THE STRIVING

MUSLIM ACADEMY

Islamic and Academic Education

STAGE 6 · ENGLISH · READING PACK

Reading and understanding

Three texts to read and talk about, with questions that ask what the words say, what they mean, and what they do not say outright.

WHAT IS INSIDE

- The Cost of the Shorter Road
- On Keeping Records
- Inventory
- How each one is worked

The Striving Muslim Academy

3 texts · 24 questions

Written for a parent teaching at home. No training assumed, and nothing else to buy.

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The Cost of the Shorter Road

A story. Read it twice: once straight through, and once with the questions.



The new road was to run straight from the town to the junction, cutting eleven kilometres off a journey that had always gone round the ridge. The engineers held a meeting in the school hall and explained it with a map and a great deal of patience.

Most of the objections were the ones they had prepared for: noise, dust, the two years of works. They had answers, and the answers were reasonable.

It was Zaynab's grandmother who asked the question nobody had written down. The old road, she said, passed four villages. Everyone who drove to the junction drove through them, and some of them stopped. The shops, the tyre man, the two tea houses and the woman who sold bread at the second bend had all been there because the road was there.

The senior engineer did not answer immediately. He looked at his map for long enough that the hall went quiet, and then he said that she was right, that it had not been in the study, and that he did not know what the number would be.

The road was built. It saved eleven kilometres. Three of the four villages are still there, and the tea houses are not. Zaynab, who is an engineer herself now, keeps a copy of that map in her office, not because the decision was wrong but because she wants to remember what a study can leave out.

1. How much shorter was the new road to be?

The first paragraph gives the figure.

2. What three objections had the engineers prepared for?

The second paragraph lists them.

On Keeping Records

An explanation. Read it twice: once straight through, and once with the questions.



A record is not the same thing as a memory, and the difference is the whole reason for keeping one.

A memory is edited every time it is used. This is not a fault; it is how memory works. Each time an event is recalled, it is reconstructed from fragments, and the reconstruction is shaped by everything that has happened since, including the last time it was recalled. A memory handled often is not more accurate for the handling. It is smoother, more confident, and further from the event.

A record, written at the time, does not change. It can be lost, misread or disputed, but it cannot quietly become something else while nobody is looking. That is its only advantage, and it is a considerable one.

This is why a figure written down on the day is worth more than a figure recalled a month later with great certainty, and why the certainty is not evidence. It is also why records are most valuable exactly when they are least convenient: when they disagree with what everybody now remembers. A record that only ever confirms the account people already give is doing none of the work it was kept for.

1. What happens to a memory every time it is used?

The second paragraph opens with it.

2. What is a memory reconstructed from?

Look for what the pieces are called.

3. What three things can happen to a record?

The third paragraph lists them.

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How each one is worked

The answers to the **work it out** questions are model answers. A child who says something different and can show you where in the text it came from has done the work.



THE COST OF THE SHORTER ROAD

1. How much shorter was the new road to be?

1. The passage says it would cut eleven kilometres off the journey.
2. So the answer is **eleven kilometres**.

Answer: **Eleven kilometres**

2. What three objections had the engineers prepared for?

1. The passage says the objections were noise, dust, the two years of works.
2. So that is the answer.

Answer: **Noise, dust, the two years of works**

3. How many villages did the old road pass?

1. The passage says the old road passed four villages.
2. So the answer is **four**.

Answer: **Four**

4. What did the senior engineer admit?

1. The passage says he said she was right, that it had not been in the study, and that he did not know what the number would be.
2. So that is the answer.

Answer: **That she was right, that it had not been in the study, and that he did not know what the number would be**

5. WORK IT OUT Why does the passage say he looked at his map until the hall went quiet?

1. The other objections had reasonable, ready answers.
2. This one made him stop and look at the map.
3. The silence shows the room noticed he had no answer ready.

Answer: **To show that he was genuinely thinking rather than giving a prepared answer**

6. WORK IT OUT Why were the shops and tea houses there in the first place?

1. The passage says everyone who drove to the junction drove through them, and some of them stopped.
2. The businesses existed because of the passing trade.
3. Move the road and the trade goes with it.

Answer: **Because the road passed through the villages and some drivers stopped**

7. WORK IT OUT Why does Zaynab keep the map, given that she does not think the decision was wrong?

1. The passage says it is not because the decision was wrong.
2. It is because she wants to remember what a study can leave out.
3. The map stands for the question nobody had written down.

Answer: **To remind herself that a study can leave out things that matter**

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SAMPLE PAGES

You have read a few pages. The pack is longer.

What you are holding is a short sample, taken from different parts of the pack so that you can see how a week is planned and what a child is actually asked to do, before you decide.

The complete pack, and the rest of the academic materials, are on our website: schemes of work for a parent teaching at home, and practice packs for the skills children get stuck on.

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Members of the homeschool community do not buy these. If you have joined the community, the pack for the term you are working on is given to you at no cost.

Our Islamic Education classes are free. These packs are part of what pays the teachers who teach them.