



English Comprehension Test Answers

A Candle in the Dark, by Adèle Geras

1. Explain the following words in the context of the story:
 - a) 'clamped' – Lotte's (Clara's mother) lips were pressed tightly together. (1)
 - b) 'buzzed' – In Clara's mind the word 'Nazi' makes a horrible sound as she doesn't like what it means. (2)
 - c) 'frowned upon' – In Nazi Germany a Jewish family was not allowed to be part of normal society, so any help they used to have was now not allowed. (2)

2. What do you think the following phrases mean?
 - a) 'It was an ugly, black little word' - Clara has a hatred of the word so she sees it in a negative way. (1)
 - b) 'the furniture store that had been in the family for years and years' – The family had owned a furniture shop for many years. (1)
 - c) 'her usual place'- Marianne always used to sit with Clara. (1)
 - d) 'a fog of tears'- Clara's eyes were so full of tears that she couldn't see properly. (1)

3. How do you think Clara felt when she realised that there were shops her family were no longer allowed in? Whose shop will she miss the most?

Clara probably felt confused as she used to go into the shops all the time, and now neither she nor her family could go in but there is no apparent reason why. The shop she will miss the most is probably Tant Trude's drapery as this is where she was allowed to take ribbons and material to make clothes and accessories for her doll, Angelika. (5)

4. Describe in your own words how, and give reasons why Clara's mother was so scared.

We can tell Clara's mother is scared because the author describes her as being very pale and shaky. She is probably so scared because like Clara, she can hear the marching and all the noise. Lotte doesn't know what is going on either and she is fearful for her family's safety. (4)

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5. Why do you think Marianne moves away from Clara? Is it really because she doesn't like her any more?

Marianne says in the text that it was her father who told her that she must not sit next to Clara, so it probably isn't because she doesn't like her anymore but because she must do as her father says. (3)

6. What was Clara's reaction to what Marianne does to her?

Clara was very upset and she felt lonely as it says that she had to walk home by herself. (2)

7. Lotte, Clara's mother says, 'Maybe they will go soon.' Write in your own words who 'they' are, and if they really will go away soon.

'They' are the Nazi soldiers and followers who want to hurt the Jews and get rid of them. It is unlikely that they will go away soon because they have been making so much noise and have been marching through the streets for so long. The Nazis are probably working their way to where Clara's family is to destroy everything they have too. (5)

8. Who is Maxi? Using the text, describe how he acts and how he must be feeling about what is happening.

Maxi is Clara's brother – you can tell because they both call Lotte 'Mama.' The way he runs out to Lotte and starts asking so many questions suggests that he is quite young. He too must be scared and confused by all the noise. (4)

9. Imagine you are Clara, sitting, scared, with Lotte. Continue the story from the end of the passage, writing about what you maybe feeling and what happens next. You should try and write about 10 lines. (8 marks)