Read the passage below and circle the correct option.

The writer was born in China / India / South Africa. She had a poor / wealthy background and lived a comfortable / uncomfortable life in the black / white areas of Springs, Transvaal near Cape Town / Rhodesia / Johannesburg. Despite this, she became an outspoken critic of the racist Apartheid regime where black and white people were allowed to mix / segregated by law.

Gordimer / Tan / Head also did / didn’t like the way the black / white Indian / European / African minority / majority controlled the white / black Indian / European / African minority / majority. The white Europeans also controlled the rich natural resources of the land they had colonised. This story deals with this concern.

On the face of it, a lot / little happens in the story. The plot / theme / structure is simple. It is about a train from Rhodesia pulling into a station / car park / house. The writer describes the passengers on / off the train and the residents / locals / vendors who crowd round the train trying to sell their wares.

The writer suggests that the lion / train / track is a living thing by using adjectives / verbs / nouns such as “creaking, jerking, jostling, gasping” and saying it had “a dwindling body behind it”. This technique is called metaphor / simile / personification. This emphasises that the train is unimportant / important to those children / vendors whose livelihood depended on it.

Two of the passengers on the train are friends / newly married / divorced and have been on a trip / visit / holiday to China / Rhodesia / India. Perhaps a honeymoon? The young man / woman / child sees a vendor selling a carving of a lion / tiger / elephant and she shows interest in it. The writer describes the lion as well crafted. The lion could be a symbol of the native Africans and their proud natures, talents and strength. Her husband offers to buy it for her but she does / doesn’t want it because she thinks it’s too cheap / expensive / shoddy at three and six / a shilling / a crown.

As the train arrives / leaves the young woman / man notices that the woman / man has bought the lion / tiger / zebra but at a very increased / reduced price that he’d obviously bartered for. However, the young woman is / isn’t happy. It is as though she has an epiphany which is a realisation / sudden thought. Her epiphany is that she does / doesn’t respect her husband for bartering the price up / down and made the vendor run after the train, losing his dignity. She seems sad / guilty / angry that her husband exploited the talents / skills / creativity of a poor black man. The carving is a symbol of her epiphany and guilt perhaps.

The story ends / begins as it began. The train / station / lion is the focus and the simile / repetition / rhythm suggests the movement of the train as it leaves.
The writer was born in South Africa. She had a wealthy background and lived a comfortable life in the white areas of Springs, Transvaal near Johannesburg. Despite this, she became an outspoken critic of the racist Apartheid regime where black and white people were segregated by law.

Gordimer also didn’t like the way the white European minority controlled the black African majority. The white Europeans also controlled the rich natural resources of the land they had colonised. This story deals with this concern.

On the face of it, little happens in the story. The plot is simple. It is about a train from Rhodesia pulling into a station. The writer describes the passengers on the train and the vendors who crowd round the train trying to sell their wares.

The writer suggests that the train is a living thing by using verbs such as “creaking, jerking, jostling, gasping” and saying it had “a dwindling body behind it”. This technique is called personification. This emphasises that the train is important to those vendors whose livelihood depended on it.

Two of the passengers on the train are newly married and have been on a trip / visit / holiday to Rhodesia. Perhaps a honeymoon? The young woman sees a vendor selling a carving of a lion and she shows interest in it. The writer describes the lion as well crafted. The lion could be a symbol of the native Africans and their proud natures, talents and strength. Her husband offers to buy it for her but she doesn’t want it because she thinks it’s too expensive at three and six.

As the train leaves the young woman notices that the man has bought the lion but at a very reduced price that he’d obviously bartered for. However, the young woman isn’t happy. It is as though she has an epiphany which is a realisation. Her epiphany is that she doesn’t respect her husband for bartering the price down and made the vendor run after the train, losing his dignity. She seems sad / guilty / angry that her husband exploited the talents / skills / creativity of a poor black man. The carving is a symbol of her epiphany and guilt perhaps.

The story ends as it began. The train is the focus and the repetition / rhythm suggests the movement of the train as it leaves.
Structured essay plan

The woman in ‘The Train from Rhodesia’ has an epiphany. The story describes how she “........................................................................................ .........................................................................................................................”,

This suggests that she is not happy with ................. because ....................... She comes to realise that .........................

Now write paragraphs using these Points:

- The train is portrayed as a character in the story.
- The train acts as a barrier between rich and poor.
- The woman believes her husband was wrong to barter the price down.
- The lion carving symbolises the strength of the African nation.

You must introduce your quotes (Evidence) briefly.
Questions

Use full sentences and quotations to provide a set of revision notes.

1. What sort of things could be seen on the station? (lines 33 – 35)
2. What was the young woman wanting to look at? (lines 33 – 35)
3. Describe the lion carving. (lines 36 – 41)
4. What are the typical connotations / things associated with lions?
5. What are the people outside the train trying to do? (lines 42 – 49)
6. What did the girl throw out of the window? (line 72)
7. Why didn’t the young woman want the lion? (lines 78 – 79)
8. What could the woman see around her? (lines 90 – 95)
9. What other carvings had the woman bought on holiday? (lines 96 – 98)
10. How does the writer make the train sound like a living thing (personification)? (lines 110 and 115)
11. Look throughout the story and find quotations that show:
   (a) the train is important to the locals
   (a) the locals who live on / near the station are poor
12. What did the old native pick up from the floor? (lines 128 – 131)
13. Why is the young man pleased with himself? (lines 134 – 136 and 38 – 140)
14. How does the young woman react to the man getting the lion for her? (lines 145 – 164)
15. The story has a wider meaning about the situation in South Africa. Find a quotation for each of the following statements about the story’s themes:
   (a) white and black people live very separate lives
   (b) white people are more privileged than black people
   (c) white people have power over black people and humiliate them by making them dependent on them
   (d) white people seem richer than black people
   (e) white people exploit the labour, creativity and talent of the black population
   (f) some white people feel guilty and angry about how black people are exploited
Plot Structure

Unlike some of the other stories in *Opening Worlds*, ‘The Train from Rhodesia’ has a linear structure. This means a beginning, a middle and an end in chronological order with no flashbacks.

Put these events in chronological order (the order in which they happen in the story)

a. The train leaves the station.
b. The girl passenger throws chocolates from the train.
c. The train arrives at the station.
d. The old man shows the young woman the lion carving.
e. The locals are waiting for the train to arrive.
f. The young woman rejects the lion carving and feels ashamed by what her husband did.
g. The vendor (old man) collects his money from the floor.
h. The girl tells the vendor that the lion is too expensive so she won’t take it.
i. The young man throws money (one and six) from the train to the vendor.
j. The station master's children collect two loaves of bread.
k. The young woman looks at her souvenirs and wonders where they’ll go in her home.