

# The Curious Case of Mr. Septimus Scribble and the Sentient Scone



a short story for English  
reading and speaking

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# Introduction

Have you ever eaten a food that looked, smelled, or behaved in a way you didn't expect? What happened?

If you could give a food or drink a personality, what would it be like? Friendly? Shy? Mischievous? Why?

In your culture, are there any stories, legends, or jokes about food having magical or unusual qualities?

If one of your meals could talk to you, what advice or secrets might it share?

# The Curious Case of Mr. Septimus Scribble and the Sentient Scone

Mr. Septimus Scribble was a man of meticulous habits and a profound love for afternoon tea. Every day, precisely at four o'clock, he would settle into his favourite armchair by the window with a freshly baked scone, a dollop of strawberry jam, and a generous spoonful of clotted cream. His scones were always sourced from Mrs. Higgins' Heavenly Humbles bakery, an establishment renowned for its exceptionally light and fluffy creations.

One Tuesday, however, Mr. Scribble noticed something peculiar about his scone. As he reached for the jam pot, the scone seemed to wobble — just a tiny tremor, mind you, but enough to make Mr. Scribble, a man who prided himself on his unflappability, raise a quizzical eyebrow.

He peered closer. The scone, a golden-brown orb of crumbly delight, appeared to be breathing. Very faintly, almost imperceptibly, but breathing nonetheless. Mr.

Scribble blinked, wondering if he'd perhaps added a touch too much sherry to his lunchtime trifle.

The next day, the scone was at it again. This time, as he buttered it, he distinctly felt a slight resistance, as if the scone were tensing. Mr. Scribble, a retired lexicographer with a penchant for the precise meaning of words, began to feel distinctly uneasy.

He decided to conduct an experiment. On Thursday, instead of his usual strawberry jam, he offered the scone a sliver of particularly pungent Stilton cheese. The scone recoiled. Not in a dramatic, rolling-off-the-plate sort of way, but with a subtle, almost imperceptible shrinking in size.

Mr. Scribble was now thoroughly intrigued. He began to treat his daily scone not as a mere baked good, but as a subject of intense scientific scrutiny. He offered it various delicacies: a sliver of smoked salmon (it quivered with what he could only describe as delight), a segment of pickled onion (it remained stubbornly inert), and a single, plump garden slug (the scone actually seemed to shudder).

He confided in his neighbour, Mrs. Periwinkle, a woman

whose imagination was as wild and unruly as her prize-winning roses. Mrs. Periwinkle, far from dismissing his claims, declared that the scones at Heavenly Humbles had always had a certain *je ne sais quoi*. She recounted tales of a batch that had once sung a chorus of Happy Birthday to a bewildered customer.

Mr. Scribble, emboldened by Mrs. Periwinkle's fantastical anecdotes, continued his observations. He discovered that his scone seemed to respond to his moods. When he was cheerful, it appeared plump and buoyant. When he was feeling glum, it would deflate slightly, its golden hue dimming.

One afternoon, feeling particularly lonely, Mr. Scribble began to talk to the scone. He told it about his day, his aches and pains, and his profound disappointment at the latest crossword puzzle in the Times. To his astonishment, the scone seemed to listen. It would subtly tilt in his direction when he raised his voice and remain perfectly still when he spoke softly.

A strange sort of companionship developed between the

old lexicographer and the sentient scone. Mr. Scribble found himself looking forward to their daily tea ritual with an enthusiasm he hadn't felt in years. He even gave the scone a name: Sidney.

One Sunday, Mrs. Higgins, the formidable owner of Heavenly Humbles, paid Mr. Scribble a visit. She had heard rumours – whispers amongst her clientele – of a certain gentleman who was overly attached to his scones.

‘Mr. Scribble,’ she boomed, her voice like a foghorn in a teacup, ‘I understand you have been fraternising with my baked goods.’

Mr. Scribble, flustered, tried to explain Sidney's sentience, his reactions to various foods, his apparent empathy. Mrs. Higgins listened, her face an impassive mask.

‘Nonsense!’ she declared finally. ‘Scones are for eating, not conversing with!’ She snatched Sidney from the plate. ‘I shall take this *unruly* scone back to my bakery for quality control.’

Mr. Scribble was distraught. He pleaded, he reasoned, but Mrs. Higgins was unmoved. She marched out of his cottage, Sidney clutched firmly in her hand.

The next day, Mr. Scribble returned to Heavenly Humbles, his heart heavy with loss. He approached the counter, where Mrs. Higgins stood, a smug look on her face.

‘Well, Mr. Scribble,’ she said, polishing a tray with a vigour that suggested she had thoroughly dealt with Sidney, ‘I have conducted my quality control. The scone was, as I suspected, perfectly ordinary. I ate it myself with a nice cup of Earl Grey.’

Mr. Scribble felt a wave of despair wash over him. He had imagined it all. The wobbling, the breathing, the subtle responses – just the fanciful musings of a lonely old man.

He sighed and ordered a plain biscuit, the joy of afternoon tea now utterly diminished.

As Mrs. Higgins reached for a biscuit tin, he noticed something on the counter. A small, golden-brown crumb. An exceptionally light and fluffy crumb. And as he looked closer, he saw it wobble — just a tiny tremor.

Mrs. Higgins, meanwhile, let out a rather peculiar little burp. A burp that sounded, just for a fleeting moment, remarkably like a contented sigh. And then, she patted her stomach and said, in a voice that seemed to have gained a

certain *fluffiness*, 'My word, Mr. Scribble, these new biscuits are simply divine!'

# The Curious Case of Mr. Septimus Scribble and the Sentient Scone — story and reading comprehension questions

## Introduction for Teachers

The following pages contain the complete short story *The Curious Case of Mr. Septimus Scribble and the Sentient Scone*, divided into clearly marked sections. Each section is followed by a set of numbered **Reading Comprehension Questions**.

This format is designed to make the story easier to use in a variety of classroom situations:

- **Step-by-step reading** – You can pause after each section to check understanding, clarify vocabulary, or encourage predictions before moving on.
- **Flexible lesson planning** – Sections can be covered across multiple lessons or used selectively to fit your timetable.
- **Targeted discussion** – The questions provide a natural starting point for conversation, encouraging both factual recall and inference skills.

Teachers may choose to:

- Read the story aloud to the class, pausing for questions.
- Have students read sections in pairs or small groups before attempting the questions.
- Use the sections for listening practice by reading them while students follow along in their text.

**This structure allows you to adapt the material to suit different levels of engagement, class sizes, and lesson lengths, while keeping the narrative flow clear and accessible.**

## **Section 1**

Mr. Septimus Scribble was a man of meticulous habits and a profound love for afternoon tea. Every day, precisely at four o'clock, he would settle into his favourite armchair by the window with a freshly baked scone, a dollop of strawberry jam, and a generous spoonful of clotted cream. His scones were always sourced from Mrs. Higgins' Heavenly Humbles bakery, an establishment renowned for its exceptionally light and fluffy creations.

## Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What time did Mr. Scribble have his afternoon tea?
2. Where did Mr. Scribble buy his scones?
3. How is the bakery described?

## Section 2

One Tuesday, however, Mr. Scribble noticed something peculiar about his scone. As he reached for the jam pot, the scone seemed to wobble — just a tiny tremor, mind you, but enough to make Mr. Scribble, a man who prided himself on his unflappability, raise a quizzical eyebrow. He peered closer. The scone, a golden-brown orb of crumbly delight, appeared to be breathing. Very faintly, almost imperceptibly, but breathing nonetheless. Mr. Scribble blinked, wondering if he'd perhaps added a touch too much sherry to his lunchtime trifle.

## Reading Comprehension Questions

4. What strange thing did Mr. Scribble notice about his scone?
5. How did Mr. Scribble react to this?

6. What possible explanation did he think of?

### **Section 3**

The next day, the scone was at it again. This time, as he buttered it, he distinctly felt a slight resistance, as if the scone were tensing. Mr. Scribble, a retired lexicographer with a penchant for the precise meaning of words, began to feel distinctly uneasy.

He decided to conduct an experiment. On Thursday, instead of his usual strawberry jam, he offered the scone a sliver of particularly pungent Stilton cheese. The scone recoiled. Not in a dramatic, rolling-off-the-plate sort of way, but with a subtle, almost imperceptible shrinking in size.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

7. What happened when Mr. Scribble tried to butter the scone?

8. What experiment did he try on Thursday?

9. How did the scone respond to the cheese?

### **Section 4**

Mr. Scribble was now thoroughly intrigued. He began to treat his daily scone not as a mere baked good, but as a subject of intense scientific scrutiny. He offered it various delicacies: a sliver of smoked salmon (it quivered with what he could only describe as delight), a segment of pickled onion (it remained stubbornly inert), and a single, plump garden slug (the scone actually seemed to shudder).

### Reading Comprehension Questions

10. How did Mr. Scribble now view his scone?
11. Which foods did the scone enjoy or dislike?
12. What was the scone's reaction to the slug?

### Section 5

He confided in his neighbour, Mrs. Periwinkle, a woman whose imagination was as wild and unruly as her prize-winning roses. Mrs. Periwinkle, far from dismissing his claims, declared that the scones at Heavenly Humbles had always had a certain *je ne sais quoi*. She recounted tales of a batch that had once sung a chorus of Happy Birthday to a bewildered customer.

### Reading Comprehension Questions

13. Who did Mr. Scribble talk to about his scone?
14. How did Mrs. Periwinkle react to his story?
15. What unusual event did she claim had happened at the bakery before?

## **Section 6**

Mr. Scribble, emboldened by Mrs. Periwinkle's fantastical anecdotes, continued his observations. He discovered that his scone seemed to respond to his moods. When he was cheerful, it appeared plump and buoyant. When he was feeling glum, it would deflate slightly, its golden hue dimming.

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

16. What encouraged Mr. Scribble to continue his study of the scone?
17. How did the scone react to his cheerful moods?
18. What happened to the scone when Mr. Scribble was sad?

## **Section 7**

One afternoon, feeling particularly lonely, Mr. Scribble began

to talk to the scone. He told it about his day, his aches and pains, and his profound disappointment at the latest crossword puzzle in the *Times*. To his astonishment, the scone seemed to listen. It would subtly tilt in his direction when he raised his voice and remain perfectly still when he spoke softly.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

19. Why did Mr. Scribble start talking to the scone?
20. How did the scone respond to his voice?
21. What details did Mr. Scribble share with the scone?

### **Section 8**

A strange sort of companionship developed between the old lexicographer and the sentient scone. Mr. Scribble found himself looking forward to their daily tea ritual with an enthusiasm he hadn't felt in years. He even gave the scone a name: Sidney.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

22. What kind of relationship formed between Mr. Scribble

and the scone?

23. How did Mr. Scribble feel about their tea ritual?

24. What name did he give to the scone?

## **Section 9**

One Sunday, Mrs. Higgins, the formidable owner of Heavenly Humbles, paid Mr. Scribble a visit. She had heard rumours – whispers amongst her clientele – of a certain gentleman who was overly attached to his scones.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

25. Who visited Mr. Scribble on Sunday?

26. Why had she come to see him?

27. How is Mrs. Higgins described?

## **Section 10**

‘Mr. Scribble,’ she boomed, her voice like a foghorn in a teacup, ‘I understand you have been fraternising with my baked goods.’

Mr. Scribble, flustered, tried to explain Sidney's sentience, his reactions to various foods, his apparent empathy. Mrs.

Higgins listened, her face an impassive mask.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

28. What did Mrs. Higgins accuse Mr. Scribble of doing?
29. How did Mr. Scribble try to defend himself?
30. How did Mrs. Higgins react while listening?

### **Section 11**

‘Nonsense!’ she declared finally. ‘Scones are for eating, not conversing with!’ She snatched Sidney from the plate. ‘I shall take this unruly scone back to my bakery for quality control.’ Mr. Scribble was distraught. He pleaded, he reasoned, but Mrs. Higgins was unmoved. She marched out of his cottage, Sidney clutched firmly in her hand.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

31. What was Mrs. Higgins’ opinion about talking to scones?
32. What did she decide to do with Sidney?
33. How did Mr. Scribble react when she took Sidney away?

### **Section 12**

The next day, Mr. Scribble returned to 'Heavenly Humbles,' his heart heavy with loss. He approached the counter, where Mrs. Higgins stood, a smug look on her face.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

34. Where did Mr. Scribble go the next day?

35. How was he feeling?

36. How did Mrs. Higgins look when he arrived?

### **Section 13**

'Well, Mr. Scribble,' she said, polishing a tray with a vigour that suggested she had thoroughly dealt with Sidney, 'I have conducted my quality control. The scone was, as I suspected, perfectly ordinary. I ate it myself with a nice cup of Earl Grey.'

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

37. What did Mrs. Higgins claim to have done with Sidney?

38. How did she describe the scone?

39. What did she drink with it?

## Section 14

Mr. Scribble felt a wave of despair wash over him. He had imagined it all. The wobbling, the breathing, the subtle responses – just the fanciful musings of a lonely old man. He sighed and ordered a plain biscuit, the joy of afternoon tea now utterly diminished.

### Reading Comprehension Questions

40. How did Mr. Scribble feel after hearing Mrs. Higgins' story?
41. What did he believe about his earlier experiences?
42. What did he order instead of a scone?

## Section 15

As Mrs. Higgins reached for a biscuit tin, he noticed something on the counter. A small, golden-brown crumb. An exceptionally light and fluffy crumb. And as he looked closer, he saw it wobble — just a tiny tremor.

### Reading Comprehension Questions

43. What did Mr. Scribble notice on the counter?

- 44. How was it described?
- 45. What did the crumb do?

## **Section 16**

Mrs. Higgins, meanwhile, let out a rather peculiar little burp. A burp that sounded, just for a fleeting moment, remarkably like a contented sigh. And then, she patted her stomach and said, in a voice that seemed to have gained a certain fluffiness, ‘My word, Mr. Scribble, these new biscuits are simply divine!’

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

- 46. What unusual sound did Mrs. Higgins make?
- 47. How did the burp sound?
- 48. What did she say about the biscuits?

# Reading Comprehension Questions

## Introduction to the Reading Comprehension Questions

The following section contains the complete list of **Reading Comprehension Questions** for *The Curious Case of Mr. Septimus Scribble and the Sentient Scone*. These questions cover the entire story and are presented in numerical order for easy reference.

They are designed to:

- Test students' understanding of key events, details, and vocabulary.
- Encourage close reading and attention to subtle aspects of the text.
- Provide a foundation for follow-up discussion, inference, and creative activities.

Teachers can use these questions flexibly — for example:

- As a post-reading comprehension test.
- As prompts for pair or group discussion.
- For homework or individual reading assignments.

A complete set of **model answers** is provided at the end of this lesson plan. These model answers can be used as a marking guide, for self-checking, or for class feedback

sessions. Students' answers do not have to match the model wording exactly; as long as the meaning is correct and based on the story, they should be considered acceptable.

1. What time did Mr. Scribble have his afternoon tea?
2. Where did Mr. Scribble buy his scones?
3. How is the bakery described?
4. What strange thing did Mr. Scribble notice about his scone?
5. How did Mr. Scribble react to this?
6. What possible explanation did he think of?
7. What happened when Mr. Scribble tried to butter the scone?
8. What experiment did he try on Thursday?
9. How did the scone respond to the cheese?
10. How did Mr. Scribble now view his scone?
11. Which foods did the scone enjoy or dislike?
12. What was the scone's reaction to the slug?
13. Who did Mr. Scribble talk to about his scone?
14. How did Mrs. Periwinkle react to his story?
15. What unusual event did she claim had happened at the

bakery before?

16. What encouraged Mr. Scribble to continue his study of the scone?

17. How did the scone react to his cheerful moods?

18. What happened to the scone when Mr. Scribble was sad?

19. Why did Mr. Scribble start talking to the scone?

20. How did the scone respond to his voice?

21. What details did Mr. Scribble share with the scone?

22. What kind of relationship formed between Mr. Scribble and the scone?

23. How did Mr. Scribble feel about their tea ritual?

24. What name did he give to the scone?

25. Who visited Mr. Scribble on Sunday?

26. Why had she come to see him?

27. How is Mrs. Higgins described?

28. What did Mrs. Higgins accuse Mr. Scribble of doing?

29. How did Mr. Scribble try to defend himself?

30. How did Mrs. Higgins react while listening?

31. What was Mrs. Higgins' opinion about talking to scones?

32. What did she decide to do with Sidney?
33. How did Mr. Scribble react when she took Sidney away?
34. Where did Mr. Scribble go the next day?
35. How was he feeling?
36. How did Mrs. Higgins look when he arrived?
37. What did Mrs. Higgins claim to have done with Sidney?
38. How did she describe the scone?
39. What did she drink with it?
40. How did Mr. Scribble feel after hearing Mrs. Higgins' story?
41. What did he believe about his earlier experiences?
42. What did he order instead of a scone?
43. What did Mr. Scribble notice on the counter?
44. How was it described?
45. What did the crumb do?
46. What unusual sound did Mrs. Higgins make?
47. How did the burp sound?
48. What did she say about the biscuits?

# Essential Vocabulary

Below are two vocabulary tables.

**Table 1**

meticulous	sherry	delicacies
habits	trifle	quivered
profound	resistance	delight
armchair	tensing	inert
clotted cream	lexicographer	shudder
renowned	uneasy	confided
peculiar	experiment	imagination
wobble	pungent	unruly
tremor	Stilton cheese	<i>je ne sais quoi</i>
unflappability	recoiled	bewildered
quizzical	imperceptible	anecdotes
orb	intrigued	observations

crumbly	scrutiny	respond
imperceptibly		

**Table 2**

plump	fraternising	quality control
buoyant	flustered	despair
glum	sentience	fanciful
deflate	empathy	musings
hue	impassive	plain biscuit
astonishment	declared	diminished
tilt	unruly	crumb
ritual	distraught	peculiar
enthusiasm	pleaded	contented
formidable	unmoved	fluffiness
rumours	smug	divine
clientele	vigour	

## Vocabulary Practice Exercise

Follow the steps below to help you learn and remember new words and phrases more effectively:

- Write each new word or phrase in your vocabulary

notebook.

- Look up the meaning of each word in your dictionary. Write a clear and simple definition next to the word.
- Create your own sentence using the word or phrase correctly. Try to make the sentence meaningful and connected to your own life or experiences.

## Examples

**Meticulous** – *showing great attention to detail; very careful and precise.*

**Example sentence:** *My friend is so meticulous when baking that she measures every ingredient to the exact gram.*

**Wobble** – *to move slightly from side to side in an unsteady way.*

**Example sentence:** *I placed the cup on the uneven table and saw it start to wobble.*

## Why do this?

Doing this regularly will help you improve all areas of your English — reading, writing, speaking, and listening. By writing definitions and making your own examples, you are actively using the language, which helps it stick in your memory.

# True or False?

Read each statement and decide if it is True (T) or False (F) according to the story. If it is false, correct the statement to make it true.

Mr. Scribble always had his afternoon tea at four o'clock.

The bakery that sold the scones was called Humble Heavens.

Mr. Scribble first noticed the scone breathing before it wobbled.

The scone reacted negatively to Stilton cheese.

Mrs. Periwinkle thought Mr. Scribble was imagining things.

The scone's mood seemed to reflect Mr. Scribble's feelings.

Mr. Scribble gave the scone the name Sidney.

Mrs. Higgins took the scone away so she could enter it into a baking competition.

Mrs. Higgins told Mr. Scribble the scone was perfectly ordinary.

At the end of the story, a crumb on the counter moved slightly.

# What is the Correct Synonym?

Match each word on the left with its closest synonym from the box. You may use each synonym only once.

1. meticulous
2. peculiar
3. astonishment
4. distraught
5. renowned
6. intrigue
7. flustered
8. buoyant
9. anecdote
10. Diminish

- A. confuse
- B. reduce
- C. odd
- D. careful
- E. curiosity
- F. surprised amazement
- G. well-known
- H. lively and cheerful
- I. upset and distressed
- J. short story about a real incident

# What is the Correct Antonym?

Match each word on the left with its closest opposite (antonym) from the box. You may use each antonym only once.

1. glum
2. plump
3. inert
4. unflappability
5. deflate
6. smug
7. conceal
8. reluctant
9. diminish
10. peculiar

- A. ordinary
- B. happy
- C. enlarge
- D. thin
- E. active
- F. insecurity
- G. reveal
- H. eager
- I. cheerful confidence under stress
- J. expand

# Gap-Fill Exercise

Complete the sentences with the correct word from the box. You may need to change the form of the word. Each word can be used only once.

## Word Box

habits	confided
orb	unruly
imperceptibly	rumours
scrutiny	clientele
delicacies	musings

Years of daily practice had made her morning yoga routine one of her most important \_\_\_\_\_.

The moon appeared as a perfect silver \_\_\_\_\_ above the horizon.

The cat's tail moved so \_\_\_\_\_ that I wasn't sure if it

had moved at all.

The scientist's work was put under close \_\_\_\_\_ before it could be published.

At the banquet, guests were served exotic \_\_\_\_\_ from around the world.

He \_\_\_\_\_ in me about his plan to quit his job and move abroad.

The teacher had difficulty controlling the \_\_\_\_\_ class during the final period.

There are \_\_\_\_\_ that the company will be launching a new product next month.

The restaurant's loyal \_\_\_\_\_ returned every week for the chef's special dish.

On her long train journeys, she often drifted into pleasant daydreams and idle \_\_\_\_\_.

# Words and Meanings

Match each word with the correct meaning from the options given. Write the letter of the correct meaning next to each number.

## Words

meticulous	confided
peculiar	formidable
distraught	rumours
buoyant	clientele
scrutiny	musings

## Meanings

A. To tell someone a secret or private information in confidence

B. Very unusual or strange

C. Looking closely at something to check details

D. Greatly upset or distressed

E. Thoughts or reflections, often when daydreaming

F. Very careful and paying attention to detail

G. Customers of a shop, business, or service

H. Information that may not be true, passed from person to person

I. Having a cheerful or positive attitude

J. Inspiring fear or respect through being large, powerful, or intense

# Discussion Questions

How would you have reacted if you noticed your food moving or “breathing” like Mr. Scribble’s scone?

Do you think Mr. Scribble really experienced a sentient scone, or was it his imagination? Why?

In your opinion, how much can loneliness affect the way people see the world?

Mrs. Higgins clearly didn’t believe Mr. Scribble. Should she have taken him more seriously? Why or why not?

If you had a talking or moving food item, what would you want it to say or do?

How does the story use humour to keep the reader interested? Can you give examples?

Which character do you think is the most believable, and why?

Do you believe unusual things sometimes happen in real life that we can’t explain? Give an example if you can.

Why do you think Mr. Scribble gave the scone a name?  
What does this tell us about his personality?

The story ends with a small clue that Sidney may still be “alive.” How would you continue the story from that moment?

If Mrs. Periwinkle had owned the bakery instead of Mrs. Higgins, how do you think events would have changed?

What role do you think food plays in human emotions and relationships?

Which part of the story made you smile the most, and why?

How would this story be different if it were set in your country?

Do you think the scone’s reactions to different foods mean something symbolic?

# Role Play

## Role Play – “The Scone Affair”

### Characters:

Mr. Septimus Scribble – a precise, slightly flustered retired lexicographer

Mrs. Periwinkle – imaginative, warm, slightly eccentric neighbour

### Instructions:

Divide into pairs and each person choose a role to play. Practice reading the script out loud for a while then, when you are ready, perform in front of the class.

***[Sound effects: Kettle whistling, clink of teacups]***

MRS. PERIWINKLE: Oh, Mr. Scribble! You look as if someone’s stolen your dictionary. Whatever is the matter?

MR. SCRIBBLE: Worse, Mrs. Periwinkle. Much worse. They’ve taken Sidney.

MRS. PERIWINKLE: Sidney? You've taken in a lodger without telling me?

MR. SCRIBBLE: Not a lodger... a scone. My scone. From Heavenly Humbles. He was... different. Special. I swear he could feel things.

MRS. PERIWINKLE: (amused) You don't say.

MR. SCRIBBLE: I offered him Stilton once. He recoiled. Smoked salmon—delighted. He responded to my moods, even listened to me! And now Mrs. Higgins has snatched him away.

MRS. PERIWINKLE: (tutting) That woman. Always so sharp with her tongs.

MR. SCRIBBLE: She called it quality control. Said he was ordinary. Ate him, apparently.

MRS. PERIWINKLE: Oh, my dear... I believe you. You see, I once bought a batch of muffins from her—blueberry, they were—and every single one hummed the theme to Coronation Street.

MR. SCRIBBLE: (leaning in) Surely not?

MRS. PERIWINKLE: I assure you. I had to eat them quickly

before the neighbours complained.

MR. SCRIBBLE: (sighs) So you think... there's more to Heavenly Humbles than meets the eye?

MRS. PERIWINKLE: Absolutely. And perhaps, Mr. Scribble... Sidney isn't gone. Not entirely.

***[Sound effects: faint wobbling sound, followed by a soft sigh, as if from a plate on the table]***

MR. SCRIBBLE: Mrs. Periwinkle... did you hear that?

MRS. PERIWINKLE: I think, my dear, you'd better put the kettle on again.

***[Music fades in: light, whimsical theme]***

# Group Discussion Activity – “Remarkable British Dishes”

**This is a group discussion activity for the whole class.**

## **Aim:**

Students will create and discuss imaginary British dishes with unusual or magical attributes, inspired by the “sentient scone” in the story.

## **Step 1 – Warm-up**

Ask students: What are some traditional British foods you know?

Write a list on the board (e.g. scones, shepherd’s pie, trifle, spotted dick, jelly, Cornish pasty, fish and chips).

Discuss quickly: Which ones would be easiest to give “unusual powers” or “personalities”?

## **Step 2 – Brainstorm Examples**

Teacher shares three sample “magical British foods”:

Singing Jelly – Quivers in time to your heartbeat and hums lullabies.

Invisible Shepherd’s Pie – Delicious but completely see-through, making mealtimes confusing.

Shy Sticky Toffee Pudding – Tries to hide under the sauce when strangers are near.

### **Step 3 – Group Task**

Put students in small groups (3–4 people).

Each group invents two unusual British dishes with:

- A creative name
- A description of its unusual attribute(s)
- How it reacts to people or other foods
- A short backstory (where it came from, any legends)

They prepare to present their dishes to the class in a short “food festival” pitch (1–2 minutes per dish).

### **Step 4 – Discussion Prompts (after presentations)**

- Which dish would you most like to try? Why?
- Which dish would be the most dangerous or difficult to live with?
- Do you have any foods in your country with strange legends or stories attached to them?

### **Optional Extension**

Writing Task: Students write a short story or menu description for one of their invented dishes.

Role Play: Turn one group's idea into a short sketch or radio ad for the dish.

# Writing Exercise – “A Day with My Unusual British Dish”

## **Aim:**

Students will use one of the magical British food ideas (either one they invented in the group activity or one from the sample list) as inspiration for a short creative story.

## **Task**

Choose one unusual British food from the discussion. Write a short story (200–250 words) about a day in your life with this magical dish.

## **Your story should include:**

- Introduction – Where you got the dish and what it looks like.
- The unusual attribute – What makes this dish special or strange.
- An event or problem – Something that happens because of the dish.
- Resolution – How the event or problem is solved.

## **Writing Prompts / Examples**

A “Singing Jelly” that won’t stop performing at night and keeps the neighbours awake.

An “Invisible Shepherd’s Pie” that disappears when you try to serve it to guests.

A “Shy Sticky Toffee Pudding” that hides under furniture when visitors come.

A “Wobbling Treacle Tart” that always tries to escape the plate.

### **Language Focus**

Encourage students to:

- Use past tense verbs for storytelling.
- Include adjectives to describe the food’s appearance and behaviour.
- Add dialogue to make the story lively.

### **Optional Extension**

After writing, students can swap stories in pairs, read each other’s work, and vote on:

- The most imaginative food
- The funniest event
- The most realistic-sounding magical dish

# Reading Comprehension Questions – Model Answers

## Note on Model Answers

The following are model answers to the reading comprehension questions, based on the events and details in the story.

Your own answers may differ slightly in wording, but as long as they convey the same meaning and are consistent with the story, they should be considered correct.

### **1. What time did Mr. Scribble have his afternoon tea?**

*At four o'clock every day.*

### **2. Where did Mr. Scribble buy his scones?**

*From Mrs. Higgins' "Heavenly Humbles" bakery.*

### **3. How is the bakery described?**

*As being renowned for exceptionally light and fluffy scones.*

### **4. What strange thing did Mr. Scribble notice about his scone?**

*It seemed to wobble slightly.*

### **5. How did Mr. Scribble react to this?**

*He raised a quizzical eyebrow.*

**6. What possible explanation did he think of?**

*That he might have added too much sherry to his lunchtime trifle.*

**7. What happened when Mr. Scribble tried to butter the scone?**

*He felt a slight resistance, as if it was tensing.*

**8. What experiment did he try on Thursday?**

*He offered the scone a piece of Stilton cheese instead of jam.*

**9. How did the scone respond to the cheese?**

*It recoiled slightly, shrinking in size.*

**10. How did Mr. Scribble now view his scone?**

*As a subject for scientific study rather than just food.*

**11. Which foods did the scone enjoy or dislike?**

*It enjoyed smoked salmon, disliked pickled onion, and shuddered at a slug.*

**12. What was the scone's reaction to the slug?**

*It shuddered.*

**13. Who did Mr. Scribble talk to about his scone?**

*His neighbour, Mrs. Periwinkle.*

**14. How did Mrs. Periwinkle react to his story?**

*She believed him and said the bakery's scones had always been unusual.*

**15. What unusual event did she claim had happened at the**

**bakery before?**

*A batch of scones sang "Happy Birthday" to a customer.*

**16. What encouraged Mr. Scribble to continue his study of the scone?**

*Mrs. Periwinkle's stories about strange scone behaviour.*

**17. How did the scone react to his cheerful moods?**

*It appeared plump and buoyant.*

**18. What happened to the scone when Mr. Scribble was sad?**

*It deflated slightly and its colour dimmed.*

**19. Why did Mr. Scribble start talking to the scone?**

*Because he was feeling particularly lonely.*

**20. How did the scone respond to his voice?**

*It tilted towards him when he spoke loudly and stayed still when he spoke softly.*

**21. What details did Mr. Scribble share with the scone?**

*His day, his aches and pains, and disappointment at a crossword puzzle.*

**22. What kind of relationship formed between Mr. Scribble and the scone?**

*A companionship based on their daily tea ritual.*

**23. How did Mr. Scribble feel about their tea ritual?**

*He looked forward to it with great enthusiasm.*

**24. What name did he give to the scone?**

*Sidney.*

**25. Who visited Mr. Scribble on Sunday?**

*Mrs. Higgins, the bakery owner.*

**26. Why had she come to see him?**

*Because she had heard he was overly attached to his scones.*

**27. How is Mrs. Higgins described?**

*As formidable, with a voice like a foghorn in a teacup.*

**28. What did Mrs. Higgins accuse Mr. Scribble of doing?**

*Fraternising with her baked goods.*

**29. How did Mr. Scribble try to defend himself?**

*By explaining Sidney's sentience, reactions, and empathy.*

**30. How did Mrs. Higgins react while listening?**

*She kept an impassive expression.*

**31. What was Mrs. Higgins' opinion about talking to scones?**

*She said scones were for eating, not talking to.*

**32. What did she decide to do with Sidney?**

*Take it back to the bakery for "quality control."*

**33. How did Mr. Scribble react when she took Sidney away?**

*He was distraught and pleaded with her.*

**34. Where did Mr. Scribble go the next day?**

*Back to "Heavenly Humbles" bakery.*

**35. How was he feeling?**

*Sad and heavy-hearted.*

**36. How did Mrs. Higgins look when he arrived?**

*Smug.*

**37. What did Mrs. Higgins claim to have done with Sidney?**

*Ate it with tea.*

**38. How did she describe the scone?**

*Perfectly ordinary.*

**39. What did she drink with it?**

*A cup of Earl Grey tea.*

**40. How did Mr. Scribble feel after hearing Mrs. Higgins' story?**

*He felt despair and believed he had imagined everything.*

**41. What did he believe about his earlier experiences?**

*That they were just the fantasies of a lonely man.*

**42. What did he order instead of a scone?**

*A plain biscuit.*

**43. What did Mr. Scribble notice on the counter?**

*A small, golden-brown crumb.*

**44. How was it described?**

*Exceptionally light and fluffy.*

**45. What did the crumb do?**

*It wobbled slightly.*

**46. What unusual sound did Mrs. Higgins make?**

*A peculiar burp.*

**47. How did the burp sound?**

*Like a contented sigh.*

**48. What did she say about the biscuits?**

*That they were simply divine.*

# True or False — Answers

True

False – The bakery was called Heavenly Humbles.

False – He noticed it wobbling first, then realised it was breathing.

True

False – She believed him and even shared a strange bakery story of her own.

True

True

False – She took it away for quality control at the bakery.

True

True

# What is the Correct Synonym — Answers

1 → D

2 → C

3 → F

4 → I

5 → G

6 → E

7 → A

8 → H

9 → J

10 → B

# What is the Correct Antonym — Answers

1 → B

2 → D

3 → E

4 → I

5 → J

6 → F

7 → G

8 → H

9 → C

10 → A

# Gap-Fill Exercise — Answers

habits

orb

imperceptibly

scrutiny

delicacies

confided

unruly

rumours

clientele

musings

# Words and Meanings — Answers

1 → F (Very careful and paying attention to detail)

2 → B (Very unusual or strange)

3 → D (Greatly upset or distressed)

4 → I (Having a cheerful or positive attitude)

5 → C (Looking closely at something to check details)

6 → A (To tell someone a secret or private information in confidence)

7 → J (Inspiring fear or respect through being large, powerful, or intense)

8 → H (Information that may not be true, passed from person to person)

9 → G (Customers of a shop, business, or service)

10 → E (Thoughts or reflections, often when daydreaming)

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