

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland – extract

After following a talking rabbit, Alice has tumbled down a hole into a strange underground world.

Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a moment: she looked up, but it was all dark overhead: before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be seen: she found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.

There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

Suddenly she came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass: there was nothing on it but a tiny golden key, and Alice's first idea was that this might belong to one of the doors of the hall; but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted!



Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway; "and even if my head would go through," thought poor Alice, "it would be of very little use without my shoulders. Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin." For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible.

There seemed to be no use in waiting by the little door, so she went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes: this time she found a little bottle on it ("which certainly was not here before," said Alice), and tied round the neck of the bottle was a paper label, with the words "**DRINK ME**" beautifully printed on it in large letters.

It was all very well to say "Drink me," but the wise little Alice was not going to do that in a hurry. "No, I'll look first," she said, "and see whether it's marked 'poison' or not;" for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they would not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that, if you cut your finger very deeply with a knife, it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that, if you drink much from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

However, this bottle was not marked "poison," so Alice ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffee, and hot buttered toast), she very soon finished it off.

"What a curious feeling!" said Alice. "I must be shutting up like a telescope."

And so it was indeed: she was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size for going through that little door into that

lovely garden. First, however, she waited for a few minutes to see if she was going to shrink any further: she felt a little nervous about this: "for it might end, you know," said Alice to herself, "in my going out altogether, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?" And she tried to fancy what the flame of a candle looks like after the candle is blown out, for she could not remember ever having seen such a thing.

After a while, finding that nothing more happened, she decided on going into the garden at once; but, alas for poor Alice! when she got to the door, she found she had forgotten the little golden key, and when she went back to the table for it, she found she could not possibly reach it: she could see it quite plainly through the glass, and she tried her best to climb up one of the legs of the table, but it was too slippery; and when she had tired herself out with trying, the poor little thing sat down and cried.

Comprehension questions

Name:

Date:

1. '*There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind ...*'

What does the simile **like the wind** tell you?

.....
.....

2. Look at the paragraph which begins: '*There were doors all round the hall ...*'

Why is Alice walking **sadly** in this paragraph?

.....

3. '*... but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small'*

Which of the following is closest in meaning to **alas**?



Interestingly!



Oh dear!



Amazing!



Surprise!

4. Why can't Alice go through the door into the garden at first?

.....

5. When Alice returns to the glass table, what is she hoping to find? Name **one** item.

.....

6. In the stories Alice had read, what unpleasant things had happened to children? Name **two**.

1.

2.

7. Why does Alice decide that it is safe to drink from the bottle?
-

8. “*What a curious feeling!*” said Alice. “*I must be shutting up like a telescope.*”

What do you think Alice means by ‘*shutting up like a telescope*’?

Becoming
silent

Getting
taller

Shrinking

Looking very
far away

9. Look at the paragraph that begins: ‘*And so it was indeed ...*’

Find and copy the group of words that show that Alice is feeling happier.

.....

.....

10. Look at the final paragraph. Why does Alice sit down and cry?

.....

.....



Comprehension answers

1. '*There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind ...*'

What does the simile **like the wind** tell you?

That she was running fast/swiftly.

2. Look at the paragraph which begins: '*There were doors all round the hall ...*'

Why is Alice walking **sadly** in this paragraph?

Because all the doors are locked and she cannot get out of the hall.

3. '*... but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small*'

Which of the following is closest in meaning to **alas**?

Interestingly!

Oh dear!

Amazing!

Surprise!

4. Why can't Alice go through the door into the garden at first?

She is too big – not even her head will fit through.

5. When Alice returns to the glass table, what is she hoping to find? Name **one** item.

Either “another key” or “a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes”.

6. In the stories Alice had read, what unpleasant things had happened to children? Name **two**.

Burnt; eaten up by wild beasts.

7. Why does Alice decide that it is safe to drink from the bottle?

Because it is not marked ‘poison’.

8. '*“What a curious feeling!” said Alice. “I must be shutting up like a telescope.”*'

What do you think Alice means by **shutting up like a telescope**?

Becoming silent

Getting taller

Shrinking

Looking very far away

- 9.** Look at the paragraph that begins: '*And so it was indeed ...*'

Find and copy the group of words that show that Alice is feeling happier.

"her face brightened up."

- 10.** Look at the final paragraph. Why does Alice sit down and cry?

Because she still can't get through the locked door: she's left the key on the table and now she's too small to reach it.