

## REMEDIAL SESSION 1: NARRATIVE COMPREHENSION

*The text below narrates the story of a woman who recounts an injury she had suffered as a child. Read the text carefully and answer Questions 4-14 in the Question Booklet.*

- 1 If I thought about medicine at all as a child, it was more with ambivalence than enthusiasm. On the one hand I was addicted to Dad's tales of doctoring, but on the other, like most children I was fully aware that doctors did things to you without permission or mercy – even my own father.
- 2 The one occasion on which I could, very easily, have died as a child was a prime example. We had driven all the way to Fort William, in the Scottish Highlands, to spend a couple of weeks in a log cabin. Old enough to be allowed to play outside by ourselves, my brother, sister and I spent hours damming streams, climbing trees and, most excitingly, swinging on a rope across a river. Except I was rubbish at rope swinging. Nervous at the prospect of falling off, I allowed my legs to trail feebly behind me, while the other children curled up tight as bullets, flinging themselves on to the other side. 5
- 3 As everyone issued instructions on how to do it better, slow-burning shame overtook my wimpish fear. I stood on the edge, clutching the rope with all my might, consumed by the thought that this time I had to make it to the other side. A deep breath, a moment of silence as the other children looked on like a panel of judges. Then, I launched myself into the air, wrenching my knees towards my eyeballs, determined to redeem myself. 15
- 4 My next sensation was of a sound worse than nails on a blackboard, an ear-splitting screeching, from far away, but becoming louder and more hideous with every moment. It took a second or two before I realised the noise was coming from me. I was surprised to find myself sitting in water, submerged in it up to my neck. More baffling still was why I should be screaming when I felt neither fear nor pain. Rough hands started grabbing and clawing. My shrieks had caused adults to come springing from their cabins and scramble down the muddy bank to drag me up to the grass. With the hoisting and yanking came the rush of pain. I was fainting with it, too shocked and nauseous to appeal for gentleness. 25
- 5 Carried by my father back into our cabin, he proceed, as every doctor would, to conduct a brisk clinical examination. I remember Mum looking on, face pained and anxious, as Dad went straight for my right arm, now dangling at a drunken angle, to assess its range of movement. When he lifted the limb, bone ground on bone. The impact had snapped off the head of my humerus and the pain was like nothing I had known. As she watched me passing out on the sofa, Mum could not stand it any longer. 'For God's sake, Mark, stop it. Look at how much you're hurting her.' 30
- 6 Terse words followed, whose content I barely registered. 35
- 7 We set off for the nearest hospital, an hour or so away along contorted mountain roads, while I slumped on the back seat, trying in vain to keep still as the car lurched and twisted round corners. Mum and Dad discussed whether surgical fixation with metal pins would be needed, and how only an inch or two's grace had saved my neck

from being broken. I kept my eyes closed, pretending to sleep, filled with gratitude to Mum for demanding that Dad take the corners a little less hastily. I endured the rest of the holiday with my arm elevated into a horizontal position by layer upon layer of dense foam packing, all kept in place by surgical tape wrapped around my torso. I looked and felt ridiculous. 40