



# Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 7

---

## Answer Key

---

### Recess

*There used to be a bell that meant  
run, meant drop whatever you were holding  
and race for the blacktop where the rules  
were simple: tag was tag, and the swings  
went as high as your nerve allowed and not  
one inch higher, and nobody*

*kept score of anything that mattered  
outside that fenced-in rectangle of gravel  
and painted lines, foursquare, hopscotch,  
a world exactly as big as we needed  
it to be, which is to say: enormous,  
completely enormous, and also*

*about to end, though none of us  
knew it yet, the way you never know  
the last time is the last time until  
long after it's already over, until  
you're standing in a hallway at fourteen  
realizing nobody has said the word*

*recess out loud in over a year, and the bell  
still rings, still means something, just  
not that, not anymore, and you stand there*

*a little stunned by how quietly  
a whole enormous world can close,  
not with an ending, just a bell*

*that starts meaning something else instead.*

### Circle the Correct Answer

1. What did the bell used to signal, according to the poem?

Answer: b) Recess, a chance to run to the blacktop and play

2. How does the poem describe the world of recess?

Answer: b) Completely enormous, despite being a small, fenced-in space

3. What does the speaker realize while standing in a hallway at fourteen?

Answer: a) That the word "recess" hasn't been said out loud in over a year

4. According to the final lines, how does the world of recess actually end?

Answer: b) Quietly, without anyone noticing at the time, as the bell starts meaning something else

### True or False

5. The poem describes recess as a very small, unimportant part of childhood.

Answer: False

6. The speaker realizes the change only after it has already happened.

Answer: True

7. The bell in the poem stops ringing entirely by the end.

Answer: False

### Fill in the Blank

8. The poem says the swings went as high as your \_\_\_\_\_ allowed.

Answer: nerve

9. The speaker is described as a little \_\_\_\_\_ by how quietly the change happened.

Answer: stunned

### Think and Explain

10. This poem uses enjambment, lines that run directly into the next line without a pause, rather than ending neatly at a natural stopping point. Find one example of enjambment in the poem and explain what effect it creates as you read.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers identifying examples such as lines running from 'meant' into 'run, meant drop whatever you were holding,' or from 'and not' into 'one inch higher, and nobody,' explaining that this technique creates a breathless, rushing momentum that mimics running or the rush of childhood, and later mirrors how quickly and unexpectedly change arrives.

**11. What is the theme of this poem, and how does its structure, including its lack of punctuation at stanza breaks and its continuous, run-on quality, support that theme?**

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting a theme about the unnoticed, gradual loss of childhood, or how significant endings often happen quietly rather than dramatically, supported by the observation that the poem's structure, run-on lines carrying across stanza breaks without clear pauses, mirrors the way the transition from childhood happens without a clear, marked boundary.