

## 2 Worksheet on Reading Comprehension

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

### A READING COMPREHENSION – WHY?

Some people may wonder why reading comprehension is tested at all. Everybody can read, can't they? Yes, but it is not only about "reading", it is about "comprehension", too. English texts can be quite tricky sometimes, for example the syntax can be misleading for a learner of English who is not experienced enough.

Reading comprehension tasks are supposed to help you look closer at particularly interesting spots of a text and also to help you find out whether you are able to put into your own words what you have just read.

So concentrate – and do not hesitate to read the same sentence a couple of times if you do not understand it fully the first time. The same goes for the tasks, too. Be careful – if some information in one option is correct, but other pieces of information are not, then you must not choose that option as the correct one, because it is partly false. The correct option must be without any wrong details, but it may be expressed in different words than in the original text.

## 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)

- ☐ 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.

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

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

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**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)**

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**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)*