

## 2019 Henry Park (Singapore) Pri 6 SA2 Comprehension

This following passage is from 2019 Henry Park Pri 6 SA2 Preliminary Examinations. For the comprehension section, we train our students with the following:

At eduKate (Singapore) Tuition Centre, we have a supplementary section that we go through with our English students, including reading along the passage and have extra information that will help our students to understand the passage better.

To be used in conjunction with the actual comprehension, we have included vocabulary, idioms and information related to the passage before having our students attempt the comprehension section.

### Comprehension Passage

My greatest ambition was to be a comics artist. My classmates often walked past me, glanced over my shoulders and asked, "Can you make a living out of it?"

I was the only person in my class who wanted to be a comics artist. The rest wanted to be astronomers, business tycoons, mathematicians or doctors. They had their heads in the clouds.

It was not until Friday night when I completed my first full-length, original six-page comic strip. I did not have any idea what to do with it though. Just doing it made me happy. However, I still read and checked through it sixty times over the weekend before finally pronouncing it 'Not too bad'.

That would have been the end of it, except I happened to mention to Micheal Lazarus, the only classmate who was interested in my ambition that I had drawn a comic strip. He told me that there was a magazine, Boy Magazine, in Sydney I could send it to. So, when I got home, I rolled my comics up in brown paper, addressed it and put it in my schoolbag where I would not forget to mail it. Lazarus had embedded the idea in my mind.

I hardly slept all night. What kept me awake was the magazine I was sending my comic to, Boy Magazine. I had never liked it because it had the sneaky policy of printing stories, with only one illustration at the top of the page to trick readers into buying the magazine. Did I want my comics to appear in a magazine which printed mainly stories? An awful prospect!

At 2 a.m., I decided no and at 3 a.m., it was a yes. At 4 a.m., it was no again but just before falling asleep, I saw Lazarus' face and he said, 'Publish it!' That decided it.

My father was quite the scoffer and would walk past my room every evening and look in to say, "Morris? They sent you the money yet?" When the letter did arrive from Boy Magazine, did he change his tune? Not one bit. "I don't see a cheque," he said. "Show me the letter."

It read, "We are very interested in your comic strip and would like you to call Miss Gordon to make an appointment to see the editor."

“An appointment? If they wanted it, there'd be a cheque,” he mocked.

I called Miss Gordon from a public phone and not from home. I did not want my father around for obvious reasons.

“And what day and time will most convenient for you, Mr Lurie?” she asked.

“Oh, any day at all,” I shouted.

“Next Thursday at 10 a.m.?” she asked.

“Perfect! I'll be there!” I yelled and hung up with a crash.

It had not occurred to me to tell her I had to take a day off from school to see the editor. I would have to find an excuse to be away for a day from school. I also had to find out how to get to Boy's Magazine by train alone and it was a big worry for my mother unlike my father's concern about receiving the cheque.

I had yet another problem. What to wear? My school uniform was out of the question because it just was not right for a business appointment. My only suit was a year old and too short. My father offered to lend me his suit but he was shorter than me and twice my weight. So, I decided to wear my suit after all.

Now, as the day of my appointment drew closer, a great question had to be answered. For my father had been right. If all they wanted to do was to buy my comic strip, they would have sent a cheque. So, there must be something else. A full-time job as a comics artist at Boy Magazine! It had to be that!

Adapted from my *Greatest Ambition* by Morris Lurie.

## **Supplementary for Teachers/Tutors/Parents**

Welcome to eduKate (Singapore) Tuition Centre. The following are guides that will help students to ease themselves into answering the comprehension section.

### **Vocabulary**

1. ambition
2. glanced
3. astronomer
4. tycoon
5. full-length
6. original
7. pronouncing
8. embedded
9. sneaky
10. policy
11. illustration
12. prospect
13. scoffer
14. tune
15. appointment
16. cheque
17. mocked

18. obvious
19. convenient
20. editor
21. full-time

### Idioms related to this passage:

1. **"blessing in disguise"** used when author's ambition is different from others.
2. **"a dime a dozen"** used when everyone else's ambition are the same.
3. **"birds of a feather flock together"** used for author and friend Lazarus.
4. **"bite the bullet"** used when author decided to send the comic to Boy Magazine.
5. **"break a leg"** used when author was about to go for his appointment.
6. **"hit the sack"** used when the author went to bed.
7. **"no pain, no gain"** author missed school, took a train for his appointment.
8. **"so far, so good"** used when Miss Gordon set an appointment with the author.
9. **"rain on someone's parade"** used when author's father asked for a cheque.
10. **"head in the clouds"** as is in passage.

### Interesting things to teach your child/student related to this passage.

1. Morris Lurie was an Australian writer (30 October 1938-8 October 2014).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morris\\_Lurie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morris_Lurie)

Lurie was born in 1948 to Arie and Esther Lurie (Jewish emigrants from Poland) at the [Royal Women's Hospital](#) in [Carlton](#), a suburb of [Melbourne](#).<sup>[1]</sup> He was schooled at Elwood Central School, Prahran Technical School and Melbourne High School, and then studied architecture at the [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology](#) before working in advertising.

His first novel was the comic *Rappaport* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1966) and focused on a day in the life of a young Melbourne antique dealer and his immature friend, Friedlander. The characters, transplanted to London, were further chronicled in *Rappaport's Revenge* (1973). Lurie's self-exile from Australia to Europe, the UK and Northern Africa provides much of the material for his fiction. His second novel was *The London Jungle Adventures of Charlie Hope* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1968). *Flying Home* (1978) was named by the National Book Council as one of the ten best Australian books of the decade. Subsequent novels are *Seven Books for Grossman* (1983)—really a novella parodying the styles of various authors—and *Madness* (1991), about a writer dealing with a mentally unstable girlfriend.

Lurie is best known for his short stories. In 2000 he wrote an instructional guide *When and How to Write Short Stories and What They Are*. His stories have been published in many prestigious magazines, including [The New Yorker](#), [The Virginia Quarterly](#), [Punch](#), [The Times](#), [The Telegraph Magazine](#), [Transatlantic Review](#), [Island](#), [Meanjin](#), [Overland](#), [Quadrant](#) and [Westerly](#).

In his 2008 novel, *To Light Attained*, Lurie deals with the subject of suicide.<sup>[2]</sup> A review of the novel described it as "a father's anguish in words".<sup>[3]</sup>

Lurie succumbed to cancer on 8 October 2014, at the [Wantirna Hospice](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

2. Disney bought Marvel Comics for \$4 billion and has made more than \$18 billion at the global box office. (July 2019 <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/07/21/disney-has-made-more-than-18-billion-from-marvel-films-since-2012.html>)
3. Avengers: Endgame has surpassed Avatar's record as the highest-grossing movie of all time. Marvel Studios re-released Endgame in theaters with several extra minutes of footage in July to boost this effort, bringing the movie's total to \$2.79 billion. James Cameron's 2009 film Avatar raked in \$2.788 billion. (July 2019 <https://time.com/5523398/highest-grossing-marvel-movies/>)
4. World's most expensive comic book sold for US\$3.2 million. An original copy of the Action Comics #1 that initially cost 10 cents and introduced Earth to Superman became the world's most expensive comic book Sunday when it raked in \$3.2 million on eBay. When Darren Adams decided to put his incredibly rare, nearly pristine copy of the debut issue of the Man of Steel up for auction on eBay, he generously started the bid at 99 cents. Less than two hours later, the price had risen faster than a speeding bullet, past US\$1.5 million. (<https://nypost.com/2014/08/25/worlds-most-expensive-comic-book-sells-for-3-2m/>)
5. Singapore's very own comic artists. Sonny Liew. Johnny Lau. Yeo Hui Xuan. Troy Chin. Wee Tian Beng. Lee Chee Chew. (<https://www.timeout.com/singapore/art/the-best-comic-book-artists-in-singapore-right-now>)

Read this passage and answer questions 71 – 80.

<p>My greatest ambition was to be a comics artist. My classmates often walked past me, glanced over my shoulders and asked, "Can you make a living out of it?"</p> <p>I was the only person in my class who wanted to be a comics artist. The rest, wanted to be astronomers, business tycoons, mathematicians or doctors. They had their heads in the clouds.</p> <p>It was not until Friday night when I completed my first full-length, original six-page comic strip. I did not have any idea what to do with it though. Just doing it made me happy. However, I still read and checked through it sixty times over the weekend before finally pronouncing it 'Not too bad'.</p> <p>That would have been the end of it, except I happened to mention to Michael Lazarus, the only classmate who was interested in my ambition that I had drawn a comic strip. He told me that there was a magazine, <i>Boy Magazine</i>, in Sydney I could send it to. So, when I got home, I rolled my comics up in brown paper, addressed it and put it in my schoolbag where I would not forget to mail it. Lazarus had embedded the idea in my mind.</p> <p>I hardly slept all night. What kept me awake was the magazine I was sending my comic to, <i>Boy Magazine</i>. I had never liked it because it had the sneaky policy of printing stories, with only one illustration at the top of the page to trick readers into buying the magazine. Did I want my comics to appear in a magazine which printed mainly stories? An awful prospect!</p> <p>At 2 a.m., I decided no and at 3 a.m., it was a yes. At 4 a.m., it was no again but just before falling asleep, I saw Lazarus' face and he said, 'Publish it!' That decided it.</p> <p>My father was quite the scoffer and would walk past my room every evening and look in to say, "Morris? They sent you the money yet?" When the letter did arrive from Boy Magazine, did he change his tune? Not one bit. "I don't see a cheque," he said. "Show me the letter."</p> <p>It read, "We are very interested in your comic strip and would like you to call Miss Gordon to make an appointment to see the editor."</p> <p>"An appointment? If they wanted it, there'd be a cheque," he mocked.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10</p> <p>15</p> <p>20</p> <p>25</p>
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I called Miss Gordon from a public phone and not from home. I did not want my father around for obvious reasons.	30
"And what day and time will be most convenient for you, Mr. Lurie?" she asked.	
"Oh, any day at all!" I shouted.	
"Next Thursday at 10 a.m.?" she asked.	
"Perfect! I'll be there!" I yelled and hung up with a crash.	35
It had not occurred to me to tell her that I had to take a day off from school to see the editor. I would have to find an excuse to be away for a day from school. I also had to find out how to get to <i>Boy's Magazine</i> by train alone and it was a big worry for my mother unlike my father's concern about receiving the cheque.	
I had yet another problem. What to wear? My school uniform was out of the question because it just was not right for a business appointment. My only suit was a year old and too short. My father offered to lend me his suit but he was shorter than me and twice my weight. So, I decided to wear my suit after all.	40
Now, as the day of my appointment drew closer, a great question had to be answered. For my father had been right. If all they wanted to do was to buy my comic strip, they would have sent a cheque. So, there must be something else. A full-time job as a comics artist at <i>Boy Magazine</i> ! It had to be that!	45
<i>Adapted from My Greatest Ambition by Morris Lurie</i>	

71. Pick out a five-word phrase from the second paragraph that tells us that the narrator did not think very highly of his classmates. (1m)

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72. Based on lines 1-16, state whether each statement in the table below is true or false, then give one reason why you think so. (3m)

Statement	True/False	Reason
Everyone was against the narrator about his desire to become a comics artist.		
The narrator's aim of completing his first full-length comic strip was for his own pleasure.		
The narrator was thorough in checking his comic strip.		

73. Write 1, 2, 3 in the blanks below to indicate the order in which the events occurred in the story. (1m)

- \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator made an appointment to meet with the editor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator was convinced by Michael Lazarus to publish his comic strip.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The narrator made up his mind to mail off his comic strip.



74. Look at the table below. What do the words in the left column refer to in the passage? Write the answers in the column on the right. (3m)

the idea (line 14)	
it (line 29)	
her (line 36)	

75. Why did the narrator dislike the magazine recommended by Michael Lazarus? (2m)

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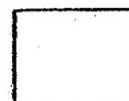
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76. What do you think the narrator meant by saying "...did he change his tune? Not one bit." (line 25)? (2m)

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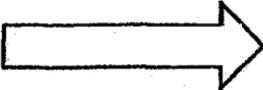


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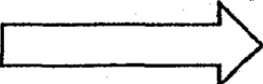


77. After the narrator got off the telephone with Miss Gordon, what were his parents' concerns? (2m)

Father 

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Mother 

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78. What were the **two** problems that the narrator realised he had to deal with after he had set up the appointment with the editor? (2m)

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79. Which **two** of the following words best describe how the narrator felt about his appointment with the editor from lines 35-47? (2m)  
DO NOT TICK MORE THAN TWO BOXES.

angry

☐

impatient

☐

discouraged

☐

puzzled

☐

excited

☐

relieved

☐

80. Did the narrator believe that he was being offered a job? Support your answer with evidence from the passage. (2m)

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