

English Comprehension Test

1. The sound of a coin dropping makes people ...
 1. think of money.
 2. look at each other.
 3. pay attention to it.
 4. stop crossing the street.
2. People in New York ...
 1. don't care about emergencies.
 2. are used to sirens.
 3. are attracted by sounds.
 4. don't hear loud noises.
3. The writer ...
 1. sleeps next to the window.
 2. has lived in Connecticut for a long time
 3. believes in ghosts.
 4. is interested in fire engines.
4. How does the author relate to sounds at night?
 1. He imagines sounds that do not exist.
 2. He exaggerates quiet sounds.
 3. He thinks taps should be turned off.
 4. He believes it's rather quiet at night.
5. He dislikes whistling because ...
 1. he is tired of it.
 2. he used to be happier.
 3. it reminds him of tense people.
 4. he doesn't like workers.
6. What kind of sound does he find pleasant?
 1. tinkling sound of a coin dropping
 2. clinking sound of keys
 3. tapping of his typewriter
 4. creaking sounds
7. How does the writer feel about sounds in general?
 1. They make him feel at home.
 2. He thinks they should be ignored.
 3. He believes they are part of our lives.
 4. He prefers silence to loud noises.

A few minutes ago, walking back from lunch, I started to cross the street when I heard the sound of a coin dropping. It wasn't much but, as I turned, my eyes caught the heads of several other people turning too. A woman had dropped what appeared to be a dime.

The tinkling sound of a coin dropping on pavement is an attention-getter. It can be nothing more than a penny. Whatever the coin is, no one ignores the sound of it. It got me thinking about sounds again.

We are besieged by so many sounds that attract the most attention. People in New York City seldom turn to look when a fire engine, a police car or an ambulance comes screaming along the street.

When I'm in New York, I'm a New Yorker. I don't turn either. Like the natives. I hardly hear a siren there.

At home in my little town in Connecticut, it's different. The distant wail of a police car, an emergency vehicle or a fire siren brings me to my feet if I'm seated and brings me to the window if I'm in bed.

It's the quietest sounds that have most effect on us, not the loudest. In the middle of the night, I can hear a dripping tap a hundred yards away through three closed doors. I've been hearing little creaking noises and sounds which my imagination turns into footsteps in the middle of the night for twenty-five years in our house. How come I never hear those sounds in the daytime?

I'm quite clear in my mind what the good sounds are and what the bad sounds are. I've turned against whistling, for instance. I used to think of it as the mark of a happy worker but lately I've been associating the whistler with a nervous person making compulsive noises.

The tapping, tapping, tapping of my typewriter as the keys hit the paper is a lovely sound to me. I often like the sound of what I write better than the looks of it.