

***You will need your exam paper for the text.***

***Comments :***

*A third person narrative about life during the first world war. We see references to the Battle of Ypres in 1915 in the notes and mention of military policemen, the Front, trenches and big guns in the artillery, so it's easy to understand the period in time.*

*The setting is in a typical English town with mention of street names, cups of tea and triangles of bread which are typical English sandwiches.*

*There are several different characters, the young soldiers and their families, and there is a contrast made between life at home and the stark reality of life on the Front. The two main characters are Nell and Frank but Billy Monroe is often mentioned because of an incident which is described in the first paragraph. This incident evokes the problem of cowardice and patriotism.*

***Culture :***

*It helps to know a little about life during World War One but there are no special difficulties.*

***Difficulties :***

*Check your tenses when answering the questions. The text is in the past but other tenses are used in the questions!*

**Comprehension :**

1. The historical event referred to in the passage is the First World War (1914-1918) as the battle of Ypres in 1915 is mentioned and there are many other references to fighting on the 'Front' (line 20), in the 'trenches' (line 34) and to military things like the 'military police' on line 4 and the 'artillery' on line 47.
2. They are all young men who joined the army to fight in the war. Albert 'joined up' on line 3, Jack is mentioned on line 46, he 'sent his love' and 'hadn't seen Albert', so he must have been away fighting, Frank 'came home' on line 19 because he was injured and Bill was home 'on leave' on line 1.
3. a) Bill visited his mother, on line 5 'his mother barred the door'. He didn't want to go back to the war and the military police had to come and get him. Consequently his mother, who didn't want them to take him away, blocked the entrance to the house, line 5, she 'barred the front door with a broom handle', and the police had to remove her physically in order to take Bill back to the army.  
b) Nell Barker witnessed this scene as she was on her way home. She felt embarrassed (line 15) for Bill because he was seen to be a coward and should have been ashamed, but she was also surprised when other women approved of what Mrs Monroe had done.  
c) On line 16 many women went to see Mrs Monroe to tell her she had done the right thing to try to protect her son.
4. The correct order is :  
a) = 3, b) = 6, c) = 1, d) = 5, e) = 4, f) = 2
5. a) Frank has come back because he has had a 'septic foot' (line 20) and has been 'in hospital in Southport' (line 19) for the treatment of his injury. He has 'a few days' leave', (line 20) to go home and get better before going back to the fighting.  
b) He spends a day with Nell and Lillian, who are sisters (line 45) and Rachel or 'Mrs' Barker (line 49-50), at their home in Lowther Street (line 30).  
c) Although they hadn't known him very well before he came home on leave, (line 21 : 'they'd hardly known him...'), when he comes that day he seems (line 21) 'like an old friend', in fact they welcome him as if they had been very good friends, (line 22) 'they both hugged him' which shows they want him to feel welcome.
6. During the war the women have had to adapt by taking men's jobs, like Lillian on line 43 who

works as a 'conductress' on the trams. Many others knit and sew to make clothing for the soldiers, for example on line 41 'they showed him their knitting' and Nell tells Frank about her job on line 42 'making uniforms', indeed she has had a promotion to forewoman, a more responsible post (line 43), which might not have been possible before the war.

7. When they tell Frank about Bill not wanting to go back to fight he shows disapproval by tut-tutting, line 37 'he tut-tutted' (this is a disapproving sound). He does this 'in the right places' to conform to what he thinks the sisters and most other people must think. However, secretly, he approves of Bill's mother wanting to keep him at home and would have liked his mother to do the same. (Line 38 'he wished he had a mother who could... prevent him having to return to the Front...')
8. Although Frank had a lot to talk about as he hadn't seen his friends for a long time and had experienced the difficulties of battle and injury during the war, he was 'tongue-tied' or speechless. He was unable to talk about his life on the Front because it all seemed too horrible to mention in his present surroundings. He had had to face the reality of death but the prettiness of the ladies' parlour, the tea-cups, the food on the table and the attractive girls prevented him from mentioning the horrors of war. Indeed on line 29 it says 'The smell of death had no place in the parlour of Lowther Street'. He probably didn't want to spoil that precious moment of respite from the terrible reality of war or to upset his hosts with unpleasant conversation.
9. ONE subject.
  - a) A conversation. It needs to reflect the reality of the situation and Frank's state of mind according to the text. You could refer to the incident mentioned in the passage but be careful not to copy.
  - b) An interesting subject, a lot to be said. Make a plan ! (How far do you agree ? = you need to nuance your answer, not just YES or NO.)

#### TRANSLATION :

*La première personne qu'ils connaissaient à être revenue en permission était Bill Monroe d'Emerald Street, puis il a été suivi par un garçon de Park Grove Street puis encore un autre de Eldon Terrace, ce qui paraissait injuste puisqu'Albert avait rejoint le front bien avant ceux-là. Un jour, il se passa une drôle d'histoire car Bill Monroe n'était pas rentré de permission quand il aurait dû le faire et on envoya la police militaire pour le ramener. Sa mère barrait la porte d'entrée avec un manche à balai et les policiers militaires durent la prendre chacun par un coude pour la déplacer. A ce moment, Nell, qui marchait le long de Emerald Street pour rentrer du travail, se rappelait les funérailles de Percy.*

*Elle fut profondément choquée quand un policier 'normal' en civil sortit de nulle part et pendant une seconde, Nell crut que c'était Percy.*