



Dracula Comprehension Indicative Content

1. How would you describe the character of Harker?

Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- methodical and forward-thinking – ‘some foreknowledge of the country could hardly fail to have some importance’
- inquisitive – ‘Mem., I must ask the Count all about them’
- open-minded and adventurous – ‘I wanted to see all I could of the ways of the country’ – yet still displaying some of the prejudices of the social and historical context – ‘On the stage they would be set down at once as some old Oriental band of brigands’
- observant and knowledgeable – could cite a number of the reflections on the journey kept in his journal

Answers should make a range of points supported by evidence from the text.

2. What impression are you given of Transylvania?

Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- highly superstitious – ‘every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians’
- a history of conflict between clans that remains conspicuous – ‘In the population of Transylvania there are four distinct nationalities... when the Magyars conquered the country in the eleventh century they found the Huns settled in it’ (foreknowledge of tribes might also elicit a comment on barbarism)
- primitive and unchartered, having an almost hallucinatory effect on the western traveller – ‘I had all sorts of queer dreams. There was a dog howling...’
- ungoverned by industrial advancements – ‘It seems to me that the further east you go the more unpunctual are the trains’
- humble and hospitable – ‘I faced a cheery-looking elderly woman in the usual peasant dress’
- discomforting sense of uncanny – ‘The women looked pretty, except when you got near them’, ‘It was on the dark side of twilight...’ (might be recognised as foreshadowing)

Answers should make a range of points supported by evidence from the text.



3. How does Stoker inject a sense of anxiety into proceedings?

Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Harker being inconvenienced for no apparent reason – ‘after rushing to the station at 7:30 I had to sit in the carriage for more than an hour before we began to move’
- things not being quite what they first seem – ‘The women looked pretty, except when you got near them’ – given the now-loaded connotations of the name Dracula, readers could comment on his own friendly welcome disguising sinister motivations
- structure of a journey into unchartered territory – ‘there are no maps of this country’ – seemingly becoming darker and more turbulent – ‘It was on the dark side of twilight when we got to Bistritz... it has had a very stormy existence, and it certainly shows marks of it’ (hints towards pathetic fallacy)

Answers should reference text and attempt to explain the effect of language and authorial techniques. Additional credit for use of subject terminology.

4. What, on the other hand, sets a more relaxed tone?

Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- on the whole, Harker might be venturing into the unknown but he seems to be well guided and entering safe territory – ‘but I found that Bistritz, the post town named by Count Dracula, is a fairly well-known place’
- our narrator displaying no sense of anguish – ‘Count Dracula had directed me to go to the Golden Krone Hotel, which I found, to my great delight, to be thoroughly old-fashioned’ (higher ability pupils might comment on the paradoxical effect of his ingenuousness causing increased anxiety in more alert readers, citing evidence from previous answer)
- the epistolary form indicates that Harker has maintained communication with loved ones and the extract ends with a letter from his charge containing a comforting and welcoming salutation – ‘I trust that your journey from London has been a happy one, and that you will enjoy your stay in my beautiful land. Your friend, Dracula’ (closer analysis might highlight that Harker is a weary stranger inhabiting Dracula’s realm)

Answers should reference text and attempt to explain the effect of language and authorial techniques. Additional credit for use of subject terminology.

5. What are your initial impressions of Count Dracula?

Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- superficially friendly and helpful – apparent in various communications
- thought to be approachable – ‘Mem., I must ask the Count all about them’
- title might imply noble and aristocratic

Answers should make a range of points supported by evidence from the text.