

In the Comprehension section of the paper you will have to answer concisely. That is, you must answer the question fully but not waffle on endlessly.

Obviously the answer to a question worth 4 marks should be longer than one worth 2 marks, but you are not aiming for long answers for the sake of it. Unless you have anything more to say continuing to write is not going to earn you any more marks.

Have a look at this example:

Describe the character of Donald.

Answer 1: **Donald is a confident man who is used to getting his own way because he knows what his ability is and he therefore doesn't worry about giving orders. Some people think he is a bully because of his bullying behaviour towards people he works with and he often makes them upset by giving orders.**

Basically there are two points here; that Donald is confident and Donald is a bully.

So how about this?

Answer 2: **Donald is a confident man used to giving orders and getting his own way. However, to some his behaviour can come across as bullying.**

Writing in a concise way can be practiced. Sometimes this is a case of finding one word instead of using 5. That comes down to vocabulary. Often that means useful phrases we pick up over the years like 'as a result of this' or 'despite this'. Encourage your children to read newspapers, blogs or any form of online journalism really. The National Literacy Trust have an online newspaper for kids. Reading articles develops ways of making a point succinctly and increases interest in the world. Perhaps read together and discuss.

There have been a few 11+ Grammar School tests recently that have asked pupils to give instructions – things like: *how do you make a cup of tea?* Or *how do you eat an ice cream?*

The aim is to explain efficiently. It is hard sometimes not to trip over your words when you write – to give enough detail but also not too much. So, practice writing instructions.

Don't time the worksheets to begin with, but as you get closer to the exam use a stopwatch. Remember to make them check!

In the exam a good answer is a concise answer. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words. Revise these sentences to state their meaning in fewer words. The first sentence has been done as an example.

1. I began to become obsessed with leaving work early and returning home to my house to play solitary games of Minecraft on my own.

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2. No two of the same people are alike. Everyone's face is different from other people's faces.

3. When I finally arrived at last I realised that I was ten minutes late, and I had arrived after everyone else who had all started work without me in my absence.

4. The annual London Marathon has been run every year since it started in 1981.

5. Deborah worked very hard whilst studying for the exam and was disappointed with her results which were despite working very hard in preparation for the exam.

6. Tom came down grinning and smiling, looking very pleased with himself and gloating that his team had won the cup and that was why he was smiling.

7. Anyone who wishes to be considered for the quiz competition this year must sign the sheet of paper if they want to participate.

8. Jenny was thrilled by the reaction that people gave to her art exhibition and was genuinely excited for the future years.

9. I really like adventure books where the hero goes to travel to strange new places and have adventures.

10. They had run out of Leeks and Broccoli at the Greengrocers so I could not make the dish that I wanted to cook because I did not have the ingredients.

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1. When James got home from school his sister was already there at home sitting down on the sofa.

When James got home from school his sister was already there, sitting on the sofa.

2. In spite of the fact that he had been off school for a period of four days, he still had to do the homework.

3. There are 10 pupils who have already expressed a desire to attend the summer school next summer.

4. As I ran quickly down the road I noticed a man lying on the road and seeming to need help.

5. The house was spooky and ghostly, and it felt as if something strange and mysterious might have at one time happened there.

6. Sarah irresponsibly left the iron on for 12 hours all day and she was lucky that the house did not burn down to the ground.

7. At the same time as my Dad was leaving the house, my older brother was returning home to the house and they met each other in the hallway together.

8. The rain poured down quickly and everyone got wet and drenched to the skin.

9. After all that exercise and running I was now exhausted and only wanted very much to go to sleep in my own bed.

10. Despite taking a lot of safety precautions, many competitors were still injured at the annual cheese-chasing contest that is held every year at the same time.