

# The Yellow Train

The Yellow Train runs through the Pyrenees, a mountain range on the border between France and Spain. It travels through dramatic scenery to reach the highest railway station in France. This extract from a travel article in *The Telegraph* newspaper describes a trip on the Yellow Train.

## Through the Pyrenees on the Little Yellow Train

The Little Yellow Train of the eastern Pyrenees is a magical trip through time and space that has been defying both with daring engineering and merry toot-toots of its whistle for more than a century. [...]

The train I board has a choice of four closed and two open-air carriages, all painted bright yellow, and as the sun is beaming from clear blue skies I opt for one of the latter. With a shrill whistle we are off, quickly reaching our cruising speed of about 15mph, as we rock and roll past Vauban's battlements\*.

This is the way to travel through tumultuous scenery, at a gentle pace with time to gaze on fast flowing streams, deep forests, and dizzying gorges. Mountain villages are etched on the skyline, clinging to impossible slopes, their church towers like rockets poised to take off for the heavens.

The eyes are constantly drawn upwards to forests in the sky, and convoluted valleys snaking up to barren peaks, a grand, sweeping



symphony of nature. At times the railway seems to defy gravity, and when we halt there is no rumbling of diesel engines, only silence broken by the rushing of a river below.

Sitting on the wooden benches of an open-air carriage, there is a sense of being on a toy train. For those of a certain age, it conjures memories of Noddy and Big Ears. Then we clatter through dark tunnels, and we are on a fairground ghost train. [...]

After rattling over France's only railway suspension bridge we climb to Bolquère-Eyne, the country's highest station at 5,226 feet. We have now emerged in Mackintosh's\* fairyland, a plateau of green fields and meadows framed by distant mountains that seems like the roof of the world.

An abridged extract from [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)

### Glossary

Vauban's battlements — the walls and towers built by the French military engineer, Vauban

Mackintosh — Charles Rennie Mackintosh, an artist

1

Why does the author describe the train journey as a "trip through time" (line 2)?

.....  
.....

☐

1 mark

2

Look up the word 'symphony' in a dictionary.

Why do you think the author chose the phrase "symphony of nature" (line 23)?

.....  
.....

☐

2 marks

3

"we are on a fairground ghost train" (lines 31-32). This is an example of (circle one):

- a. onomatopoeia      b. a metaphor      c. personification      d. alliteration

☐

1 mark

4

a. Which of the following describes the purpose of the text? Circle one.

- a. to argue      b. to instruct      c. to inform      d. to discuss

☐

1 mark

b. Explain your answer to part a.

.....

☐

1 mark

5

Is this article similar or different to other newspaper articles you have read?

Explain your answer.

.....  
.....

☐

2 marks

6

Did this article make you want to ride on the Yellow Train? Explain your answer.

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

☐

2 marks

Total  
out of 10

## Answers

1. E.g. Because the train isn't like modern trains, so it's like going back in time.
2. E.g. A symphony is where all the different instruments in an orchestra feature in a piece of music. I think the author is saying that the Yellow Train's surroundings are made up of lots of different natural features.
3. b. a metaphor
4. a. c. to inform      b. E.g. Because it contains facts which tell the reader about the train journey.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Different, because the newspapers that I've read usually talk about current affairs, not travel. They also don't use as much descriptive language. OR E.g. Similar, because it is a non-fiction text that gives information about something.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because the article makes a journey on the Yellow Train sound like an amazing experience, for example the author calls it a "magical trip". OR E.g. No, because I don't like heights and the article describes part of the train journey as being like "the roof of the world".



