

 This poem is by Sharon Olds.

The Missing Boy

(for Etan Patz)

Every time we take the bus
 my son sees the picture of the missing boy.
 He looks at it like a mirror – the dark
 straw hair, the pale skin,
 the blue eyes, the electric-blue sneakers with
 slashes of jagged gold. But of course that
 kid is little, only six and a half,
 an age when things can happen to you,
 when you're not really safe, and our son is seven,
 practically fully grown – why, he would
 tower over that kid if they could
 find him and bring him right here on this bus and
 stand them together. He holds to the pole,
 wishing for that, the tape on the poster
 gleaming over his head, beginning to
 melt at the centre and curl at the edges as it
 ages. At night, when I put him to bed,
 my son holds my hand tight
 and says he's sure that kid's all right,
 nothing to worry about, he just
 hopes he's getting the food he likes,
 not just any old food, but the food
 he likes the most, the food he is used to.



| | | |
|-------|--------|-------|
| Name: | Class: | Date: |
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The Missing Boy

1 Where did the boy and his mother see the poster?

| | |
|--------|----|
| | 2b |
| 1 mark | |

2 The poet says that her son looks at the picture of the missing boy *like a mirror*. What does she mean? Tick **one**.

The poster is shiny.

Her son looks at the poster for a long time.

The boy in the poster looks like her son.

Her son can see his reflection in the poster.

| | |
|--------|----|
| | 2g |
| 1 mark | |

3 Describe **two** ways in which the poet's son and the missing boy look alike.

1 _____

2 _____

| | |
|--------|----|
| | 2b |
| 1 mark | |

4 a) Do you think the poet believes her seven-year-old son is *practically fully grown*?

| | |
|--------|----|
| | 2d |
| 1 mark | |

b) Why do you think the poet describes her son in this way?

| | |
|--------|----|
| | 2g |
| 1 mark | |

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| | / 5 |
| Total for this page | |

5 Tick to show whether the following sentences are **true** or **false**.
The first one has been done for you.

| | True | False |
|---|------|-------|
| The poet's son is a lot older than the missing boy. | | ✓ |
| The poet's son finds the poster upsetting. | | |
| The poster has been on the bus for a long time. | | |
| The poet's son knows the missing boy. | | |

2d
2 marks

6 Read these lines from the end of the poem.

*At night, when I put him to bed,
my son holds my hand tight
and says he's sure that kid's all right,
nothing to worry about, he just
hopes he's getting the food he likes,
not just any old food, but the food
he likes the most, the food he is used to.*

Underline the phrase that shows that the poet's son **is**, in fact, worried.

2g
1 mark

7 Think about the whole poem. Who or what is the poem **mainly** about?
Tick the **best** answer.

- a bus
- a boy who has gone missing
- a poster
- the poet's son

2c
1 mark

8 How would you describe this poem? Tick the **best** answer.

- humorous
- magical
- realistic
- rhyming

2f
1 mark

/ 10
Total for this test