

2 Reading Comprehension – Answer Key

Text: Bachi Karkaria, “The Dabba Connection”, from: Mita Banerjee and Susanne Stadler, *India*, Viewfinder Topics (München: Langenscheidt, 2010), pp. 8-9.

B QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. The best symbol of Bombay for the author is ... (tick one option)

- ☐ the historic Gateway of India.
- ☐ the Gothic, gargoyle Victoria Terminus.
- ☐ the white Gandhi cap.
- ☒ the little man who delivers innumerable lunches.

2. Which of the following statements are true of a dabbawalla? (tick two options)

- ☒ He carries almost forty dabbas on a long tray.
- ☐ He weighs more than 50 kilograms.
- ☒ Even in difficult situations, the meals reach their destination in time.
- ☐ He presses his hand on the lid of the dabba to prevent food from splashing out.
- ☐ He wears fancy clothes, especially in summer.

3. Why is the dabbawalla system called both complex and simple (cf. ll. 29-30)? Explain in one or two sentences.

It is complex because of the huge number of individual trays to be transported and the area to be covered. But it is simple because no advanced technology is used.

4. What are the main reasons why many workers use this system? Look at ll. 40-45, 79-81.

It would be far too expensive for them to eat at a restaurant, and they prefer the meals prepared by their wives as well. In addition, there are certain taboos to be considered in connection with their religion.

5. What happens if a dabba has been stolen? (one sentence)

The owner is paid back half the price of a new dabba.

6. Which of the following statements about ll. 91-108 is true? (2 options)

- ☐ There are clashes between different castes.
- ☐ Sometimes the dabbas dissolve so that food spills out.
- ☐ A dabbawalla is one of over 635 servants.
- ☒ A dabbawalla's job is quite dangerous.
- ☒ It can be difficult for a dabbawalla to cross the road quickly enough.

7. Why does the secretary of the Bombay Tiffinbox Suppliers Association patrol the city? (one or two sentences)

In case of an accident, he deals with the police formalities, while somebody else goes on transporting the meals.

8. The dabbawallas' job is even more stressful in monsoon season because ...

(Do not tick more than 2 options)

- ☒ ... the rain does not stop for days on end.
- ☐ ... the boats are very slow on the floods.
- ☒ ... the trains cannot use the railway tracks.
- ☐ ... they have to swim to deliver their dabbas.
- ☐ ... they don't get any cushions if they want to rest.

(Peter Ringeisen)