

Text 2

The text below describes the frightening experience of a young girl called Rena when an earthquake struck her village. Read the text carefully and answer Questions 4 - 13 in the Question Booklet.

- 1 'Would you believe that giant snakes live underground, and that it is their movements which create earthquakes? Maybe you wouldn't, but your ancestors did. Ancient people had many fanciful explanations for earthquakes...'
- 2 The teacher's voice droned on as Rena, distracted, looked longingly out of the classroom, thinking of the long holiday stretching before her and the luxury of no school for several weeks. 5
- 3 'The first description of the effects of an earthquake were published in the seventeenth century.' The teacher pursued the topic relentlessly while Rena impatiently watched the second hand on the clock tick-tock its way towards the final bell of the day.
- 4 Home proved equally uneventful. Finally, after completing some chores and homework, Rena went to bed and fell asleep almost immediately. She drifted into consciousness with the gradual realisation that the house seemed to be swaying from side to side. Dismissing this as the last remnant of a dream, she turned over and tried to get back to sleep. But the sound of dishes rattling loudly in the kitchen made her sit bolt upright in bed. What was her mother doing in the kitchen in the middle of the night? Suddenly, the framed photograph of her family, taken at a cousin's wedding, tumbled down from its hook on the bedroom wall; her mother's smiling expression, captured in a moment that day by the photographer, seemed somewhat inappropriate at this time. 10 15
- 5 Now the sound of broken crockery was reverberating through the house, as cups, plates and glasses trembled as they inched forward. Rena looked on in horror as the chest of drawers shot out like bullets. Other pieces of furniture seemed also to have come alive as the house became a rattlebox for a giant. Burrowing her head under the pillow, Rena willed these strange events to be nothing more than a nightmare. But no, now her bed was shifting a foot across the floor, as if anxious to catch up with the chest of drawers. This was no dream – this was a terrifying reality. 20
- 6 At this point, her mother appeared in the doorway, clutching her baby sister. Rena realised that her mother was leaning on the door frame to steady herself.
- 7 "Quickly, Rena!" she said. "Get downstairs into the yard!" 25
- 8 Her feigned calmness did little to disguise her obvious sense of impending danger. Rena followed her mother not a moment too soon. The house began to shake even more violently, and then the wall collapsed, burying the bedroom's runaway furniture under a mountain of broken concrete. Rena had been trying to delude herself but now, as she choked under a huge volume of dust, she realised that this was the earthquake of her geography lessons. 30
- 9 Once every member of the family had been accounted for in the yard, Rena's father started digging a hole. Quickly, he placed broken bricks from a collapsed wall around it and then piled broken branches into it to make a fire. By now every door of every house as far as the eye could see was spewing out a stream of human beings into the chilly night. A long queue had formed winding around the block to fetch water from the pump at the end of the street. Rena was sent by her mother with small containers salvaged from the mess that was their kitchen to join the queue to bring back water to fill the large barrel in the yard. When this time-consuming task had been completed, the sun was already shimmering blood-red through the shroud of dust enveloping the village. No more tremors were felt. 'The worst is over,' Rena thought. "We will be back home in a day or two." 35
- 10 Suddenly a loud explosion boomed as a fractured gas pipe ignited. Huge flames leapt into the sky and a cluster of houses nearby caught fire immediately. The dark sky brightened as hungry tongues of fire licked their way down the street. The wail of the ambulance mingled with those of families who had lost loved ones. The loud wails of ambulances and shrill sirens of fire engines were heard throughout the night. At other times, the sound would have sent shivers of apprehension down her spine; that day, however, there was a kind of comfort in them. 40 45

- 11 It was to be over a week before Rena's family returned to their home, and much, much longer before they recovered from the havoc created by the earthquake. Rena went back to school more willing to listen to her teachers, particularly in geography lessons showing the contrast between the power of nature and the frailty of Man.

Section C

Text 3

The article below is about the Sichuan peppercorn. Read the text carefully and answer Questions 14 – 20 in the Question Booklet.

- 1 Researchers at the University College London Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience found that people experienced the same sensation when either Sichuan pepper—a spice used in many types of Asian cuisine—or a machine vibrating at a particular frequency was placed on their lips. This sensation which has been likened to electric currents produced by a battery placed on a tongue can be experienced in Chengdu, the capital of China's south-western Sichuan province and the cradle of the region's famously fiery cuisine. Plates resembling volcanic islands, with each dish's contents swimming in chilli oil hidden beneath a red-hot mountain of peppers and garlic would set one's tongue ablaze and forehead glistening. But this initial unsettling feeling is replaced by a reprieve from the heat. 5
- 2 This curious effect and many more factors make this tiny-but-mighty Sichuan peppercorn, a spice indigenous to China, one of the most integral ingredients in the province's distinctive cuisine. Chefs often use the peppercorn to heighten other seasonings because of its unique fragrance. Simmering fresh Sichuan peppercorn in oil, for example, produces a vaguely numbing oil that can enhance noodles, salads and sauces. Grinding it into a powder makes an ideal addition to a dry rub for roasted meat. The spice's ability to complement many different flavours partly explains how it became so ubiquitous in the region. The owner of Cheng Big Mouth Frog restaurant in Chongqing claimed that the level of humidity in Sichuan can make one feel lethargic and uncomfortable. Hence, the Sichuan peppercorn is a much welcomed spice as it not only adds fragrance but also helps combat dampness which is an outcome of the highly humid weather experienced by Chengdu all year round. 10 15 20
- 3 Chongqing is a port city, and back in the day, a lot of workers did hard labour by the docks. The wealthy people in Sichuan ate a lot of beef, but they saw the offal as unrefined, something to throw away. So, the labourers would take the offal for a source of protein. For those workers in Chongqing, Sichuan peppercorn was a cheap way to mask the gamey taste of otherwise pungent meats. Today, famous dishes such as fūqī fèi piàn – thinly sliced beef offal tossed with chilli oil, Sichuan peppercorn and garlic – make star ingredients of those cuts once considered lower-class. Though Sichuan peppercorns are among the oldest spices used by Chinese people, in the beginning they weren't used in cooking. In the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC), Sichuan peppercorns were mostly used in rituals and worship ceremonies as well as for preserving corpses in ancient times alongside other spices and herbs, as they could help with pest control. However, the earliest record of Sichuan peppercorns was in "Shijing," dating from the 11th to 7th centuries BC during which time they were used as a token of affection. 25 30
- 4 However, even today finding fresh, potent Sichuan peppercorn overseas can be challenging; what is found in many places lacks aroma and often comes with seeds and twigs. That often happens when the ingredient is processed by machine. Machine-sorting of Sichuan peppercorn leaves a lot of seeds, but that's what most people will export. The difficulties in obtaining the valued Sichuan spice starts with harvesting as some farmers choose not to go the conventional way of obtaining the peppers by shaking the trees. Instead, a more arduous path involving the shredding and bleeding of hands is opted for to get at the best peppers. As the red berry clusters are surrounded by prickly sharp thorns, gloves cannot be a part of this process which is akin to threading the eye of a needle. 35 40
- 5 If chefs can get their hands on it, fresh Sichuan peppercorn at its full potential may have myriad applications even beyond Sichuan cuisine. Nowadays, restaurants outside China have begun using the numbing ingredient in non-traditional ways. Beast & Butterflies in the M Social Singapore Hotel recently included it in a chocolate and banana sphere dessert. The Washington DC-area joint Hot Lola's adds it to a variation on Nashville hot chicken. The world is a global village now. This means more people around the world can discover the ingredient's powerful effects, which Sichuan locals say are both physiological and mental. 45

Refer to Text 2 on pages 3 and 4 of the Insert for Questions 4 – 13.

- 4 Which word from Paragraph 1 indicates that the teacher was skeptical about ancient people's understanding of earthquakes?

..... [1]

- 5 Which **two** actions from Paragraphs 2 and 3 show that Rena was eager for the lesson to end?

(i).....

(ii)..... [2]

- 6 According to Paragraph 4, which sign of the earthquake first startled Rena?

.....

..... [1]

- 7 Why might Rena's mother's smiling expression in the photograph be described as 'inappropriate'?

.....

..... [1]

- 8 In Paragraph 5, Rena is caught in an earthquake. Explain how the language used in this paragraph emphasises the violence of the earthquake. Support your ideas with **three** details from the text.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

[3]

- 9 (a) From Paragraph 7, in which **two** ways does the writer show that the 'feigned calmness' of Rena's mother's instructions were not effective in hiding her anxiety?

(i)

.....
(ii).....
..... [2]

(b) Suggest why Rena's mother feigned calmness?

.....
..... [1]

10 Apart from the fact that the queues were very long, what else made the task of filling the barrel 'time-consuming' (line 37)?

.....
.....
..... [2]

11 In Paragraph 10, what is the difference between Rena's reactions to the sirens in normal times and during the earthquake? Answer in your own words.

Rena's reaction to sirens and fire engines:

Occasions	Reactions
(i) Normal times	
(ii) During the earthquake	

[2]

12 With reference to Paragraph 11, explain what Rena learnt from her experience.

.....
..... [1]

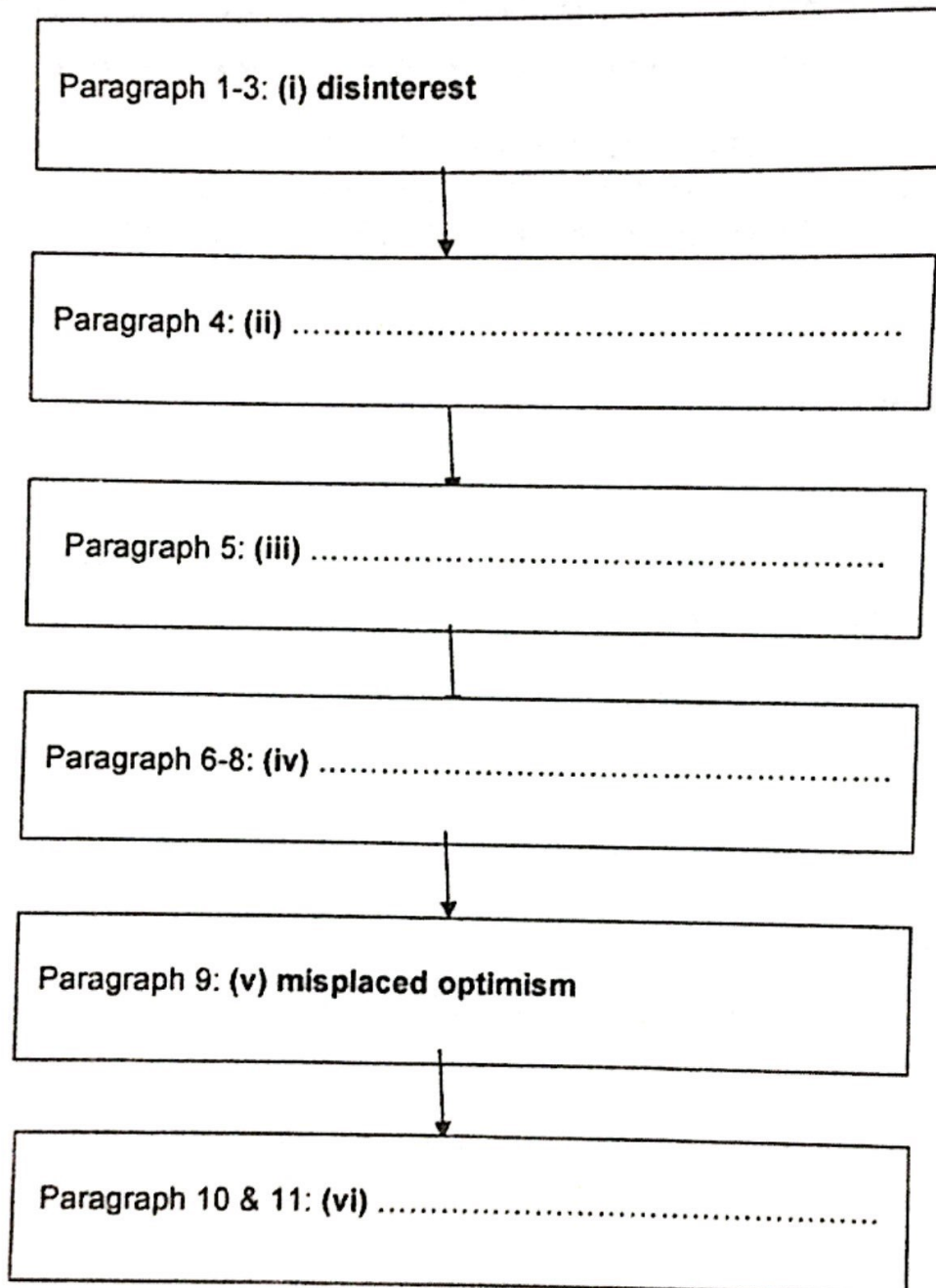
13 The structure of the text reflects Rena's responses to her situation at different stages of the narrative. Complete the flow chart by choosing one word/phrase from the box to summarise the stage in each part of the text. There are some extra words in the box you do not need to use.

Rena's responses

changed perspectives	curiosity	acceptance
awestruck	frightful realisation	confusion

growing fear

Flow chart



[4]

Refer to Text 3 on pages 3 and 4 of the Insert for Questions 14 – 20.

- 14 Which one word in Paragraph 1 tells us that a generous portion of chilli oil has been served?

.....
.....

[1]

- 15 What does the writer mean when he describes Chengdu as the 'cradle' of the region's famously fiery cuisine?

.....
.....
.....

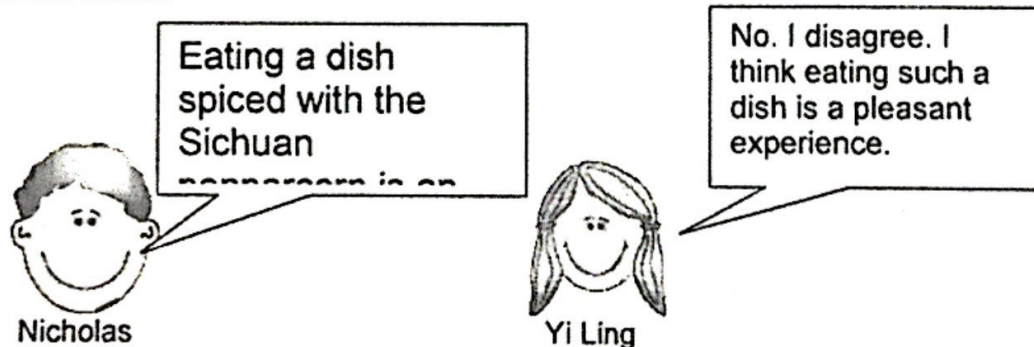
[1]

- 16 What does 'curious' mean in the phrase 'curious effect' (line 10)?

.....
.....

[1]

- 17 Here is part of a conversation between two students, Nicholas and Yi Ling, who have read the article.



- (a) With reference to Paragraph 1, explain why Nicholas feels that eating a dish spiced with the Sichuan peppercorn is an unpleasant experience.

.....
.....

[1]

- (b) Give two reasons from Paragraph 2 which Yi Ling can use to support her opinion.

(i)

[1]



(ii)

[1]

- 18 (a) From Paragraph 4, identify a **word** and an **expression** which tell us that the process of picking the freshest peppers is very difficult.

(i) Word:

(II) Expression:.....

[2]

- (b)** What makes it difficult to pick the freshest peppers?

.....

[1]

- 19 How does the writer support the idea that 'The world is global village now' (line 45)?

.....

.....

[1]

- 20** Using your own words as far as possible, summarise the ways in which the Sichuan peppercorn is being used in the present and how it was used in the past.

Use only information from Paragraphs 2 and 3.

Your summary which must be in continuous writing (not note form) must not be longer than 80 words (not counting the words given to help you begin).

The Sichuan peppercorn, a much sought-after spice, is used to.....

.....

.....

Year	Percentage of Respondents (%)
1997	85
1998	88
1999	92
2000	95
2001	92
2002	88
2003	85
2004	80

.....

.....

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