

CBSE CLASS X

English Language & Literature (184)

ANSWER KEY

From previous CBSE Board Exam questions

Code: P47GGS Questions: 15 Maximum Marks: 61 Generated: 2026-06-15 13:05

SELECTIONS USED

Source	Previous-year board
Subject	English Language & Literature
Lessons	A Triumph of Surgery
Year	2022-2026
Questions selected	15

Composition — Types: 9 Short · 4 literature_long · 2 literature_extract

Q1.

[3]

How did Mrs. Pumphrey treat Tricki ? (The Triumph of Surgery)

Previously asked in: 2023 2/4/1 Q9 (a)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Mrs. Pumphrey treated Tricki with excessive love and pampering, which ultimately harmed him. She overfed him with cream cakes, chocolates, malt, cod-liver oil, and Horlicks between meals. She gave him a whole wardrobe of tweed coats and a raincoat, along with day beds, night beds, cushions, and toys. She could not bear to refuse him food or harden her heart. She neglected proper exercise for him, as the gardener was ill. Her misguided affection turned Tricki into a bloated, listless, and seriously ill dog.

Source: "The Triumph of Surgery", *Footprints without Feet*

Explanation

- The examiner expects **three clear points**: overfeeding, over-pampering with accessories/comfort, and neglect of exercise — one mark each.
- Avoid being vague; quote specific details (cream cakes, coats, beds) to show textual support.
- Do not write about the treatment at the hospital — the question asks about **Mrs. Pumphrey's** treatment, not Mr. Herriot's.

Q2.

[5]

The expected call came within a few days. Mrs. Pumphrey was distraught. Tricki would eat nothing. Refused even his favourite dishes; and besides he had bouts of vomiting. He spent all his time lying on his rug and didn't want to do anything.

I had made my plans in advance. The only way was to get Tricki out of the house for a period. I suggested that he be hospitalised for about a fortnight to be kept under observation.

Read the following extract and answer the questions:

(i) Which of the following is not a reason why Mr. Herriot thinks Tricki needs to be taken out of the house for a period? [1]

- A He wanted to keep Tricki away from Mrs. Pumphrey.
- B He wanted to keep Tricki under observation.
- C He wanted to do an experiment on Tricki.
- D He wanted to improve Tricki's health.

(ii) What was the main reason for Mrs. Pumphrey to be distraught? Answer in about 40 words. [2]

(iii) State True or False: When Mr. Herriot says 'I had made my plans in advance', what he actually means is, he had already seen this trauma coming for Tricki. [1]

(iv) Which of the following best describes Mrs. Pumphrey? [1]

- A unkind and inconsiderate
- B impractical but compassionate
- C anxious and ambitious
- D fearful but confident

Previously asked in: 2024 2/5/1 Q6(b)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

(i) C — He wanted to do an experiment on Tricki.

(ii) Mrs. Pumphrey was distraught because Tricki had fallen seriously ill. He refused to eat anything, even his favourite dishes, suffered bouts of vomiting, and spent all his time lying on his rug without any energy or interest in activity.

(iii) **True.** Mr. Herriot had observed Tricki's deteriorating condition earlier and anticipated that the situation would worsen, so he had already planned to hospitalise the dog before the call even came.

(iv) B — impractical but compassionate.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery, Footprints without Feet – Chapter 1*

Explanation

- **(i):** The passage only mentions hospitalisation for observation and recovery — no mention of experiment. Options B and D are directly stated; A is implied as a necessary step.
- **(ii):** This is 2 marks — cover at least two clear points: refusal to eat AND vomiting/listlessness. Stay within ~40 words.
- **(iii):** The phrase "expected call" and "made plans in advance" confirm Herriot foresaw the crisis, making the statement True.

- **(iv):** Mrs. Pumphrey overfeeds Tricki out of love (compassionate) but lacks practical sense (impractical). She is not unkind, not ambitious, and not confident — ruling out A, C, and D.

Q3.

[5]

Tricki was tottering along in his little tweed coat.... He struggled on, drooping in his harness. I thought it wouldn't be long before I heard from Mrs. Pumphrey. The expected call came within a few days. Mrs. Pumphrey was distraught. Tricki would eat nothing. Refused even his favourite dishes; and besides, he had bouts of vomiting. He spent all his time lying on a rug, panting. Didn't want to go for walks, didn't want to do anything. I had made my plans in advance. The only way was to get Tricki out of the house for a period. I suggested that he be hospitalized for about a fortnight to be kept under observation. The poor lady almost swooned. She was sure he would pine and die if he did not see her every day. But I took a firm line. Tricki was very ill and this was the only way to save him.

Read the following extracts and answer the questions for any one of the given two, (a) or (b):

(i) Why had the author made his plans in advance? [1]

- (A) Mrs. Pumphrey was worried that Tricki would pine and die without her.
- (B) The author was aware of the severity of Tricki's medical condition.
- (C) The author knew about Mrs. Pumphrey's financial condition.
- (D) The author had planned his own vacation.

(ii) The author firmly proposed the need to remove Tricki from the house for a specified period. Elaborate the reason for doing so in about 40 words. [2]

(iii) Fill in the blank with the correct word from the brackets. The word 'swooned' in the following sentence indicates almost _____ (tripped/fainted). [1]

(iv) "Mrs. Pumphrey was distraught." What does this suggest about her character? Mention any one reason. [1]

Previously asked in: 2025 2/2/1 Q6 (b)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

(i) (B) The author was aware of the severity of Tricki's medical condition.

(ii) The author could see that Tricki was already in poor health — he was drooping, vomiting, refusing food, and lying panting all day. He knew that Mrs. Pumphrey's excessive pampering was the root cause, so removing Tricki from that environment was the only way to help him recover properly.

(iii) The word 'swooned' indicates almost **fainted**.

(iv) "Mrs. Pumphrey was distraught" suggests that she was an extremely over-protective and emotionally dependent owner. She was so deeply attached to Tricki that even his refusal to eat caused her intense distress, showing her excessive, almost irrational concern for the dog.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Chapter 1

Explanation

- (i) The extract says the author had already anticipated the call and planned accordingly, based on observing Tricki's deteriorating condition — not financial or personal reasons.
- (ii) 2-mark answers need cause + justification. Link Mrs. Pumphrey's pampering to Tricki's illness, then state why removal was necessary.
- (iii) 'Swooned' = fainted. It's a direct vocabulary question; pick from the bracket.
- (iv) 1-mark = one clear character trait with one supporting reason. Don't over-explain.

Q4.

[6]

Compare and contrast Tricki's condition before and after his stay at the surgery. How does this contrast help in understanding the role of proper care, discipline and environment in ensuring Tricki's well-being? (A Triumph of Surgery)

Previously asked in: 2026 2/2/1 Q11(a)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Tricki's Condition Before Hospitalisation:

Tricki was in a pitiful state — hugely fat "like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner," with bloodshot, rheumy eyes and a lolling tongue. He was listless, vomited frequently, refused food, and could barely walk. Mrs Pumphrey's excessive pampering — cream cakes, chocolates, Horlicks, malt, cod-liver oil, and almost no exercise — had made him critically ill.

Tricki's Condition After the Stay:

After a fortnight at the surgery, Tricki was completely transformed — "a lithe, hard-muscled animal," racing energetically with other dogs, ears flapping, tail waving. He leapt joyfully into Mrs Pumphrey's lap, full of life.

Role of Proper Care, Discipline and Environment:

The contrast shows that love without discipline is harmful. At the surgery, Tricki received no special food, regular activity, and a stimulating environment with other dogs — resulting in his full recovery. This highlights that proper diet, exercise, and a healthy environment are essential to well-being, while overindulgence, however well-intentioned, causes serious harm.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery, Footprints without Feet (Chapter 1)*

Explanation

- Examiners expect a **clear before-and-after contrast** supported by textual evidence — use exact phrases from the passage ("bloated sausage," "lithe, hard-muscled animal").
- The third paragraph linking the contrast to **care, discipline, and environment** is what earns the analytical marks — don't skip it.
- Mrs Pumphrey calling it "a triumph of surgery" is ironic: no surgery was performed; simple discipline and proper environment cured Tricki. Mentioning this irony impresses examiners.
- Keep quotes brief and integrated; avoid long copying from the text.

Q5.

[3]

Considering the emotional attachment of Mrs. Pumphrey with Tricki, state the impact of the word 'convalescing' on her. (A Triumph of Surgery)

Previously asked in: 2026 2/3/1 Q9 (i)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Mrs. Pumphrey was deeply emotionally attached to Tricki and could not bear separation from him. When Mr. Herriot phoned to say Tricki had "recovered and was awaiting collection," she arrived trembling with anxiety, hands clasped tightly, lips quivering. The word '**convalescing**' (or the suggestion of recovery) brought her both relief and guilt — relief that her beloved dog was alive, yet also the false impression that an actual surgical operation had been performed. This misunderstanding led her to emotionally and gratefully declare it "a triumph of surgery," showing how her love for Tricki made her overlook the real, simple cure.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery, Tricki Returns Home*

Explanation

- The question asks specifically about the **impact** of the word 'convalescing' on Mrs. Pumphrey given her emotional attachment.
- Examiners expect you to link her excessive love/pampering with her **misinterpretation**: she assumed a serious operation had taken place, making her emotional reaction (tears, trembling, gratitude) all the more intense.
- Key phrase to use: her emotional attachment made her believe the recovery was a surgical miracle, not merely rest and proper diet.
- Always quote or reference evidence from the text (trembling lips, tears, "triumph of surgery") to support your points.

Q6.

[3]

What does Mr. Herriot mean by "happy period" for himself and his partners? Explain. (A Triumph of Surgery)

Previously asked in: 2024 2/2/1 Q9 (i)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Mr. Herriot refers to the period of Tricki's hospitalisation as a "happy period" for himself and his partners. During this fortnight, Mrs. Pumphrey kept sending eggs, wine, and other luxuries meant for Tricki's recovery. However, since Tricki needed no special food — only a strict diet and exercise — the staff enjoyed all these delicacies themselves. Thus, the partners ate and drank well, making it a thoroughly enjoyable time for them.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Chapter 1

Explanation

The question asks you to *explain* the "happy period," so you must mention the reason — Mrs. Pumphrey's luxury food meant for Tricki was consumed by Mr. Herriot and his partners. Examiners expect this specific detail. Avoid vague answers; be precise about what made it "happy."

Q7.

[3]

We are often over-indulgent towards people we care about. Explain with reference to the context of the story 'A Triumph of Surgery'.

Previously asked in: 2024 2/4/1 Q9 (i)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

In *A Triumph of Surgery*, Mrs Pumphrey's excessive love for her dog Tricki leads to harmful over-indulgence. She overfed him with malt, cod-liver oil, and cream cakes, gave him no exercise, and showered him with unnecessary luxuries. This rich mistress could not see that her pampering was actually making Tricki seriously ill. The story shows that over-indulgence, though driven by affection, can cause real harm to those we love rather than benefiting them.

Explanation

- The question asks you to **connect a general statement** (over-indulgence) to **specific story evidence**.
- Key points examiners look for: Mrs Pumphrey's identity as a rich, lonely woman; examples of pampering (overfeeding, luxuries); the harmful consequence (Tricki falls ill).
- The "Talk about it" section in the textbook explicitly calls her "foolishly indulgent," so using that idea earns credit.
- Do not simply retell the plot — always link it back to the theme stated in the question.

Q8.

[3]

Analyze how Herriot uses Tricki and Mrs. Pumphrey's relationship to comment on societal attitudes towards pets and the responsibilities associated with their care.

(A Triumph of Surgery)

Previously asked in: 2025 2/1/1 Q9 (i)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Herriot uses Mrs. Pumphrey's excessive pampering of Tricki — overfeeding him cream cakes, chocolates, and Horlicks, dressing him in wardrobes of coats, yet denying him proper exercise — to critique how wealthy pet owners often confuse indulgence with love. Her misguided affection directly causes Tricki's illness. Herriot's clinical intervention, providing only water and exercise, restores Tricki to health, highlighting that true responsibility requires discipline over sentiment. Mrs. Pumphrey's final remark, "a triumph of surgery," ironically underscores her inability to see that neglect of duty, not disease, was the real problem.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Chapter 1

Explanation

This question asks for **analysis**, so examiners expect you to identify the **social commentary** (rich owners = indulgence ≠ care), connect it to **specific textual evidence** (overfeeding, coats, no exercise), and note the **irony** in Mrs. Pumphrey's final line. Avoid merely retelling the story — link each detail to the broader comment Herriot is making. The irony of "triumph of surgery" is a high-value point worth including.

Q9.

[3]

In 'A Triumph of Surgery', how does Tricki's condition reflect the consequences of pampering pets excessively? What does this suggest about human attachment?

Previously asked in: 2026 2/5/1 Q9 (iii)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Tricki's condition directly results from Mrs Pumphrey's excessive pampering. She overfed him with cream cakes, chocolates, Horlicks, malt, and cod-liver oil, believing she was helping him. This caused him to become "hugely fat, like a bloated sausage," with bloodshot eyes and extreme lethargy. He recovered without any medicine — simply through exercise and controlled diet at Mr Herriot's surgery.

This reflects how human attachment, when excessive, becomes harmful. Mrs Pumphrey confused love with indulgence, prioritising Tricki's momentary pleasure over his health. True care requires discipline, not blind pampering.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Chapter 1

Explanation

- The examiner wants **two parts**: what happened to Tricki (cause + effect) and **what it suggests about human attachment**. Both must appear for full 3 marks.
- Quote or closely paraphrase the text ("bloated sausage," "no medicinal treatment") to show textual grounding.
- The insight about love vs. indulgence is the **thematic/value-based point** CBSE expects in "what does this suggest" questions — never skip it.
- Avoid listing every detail; stay within ~75 words.

Q10.

[3]

Lunch transformed into a significant ceremonial event for Mr. Herriot and his associates. Do you agree? Explain with reference to 'A Triumph of Surgery'.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/4/1 Q9 II

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Yes, lunch was indeed a significant ceremonial event for Mr. Herriot and his associates. When Tricki was hospitalised, Mrs. Pumphrey sent two dozen eggs to build up his strength, then bottles of wine and brandy, fearing he was anaemic. The staff at the surgery thoroughly enjoyed these luxuries. They looked forward eagerly to each day's supplies, turning lunch into a feast. Mr. Herriot admits they drank and dined splendidly, making Tricki's stay an unexpectedly delightful experience for all of them.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Chapter 1, *Footprints without Feet*

Explanation

The source passages provided do not explicitly mention the eggs, wine, or brandy episode. However, this detail is a well-known part of the NCERT Chapter 1 text (*A Triumph of Surgery*) that was not included in the excerpts given. Since the question is from this chapter, examiners expect students to reference this key episode. The examiner looks for: Mrs. Pumphrey's extravagant supplies, the staff benefiting from them, and the idea of lunch becoming a ceremonial/celebratory event. Do **not** omit this even if the passage excerpt is incomplete — you are expected to know the full chapter.

Q11.

[6]

Answer ANY ONE of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words:
Evaluate how "A Triumph of Surgery" is a lesson in thoughtful parenting.

Previously asked in: 2026 2/1/1 Q11(I)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

"A Triumph of Surgery" as a Lesson in Thoughtful Parenting

Mrs Pumphrey's excessive love for Tricki mirrors the mistakes of over-indulgent parents. She fed him cream cakes, chocolates, and malt between meals, mistaking indulgence for affection. This turned Tricki into an obese, listless dog unable to move or enjoy life.

Mr Herriot, like a wise and firm parent figure, took charge. He put Tricki on a strict regime — no food initially, then controlled diet and gradual exercise. He resisted Mrs Pumphrey's anxious phone calls, understanding that tough love was necessary for real recovery.

The story teaches that genuine care requires discipline, not just pampering. Giving a child — or pet — everything they desire does more harm than good. True love means making difficult but responsible decisions for their well-being, even at the cost of temporary displeasure.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Chapter 1, *Footprints Without Feet*

Explanation

- Examiners look for a **thematic link** between Mrs Pumphrey's behaviour and parenting — this is the core demand of the question.
- Use **specific story details** (cream cakes, malt, no exercise, strict diet at surgery) to support your argument — vague answers lose marks.
- Structure: **problem (over-indulgence) → solution (disciplined care) → lesson (thoughtful love)**. This 3-part flow keeps your answer focused.
- The textbook's "Talk about it" section explicitly asks if there are parents like Mrs Pumphrey — your answer should reflect that connection.
- Stay within 120–150 words; padding loses you nothing but wastes time.

Q12.

[6]

Answer any one of the following two questions, in about 100-120 words :

Evaluate the elements of humour and endearment in "A Triumph of Surgery".

Previously asked in: 2026 2/4/1 Q11 (a)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

"A Triumph of Surgery" by James Herriot is rich in gentle humour and warmth. Much humour springs from Mrs Pumphrey's foolish over-pampering of Tricki, feeding him cream cakes, chocolates and even "malt and cod-liver oil," which makes the dog grossly fat and ill. Her exaggerated worry and pet luxuries—beds, toys, cushions and coats—amuse us.

The narrator's sly cunning, in keeping Tricki long enough to enjoy the steady gifts of eggs, wine and brandy, adds wit. The irony of the title, since no surgery occurred, is delightfully comic.

Endearment lies in Tricki's joyful leap into his mistress's lap, licking and barking, and Mrs Pumphrey's tears of gratitude. Their loving bond and the dog's lively recovery leave the reader smiling fondly.

Source: A Triumph of Surgery, Tricki Returns Home

Explanation

For a 6-mark literature answer, examiners expect a balanced response covering BOTH elements named in the question—humour AND endearment. Give specific incidents as evidence: the over-pampering, the narrator's self-interest, the ironic title (humour); the joyful reunion and Mrs Pumphrey's tears (endearment). Use textual detail (cream cakes, eggs, wine; the leap into her lap) to show close reading. Keep it to about 120 words and end with a short evaluative comment.

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Model Answer

Elements of Humour and Endearment in "A Triumph of Surgery"

The story blends gentle humour with warmth throughout. The humour arises from Mrs Pumphrey's excessive pampering of Tricki — feeding him cream cakes, chocolates, and malt — turning him into a fat, lethargic dog who cannot even rise from his bed. Her misguided love creates the very problem Herriot must fix.

Endearment is seen in Mrs Pumphrey's devotion; her trembling lips and clasped hands on the day of collection show genuine, touching concern. Herriot's own confession that he was tempted to keep Tricki permanently — because of the luxuries Mrs Pumphrey sent — adds a humorous, self-aware touch.

The climax is both funny and heartwarming: a transformed, energetic Tricki leaps into his mistress's lap, while Mrs Pumphrey emotionally credits a strict diet-and-exercise regime as a "triumph of surgery." This dramatic irony forms the comic high point, yet the reunion is genuinely sweet and endearing.

Source: "A Triumph of Surgery", Chapter 1, *Footprints without Feet*

Explanation

- Examiners expect you to identify **specific humorous moments** (Mrs Pumphrey's over-indulgence, the ironic title) and **endearing moments** (reunion scene, Mrs Pumphrey's emotional devotion).
- The term **dramatic irony** is useful here — Mrs Pumphrey thinks surgery saved Tricki; the reader knows it was simply proper diet and exercise.

- Keep a balance: don't discuss only humour or only endearment — the question asks for both.
- Always anchor points to **textual evidence** from the passage for full marks.

Q13.**[6]**

Answer in about 100-120 words : In the story, 'A Triumph of Surgery', a wealthy woman's nonsensical behaviour, is depicted. Do you think such individuals are merely displaying foolishness or could their actions potentially, inflict harm upon others ? Support your answer from the text.

Previously asked in: 2025 2/5/1 Q11(b)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

In *A Triumph of Surgery*, Mrs Pumphrey's behaviour goes beyond mere foolishness — it actively harms Tricki. She overfeeds him with malt, cod-liver oil, and cream cakes, and buys him coats, cushions, and toys, thinking she is showing love. However, this indulgence turns Tricki into a "fat, bloated" dog who collapses and becomes seriously ill, unable even to exercise.

Her actions prove that excessive, misguided affection can cause real harm. Tricki needed discipline, not pampering. Only when Mr Herriot takes him away and gives him a proper diet and exercise does the dog recover — transformed into a "lithe, hard-muscled animal" in just two weeks.

Thus, such individuals are not merely silly; their thoughtless indulgence can endanger the health and well-being of those dependent on them.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Chapter 1

Explanation

- The examiner wants you to **take a clear stand**: not just silly, but potentially harmful.
- Support with **textual evidence**: overfeeding (malt, cod-liver oil, cream cakes), buying unnecessary accessories, and the result — Tricki falls gravely ill.
- Contrast with the **outcome under Herriot's care** to show that proper treatment (not pampering) led to recovery.
- Avoid retelling the whole story; pick **2–3 sharp examples** and link them to the central argument.
- The phrase "triumph of surgery" is ironic — no surgery was performed; the cure was simply correct diet and exercise.

Q14.

[3]

What excuses did Mrs. Pumphrey make about Mr. Herriot's advice ?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/6/1 Q9 (b)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Mrs. Pumphrey made several excuses to avoid following Mr. Herriot's advice. When asked about cutting down sweet things, she said Tricki seemed so weak that she had to relent, as he loved cream cakes and chocolates. She also claimed Tricki suffered from malnutrition, so she gave him extras like malt, cod-liver oil, and Horlicks. Regarding exercise, she excused herself by saying the gardener, Hodgkin, was down with lumbago, so ring-throwing had stopped.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Tricki's Condition and Hospitalisation

Explanation

Examiners expect three distinct excuses — one for sweet things, one for extra feeding (malnutrition claim), and one for lack of exercise (gardener's lumbago). Each excuse should be stated clearly and briefly. Quoting specific details (cream cakes, Horlicks, lumbago) shows close reading and earns full marks. Avoid padding with your own opinion.

Q15.

[3]

What was Mr. Herriot's strict advice? Did Mrs. Pumphrey agree to his advice?

Previously asked in: 2023 2/1/1 Q9 (c)

♦ A Triumph of Surgery

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Model Answer

Mr. Herriot's strict advice to Mrs. Pumphrey was to **cut down Tricki's food drastically** and give him **more exercise**, or else the dog would become seriously ill. He told her to harden her heart and keep Tricki on a very strict diet.

Mrs. Pumphrey did **not** truly follow the advice. Although she showed determination at first, she could not resist Tricki's love for cream cakes and chocolates and soon relented. Within a few days, Tricki's condition worsened, and Mr. Herriot had to hospitalise him.

Source: *A Triumph of Surgery*, Tricki's Condition and Hospitalisation

Explanation

The question has two parts — state the advice (1 mark) and whether Mrs. Pumphrey followed it (2 marks). Examiners expect both parts answered clearly. Key phrases from the text: "cut his food right down," "strict diet," "more exercise," and Mrs. Pumphrey's inability to refuse cream cakes and chocolates. Mention the consequence (Tricki worsening) to show she failed to comply.

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