

Reading extract and questions: Year 3-4 The Tinderbox Set A/B



A soldier came marching along the high road - left, right! A left, right! He had his knapsack on his back and a sword by his side, for he had been to the wars and was now returning home.

An old Witch met him on the road. She was very ugly to look at: her bottom-lip hung down to her chest.

'Good evening, Soldier!' she said. 'What a fine sword and knapsack you have! You are the very picture of a fine soldier! You ought to have as much money as you can carry!'

'Thank you, old Witch,' said the Soldier.

'Do you see that great tree there?' said the Witch, pointing to a tree beside them. 'It is hollow within. You must climb up to the top, and then you will see a hole through which you can let yourself down into the tree. I will tie a rope round your waist, so that I may be able to pull you up again when you call.'

'What shall I do down there?' asked the Soldier.

'Get money!' answered the Witch. 'Listen! When you reach the bottom of the tree you will find yourself in a large hall; it is light there, for there are more than three hundred lamps burning. Then you will see three doors, which you can open - the keys are in the locks. If you go into the first room, you will see a great chest in the middle of the floor with a dog sitting upon it; he has eyes as large as saucers, but you needn't trouble about him. I will give you my blue-check apron, which you must spread out on the floor, and then go back quickly and fetch the dog and set him upon it; open the chest and take as much money as you like. It is copper there. If you would rather have silver, you must go into the next room, where there is a dog with eyes as large as mill-wheels. But don't take any notice of him; just set him upon my apron, and help yourself to the money. If you prefer gold, you can get that too, if you go into the third room, and as much as you like to carry. But the dog that guards the chest there has eyes as large as the Round Tower at Copenhagen! He is a savage dog, I can tell you; but you needn't be afraid of him either. Only, put him on my apron and he won't touch you, and you can take out of the chest as much gold as you like!'

'Come, this is not bad!' said the Soldier. 'But what am I to give you, old Witch; for surely you are not going to do this for nothing?'

'Yes, I am!' replied the Witch. 'Not a single farthing will I take! For me you shall bring nothing but an old tinder-box which my grandmother forgot last time she was down there.'

'Well, tie the rope round my waist!' said the Soldier.

'Here it is,' said the Witch, 'and here is my blue-check apron.'

Then the Soldier climbed up the tree, let himself down through the hole, and found himself standing, as the Witch had said, underground in the large hall, where the three hundred lamps were burning.

Well, he opened the first door. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as big as saucers glaring at him.



Questions for *The Tinderbox* Set A

Vocabulary:

1. Look at the first paragraph. **Find** and **copy** a word that means *coming back*.

2. 'You are the very picture of a fine soldier!' This means... Tick **one**.

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| she had only seen soldiers in pictures | <input type="checkbox"/> | the soldier looked just like a soldier should | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| the soldier was scruffy | <input type="checkbox"/> | the witch wanted a picture of the soldier | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Look at the section of text beginning: 'Do you see that great tree there?' ... **Find** and **copy** a word that means *empty*.

Retrieval

4. Where had the soldier been before he met the witch?

5. What does the soldier need to do to find the entrance?

6. Write **two** things that were in the third room.

1. _____

2. _____

Inference

7. Why does the soldier agree to help the witch?

8. What does the soldier need to do to keep himself safe?

Summarise

9. Here are some summaries of different paragraphs in the text. Number them from **1** to **4** to show the order in which they appear.

- The soldier lands in the great hall.
- The witch tells the soldier what to bring back.
- The witch explains what the soldier needs to do.
- The witch gives the soldier the apron.

Authorial Intent

10. How does the author make the dogs sound scary?

Predict

11. What do you think the soldier will do when he gets into the first room? Use the text to help you answer.

Questions for *The Tinderbox*

Set B

Vocabulary:

1. Look at the paragraph beginning: *An old Witch...* **Find** and **copy** a word that means *inside*.

2. Look at the paragraph beginning: *'Get money!' answered the Witch.* What does the word *savage* mean?

3. Which words tell you that the witch doesn't want the money?

Retrieval

4. What will the soldier find when he reaches the bottom of the tree? Tick **one**.

a chest full of gold a blue-check apron

a dog with eyes as large as saucers a large hall

5. Write **three** things the soldier can get if he helps the witch.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

6. What does the witch want from the soldier?

Inference

7. Why does the soldier say: *'But what am I to give you, old Witch; for surely you are not going to do this for nothing?'* Tick **two**.

He does not trust the witch. He wants to give her a gift for her kindness.

He doesn't want to help her. He is worried about what he will have to give the witch.

8. How do you know the tinderbox is important?

9. How do you know this text was written in the past?

Summarise

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

	True	False
The witch forced the soldier to help her.		
The soldier didn't want the money in return for helping the witch.		
The witch told the soldier the truth about what he would find.		

Meaning as a whole

11. Draw lines to match each part of the story with the correct quotation from the text.

Past events

...a large hall; it is light there, for there are more than three hundred lamps burning...

Character

my grandmother forgot last time she was down there.'

Setting

She was very ugly to look at: her bottom-lip hung down to her chest.

Compare

12a. How are the dogs in the different rooms **similar**? Give **one** example.

12b. How are the dogs in the different rooms **different**? Give **one** example.

Answers for *The Tinderbox*

Set A:

Vocabulary:

1. returning
2. the soldier looked just like a soldier should
3. hollow

Retrieval:

4. to the wars
5. climb to the top of the tree/let himself down into the hole
6. Accept two of the following: gold/dog (with eyes as large as the Round Tower at Copenhagen!)/chest

Inference:

7. To get money/to get copper/silver/gold/to get the treasure/because he wanted to be rich
8. put the dogs on the blue-check apron/use the witch's blue-check apron

Summarise:

9.
 - 4 The soldier lands in the great hall.
 - 2 The witch tells the soldier what to bring back.
 - 1 The witch explains what the soldier needs to do.
 - 3 The witch gives the soldier the apron.

Authorial intent:

10. Accept any of the following:

- by describing/using similes for their eyes, e.g. he has eyes as large as saucers/eyes as large as mill-wheels/eyes as large as the Round Tower at Copenhagen
- He is a savage dog.

Predict

11. Put the dog on the blue-check apron as this is what the witch told him to do.

Also accept reference to the fact that he might be so scared of the dog's eyes that he runs away/might not trust the witch because witches are often bad, so runs away.

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Answers for *The Tinderbox*

Set B:

Vocabulary:

1. within
2. ferocious/fierce/violent/untamed
3. Not a single farthing will I take (also accept – you shall bring me nothing but an old tinderbox)

Retrieval:

4. a large hall
5. copper, silver, gold
6. (an old) tinder-box

Inference:

7. He does not trust the witch.
He is worried about what he will have to give the witch.
8. Because the witch is offering the soldier lots of money/riches/copper/silver/gold to help her get it
9. The soldier is in an old fashioned uniform/uses words such as: ought to/within/set him upon it/farthing

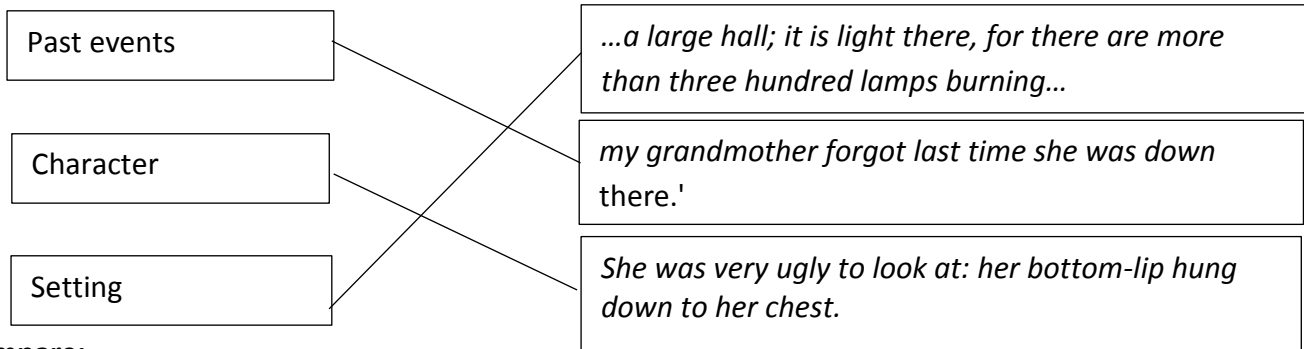
Summarise:

10.

	True	False
The witch forced the soldier to help her.		✓
The soldier didn't want the money in return for helping the witch.		✓
The witch told the soldier the truth about what he would find.	✓	

Meaning as a whole:

11.



Compare:

- 12a.** They all have large eyes./They are all guarding a chest./The soldier doesn't need to be afraid of any of them./If the soldier puts them on the witch's (blue-check) apron they won't touch him.
- 12b.** Their eyes are different sizes (saucers/mill-wheels/the Round Tower at Copenhagen)./It says the one in the third room is savage and it doesn't say this about the others.

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