

R5a. Can search for simple clues within the text to support reading between the lines

Skills Test 3

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'The Night Mail' by WH Auden

This is the night mail crossing the Border,
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb:
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily as she passes
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches,
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;
They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes no one wakes,
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

Dawn freshens, Her climb is done.
Down towards Glasgow she descends,
Towards the steam tugs yelping down a glade of cranes
Towards the fields of apparatus, the furnaces
Set on the dark plain like gigantic chessmen.
All Scotland waits for her:
In dark glens, beside pale-green lochs
Men long for news.

1. Tick the option that best describes what *Beattock* is.

Tick **one**

station	
hill	
river	
person	

2. How do you know that the farm is close to the railway line?

3. Look at the last verse. What evidence is there to suggest that Glasgow is an industrial city?

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Answers

1.

Tick **one**

station	
hill	✓
river	
person	

2. The farm must be close to the railway line because it says that a jug in the bedroom shakes when the train passes.
3. I think Glasgow is an industrial city because the poem describes steam tugs, cranes and furnaces. These are all signs of heavy industry.