

## 2 Worksheet on Reading Comprehension

Text: Theodore Dreiser, "The Lobster and the Squid", from: Peter Freese, *The American Dream*, Viewfinder Topics (München: Langenscheidt, 2011), pp. 48f.

### 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 TASKS

Read the excerpt from Theodore Dreiser's novel *The Financier* in your Viewfinder Topic; the passage is entitled "The Lobster and the Squid" (pp. 48f.). Take your time to read all of it carefully.

Then answer the following questions. You may look at the text again if you are not sure.

**1. As what kind of person is Frank Cowperwood portrayed in the first paragraph (ll. 1-12)?**

- ☐ a clean, friendly and helpful boy
- ☐ an intelligent boy, who loves reading
- ☐ a courageous and very reasonable boy, who is very curious
- ☐ a sturdy, defiant and good-looking boy, who loves sports

**2. In lines 13 to 17, we learn about Frank that ... (more than one option is correct)**

- ☐ his father is the director of a bank.
- ☐ he sometimes takes responsibility for his brothers after school.
- ☐ at one store at the fish-market, rare fish or other things living in the sea are on display.
- ☐ he is especially interested in the construction of the tank.

**3. Which of the details from lines 17 to 41 is correct?**

- ☐ The "tragedy" Frank sees makes him more intellectual.
- ☐ The squid manages to disappear again and again.
- ☐ Frank comes to look at the tank every day because he wants to support the squid.
- ☐ Both the lobster and the squid are quick in their movements.

**4. In the passage where Frank finds out that the squid is dead (ll. 42-66) ...**

- ☐ he sees that the squid is killed by an engine.
- ☐ he thinks the lobster enjoys its meal.
- ☐ he has more regrets about missing the final fight than about the death of the squid.
- ☐ the lobster uses a calculator.

**5. At the end, Frank tries to understand what can be learnt from this incident (ll. 67-101) (more than one option).**

- ☐ The squid lost because he had no more ink to spray.
- ☐ The squid lost because he was unarmed.
- ☐ This experience influences Frank very much.
- ☐ Frank makes up his own philosophy about the internal logic of life.
- ☐ People kill other people in order to eat them.
- ☐ Frank is satisfied with his argumentation.

**6. What do you think of Frank as a person as he is described in the first paragraph? Would you like to be his friend?**

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**7. You are a couple of years older than young Frank Cowperwood is in this excerpt. What do *you* think: Is there a lesson that can be learnt from the squid/lobster incident?**

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*(Peter Ringeisen)*