

Reading

Extra Time

**60**

minutes

50

marks

First name	
Last name	
School	

Instructions

- You have 60 minutes. Read each text, then answer the questions about it.
- Read the whole text before you start the questions.
- Some questions ask you to tick one box. Others ask you to write an answer.
- Look at the number of marks for each question. Questions worth 2 or 3 marks need more: more than one point, or points with evidence from the text.
- If a question says “Use evidence from the text”, show where in the text you found your answer.

Practice paper written by SATs Arcade. Not an official STA paper.

Reading booklet

Read all 3 texts. You can look back at them as you answer the questions.

Text 1

Ruby Between the Posts

FICTION

1 Ruby Patel stood on the touchline with her gloves in her hands and her stomach doing somersaults. The gloves had belonged to her cousin, and the fingers were a little too long, so they flopped at the tips whenever she held them up. Across the pitch, the Marsh Lane Magpies were already firing shots into an empty net and laughing.

2 “You don’t have to do this,” said Mr Okoro, coach of the Eastfield Eagles Under-10 girls. He crouched beside her so that his eyes were level with hers. “Nia can go back in goal if you’d rather.”

3 Ruby thought about it. Nia had played in goal for the first three matches of the season and had let in nineteen goals. Nobody had blamed her, but Ruby had seen Nia’s face afterwards, and she did not want to see it again. “No,” she said, though her voice came out smaller than she meant it to. “I’ll do it.”

4 “Good. Remember what we practised,” said Mr Okoro. “Stay on your toes. Talk to your defenders. If you’re not sure, get your body behind the ball.” He smiled. “And whatever happens, it’s only a game.”

5 The whistle blew. For ten minutes nothing came near Ruby at all. She jogged on the spot, rubbed her hands together and watched the play sweep up and down the pitch.

6 Then the Magpies’ tallest player broke free. She sprinted down the wing, cut inside and the defenders scattered. Ruby’s heart thumped so loudly that she was sure the whole pitch could hear it. “Mine!” she yelled, although she had not really decided whether it was. The shot came low and hard to her left. Ruby dived. The ball smacked into her gloves, stinging her all the way up to her elbows, and spun away round the post for a corner.

7 Cheers rose from the Eagles’ parents. Ruby lay on the damp grass, staring at the grey sky and hardly believing what she had done. Then she scrambled to her feet. Her gloves, floppy fingers and all, had worked.

8 Just before half-time, the Magpies scored from the corner. It was a scrappy goal. The ball bounced off a defender’s knee and trickled over the line before Ruby could move. At the break, she sat on an upturned crate with her head down.

9 “That one wasn’t your fault,” said Nia, squeezing in beside her and handing over an orange segment. “It hit Dani’s knee. And you stopped the first shot, which is more than I managed in my first match.”

“Really?” said Ruby.

“Really. Now eat that. You’ll need it.”

10 The second half was faster and tighter. Dani, who had been so unlucky before the break, thumped in an equaliser from an Eagles corner, and the parents erupted again. Then, with two minutes left, a Magpies striker was brought down in the penalty area and the referee pointed to the spot.

11 Ruby’s mouth went dry. The penalty-taker placed the ball on the spot and stepped back. Ruby bounced on her toes, just as she had practised. She noticed that the girl’s eyes flicked towards the bottom corner on Ruby’s right, just once, before she began her run. Ruby leaned that way. The shot came, low and fierce, and Ruby flung out an arm. The extra length of those floppy fingers was just enough. The ball brushed her fingertips, clanged off the post and was hacked away by a defender.

12 The final whistle blew with the score still 1–1. The Eagles’ parents clapped and the players swarmed round Ruby. Nia reached her first and hugged her so hard that Ruby’s feet left the grass.

13 That evening, Ruby sat in the back of the car with the gloves on her lap. The fingers still flopped over at the tips. She decided that she wouldn’t swap them for any other pair in the world.

Text 2

Grass Matters: How a Pitch Is Looked After

NON-FICTION

On a Saturday morning, a football pitch seems simple. There is a rectangle of green, a white line round the edge and a goal at each end. But the surface under your boots has been looked after all week, and often all year. Behind every good pitch is a groundskeeper, and the job is harder than it looks.

Cutting the grass

While it is growing, the grass on a pitch is usually cut once or twice a week. This may sound harsh, but grass grows from near its base, not from its tip, so a mower takes off the top of each blade without harming the plant. Regular cutting even helps, because it makes the grass grow thicker and creates a tougher surface.

The grass is kept short so that the ball rolls smoothly along the ground instead of slowing down or bobbling. However, grass cannot be cut too short. A plant with very little leaf cannot catch much sunlight, and it grows shallow roots that hold it poorly in the soil. A groundskeeper therefore has to find a balance between a pitch that is fast and a pitch that is strong.

Stripes

Many pitches are cut in light and dark stripes. These are made by a heavy roller fitted behind the mower, which presses the blades of grass so that they lean in one direction. Grass that leans away from you reflects more light and looks paler. Grass that leans towards you looks darker. The grass itself is exactly the same in every stripe. It is only the way the light bounces off it that changes.

Marking the lines

Before a match, the white lines are marked on the grass by a machine that carries line-marking paint. To keep the lines straight, a string is stretched tight between two pegs and the machine is guided along it.

Water

Like all plants, grass needs air, light, water and nutrients from the soil. In a dry spell, a pitch may be watered, usually early in the morning or in the evening, when less of the water will dry up in the sun. Too much water causes just as many problems. A waterlogged pitch has puddles on its surface, and players' boots would tear up the grass and churn the soil into mud. Repairing the damage can take weeks, so a match is often postponed instead.

Pressed down and worn out

Every time a player runs, turns or slides, they press down on the soil. Over a season, the ground becomes packed so tightly that air and water cannot easily reach the roots. To solve this, groundskeepers aerate the pitch. A machine pushes spikes or hollow tubes into the ground and leaves rows of small holes. Air and water can then soak down, and the roots can spread deeper.

Some parts of a pitch wear out faster than others. Goalmouths, where keepers dive and defenders battle for the ball, are often worn bare by the end of winter. The groundskeeper rakes these patches and scatters new seed on them. Players can help too. When boots tear out a divot, a lump of turf, it should be pushed back into place and trodden down at half-time or after the match.

Rest

A pitch cannot be played on every day. The more it is used, the less time it has to recover. Clubs with more than one pitch often play on one pitch one week and a different pitch the next, and in the wettest months training may be moved to a smaller area so that the main pitch is saved for matches. When the ground is frozen solid, matches are usually called off, because players can slip or be hurt on the hard, uneven surface.

So the next time you walk onto a pitch, look down. The even green surface, the stripes and the straight white lines are the result of hours of work that most people never see.

Text 3

The Far End of the Bench

FICTION

1 By lunchtime, the drizzle that had greeted the minibus at Hollin Park had thickened into steady, silvery rain. Idris Karimi sat at the far end of the substitutes' bench with the hood of his jacket pulled so low that the world had shrunk to a small grey circle of mud and boots. He had been sitting there for three matches.

2 Westbrook Wanderers Under-11s had won all three. Each time, Mr Hartley had strolled along the touchline, tapping shoulders and murmuring names, and each time the name had belonged to somebody else. Idris did not mind, he told himself. He had told himself this so often that the words had worn smooth, like pebbles carried in a pocket.

3 Behind the bench, beneath an orange umbrella, sat his gran. She had brought a flask of sweet tea and a bag of orange quarters, and she said nothing at all, which was her way. Every so often she glanced along the bench at him, head tilted like a robin's, and then looked away again.

4 The semi-final against Ferndale Foxes was different. By half-time the Wanderers, in their white shirts, trailed by two goals, and the neat passing they had practised all autumn had dissolved into panic. Everybody shouted and nobody listened. The ball, swollen with rainwater, skidded across the sodden turf and refused to go where it was sent. Then Callum, the left-back, limped off clutching his ankle, and Mr Hartley, without even turning his head, said, "Idris. You're on."

5 Idris rose so quickly that his knees cracked. His legs felt as though they belonged to somebody else. He had imagined this moment a hundred times, and in every version he had been brave. Now, as he jogged onto the pitch, he felt only a hollow, ringing dread. “Left-back,” said Mr Hartley, catching him by the sleeve. “Keep it simple. Win the ball, give it to a white shirt. Nothing clever.”

6 Nothing clever. Idris could manage that. In three matches on the bench he had done nothing but watch, and watching, he now discovered, was a kind of practice. He had noticed that the Foxes’ right winger always dropped his shoulder a moment before he cut inside. He had noticed that their captain bellowed when he wanted the ball and fell silent when he did not.

7 The first time the winger dropped his shoulder, Idris was already waiting. He stuck out a boot, the ball broke loose, and he stroked it sideways to Hana, the nearest white shirt. The second time, he hooked it off the winger’s toe and out for a throw-in. By the fifth time, the winger had stopped dropping his shoulder at all and had begun to look worried.

8 Idris scored no goals and took no shots. He did not dribble past anyone. Yet with every tackle the Wanderers seemed to stand a little taller, and the passes began to join up again, one white shirt to the next. Hana slotted a shot home from the edge of the area to make it 2–1. Nikhil reached a loose ball before the Foxes’ captain and poked it in to make it 2–2. In the final minute Hana struck again, and when the whistle blew the Wanderers had won 3–2.

9 The team swarmed across the pitch, but Mr Hartley made his way to Idris. He did not make a speech. For a moment he seemed to be searching for something to say. “Nothing clever,” he said at last, and the corner of his mouth twitched. “Exactly right.”

10 Back at the bench, Idris found his jacket lying in a heap where he must have dropped it. He could not remember taking it off. The rain was still falling, drumming on the umbrella and soaking through his shirt, but he could not recall noticing it once since he had stepped onto the pitch. He left the jacket where it was. His gran held out the flask without a word. As she handed it over, he saw that she was smiling, and this time she did not look away.

Reading: questions

1 Text 1 Look at paragraph 1. What was wrong with Ruby's gloves? _____ _____	1 mark
2 Text 1 Look at paragraph 2. Mr Okoro <i>crouched</i> beside Ruby. What does <i>crouched</i> mean? Tick one. stood up straight ☐ bent down low ☐ turned away ☐ stepped back ☐	1 mark
3 Text 1 Look at paragraph 3. How many goals had Nia let in during the first three matches of the season? _____ _____	1 mark

4

Text 1

Look at paragraph 3.

Nobody had blamed her, but Ruby had seen Nia's face afterwards, and she did not want to see it again.

What does this tell you about how Nia felt after the first three matches?

Use the text to explain your answer.

2 marks

5

Text 1

Look at paragraph 3. *her voice came out smaller than she meant it to.*

This suggests that Ruby was

Tick **one**.

bored with the conversation

☐

less confident than she wanted to sound

☐

angry with Mr Okoro

☐

losing her voice

☐

1 mark

6

Text 1

Look at paragraph 4. Give **one** thing Mr Okoro told Ruby to do when she was in goal.

1 mark

7

Text 1

Look at paragraph 6. Find and copy **one word** that means *shouted*.

1 mark

8

Text 1

Look at paragraph 6. *Ruby's heart thumped so loudly that she was sure the whole pitch could hear it.*

What does this show about how Ruby felt?

1 mark

9

Text 1

Look at paragraph 8. When in the match did the Magpies score?

1 mark

10

Text 1

Look at paragraph 9. Give **two** things Nia said or did to cheer Ruby up at half-time.

2 marks

11

Text 1

Look at paragraph 11. What did Ruby notice the penalty-taker do just before she began her run?

1 mark

12

Text 1

Look at paragraph 13. *She decided that she wouldn't swap them for any other pair in the world.*

Explain why Ruby feels like this about the gloves.

Use evidence from the story.

2 marks

13

Text 1

Number the events from 1 to 5 to show the order in which they happened in the story.

Dani scores the equaliser.	☐
Ruby dives to stop the Magpies' first shot at goal.	☐
Nia hands Ruby a piece of orange.	☐
Mr Okoro tells Ruby that Nia can go back in goal.	☐
The Magpies score from a corner.	☐

1 mark

14

Text 2

According to the text, why is the grass on a pitch kept short?

Tick **one**.

- so that it catches more sunlight ☐
- so that the ball rolls smoothly along the ground ☐
- so that the roots grow deeper ☐
- so that stripes show up ☐

1 mark

15

Text 2

Look at the section **Cutting the grass**. How often is the grass on a pitch cut while it is growing?

1 mark

16

Text 2

Look at the section **Cutting the grass**. The text says that a groundskeeper “has to find a balance”.
Explain what the groundskeeper has to balance and why.
Use the text to help you.

2 marks

17

Text 2

Look at the section **Stripes**. What makes the blades of grass lean in one direction?

1 mark

18

Text 2

Look at the section **Marking the lines**. How is the machine kept moving in a straight line?

1 mark

19

Text 2

Look at the section **Water**. Explain why it is better to postpone a match than to play on a waterlogged pitch.

1 mark

20

Text 2

Look at the section **Pressed down and worn out**. Which word is closest in meaning to *aerate*?

Tick **one**.

pack down ☐

let air into ☐

cut short ☐

water early ☐

1 mark

21

Text 2

Look at the section **Pressed down and worn out**. Give **one** way that aerating a pitch helps the grass.

1 mark

22

Text 2

Look at the section **Pressed down and worn out**. *defenders battle for the ball*

Why has the writer chosen the word *battle* here?

1 mark

23

Text 2

Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Grass grows from the tip of each blade.	☐	☐
Goalmouths often wear out faster than other parts of a pitch.	☐	☐
The grass in a dark stripe is a different kind of grass from the grass in a light stripe.	☐	☐
A divot that has been torn out should be pushed back into place.	☐	☐

1 mark

24

Text 2

Look at the section **Rest**. *The more it is used, the less time it has to recover.*

What does *recover* mean here?

1 mark

25

Text 2

Look at the section **Rest**. Give **one** reason why clubs with more than one pitch often play on a different pitch from one week to the next.

1 mark

26

Text 2

Which of these is the best summary of the whole text?

Tick **one**.

Groundskeepers cut stripes into pitches to make them look good.

☐

Looking after a grass pitch takes careful work all year, including cutting, watering, repairing and resting it.

☐

Matches should be postponed whenever it rains.

☐

Wet weather is the only thing that damages a pitch.

☐

1 mark

27

Text 3

Look at paragraph 1. How many matches had Idris sat through on the bench?

1 mark

28

Text 3

Look at paragraph 2. *Idris did not mind, he told himself.*

This suggests that Idris

Tick **one**.

was happy to sit and watch

☐

did mind, but was trying to believe that he did not

☐

had not noticed Mr Hartley's choices

☐

did not want to play football

☐

1 mark

29

Text 3

Look at paragraph 2. *the words had worn smooth, like pebbles carried in a pocket.*

What does this suggest about the words Idris told himself?

1 mark

30

Text 3

Look at the whole story.

What impressions do you get of Idris's gran?

Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

3 marks

31

Text 3

Look at paragraph 4.

Find and copy **one word** that describes the turf and shows that it was very wet.

1 mark

32

Text 3

Look at paragraph 4. Callum limped off *clutching* his ankle. What does *clutching* mean?

Tick **one**.

rubbing gently ☐

gripping tightly ☐

pointing at ☐

bending down to ☐

1 mark

33

Text 3

Look at paragraph 4. Give **one** thing that went wrong for the Wanderers in the semi-final before Idris came on.

1 mark

34

Text 3

Look at paragraph 5. *He had imagined this moment a hundred times, and in every version he had been brave.*

When the moment really came, Idris

Tick **one**.

felt as brave as he had imagined

☐

felt frightened, not brave as he had imagined

☐

felt angry with Mr Hartley

☐

felt relieved to be off the bench

☐

1 mark

35

Text 3

Look at paragraph 6. Give **one** thing Idris had noticed about the Foxes' right winger.

1 mark

36

Text 3

Look at paragraph 6. *watching, he now discovered, was a kind of practice.*

Explain what this means.

Use evidence from the text.

2 marks

37

Text 3

Look at paragraph 7. *By the fifth time, the winger had stopped dropping his shoulder at all and had begun to look worried.*

What does this show about the winger?

1 mark

38

Text 3

Look at paragraph 8.

What changed about the Wanderers' passing after Idris came on?

1 mark

39

Text 3

Look at paragraph 9. *"Nothing clever," he said at last, and the corner of his mouth twitched. "Exactly right."*

What does this show about how Mr Hartley felt about Idris's performance?

Use evidence from the text.

2 marks

40

Text 3

At the start of the story, Idris sat at the far end of the bench with the hood of his jacket pulled low.

How has Idris changed by the end of the story?

Explain fully, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

3 marks

END OF TEST