

# Two owls



Owls have rounded heads and forward-facing eyes, giving them features that some recognise as a 'face'. Perhaps this is one reason why they are often written about. Found all over the world, most owls are active during the night and at dawn and dusk.

## The owl

Downhill I came, hungry, and yet not starved;  
Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof  
Against the North wind; tired, yet so that rest  
Had seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.

- 5 Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest,  
Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.  
All of the night was quite barred out except  
An owl's cry, a most melancholy cry

- Shaken out long and clear upon the hill,  
10 No merry note, nor cause of merriment,  
But one telling me plain what I escaped  
And others could not, that night, as in I went.

- And salted was my food, and my repose,  
Salted and sobered, too, by the bird's voice  
15 Speaking for all who lay under the stars,  
Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.



Edward Thomas (1878–1917)

## Owl

- Why does night rest its gourd in my breast?  
Why does the moon puff out my feathers?  
Why do mice twinkle like stars?  
Why does the darkness hoot in my ears?  
5 Why does a hollow tree seem like heaven?  
I am so bespectacled with questions,  
The poor fools call it wisdom.

John Agard

- 1 Both these poems are written in (ring **one**):      the first person      the third person. 1 mark
- 2 a) At the opening of the first poem, what three feelings could have made the speaker feel dejected? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark  
 b) Why does he not feel downhearted? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 3 What similarities are there between Thomas's 'inn' and Agard's 'hollow tree'? \_\_\_\_\_ 2 marks
- 4 What does 'no merry note' and 'nor cause of merriment' tell us about both the owl and the speaker, in the first poem? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 5 a) Which adjective describing the owl's cry also sums up the speaker's feelings on hearing the bird? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark  
 b) What does the word mean? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 6 What thoughts preoccupy the traveller's mind at the end of Thomas's poem? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 7 In Agard's poem, who is asking the questions? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 8 A question to which no answer is expected is described as (ring **one**):  
 methodical      analytical      rhetorical      impractical      artificial. 1 mark
- 9 From the second poem, quote an example of  
 a) a simile \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark  
 b) a metaphor \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 10 Do you think it is a warm or a cold night in the second poem? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 11 Give one example of how Thomas's poem is more traditional than Agard's in style and form. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 12 What common human belief about owls is challenged in Agard's poem? \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark

**R**yan had been looking forward to his birthday party for months. He and his best friends, Marc, Bob, and Kelly, were going to the go-kart track for the afternoon.

When they arrived at the park, Marc announced that he was the best driver of the group and would **undoubtedly** cover the most distance. Kelly laughed and reminded him that she had driven the farthest the last time they were there. Ryan felt certain that since it was his birthday, luck would be on his side.

They fastened on their helmets and climbed into the vehicles. Once they were belted in **securely**, they began to circle the track. The minute Ryan felt the wind whipping against his skin, he knew his party would be a great one.

After the friends were finished riding, they compared the **odometres** on their karts. Ryan pointed

out that his and Marc's odometres measured distance in kilometres, while Kelly's and Bob's measured it in metres.

"There are a thousand metres in a kilometre," Ryan said. "That means we can still compare the distances if we convert our readings."

Ryan's go-kart travelled 6.1 kilometres, and Marc's travelled 6.0 kilometres. Kelly's covered a distance of 6,220 metres, while Bob's travelled 6,000 metres.

"Looks like we have a winner," Ryan said, smiling.



## Let's Race!

### Comprehension Questions

58B

1. Why did the friends go to the track?
  - a. They went to watch a race.
  - b. They went to see who could travel the farthest.
  - c. They went for Ryan's birthday.
2. Who travelled the farthest?
  - a. Kelly
  - b. Ryan
  - c. Bob.
3. **Undoubtedly** means
  - a. probably.
  - b. without a doubt.
  - c. filled with doubt.
4. How were the friends able to compare how far they'd each travelled even though their odometres used different units?
  - a. They just guessed how far they'd each travelled.
  - b. They asked an official at the track to measure for them.
  - c. They knew the number of metres in a kilometre.
5. You can tell that Ryan
  - a. travelled farther than Kelly.
  - b. enjoyed his birthday even though he didn't travel the farthest.
  - c. never wanted to ride in a go-kart again after that day.