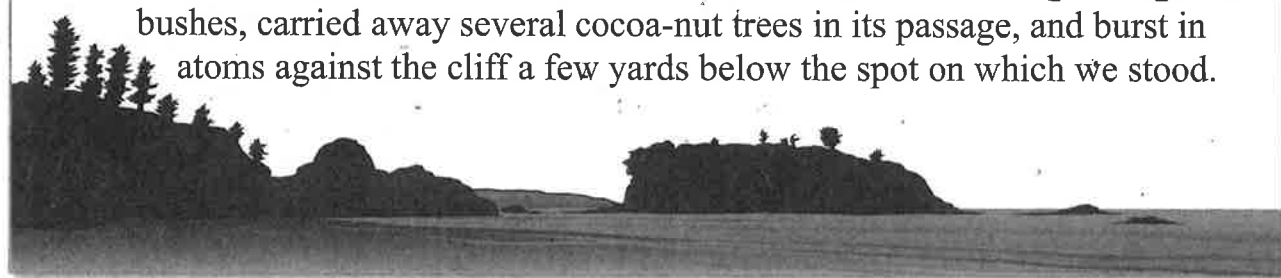
"A sail! a sail! Ralph, look! Jack, away on the horizon there, just over the entrance to the lagoon!" cried Peterkin, as we scrambled up the rocks.

"So it is, and a schooner*, too!" said Jack, as he proceeded hastily to dress.

Our hearts were thrown into a terrible flutter by this discovery, for if it should touch at our island we had no doubt the captain would be happy to give us a passage to some of the civilized islands, where we could find a ship sailing for England, or some other part of Europe. Home, with all its associations, rushed in upon my heart like a flood, and, much though I loved the Coral Island and the bower* which had now been our home so long, I felt that I could have quitted all at that moment without a sigh. With joyful anticipations we hastened to the highest point of rock near our dwelling, and awaited the arrival of the vessel, for we now perceived that she was making straight for the island, under a steady breeze.



In less than an hour she was close to the reef, where she rounded to, and backed her topsails* in order to survey the coast. Seeing this, and fearing that they might not perceive us, we all three waved pieces of cocoa-nut cloth in the air, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing them beginning to lower a boat and bustle about the decks as if they meant to land. Suddenly a flag was run up to the peak, a little cloud of white smoke rose from the schooner's side, and, before we could guess their intentions, a cannon-shot came crashing through the bushes, carried away several cocoa-nut trees in its passage, and burst in atoms against the cliff a few yards below the spot on which we stood.

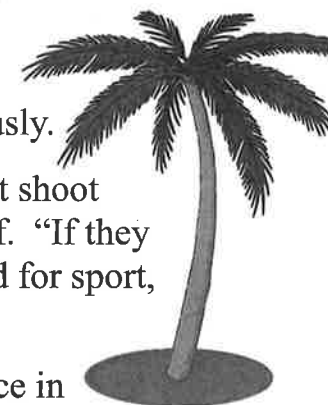


* schooner — a type of ship * bower — a shaded place under trees

* backed her topsails — turned some sails around to slow down the boat

Practice Questions — Fiction

With feelings of terror we now observed that the flag at the schooner's peak was black, with a Death's head and cross bones upon it. As we gazed at each other in blank amazement, the word "pirate" escaped our lips simultaneously.



"What is to be done?" cried Peterkin, as we observed a boat shoot from the vessel's side, and make for the entrance of the reef. "If they take us off the island, it will either be to throw us overboard for sport, or to make pirates of us."

I did not reply, but looked at Jack, as being our only resource in this emergency. He stood with folded arms, and his eyes fixed with a grave, anxious expression on the ground. "There is but one hope," said he, turning with a sad expression of countenance* to Peterkin; "perhaps, after all, we may not have to resort to it. If these villains are anxious to take us, they will soon overrun the whole island. But come, follow me."

Stopping abruptly in his speech, Jack bounded into the woods, and led us by a circuitous* route to Spouting Cliff. Here he halted, and, advancing cautiously to the rocks, glanced over their edge. We were soon by his side, and saw the boat, which was crowded with armed men, just touching the shore.

* expression of countenance — a facial expression

* circuitous — long and winding

- 1 In the first paragraph, why do the boys scramble up the rocks?

.....

.....

- 2 "So it is, and a schooner, too!" said Jack, as he proceeded hastily to dress. Which of the following best matches the meaning of the word *hastily* in the sentence above?

Tick **one** box.

angrily ☐

gradually ☐

thoughtfully ☐

quickly ☐

Practice Questions — Fiction

- 3 The boys' hearts are *thrown into a terrible flutter* when they see the boat for the first time.
What does this description tell you about how the boys are feeling?

.....

- 4 How can you tell that Ralph has mixed feelings about leaving the island?

.....

- 5 Why does white smoke rise from the side of the boat?

.....

- 6 Look at the paragraph beginning, *In less than an hour...*
Find and copy a word or phrase from this paragraph that suggests the cannonball has caused a lot of damage.

.....

- 7 Why do the boys think the boat is a pirate ship?

.....

- 8 Look at the paragraph beginning, *I did not reply.*
Explain how Jack's speech and actions in this paragraph show that he is a good leader.

.....

.....

.....

Practice Questions — Fiction

- 9 Look at the paragraph beginning, *Stopping abruptly...*
Find and copy a word from the rest of the paragraph that suggests Jack is being careful not to be seen by the pirates.

.....

- 10 Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is true or false.

Statement	True	False
Jack is the first one to see the ship.		
Several hours pass between the ship being spotted and the ship approaching the reef.		
The boys are surprised to find out that the ship belongs to pirates.		
Peterkin is concerned about what might happen if the pirates find them.		
Jack is confident that his plan is going to work.		

- 11 How do the boys' attitudes towards the boat change throughout the extract?

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.....

- 12 What do you think might happen to the boys next?
Use evidence from the last paragraph to support your prediction.

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Practice Questions — Non-Fiction

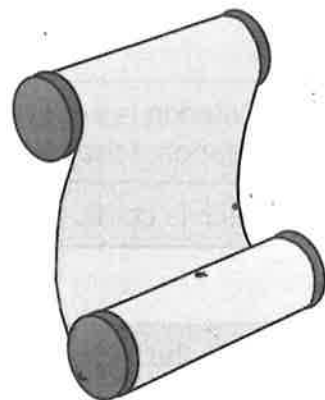
Read this article about libraries, then answer the questions below.

Libraries

The word 'library' often conjures up images of *Harry Potter's* Hogwarts School or Victorian country houses: centuries-old buildings housing row upon row of bookcases, each buckling under the weight of the countless large, cobweb-laden tomes on their shelves. For some, libraries belong in a world of candles, cloaks and horse-drawn carriages.

But libraries in fact have a far richer history, stretching back to a time long before the Victorian era.

The first libraries date back to the ancient world. Archaeologists have found evidence suggesting that some ancient Egyptian towns had buildings which stored rolls of papyrus and parchment. By far the most renowned of these ancient libraries was the Great Library of Alexandria, which was established by a king called Ptolemy. Ptolemy set out to collect all of the books in the world, which he then stored in the library as papyrus scrolls. They were written in a range of different languages and transported from distant places, which took huge amounts of time and effort. At its height, the library is believed to have held over 700,000 scrolls of parchment — a huge feat.



From Egypt, the idea of libraries soon spread across the world, including to Rome and eventually to the rest of Europe. By the 1800s, libraries as we know them had been founded in Britain, France, Italy, Spain and Germany. Universities, governments and other organisations paid large sums of money for ornate buildings to house their books.

Arguably the most significant moment in the history of British libraries came in 1850, when the government passed the Public Libraries Act, which allowed any local council to set up its own library. The new law was partly the work of Edward Edwards, a bricklayer who used a local college library to educate himself. The new law did face opposition from some politicians, who thought that the scheme was too costly, and a few rich people disliked the idea of giving poorer people access to books for free. But the law passed successfully — the first free public library in Britain was the Manchester Free Library, founded in 1852. Edward Edwards was its first librarian, and on its opening it held over 18,000 books.

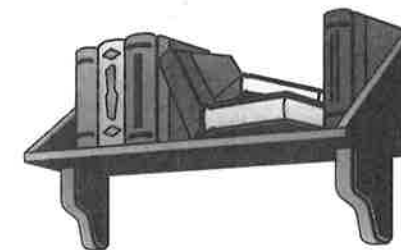
Practice Questions — Non-Fiction

An important innovation for libraries was the Dewey Decimal System. It was invented in 1876 by an American librarian called Melvil Dewey while he was working at a university library in Massachusetts. The Dewey Decimal System uses numbers to classify library books by subject area, simplifying the process of organising and locating books in a large collection. It rapidly became the most popular way to organise library books and is still used today.

The Dewey Decimal System made Melvil Dewey a household name. Many other illustrious figures worked in libraries during their lifetimes, including authors such as Philip Pullman and Lewis Carroll, and the poet Philip Larkin. In fact, it was during Larkin's time as a librarian at the University of Hull that he wrote some of his most popular poems.

Unfortunately, the increasing popularity of the internet has contributed to a drop in library use over the past few years: around 10 million British people regularly use their public library today, compared to around 15 million ten years ago. With information available online at the click of a mouse and cheap books available to order over the internet, is it any wonder that libraries are finding it increasingly difficult to remain open?

Thankfully, many libraries have managed to adapt in order to maintain their place in the public consciousness. Libraries now host book festivals, music concerts and other events to entice new visitors. For example, in 2015, the new Dokk1 library in Denmark was unveiled; it has a wealth of facilities, including art exhibitions, classrooms and playgrounds. It has already been very successful — the year after it opened, it was named public library of the year.



1

What does a far richer history tell you about libraries?

Tick **one** box.

Libraries in the present are better than those in the past.

☐

Libraries have a more interesting and important history than people think.

☐

Libraries have a lot more money than people first thought.

☐

Libraries have grown too powerful and need to be stopped.

☐

Practice Questions — Non-Fiction

- 2 Look at the paragraph beginning, *The first libraries date back...*
What does the word *renowned* tell you about the Great Library of Alexandria?
-
- 3 Why was the Great Library of Alexandria considered a *huge feat*? Give one reason.
-
- 4 Look at the paragraph beginning, *From Egypt...*
What is the meaning of the word *ornate* in this paragraph.
-
- 5 Give two reasons why the Public Libraries Act had to *face opposition*.
1.
2.
- 6 How did the Great Library of Alexandria compare to the Manchester Free Library?
-
-
- 7 Why was the Dewey Decimal System an *important innovation*?
-
- 8 Find and copy a word or group of words that shows that the Dewey Decimal System made Melvil Dewey famous.
-

Practice Questions — Non-Fiction

- 9 According to the text, how did the rise of the internet lead to a decline in library use?
-
-
- 10 *Libraries now host book festivals, music concerts and other events to entice new visitors.*
What does the word *entice* mean in the sentence above?
-
-
- 11 What do you think will happen to libraries in the future?
-
-
- 12 Below is a list of summaries of paragraphs from the text.
Number them 1-6 in the order in which they appear in the text.
- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| There is still hope for libraries. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Several famous people worked in libraries. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A description of the first libraries. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A new system to organise books is described. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| An explanation for the decline of library use. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A description of the Public Libraries Act. | <input type="checkbox"/> |