



FORM 2 ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and then answer the questions on the Language Paper.

1 My name is Paco. I travel the Amazon River selling bananas to earn money to help my family. My dog, Macapa, travels with me.

The Amazon, which flows through the jungles of Peru and Brazil, carries more water than any other river in the world. **It** can be very dangerous for a small boat, but I've known the part of the river where I travel all my life. I've learnt that everything I see around me has something to tell me. The floating leaves tell me where to paddle my boat as they follow the fastest current. If I follow **them**, the boat travels faster with less help from me. This also shows me where the water is deepest, so if I follow them, I also know that I won't hit a sandbank. You can't learn where the sandbanks are because their positions is always changing. They move during the rains.

I can tell a storm is coming because the wind is making waves in the water. My little boat is rocking and suddenly Macapa falls into the river. I try to catch him but the current is too fast and it carries him away from me. However, I know that Macapa's a clever dog and he's a strong swimmer because this has happened before. He makes for the shore, knowing that I will be following him.

The sky is turning purple. Lightning lights up the jungle. When my dog and I reach the bank, we immediately start looking for shelter. We find **it** in a hole in the roots of a tree. The birds and animals, sensing danger, are silent. Nobody is singing or calling out. Suddenly, thunder breaks the silence, and wind roars through the jungle, bending the trees. Torrential rain noisily hits the canopy of leaves high above us, like stones falling on a tin roof.

The storm ends as suddenly as it began. I look around in the dim light. I can't see the trees of the canopy, but I can hear the macaws and parrots up there making noise. Below the canopy are the palm, rubber and fig trees in which the monkeys and tree frogs were hiding during the storm. On the floor of the forest, bushes and vines grow. White ants are already chewing the fallen trees.

Macapa and I head for the river. I paddle the boat as he watches the fish. There are more than 1500 kinds of fish in the Amazon, the most famous of which are the piranhas. **They** can eat the flesh from any mammal within minutes, but some people still swim, bathe and wash their clothes in the river. They say piranhas aren't dangerous if **you** keep moving. Once I saw them attacking something. There was a lot of noise and splashing and whatever it was, it disappeared very fast. It didn't look as if the piranhas aren't dangerous!

In the water, there are also electric eels that can knock you out. The largest snake in the world, the Anaconda, also lives in the Amazon. They attack people and other mammals; I have even seen them eat small cows that had been grazing along the river banks.

Soon, Macapa and I reach the market. I sell my bananas and paddle back towards home.

(Adapted from *On the River Amazon* published by Steck-Vaughn)

