

“A Cold Day”

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.

It is a **frigid** January day in York, Pennsylvania.

The temperature is below freezing. Snow is starting to fall.

Dr. James turns on the television to check the weather.

He must leave for his work at the hospital soon.



“Today is going to be very cold,” says the TV weatherman. “Be sure to wear very warm clothes when you go outside. Also, be careful driving on the roads. Snowfall will make them **slippery**. In fact, if you can stay home today, do it!”

Dr. James cannot stay home. Very sick people are waiting to see him at the hospital.

He goes to his closet. He takes out the warmest clothes he has.

He puts on a sweater, jacket, gloves, socks, boots, and a hat.

He opens his front door to go to work. A gust of cold air blows inside.

“Wow, it is very cold outside,” Dr. James says. He is from Miami and is not used to the cold. “The weatherman was right!”

Before he can drive to work, Dr. James must clear the snow off his car.

He does this very fast. He hops in the car. He shivers. His neck feels especially cold.

Dr. James drives slowly to work. Everyone else is driving slowly, too. There is a lot of **traffic** on the road. There are cars in front of and behind him.

Suddenly, the cars in front of Dr. James come to a stop. There has been an **accident!**

Dr. James hurries from his car to check on the driver of the car that has swerved off the road. “Is everyone okay?” Dr. James asks.

“Yes, yes, we are fine. We slipped on a patch of ice,” the driver says. “This would have been a good day to stay home in bed.”

Questions:

1) If the weather is **frigid**, it is very

- A. cold
- B. rainy
- C. windy
- D. slippery

2) In what city does this story take place?

- A. Florida
- B. Miami
- C. Pennsylvania
- D. York

3) Dr. James doesn't stay home because

- A. There are sick people waiting for him.
- B. He listens to the weatherman.
- C. He has to clear snow off his car.
- D. He must help the people in the accident.

4) What could Dr. James have put on his neck to keep it warm?

- A. gloves
- B. a scarf
- C. another hat
- D. a jacket

5) What does Dr. James do before he leaves for work?

- I. He dresses warmly.
 - II. He checks the weather on TV.
 - III. He clears snow from his car.
- A. I only
 - B. I and II
 - C. II and III
 - D. I, II, and III

6) Given what is said in the story, what is probably true about Miami?

- A. It is a warm place.
- B. It is a rainy place.
- C. It is a windy place.
- D. People drive slowly there.

7) How are people driving today?

- A. badly
- B. slowly
- C. very fast
- D. like they do not care

8) As described in the beginning of the story, what does it mean if the roads are **slippery**?

- A. The roads are full of cars.
 - B. The roads are easy to slide on.
 - C. The roads are very long and curvy.
 - D. The roads lead to a place with lots of snow.
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Questions (continued):

9) Why does Dr. James clear the snow off his car quickly?

- A. because he is very cold
- B. because he is late for work
- C. because he knows his patients are waiting
- D. because he knows he will have to drive slowly

10) There is a lot of **traffic** on the road. How can we rewrite this sentence?

- A. There is a lot of snow on the road.
- B. There are a lot of cars on the road.
- C. There are a lot of accidents on the road.
- D. There are a lot of people walking on the road.

11) Why did the car have an accident?

- A. because it was snowing outside
- B. because Dr. James hit the car
- C. because it was so cold outside
- D. because the car slipped on a patch of ice

12) What is an **accident**?

- A. something that hurts people
- B. something that happens only in the snow
- C. something that happens that has not been planned
- D. something that happens because other people want it to

13) What is the weatherman right about?

- I. It is a windy day.
 - II. It is very cold outside.
 - III. The roads are slippery.
- A. I only
 - B. I and II
 - C. II and III
 - D. I, II, and III

14) Why does Dr. James hurry from his car after the accident?

- A. because he is very cold
- B. because he wants to get to the hospital as soon as possible
- C. because he is worried about his patients waiting at the hospital
- D. because he wants to make sure the people in the car are okay

Do you like the weather where you live? Why or why not?

Answers and Explanations

1) **A**

frigid (*adjective*): extremely cold.

The first line of the story tells the reader that it is a frigid day: “The temperature is below freezing. Snow is starting to fall.” We can understand from this that *frigid* means *very cold*. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

Since snow is starting to fall, we know that it is not *rainy*. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. A windy day may or may not be freezing and snowy, so frigid cannot mean *windy*. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. It may or may not be slippery out when it is below freezing, so frigid cannot mean *slippery*. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

2) **D**

The first line of the story says, “It is a frigid January day in York, Pennsylvania.” Therefore **(D)** is correct. Florida is a state, not a city. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Although we learn later in the story that Dr. James is from Miami, that is not where the story takes place. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Pennsylvania is a state, not a city. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

3) **A**

In the middle, the story says, “Dr. James cannot stay home. Very sick people are waiting to see him at the hospital.” Dr. James cannot stay at home because there are sick people waiting for him. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

Dr. James does listen to the weatherman, but that is not the reason why he cannot stay home. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. He also clears snow off his car, but that is not the reason why he cannot stay home. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. The accident is not the reason why Dr. James cannot stay home. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

4) **B**

A scarf is the item of clothing used to keep the neck warm. It is also the only item of clothing Dr. James is not already wearing. Wearing a scarf would keep his neck warm. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

Gloves go on hands, and Dr. James is already wearing gloves. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Hats keep heads warm, and another hat will not keep his neck warm. He is already wearing a hat. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. Jackets keep the torso and arms warm, and Dr. James is already wearing a jacket. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

5) **D**

In the middle of the story, Dr. James “takes out the warmest clothes he has.” Dr. James “puts on a sweater, jacket, gloves, socks, boots, and a hat.” This supports **option (I)**. At the beginning, the story says, “Dr. James turns on the television to check the weather.” This supports **option (II)**. In the middle, the

story says, “Dr. James must clear the snow off his car.” Dr. James clears the snow off his car “very fast.” This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

6) **A**

In the middle, the story says Dr. James “is from Miami and is not used to the cold.” We can understand from this that Miami is not cold. Since Miami is not cold, it is probably warm. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

The story says that Dr. James is not used to the cold because he is from Miami. This gives us an idea of how warm it is in Miami, but does not give us any idea whether Miami is rainy. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. It also does not tell us whether Miami is windy. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. The story describes what the traffic is like in York on one day, but that does not give us any idea what the traffic is like in Miami. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

7) **B**

The story says that Dr. James “drives slowly,” and “everyone else is driving slowly, too.” Therefore **(B)** is correct. The story does not provide information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

8) **B**

slippery (*adjective*): causing or tending to cause items to slide or slip.

In the middle of the story, the TV weatherman says, “Be careful driving on the roads. Snowfall will make them slippery.” At the end of the story, a driver who swerved off the road tells Dr. James, “We slipped on a patch of ice.” Taking these statements together, we can understand from this that snowfall makes the roads dangerous because they became easy to slip on. *Slippery* means making it easy to slide or slip. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

The snowfall will not make the roads full of cars. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. The snowfall will not make the roads long or curvy. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. The snowfall does not affect where roads lead. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

9) **A**

In the middle of the story, Dr. James clears off his car. When Dr. James is finished clearing off the car, he “hops in the car” and “shivers.” Since Dr. James gets in the car quickly and shivers after clearing off the car, we can understand that Dr. James cleared the car off quickly because he felt cold. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

Dr. James goes to work though the snow has made driving difficult because he knows that he has patients waiting for him, but that is not why he clears the snow quickly. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. The story does not provide information to support answer choices **(B)** and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

10) **B**

traffic (*noun*): the vehicles coming and going on a street, in a town, etc.

Near the end, the story says, "There is a lot of traffic on the road. There are cars in front of and behind him." We can understand from this that *traffic* means there are a lot of cars on the road. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The story does not give us information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

11)**D**

At the end of the story, Dr. James goes up to a car that has swerved off the road and asks the driver if everyone is okay. The driver says, "Yes, yes, we are fine. We slipped on a patch of ice." We can understand from this that the car had an accident because it slipped on the ice. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

While the snow may have made the roads icy, the direct cause of the accident was the ice itself. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. The story does not say Dr. James hit the car. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Therefore it is incorrect. Although the cold weather has caused the ice to freeze, the direct cause of the accident was the ice itself. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

12)**C**

accident (*noun*): an unexpected event, especially one that causes harm.

The weather is snowy, which has made the roads slippery. At the end of the story, the slippery roads cause an accident. The *accident* is that one of the cars swerved off the road. The driver swerved off the road because of the ice. The driver did not plan to swerve off the road. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

Although people can be hurt in accidents, the people in this car accident were fine. They were not hurt. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. The snow may make accidents more likely to happen, but accidents can happen without snow. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Accidents are not planned, as it would not make sense for the driver to plan to swerve off the road. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

13)**C**

The weatherman does not say that the day will be windy. This eliminates **option (I)**. Near the beginning of the story, the weatherman says, "Today is going to be very cold." This supports **option (II)**. The weatherman also says, "Be careful driving on the roads. Snowfall will make them slippery." This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

14)**D**

At the end, the story says, "Dr. James hurries from his car to check on the driver of the car that has swerved off the road." Therefore **(D)** is correct.

We know that Dr. James is cold. This is why he cleans his car off quickly. But this is not why Dr. James gets out of his car quickly after the accident. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. We also know that Dr. James wants to get to the hospital to take care of his patients. This is why Dr. James leaves his house against the weatherman's advice. But this is not the reason that Dr. James hurries from his car after the accident. This makes **(B)** incorrect. It is possible that Dr. James is worried about his patients at the hospital, but the story does not tell us this is so. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.