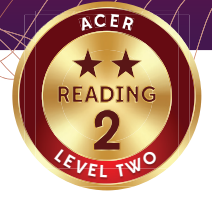


ACER Certificate in Reading

Sample Question



Reading level 2

Interpret Meaning

Mali

'You'll be fine,' says my grandmother as I sit down for breakfast, 'once you have eaten some of my roti bread.' She lays the plate carefully in front of me, and then adds a small bowl of curry and a smile. 'I made this especially for you.'

I look at the roti but all I can see is Taeng's round face staring back at me, sneering at me.

'What's wrong, Mali? I thought this was your favourite.'

I nudge the roti behind the water jug.

My grandmother puts her arm around me and gives me a hug that I pretend isn't needed. 'You don't have to go through with this audition,' she says. 'I can call up the school and tell them you are sick. I can tell them that your throat is sore, or that you have a stomach ache.'

But that's exactly what Taeng wants – that I back down, like every other girl in the school does. Well it's not going to happen. I grab the roti and tear it into strips.

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'I hope you get it,' says a boy in my English class. I have never spoken to him before but he seems to know everything about me. 'I'll be in the hall at lunchtime to cheer you on,' he says. 'I think you're the best dancer. You deserve the lead role.'

It's the same story with the girls behind me; they say my name and pass me secret notes of encouragement. A little no-one like Mali wants to be the leading dancer in the school performance – who would have thought it?

But I can't concentrate on my studies. When I look at my textbook I see Taeng's face on every page. When the teacher asks me a question I panic and drop my pencils, and once I've picked them up I drop them all again. This stupid dance audition is going to be a disaster; I should have kept my mouth shut. Everyone knows that lead roles are only given to 'glamour girls' like Taeng.

In the school hall at lunchtime a small crowd has gathered. I'm standing in my dance clothes, but my feet are made of stone. The teacher sees me and calls me over. I take a deep breath and brace myself.

'Haven't you heard?' says the teacher. 'Taeng has gone home with a stomach ache, so it looks like you will take the lead role in the school performance after all.'

Which of these statements was most likely written on a secret note given to Mali?

- A Mali is a little no-one.
- B Good luck in the audition.
- C Meet me in the hall at lunchtime.
- D Taeng is the school's glamour girl.

Answer: B. Good luck in the audition.

Explanation

This question requires students to identify where one idea is a generalised version of another. The relevant part of the text is found in the second paragraph, and can be identified by matching the words 'secret note' to the words in the question:

It's the same story with the girls behind me; they say my name and pass me secret notes of encouragement.

The explicit information in the text is that Mali was passed encouraging notes by her class mates. This is the idea that the student has to recognise. In the question, four possible notes are given as the options, but only one of them is encouraging. The text contains the general idea, and the correct answer is a specific case of exactly the same idea.

Text complexity

This text is a narrative with many familiar aspects: the first part of the narrative is a conversation before school between the main character and her grandmother who makes her breakfast. The second part of the text takes place in a school context, with the main character worrying about an audition for a school performance.

The complexity of the text comes in part from a low level of subtlety in implying the main character's emotions and attitudes, as well as some potentially unfamiliar vocabulary. The main character is alternately worried and determined, and these states of mind are conveyed in her actions and speech rather than through explicit statements. The vocabulary includes a regional food 'roti' that might distract some students, though it is defined in the text in the phrase 'roti bread' and is not a significant part of the story. The rest of the vocabulary items are appropriate for this level of difficulty, and include hard words like 'sneering', 'encouragement', and 'gathered'.