



Down in The Tube Station at Midnight

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Down in the Tube Station at Midnight.....	4
Reading Comprehension Questions.....	10
Down in the Tube Station at Midnight story and reading comprehension questions.....	12
Essential Vocabulary.....	21
Discussion Questions.....	24
Writing.....	26
Reading Comprehension — Answers.....	27
Credits.....	31

Introduction

Have you ever been in a subway station late at night? How did it feel?

Can strange things happen in a subway station at night? Give some examples.

Is it possible for subway stations to be haunted?

Down in the Tube Station at Midnight

“I’ll be glad when this shift is over.”

It was close to midnight and John was just finishing work at the Grey Park tube station.

He hated the late shifts. It was too quiet for one.

Then, when he finished work, he had to get home. It wasn’t too far — sometimes he took a taxi — but other times he walked and the streets were empty with strange shadows creeping across between the houses.

His workmate for the evening, Colin, stretched and kept his feet up on the desk.

Just behind his feet, the bank of security camera monitors. Each screen showed a different view of the station’s interior.

“Soon done,” said Colin. “See this last train in, then we can all get out of here.”

John waited a second to see if Colin would volunteer to do the rounds of the station. One of them had to walk around the whole place, just to make sure there were no people left inside.

Sometimes a drunk.

One time they found a dog, whimpering and lost.

But Colin stayed glued in his seat. Clearly, he had no intention of moving.

“Guess I’ll go down and have a look,” said John.

Colin peered over his shoulder towards him. “You don’t mind, mate?”

John shrugged. “One of us has got to do it.”

He put on his uniform cap and went to the door.

One of these days, Colin might move out of his chair. Although John couldn’t recall ever seeing Colin doing anything but sitting down every shift.

John grabbed his walkie-talkie and turned it on. He turned the dial and spoke into it.

“Keep an eye out for me,” he said into the walkie-talkie.

His voice carried loudly to the walkie-talkie on the desk and made Colin jump.

Colin shifted his weight and tried to sit up straight.

“Yeah, yeah, sure. I’m right here.”

John smirked and walked out the door.

A short corridor led to another door and a public walkway. Both sides of the walkway were filled with advertising. An overflowing

rubbish bin with discarded fast-food wrappers and fizzy-pop cans at the bottom of it.

John marched down the corridor. He could hear the last train arriving. It pulled into the station and then he heard Colin's tired monotone voice.

"This is Grey Park, the final stop. Please alight here and leave the station. Thank you."

Colin never had any enthusiasm in his voice.

Some of the other guys that worked in the station would put some energy into their voices or put on a funny voice.

It made them laugh and helped them get through the long and quiet hours.

But never Colin.

As John made his way to the platform, he met the passengers leaving the station. The usual late-night crowds.

A couple of young guys, drunk and full of swagger.

"All right, mate?" they said to John. "Nice hat."

John gave them a curt nod and walked on. The two lads laughed loudly and broke into a rendition of a popular song.

A man in his forties, looking weary and deadbeat. Another poor guy doing a late shift somewhere in the city.

An elderly woman, clutching her bag and looking nervous. A young woman, her eyes on the ground and walking straight ahead.

The last strays of the night, all heading home or to anywhere else in the night that might welcome them.

On the platform, the train was still in place, all of its doors open.

John nodded at the train guard — he recognised him from the dozens of times he had seen him before but could not remember his name.

All the train had to be checked, to make sure no people were left sleeping on seats, no forgotten items. God forbid any bags or boxes left on the train — then they had to call the police.

John walked along the platform, checking every carriage. Everything looked in order.

He waved at the guard, who waved back and got back onto the train. He heard the crackle of a radio, then the doors hissed closed and the train pulled out of the station and into the dark tunnel.

In a few seconds, John was all alone on the platform.

He clicked on the walkie-talkie. “Just checking the north end of

the platform,” he said. “All clear up there?”

The walkie-talkie crackled and Colin’s voice came through it, tinny and alien. “Just that one bloke by the seats.”

John kept walking.

He hoped the man on the platform wasn’t drunk. They could be difficult to deal with sometimes.

But he could see no one.

“You sure?” he said into his radio. “I can’t see anyone.”

“He’s right there,” said Colin. “Hang on, he’s getting to his feet.”

John peered ahead and saw no one. He turned and looked behind him. No one there either.

Colin was such an idiot. This was another problem with him.

He wasn’t very observant.

“Are you sure you’re looking on the right platform?” asked John. He would talk to the station chief about Colin.

This was not good enough.

“Yes, platform one,” said Colin. “I can see you walking towards the camera.”

John squinted into the far end of the platform.

He couldn’t see anyone.

“There’s no one here,” he said to himself.

He carried on walking to the very end of the platform, past the two benches on the side. He stopped and looked behind him again.

Maybe Colin was looking at the wrong end of the platform. Not a soul around.

John pulled the radio up to his ear. "Colin, are you sure? Please check again, I can't see anyone here."

"He's right there," said Colin. "By the seats. He's just standing by the edge of the platform."

John spun around. Nothing. He was the only person there.

"Colin, is this some sort of a joke? I can't see anyone."

The radio spluttered into life again. "John. He's behind you. He's... John!"

John dropped the radio from the side of his face.

He spun around.

Then he saw it.

Reading Comprehension Questions

Read the full story carefully and then answer the following comprehension questions.

These questions will help you reflect on the characters, setting, events, and atmosphere of the story.

Students:

Answer each question in **full sentences**, using evidence from the story to support your answers.

Teachers:

Model answers for all questions are provided at the **end of the lesson plan** for reference and discussion.

1. Who is the main character in this story?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What time of day is it?
4. What does John think about working the late shift?

5. How does John sometimes get home after work?
6. Who does John work with?
7. What does John think about Colin's attitude towards work?
8. What sometimes happens at the end of the night in the station?
9. Does Colin offer to help John?
10. What does John take with him when he checks the station?
11. How does Colin react when John speaks into the walkie-talkie?
12. What does John see in the walkway?
13. What can John hear as he walks along the corridor?
14. What announcement does Colin make?
15. How is Colin different from the other station workers?
16. How do the workers sometimes make the job more fun?
17. What kinds of people does John see leaving the station?
18. How do the young men interact with John?

19. What kind of mood do the other passengers seem to be in?
20. Describe the people John sees at the station.
21. Who does John see on the train? Does he know this person?
22. Why does John have to check the train?
23. What could happen if someone left a bag or item behind?
24. Where does the train go?
25. Which part of the station does John go to next?
26. What does Colin report seeing on the platform?
27. What does John hope about the man Colin sees?
28. What does John notice as he looks around?
29. What does John think about Colin's observation skills?
30. Where does John look to try to find the man?
31. Does John find anyone?
32. Who does John plan to talk to about Colin?
33. What does John see on the platform?
34. What does Colin insist he can see?

35. Does John see anyone?
36. What warning does Colin give?
37. What happens at the end of the story?

Down in the Tube Station at Midnight story and reading comprehension questions

This story is divided into short sections, each followed by reading comprehension questions.

Please read each section carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Students:

Answer all questions in **full sentences**, using information from the story to support your responses. Pay close attention to details about the characters, setting, and events.

Teachers:

Model answers for all comprehension questions can be found at the end of the lesson plan for reference or classroom discussion. This format is particularly useful for supporting guided reading, small group work, or homework assignments.

Section 1

“I’ll be glad when this shift is over.”

It was close to midnight and John was just finishing work at the Grey Park tube station.

He hated the late shifts. It was too quiet for one.

Then, when he finished work, he had to get home. It wasn't too far — sometimes he took a taxi — but other times he walked and the streets were empty with strange shadows creeping across between the houses.

His workmate for the evening, Colin, stretched and kept his feet up on the desk.

Just behind his feet, the bank of security camera monitors. Each screen showed a different view of the station's interior.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the main character in this story?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What time of day is it?
4. What does John think about working the late shift?
5. How does John sometimes get home after work?

Section 2

“Soon done,” said Colin. “See this last train in, then we can all get out of here.”

John waited a second to see if Colin would volunteer to do the rounds of the station. One of them had to walk around the whole place, just to make sure there were no people left inside.

Sometimes a drunk.

One time they found a dog, whimpering and lost.

But Colin stayed glued in his seat. Clearly, he had no intention of moving.

“Guess I’ll go down and have a look,” said John.

Colin peered over his shoulder towards him. “You don’t mind, mate?”

John shrugged. “One of us has got to do it.”

Reading Comprehension Questions

6. Who does John work with?

7. What does John think about Colin’s attitude towards work?

8. What sometimes happens at the end of the night in the station?

9. Does Colin offer to help John?

Section 3

John grabbed his walkie-talkie and turned it on. He turned the dial and spoke into it.

“Keep an eye out for me,” he said into the walkie-talkie.

His voice carried loudly to the walkie-talkie on the desk and made Colin jump.

Colin shifted his weight and tried to sit up straight.

“Yeah, yeah, sure. I’m right here.”

John smirked and walked out the door.

A short corridor led to another door and a public walkway. Both sides of the walkway were filled with advertising. An overflowing rubbish bin with discarded fast-food wrappers and fizzy-pop cans at the bottom of it.

John marched down the corridor. He could hear the last train arriving.

Reading Comprehension Questions

10. What does John take with him when he checks the station?

11. How does Colin react when John speaks into the walkie-

talkie?

12. What does John see in the walkway?

13. What can John hear as he walks along the corridor?

Section 4

It pulled into the station and then he heard Colin's tired monotone voice.

"This is Grey Park, the final stop. Please alight here and leave the station. Thank you."

Colin never had any enthusiasm in his voice.

Some of the other guys that worked in the station would put some energy into their voices or put on a funny voice.

It made them laugh and helped them get through the long and quiet hours.

But never Colin.

As John made his way to the platform, he met the passengers leaving the station.

The usual late-night crowds.

Reading Comprehension Questions

14. What announcement does Colin make?

15. How is Colin different from the other station workers?
16. How do the workers sometimes make the job more fun?

Section 5

A couple of young guys, drunk and full of swagger.

“All right, mate?” they said to John. “Nice hat.”

John gave them a curt nod and walked on. The two lads laughed loudly and broke into a rendition of a popular song.

A man in his forties, looking weary and deadbeat. Another poor guy doing a late shift somewhere in the city.

An elderly woman, clutching her bag and looking nervous. A young woman, her eyes on the ground and walking straight ahead.

The last strays of the night, all heading home or to anywhere else in the night that might welcome them.

Reading Comprehension Questions

17. What kinds of people does John see leaving the station?
18. How do the young men interact with John?
19. What kind of mood do the other passengers seem to be in?
20. Describe the people John sees at the station.

Section 6

On the platform, the train was still in place, all of its doors open. John nodded at the train guard — he recognised him from the dozens of times he had seen him before but could not remember his name.

All the train had to be checked, to make sure no people were left sleeping on seats, no forgotten items. God forbid any bags or boxes left on the train — then they had to call the police.

John walked along the platform, checking every carriage.

Everything looked in order.

He waved at the guard, who waved back and got back onto the train.

He heard the crackle of a radio, then the doors hissed closed and the train pulled out of the station and into the dark tunnel.

Reading Comprehension Questions

21. Who does John see on the train? Does he know this person?
22. Why does John have to check the train?
23. What could happen if someone left a bag or item behind?
24. Where does the train go?

Section 7

In a few seconds, John was all alone on the platform.

He clicked on the walkie-talkie. “Just checking the north end of the platform,” he said. “All clear up there?”

The walkie-talkie crackled and Colin’s voice came through it, tinny and alien. “Just that one bloke by the seats.”

John kept walking.

He hoped the man on the platform wasn’t drunk. They could be difficult to deal with sometimes.

But he could see no one.

“You sure?” he said into his radio. “I can’t see anyone.”

“He’s right there,” said Colin. “Hang on, he’s getting to his feet.”

Reading Comprehension Questions

25. Which part of the station does John go to next?

26. What does Colin report seeing on the platform?

27. What does John hope about the man Colin sees?

28. What does John notice as he looks around?

Section 8

John peered ahead and saw no one.

He turned and looked behind him. No one there either.

Colin was such an idiot. This was another problem with him.

He wasn't very observant.

"Are you sure you're looking on the right platform?" asked John.

He would talk to the station chief about Colin.

This was not good enough.

"Yes, platform one," said Colin. "I can see you walking towards the camera."

John squinted into the far end of the platform.

He couldn't see anyone.

"There's no one here," he said to himself.

Reading Comprehension Questions

29. What does John think about Colin's observation skills?

30. Where does John look to try to find the man?

31. Does John find anyone?

32. Who does John plan to talk to about Colin?

Section 9

He carried on walking to the very end of the platform, past the two benches on the side.

He stopped and looked behind him again.

Maybe Colin was looking at the wrong end of the platform.

Not a soul around.

John pulled the radio up to his ear. "Colin, are you sure? Please check again, I can't see anyone here."

"He's right there," said Colin. "By the seats. He's just standing by the edge of the platform."

John spun around. Nothing.

He was the only person there.

Reading Comprehension Questions

33. What does John see on the platform?

34. What does Colin insist he can see?

35. Does John see anyone?

Section 10

"Colin, is this some sort of a joke? I can't see anyone."

The radio spluttered into life again. “John. He’s behind you. He’s... John!”

John dropped the radio from the side of his face.

He spun around.

Then he saw it.

Reading Comprehension Questions

36. What warning does Colin give?

37. What happens at the end of the story?

Essential Vocabulary

glad	shift	midnight
tube station	shadows	creeping
workmate	stretched	bank
security camera monitors	screen	view
interior	soon done	get out of here
volunteer	to do the rounds	drunk
whimpering	glued	no intention
peered	shoulder	mate
shrugged	uniform cap	recall
grabbed	walkie-talkie	dial
jump	shifted	smirked
corridor	public	walkway
advertising	overflowing	rubbish bin
discarded	wrappers	fizzy-pop
monotone	alight	enthusiasm
late-night	crowds	swagger
curt	nod	lads
broke into	rendition	a popular song
weary	deadbeat	clutching
nervous	strays	platform
nodded	train guard	recognised

dozens	checked	items
God forbid	carriage	in order
waved	crackle	radio
hissed	tunnel	all clear
tinny	alien	bloke
idiot	observant	station chief
squinted	far end	benches
soul	edge	spun
spluttered		

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Glad — *a feeling of being happy or content.*

Shift — *a period of working time, can be early in the morning or late at night.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or

phrase correctly.

I'm glad it has stopped raining. Now we can go outside again.

I love being a nurse, but the late-night shifts are really tiring.

Do this with all the vocabulary and, over time, this will help improve all your English skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Discussion Questions

Describe what John's job is.

Does he like this job, do you think?

How does John feel about his late-night shifts? Why?

How does he get on with his colleague, Colin?

Describe John's workmate, Colin. What kind of person is he?

Why does John have to do the rounds of the station at the end of his shift?

Why do you think Colin never offers to do the rounds of the station at the end of the shift?

How does John feel about Colin's attitude?

What is the setting of the story? How does the setting contribute to the atmosphere?

What do you think the subway station is like late at night?

What kind of people do you think John encounters late at night in the subway station?

The two young guys are drunk. Why does one of them say 'Nice hat' to John?

The old woman appears nervous. Why?

Why does John have to check the train before it leaves the

station?

Someone — or something — is on the platform. What do you think this is?

Why does John think Colin is mistaken about seeing someone on the platform?

What do you think happens after John sees 'it'? Discuss in class possible events that follow.

What do you think Colin does next?

Do you have a subway system in your town or city?

Are there any strange stories about subway stations in your hometown? Tell the class.

Have you ever had a moment when you were scared or surprised? Can you describe it?

How would you feel if you were in John's situation? Would you be scared or curious?

Do you think there is a logical explanation for the person Colin sees on the platform?

Have you ever had a job where you had to do tasks at the end of your shift? What were they?

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

You are going to continue writing the next part of the story.

- What happens next?
- What does Colin see?
- What does Colin do next?
- What happens to John?
- What does John see?
- What does the thing that John sees do next?

Think about all these questions to help you write the next part of the story.

Now write the story.

When you have finished, read it out loud in front of your classmates.

Or give it to your teacher for review.

Reading Comprehension — Answers

Who is the main character in this story?

John is the main character.

Where does the story take place?

It takes place at the Grey Park tube station.

What time of day is it?

It is close to midnight.

What does John think about working the late shift?

He hates it because it is too quiet.

How does John sometimes get home after work?

He sometimes takes a taxi or walks.

Who does John work with?

He works with Colin.

What does John think about Colin's attitude towards work?

He thinks Colin is lazy and doesn't do much.

What sometimes happens at the end of the night in the station?

They sometimes find drunks or lost dogs.

Does Colin offer to help John?

No, he stays seated and lets John do the work.

What does John take with him when he checks the station?

He takes a walkie-talkie.

How does Colin react when John speaks into the walkie-talkie?

Colin jumps because John's voice is loud over the radio.

What does John see in the walkway?

He sees advertising posters and an overflowing rubbish bin.

What can John hear as he walks along the corridor?

He hears the last train arriving.

What announcement does Colin make?

He announces that Grey Park is the final stop and asks passengers to leave the station.

How is Colin different from the other station workers?

He has no enthusiasm in his voice.

How do the workers sometimes make the job more fun?

They sometimes put on funny voices over the announcements.

What kinds of people does John see leaving the station?

He sees a couple of drunk young men, a weary man, an elderly woman, and a young woman.

How do the young men interact with John?

They greet him in a joking way and comment on his hat.

What kind of mood do the other passengers seem to be in?

They seem tired, nervous, or withdrawn.

Describe the people John sees at the station.

Young drunk men, a tired middle-aged man, a nervous elderly woman, and a young woman looking at the ground.

Who does John see on the train? Does he know this person?

He sees the train guard, whom he recognizes but doesn't know by name.

Why does John have to check the train?

To make sure no people, bags, or forgotten items are left behind.

What could happen if someone left a bag or item behind?

They would have to call the police.

Where does the train go?

It leaves the station and goes into the tunnel.

Which part of the station does John go to next?

He goes to the north end of the platform.

What does Colin report seeing on the platform?

Colin reports seeing a man by the seats.

What does John hope about the man Colin sees?

He hopes the man isn't drunk.

What does John notice as he looks around?

He notices that no one is there.

What does John think about Colin's observation skills?

He thinks Colin is not very observant.

Where does John look to try to find the man?

He looks at the far end of the platform and behind him.

Does John find anyone?

No, he finds no one.

Who does John plan to talk to about Colin?

He plans to talk to the station chief.

What does John see on the platform?

He sees no one.

What does Colin insist he can see?

Colin insists there is a man by the seats.

Does John see anyone?

No, he does not.

What warning does Colin give?

He warns John that the man is behind him.

What happens at the end of the story?

John spins around and sees something, but the story ends without revealing what it is.

Credits

This lesson plan is courtesy of ManWrites.

This content is copyright ManWrites 2023 — ManWrites©2023

For more information, go to www.manwrites.com

Or join my mailing list below and I will send you more ESL teaching ideas.

[ManWrites Mailing List](#)