

## PAPER 1: READING Part 1

### Part 1

You are going to read an article about a woman who writes children's books. For questions 1–8, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

### Jane Hissey, creator of the 'Old Bear' stories

If anyone knows what makes a great children's book, it must be Sussex author and illustrator Jane Hissey. Her 'Old Bear' books have achieved classic status in a variety of formats: books for different ages, audio tapes, calendars and diaries.

I caught up with Jane at her home in the East Sussex countryside and asked her what she thinks is the secret of a classic children's book. 'That's a difficult one. I suppose it's got to be relevant to the child's stage of development – for young children, pictures on a page that are familiar, for older children, an experience. The book should be familiar, but hold some surprises too, in order to maintain the interest. It must inspire and delight, but there is also an element of the matter-of-fact, the things that happen every day.'

Jane was born in Norwich and studied design and illustration at Brighton College, after which she taught art to secondary school students. She married a graphic designer and settled in East Sussex. After the birth of her first child, Owen (who is now 18), she gave up teaching and worked on her own artwork, drawing pictures of teddy bears and designing greeting cards. An editor from a publishing company saw her work and invited Jane to do a children's book. After the birth of her second child, Alison (who is now 14), she set to work.

'Old Bear', the leader of the gang, was Jane's childhood teddy and she still loves him. 'I get the feeling he's writing his own words. I look back at the first book I wrote and realise he's lost a lot of his fur. That's partly because I pin him in front of me in order to draw him. Like the other toys, he gets stuck on little clamps. All the toys have aged more than I show in my drawings; I'm able to keep them looking youthful.'

Over the years, from the first 'Old Bear' book in 1988, her children have made a huge contribution – not least in terms of plot. 'I used to give my children the toys to play with – and they had tea parties and so on. One of my bear characters, 'Little Bear', is the same age as Ralph, my youngest, who's seven now. All the children have been involved and, in years to come, they will realise how much.'

Jane's technique is very interesting. Unlike many other children's illustrators, she works in coloured pencils, which makes her work immediately accessible to children because it's the medium most familiar to them. She likes to draw the original about four times larger than it appears in the book. Because they are eventually reduced in size, the drawings then look more dense, with a deeper texture. 'I build up layers and layers of colour,' she explains, 'so the effect is not wishy-washy. There's a depth of colour and you can see the other colours underneath.' With such a laborious, meticulous method of working, a single book takes a year to write and illustrate. How, I asked her, does this work fit in with the demands of a large family and home? She told me it was a combination of teamwork and good planning. 'My husband is also an illustrator, so we both work from home and we can juggle things so that one of us is always there.'

Despite such phenomenal success in the book world, Jane remains very down-to-earth about her collection of toys. But, she admits she would miss them if she suddenly had no contact with them. 'I hope I'll know when people are getting fed up with the characters. If ever they did, I think I'd go on drawing them for fun. My own children have been very useful to me in my work, but as they are older now, I'll just have to hope that other people's children can inspire me.'



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- 1 According to Jane, a successful children's book
- A contains material that is unexpected.
  - B should offer an escape from everyday life.
  - C does not lose its attraction as children get older.
  - D is set in a place which is known to its readers.
- 2 Jane first became involved in book writing because
- A she got in touch with an editor.
  - B her artwork attracted professional attention.
  - C her husband encouraged her to try.
  - D she wrote stories for her own children.
- 3 What does Jane say about her teddy bear illustrations in paragraph 4?
- A They have improved over time.
  - B She uses real models to work from.
  - C They have been pinned up around the house.
  - D She has had difficulty keeping them up-to-date.
- 4 How did Jane's children assist her in her work?
- A by allowing her to concentrate on her work
  - B by telling her what they thought of her stories
  - C by suggesting characters for her stories
  - D by giving her ideas for her stories
- 5 According to the writer, Jane's books take a long time to produce because
- A the pages have to be so large.
  - B the colouring is a lengthy process.
  - C she redoes so many of her drawings.
  - D she colours each page to suit the mood of the story.
- 6 When Jane says 'we can juggle things' (lines 63-4), she means that she and her husband can
- A find someone to look after their children.
  - B afford to turn down work.
  - C find space in the home to work.
  - D organise their daily schedules.
- 7 How does Jane feel about her future work?
- A uncertain
  - B excited
  - C encouraged
  - D depressed
- 8 What do we learn from the article as a whole about Jane's attitude to her books?
- A She is interested in experimenting with different drawing techniques.
  - B She regards her characters simply as a commercial project.
  - C She is fond of the toys that she draws regularly.
  - D She is bored with writing about bears all the time.