

The comprehension below involves some pretty tricky vocabulary. Do your best to read the text (and the questions that follow) really carefully so that you can work out the correct answers.

### 'Herbert' by Horatio Alger

- 1 If my young readers do not find the town of Waverley on the map of Ohio, they may conclude that it was too small to attract the notice of the map-makers. The village is small, consisting of about a dozen houses, a church, a schoolhouse, and, as a matter of course, one of that well-known class of stores in which everything required for the family is sold, from a dress-pattern to a pound of sugar.
- 5 Outside of the village there are farmhouses, surrounded by broad acres, which keep them at respectable distances from each other, like the feudal castles of the Middle Ages. The land is good, and the farmers are thrifty and well-to-do; but probably the whole town contains less than a thousand inhabitants.

In one of the houses, near the church, lived Dr. Kent, whose letter has already been referred to. He  
10 was a skillful physician, and a very worthy man, who would have been very glad to be benevolent if his limited practice had supplied him with the requisite means. But chance had directed him to a healthy and sparsely-settled neighborhood, where he was able only to earn a respectable livelihood, and indeed found himself compelled to economize at times where he would have liked to indulge himself in expense.

15 When Mrs. Mason died it was found that the sale of her furniture barely realized enough to defray the expenses of her funeral. Herbert, her only son, was left wholly unprovided for. Dr. Kent, knowing that he had a rich uncle in New York, undertook to communicate to him the position in which his nephew had been left, never doubting that he would cheerfully extend a helping hand to him. Meanwhile he invited Herbert to come to his house and make it his home till his uncle should  
20 send for him.

Herbert was a handsome, well-grown boy of fourteen, and a general favorite in the village. While his mother lived he had done all he could to lighten her tasks, and he grieved deeply for her loss now that she was gone. His father had ten years before failed in business in the city of New York, and, in a fit of depression, had emigrated to this obscure country village, where he had invested the  
25 few hundred dollars remaining to him in a farm, from which he was able to draw a scanty income. Being a man of liberal education, he had personally superintended the education of his son till his death, two years before, so that Herbert's attainments were considerably in advance of those of other boys of his age in the neighborhood. He knew something of Latin and French, which made him looked upon as quite a model of learning by his playmates. After his father's death he had  
30 continued the daily study of the languages, so that he was able to read ordinary French with nearly as much ease as if it were English. Though studious, he was not a bookworm, but was distinguished in athletic sports popular with boys of his age.

Continue over the page for some questions ⇨

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1. Why does the author suggest that Waverley might not be marked on a map?
  - A It's not important enough
  - B It's not large enough
  - C It's too small
  - D Map-makers didn't think it was attractive
  
2. Which of the following amenities is Waverley **not** reported to have?
  - A A church
  - B A school
  - C Shops
  - D A library
  
3. What does the author compare to the 'feudal castles of the Middle Ages' (line 6)?
  - A The village stores
  - B The acres of land
  - C The village farmhouses
  - D The villagers
  
4. Which option below could be used to describe the Waverley farmers?
  - A Surly and unlikeable
  - B Vulgar and uncouth
  - C Well-liked among the other villagers
  - D Resourceful with money
  
5. What would stop Dr. Kent from spending too much money?
  - A The small size of the town means he has limited earning potential
  - B His wife forbids him from indulging himself very often
  - C He is saving up to move to a bigger town
  - D He has too many day-to-day expenses
  
6. Why did Herbert go to stay with Dr. Kent?
  - A Because Dr. Kent is his uncle
  - B Because his mother's death left him with no one to care for him
  - C Because he worked for Dr. Kent
  - D Because his mother owed the doctor some money

Continue over the page for more questions ➡

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7. Which of the following statements about Herbert is **not** true?
- A He's a good-looking boy
  - B He always did his best to help his mother
  - C He didn't grieve when his mother died
  - D He was well-studied in languages
8. Why did Herbert's father decide to move to Waverley?
- A He was downcast after his business failed
  - B He hated how busy New York was
  - C He wanted to become a farmer
  - D To marry Herbert's mother
9. What is meant by the phrase 'Herbert's attainments were considerably in advance of those of other boys of his age in the neighborhood' (lines 27 - 28)?
- A Herbert had achieved more than other boys in all aspects of life
  - B Herbert was ahead of the other boys in his studies
  - C Herbert's family had a lot of money
  - D Herbert had a lot more possessions than other boys his age
10. What is the definition of the word 'requisite' (line 11) as used in this passage?
- A Futile
  - B Necessary
  - C Wealthy
  - D Sadness
11. What part of speech is the word 'inhabitants' (line 8) as used in this passage?
- A Adverb
  - B Verb
  - C Noun
  - D Adjective
12. What is the definition of the word 'studious' (line 31) as used in this passage?
- A Sporty
  - B Attractive
  - C Sullen
  - D Academic

Well done. Check your answers by referring back to the text.

1. **C** (line 2 states that Waverley was 'too small to attract the notice of the map-makers')
2. **D** (a library is the only option not mentioned in the passage. The rest are mentioned between lines 3 and 4)
3. **C** (lines 5 - 6 state 'Outside of the village there are farmhouses, surrounded by broad acres, which keep them at respectable distances from each other, like the feudal castles of the Middle Ages')
4. **D** (line 7 describes the farmers as 'thifty', which means careful/resourceful with money)
5. **A** (The phrase 'chance had directed him to a healthy and sparsely-settled neighborhood, where he was able only to earn a respectable livelihood' (lines 11 - 12) shows that, due to the small size of the town, the doctor has limited earning potential because of his small number of patients)
6. **B** (line 16 states that Herbert 'was left wholly unprovided for' after his mother died)
7. **C** (line 22 says that Herbert 'grieved deeply for her loss', so it is not true to say that he didn't)
8. **A** (lines 23 - 24 state 'His father had ten years before failed in business in the city of New York, and, in a fit of depression, had emigrated to this obscure country village')
9. **B** (The full phrase states that Herbert's father 'had personally superintended the education of his son till his death, two years before, so that Herbert's attainments were considerably in advance of those of other boys of his age in the neighborhood'. This shows that the phrase is talking about Herbert's studies in particular)
10. **B** ('Requisite' means 'necessary')
11. **C** ('inhabitants' are the people who live in a certain town or place, so it is a noun, which is a naming word)
12. **D** ('studious' means 'academic')