

## “The Rent Man”

### Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.

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Someone is knocking on Amanda's door.

Amanda is home, but she does not answer.

It is the man who owns the house where she lives.  
His name is Mr. Campbell. Amanda calls him the Rent Man.

He has come by to get the rent money Amanda owes.

Amanda does not have the money to pay him.

Amanda lost her job at the auto factory three and a half weeks ago.

“I worked there for 15 years,” Amanda thinks to herself. She is **bitter**. “But it took them just one day to take my job away.”

Amanda has no idea when she will find another job. Lots of other people from her factory lost their jobs three weeks ago, too.

She looks for work every day.

She looks for work at a restaurant. “You have never worked at a restaurant,” the owner tells her. “This job is not for you.”

She looks for work at the bookstore. “We don't have any jobs right now,” the clerk tells Amanda.

She looks for work at the grocery store. “I will call you to let you know,” the manager says.

Amanda is worried. She is running out of money quickly.

There is another loud knock at the door. Amanda sits quietly in her kitchen. She hopes the Rent Man will go away soon.



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Questions:

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1) Who is knocking at Amanda's door?    2) What does Mr. Campbell want?

- A. the restaurant owner
- B. the clerk
- C. Mr. Campbell
- D. the manager

- A. a book
- B. a car
- C. a job
- D. money

3) Why doesn't Amanda answer the door?

- A. she is feeling sick
- B. she is not home
- C. she has very little money
- D. she doesn't hear the doorbell ring

4) When did Amanda lose her job?

- A. ten days ago
- B. two weeks ago
- C. three weeks ago
- D. almost a month ago

5) If Amanda is **bitter**, how does she feel?

- A. disappointed and angry
- B. happy and sure
- C. hungry and tired
- D. quiet and alone

6) What seems to be the reason Amanda lost her job at the factory?

- A. She was bitter.
- B. She was a bad worker.
- C. She had worked there too long.
- D. Business was slow.

7) Where does Amanda look for a new job?

- I. a restaurant
- II. a bookstore
- III. a grocery store

- A. I only
- B. I and II
- C. II and III
- D. I, II, and III

8) Which job might Amanda get?

- A. none of them
  - B. the factory job
  - C. the bookstore job
  - D. the grocery store job
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Questions (continued):

9) Where is Amanda?

- I. in her kitchen
- II. at the table
- III. at the factory

- A. I only
- B. I and II
- C. II and III
- D. I, II, and III

10) It could have been helpful for Amanda to

- A. call the police
- B. tell Mr. Campbell to stop knocking
- C. tell Mr. Campbell that she lost her job
- D. lock the back door in addition to the front door

11) What would it be reasonable for Mr. Campbell to do next?

- I. break the door down
- II. come back another day
- III. call Amanda on the phone

- A. I only
- B. I and II
- C. II and III
- D. I, II, and III

12) Why does Amanda sit quietly?

- A. so she can think
- B. so she can hear the door
- C. so Mr. Campbell will not know she is home
- D. because Mr. Campbell is a scary man

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Is Mr. Campbell a bad man? Why or why not?

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## Answers and Explanations

1) **C**

In paragraph 3, we learn the person knocking on Amanda's door "is the man who owns the house where she lives." Later in the paragraph, we are told, "His name is Mr. Campbell." Therefore **(C)** is correct. The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

2) **D**

Paragraph 4 lets us know that Mr. Campbell "has come by to get the rent money that Amanda owes." Therefore **(D)** is correct. The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

3) **C**

In paragraph 5, we learn, "Amanda does not have the money to pay him." Because Amanda cannot pay Mr. Campbell, we understand that she has very little money. Therefore **(C)** is correct. The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) **D**

Paragraph 6 tells us, "Amanda lost her job at the auto factory three and a half weeks ago." There are four weeks in a month, so three and a half weeks is almost a month. This lets us know that Amanda lost her job almost a month ago. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)** and **(B)**. Therefore they are incorrect. Amanda lost her job three and a half weeks ago, which is more than three weeks. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

5) **A**

In paragraph 6, we learn "Amanda lost her job at the auto factory three and a half weeks ago." In paragraph 7, it says Amanda is bitter. She is bitter because even though she worked at the auto factory for 15 years, her job got taken away in one day. It was not fair that Amanda lost her job with so little warning. This is why she is bitter. When people are treated unfairly they are sometimes disappointed and angry. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

Amanda is worried about money because she does not have a job. She is not happy or sure. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. She may be hungry and tired, but there is no information in the story to support that idea. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect. When she waits for Mr. Campbell to go away, she does sit quietly, but she is bitter about losing her job, not about owing rent money. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **D**

Paragraph 8 tells us, "Lots of people from her factory lost their jobs three weeks ago, too." Sometimes when business is slow, companies do not need

as many workers. They might fire or lay off workers they don't need. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

Because many other people lost their jobs too, we can understand that nothing Amanda did caused her to lose her job. Therefore **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)** are incorrect.

7) **D**

In paragraph 10, Amanda "looks for work in a restaurant." This supports **option (I)**. In paragraph 11, Amanda "looks for work in a bookstore." This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 12, "she looks for work at the grocery store." This supports **option (III)**. When Amanda looks for work, this means she is looking for a new job. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

8) **D**

In paragraph 12, the manager of the grocery store tells Amanda, "I will let you know," when she applies for a job. It is possible that Amanda might get a job at the grocery store. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

There is a chance she might get a job at the grocery store. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. At the restaurant, the owner tells her, "You have never worked at a restaurant... This job is not for you." Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. In paragraph 11, the clerk at the bookstore tells Amanda, "We don't have any jobs right now." This lets us know that Amanda will definitely not get a job at the bookstore, because there are none available. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

9) **A**

In paragraph 14, the author writes, "Amanda sits quietly in her kitchen." This supports **option (I)**. Though people often have tables in their kitchens, we do not know if Amanda is sitting at a table or not. This eliminates **option (II)**. We know that Amanda is not at the factory, because she got laid off. She used to work at the factory, but does not work there anymore. This eliminates **option (III)**. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

10) **C**

Amanda could have explained to Mr. Campbell that she lost her job, and this is the reason she could not pay her rent. It is fair to believe that Mr. Campbell might have been willing to wait for the rent until Amanda found a new job and could pay him. Even if she does not answer the door today, he will keep asking for his money and eventually she will have to talk to him. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

Calling the police would not be helpful because Mr. Campbell is not doing anything illegal. Amanda does owe him rent money. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Telling Mr. Campbell to stop knocking would not be helpful because she would still owe him the money. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Locking the back door would not be helpful because even if it kept Mr. Campbell out, it would not solve the problem. The problem is that Amanda owes him money. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

11)**C**

If something is reasonable, it is logical, moderate, or understandable. It is not reasonable to believe that Mr. Campbell would break the door down. This would be too forceful. He is merely trying to collect the rent, and does not want to do any harm to Amanda or the apartment. This eliminates **option (I)**. In the story, Amanda does not answer the door. For this reason, Mr. Campbell might think she is not at home. It is reasonable to believe that he could come back another day and try to find Amanda. This supports **option (II)**. It is also reasonable to believe that he could call her on the phone and try to talk to her that way. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

12)**C**

The last paragraph tells us, "Amanda sits quietly in her kitchen. She hopes the rent man will go away soon." Using this information, we can understand that Amanda is sitting quietly so that Mr. Campbell will not know that she is home. She does not want him to know that she is home because she does not have the money to pay the rent. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

It may help to sit quietly if you need to think, but the story does not tell us Amanda wants to think right now. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Amanda does not need to sit quietly to hear the door because there is "another loud knock." A loud knock is easy to hear. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Although the rent man may seem scary, there is no reason to believe he is actually scary. He is merely trying to collect the rent, and does not want to hurt Amanda. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.