

Verbal Reasoning practice for the CEM 11+

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Author: **Jeremy Bull**. Jeremy Bull has asserted his moral rights under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as the author of this book.

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Introduction

Verbal Reasoning is an important feature of the CEM 11+ exam. It may account for half the total marks awarded. The Verbal Reasoning practice exercises in this book have been written to help children in Year 5 aged 9 and 10 prepare for the CEM 11+. All of the practice exercises are relevant to the CEM-style 11+ administered in different parts of the UK.

In the CEM 11+, Verbal Reasoning includes multiple-choice reading comprehension. For this reason, each Section of this book includes a multiple-choice reading comprehension passage. Most of the passages are short stories or excerpts from stories, reflecting recent CEM 11+ exam content.

Vocabulary is one of the principal areas tested in CEM 11+ Verbal Reasoning. Many of the exercises in this book are designed to help children extend their knowledge and use of English vocabulary – the meanings of words, their use in different contexts and the way they are spelt.

How to use this book

This book is divided into 10 Sections. Each Section provides 7 Verbal Reasoning practice exercises. The level of difficulty is designed to be consistent across all of the Sections. It is recommended that you complete a Section in full before starting the next one. You do not need to complete all 7 sub-sections in a single practice session.

Before you start an exercise, make sure you read the exercise instructions carefully. For example, in the Synonyms and Antonyms exercises, check carefully whether you are being asked to identify synonyms (words with the same or nearly the same meaning) or antonyms (words with the opposite or nearly the opposite meaning).

Assessment

Many of the practice exercises in this book are timed. This is because in the CEM 11+ exam all of the test exercises are timed, and it is therefore very useful practising to a time limit. Time yourself using the timer function on a tablet, smart phone or similar – or ask someone to time you. You should not use a dictionary, thesaurus or other aid when completing the timed exercises. The following scores are indicative of good ability in CEM-style Verbal Reasoning -

Reading comprehension exercises:	80% correct answers or higher in the time allowed.
Spelling exercises:	70% correct answers or higher in the time allowed.
Jumbled sentences:	80% correct answers or higher in the time allowed.
Cloze procedure exercises:	80% correct answers or higher in the time allowed.
Missing letters exercises:	70% correct answers or higher in the time allowed.

Dictionary and thesaurus

In some exercises you are instructed to refer to a dictionary and thesaurus. For speed and ease of use, an electronic English dictionary with 240,000+ words and including a thesaurus is highly recommended.

Section 1

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Reading comprehension 1

Carefully read through the passage of writing and then answer the questions that follow. Indicate your answer by circling one letter: A, B, C or D. The time allowed is 8 minutes. Time yourself or ask someone to time you. You can read the passage as many times as you want within the time allowed, but do not use a dictionary. If you have time left, you should check your answers.

It was one September evening. All the people of the village were standing by their doorsteps talking about their bad harvest and what chances there were of a reasonable price for their crops at market.

All at once a humming noise came up from the riverside. It came nearer and nearer, and all the people stopped talking and began to look down the village road. And coming up the road past the horse stables was a small man with a long beard. Some horses strained to see who was making the strange sound. The man seemed to be humming something over and over. As he came nearer, the people of the village could make out the words: "Have you any work for Aiken? Any work for Aiken?"

The village folk, who were quite unused to strangers, crowded around the little man. They saw that his face was kind and gentle and that his eyes had a merry twinkle in them.

"Good sir," said an old man of the village, "tell us what you want and where you came from."

"I cannot well tell you where I came from," said the stranger genially. "My country is a nameless land and is very different from this land of yours. Back there, we all learn to serve, while here every one wishes to be served. When there is no work for us to do at home, we sometimes set out to visit other lands to see if there is work we can do there. If you wish, I will stay here for a while. I want no pay - offer to pay me and I'll have to go home. All I ask for is a corner of the barn to sleep in, bread and vegetables and a warm bowl of soup at bedtime. I shall be ready to help anyone who needs me. I'll gather your sheep on the hill. I'll take in the harvest by moonlight. I'll bake your bread on a busy day. I'll even tame those young colts I saw in the stables."

No one knew quite what to say in answer to the man's strange request. It was an unheard-of thing for anyone to come and offer his services for nothing. Some thought it could not be true; others said it were better to have nothing to do with him.

But the miller offered the man a corner of his barn to sleep in, and his wife promised to make him some broth at bedtime and to come down to the barn with it every evening. Then all the people of the village said, "Good night," and went to their homes. But some looked over their shoulders, suspicious that the little man was trying to deceive them all.

But if some were doubtful of him that night, they had a very different story to tell about him before a month had passed. Whatever he was or wherever he came from, he was the most wonderful worker that they had ever known. The funny thing was, they rarely saw him. They might have gone to the miller's barn twenty times a day, and twenty times a day they would have found nothing but a heap of straw and an empty broth bowl.

But whenever there was work to be done - a farmyard to be made tidy, or a batch of bread loaves to be made, or a flock of sheep to be gathered together on a stormy night - Aiken somehow always knew of it and helped just at the right time.

And maybe he would never have gone away if everyone in the village had remembered that he would not work for pay. But a good man of the village forgot, and one day he planned to give something to Aiken. "He should not work for nothing," said the man. "He has already worn out his coat and trousers and shoes working for us all."

So one day he put some money in an envelope, enough for new clothing and shoes, and laid the envelope by the side of the empty bowl of broth in the miller's barn.

Aiken vanished that same day as anyone from his land was sure to do if someone tried to pay them for work. And all the people of the village talked of the kind deeds of the little man who came one evening into their midst, and they wondered if he would ever come back again.

1. How were the village people feeling before Aiken arrived?
 - A. Tired.
 - B. Happy.
 - C. Anxious.
 - D. Relaxed.

2. How often did strangers visit the village?
 - A. Sometimes.
 - B. Rarely.
 - C. Frequently.
 - D. Now and then.

3. Complete the following analogy: 'Horse is to stables as pig is to...'
 - A. lairs.'
 - B. sties.'
 - C. dens.'
 - D. setts.'

4. What surprised the villagers most about the man's offer?
 - A. He didn't want a wage.
 - B. He didn't need a bed to sleep in.
 - C. He offered to bake bread.
 - D. He said he would tame the young colts.

5. An analogy for 'a flock of sheep' is...
 - A. 'A pack of horses'.
 - B. 'A herd of geese'.
 - C. 'A pride of wildebeest'.
 - D. 'A colony of ants.'

6. The villages were suspicious at first, but Aiken turned out to be...
- A. industrious.
 - B. indolent.
 - C. immature.
 - D. inefficient.
7. Why did Aiken leave the village?
- A. There was no more work to do.
 - B. He was feeling homesick.
 - C. Nobody knows.
 - D. Someone from the village made a mistake.
8. A colt is a young male horse. A young female horse is a...
- A. calf.
 - B. filly.
 - C. kid.
 - D. mare.
9. Aiken doesn't want to be paid any money for working. This kind of work is called...
- A. volatile.
 - B. involuntary.
 - C. voluntary.
 - D. involved.
10. According to Aiken, what is a major difference between his land and the villagers' land?
- A. The people in his land are more helpful.
 - B. The people in his land work harder.
 - C. The people in his land are more cheerful.
 - D. The people in his land are not as friendly.

Synonyms in context 1

Select the word which is most similar in meaning to the word underlined in the sentence or phrase on the left. Use a dictionary and thesaurus to help you. There is no time limit. There is only one right answer for each question. Indicate your answer by circling one of the letters A - E.

1.

	A	B	C	D	E
I <u>rarely</u> go.	often	seldom	really	never	sometimes

2.

	A	B	C	D	E
It is a <u>forgery</u> .	mistake	factory	masterpiece	fake	fault

3.

	A	B	C	D	E
A <u>tedious</u> book.	thick	famous	boring	notorious	tremendous

4.

	A	B	C	D	E
<u>Singed</u> hair.	short	curly	burnt	brunette	blond

5.

	A	B	C	D	E
A tremendous <u>feat</u> .	gala	fiesta	future	achievement	victory

6.

	A	B	C	D	E
He's <u>industrious</u> .	diligent	lazy	indolent	manufacturing	working

7.

	A	B	C	D	E
A <u>handy</u> tip.	useless	useful	sharp	blunt	possible

8.

	A	B	C	D	E
A <u>fake</u> certificate.	genuine	torn	bogus	bought	stamped