

The gift

This task is about comprehending a text and making inferences.

Read the story *The Gift* [pdf] and answer the questions which follow.

Line numbers are given in the margin of the story to help you find the parts of the story you need to read to answer the questions.

a) Here is part of a conversation between two people who read *The Gift*:



Give evidence from the story to show how each of these speakers could justify their points of view.

Speaker 1

Speaker 2

b) What is the woman's situation at the beginning of the story?

- She is too weak to leave the house after days without food.
- She is defending herself against a wild animal.
- Her house has been surrounded by flood waters.
- A flooded river has swept her house away.

c) Here are some of the early references to the panther in the story.

"the cry awoke her, a sound so anguished . . ." (line 32)

"The answer was a repeated cry, but less shrill, tired sounding . . ." (line 44)

"She had . . . heard their cries, like suffering, in the distance." (lines 52-53)

Considering what happens in the rest of the story, why do you think the writer chose to introduce the panther with these descriptions?

d) "Then creaking and groaning with effort the house struggled up . . ." (line 24)

What happened to the house in this part of the story?

- It fell apart.
- It began to float.
- It crashed into the oak tree.
- It sank to the bottom of the river.

e) What does the story suggest was the woman's reason for feeding the panther?

f) When the woman says, "**and then I'll see to you**" (line 92) she means that she is ...

- sure that the cat won't hurt her.
- trying to frighten the cat.
- intending to shoot the cat.
- planning to feed the cat.

g) Do you think that the last sentence of *The Gift* is an appropriate ending?

Explain your answer, demonstrating your understanding of how the last sentence relates to the story's meaning.