King Henry VIII School

Entrance Examination

Sample English Comprehension Paper

Name: ..... **Candidate Number: .....**

YOU WILL HAVE **10 MINUTES** IN WHICH TO READ THE STORY, AND THEN **30 MINUTES** FOR ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS.

In the answer booklet there are different types of questions for you to answer in different ways.

1. Multiple-choice answers

You do not need to do any writing for these questions. You need to circle the word which best answers the question.
Example:
The story is set in the

Past Present Future

Circle ONE of the above.

2. Short answers

Some questions are followed by a short line, showing that you have to write just one word or a short phrase.
Example:
What is the name of the writer?

William Shakespeare

3. Longer answers

Some questions are followed by a few lines, showing that you need a more detailed answer.

Answer the questions as carefully as you can. Do not ask to turn over the pages, but carry on in your own time. Check your answers if you have time, and if you need to make any changes do so neatly and clearly.

Total/40		
Markers:		

The Snow Goose by Paul Gallico

This passage tells the story of Philip Rhayader, a man who is disabled and, as a result, is ignored by people around him. He takes comfort from the wild birds that visit his lighthouse every year.

In the late spring of 1930 Philip Rhayader came to the abandoned lighthouse at the mouth of the River Aelder. He bought the lighthouse and many acres of marshland surrounding it.

He lived and worked there alone the year round. He was a painter of birds and of nature, who had withdrawn from all human society. Some of the reasons for this were apparent on his fortnightly visits to the little village of Chelmbury for supplies, where the natives looked disapprovingly at his mis-shapen body and dark visage. For he was a hunchback and his left arm was crippled, thin and bent at the wrist, like the claw of a bird.

They soon became used to his strange figure, small but powerful, the massive dark, bearded head set just slightly below the mysterious mound on his back, the glowing eyes and the clawed hand, and marked him off as 'that painter chap that lives down at the lighthouse'.

Physical deformity often breeds hatred of humanity in men. Rhayader did not hate; he loved very greatly: man, the animal kingdom, and all nature. His heart was filled with pity and understanding. He had mastered his handicap, but he could not master the rebuffs that he suffered due to his appearance. The thing that drove him into seclusion was his failure to find anywhere a return of the warmth that flowed from him. He repelled women. Men would have warmed to him had they got to know him. But the mere fact that an effort was being made hurt Rhayader and drove him to avoid the person making it.

He was a friend to all things wild, and the wild things repaid him with their friendship.

Tamed in his enclosure were the geese that come travelling down the coast from Iceland and Spitzbergen each October, in great flocks that darkened the sky and filled the air with the rushing noise of their passage – the brown-bodied pink feet, white breasted barnacles, with their dark necks and clowns' masks, the wild fronts with black-barred breasts, and many species of wild ducks, widgeon, mallard, pintails, teal and shovellers.

Some were not allowed to leave, so that they would remain there as a sign and signal to the wild ones that came down at each winter's beginning that here were food and sanctuary.

Many hundreds came and remained with him all through cold weather from October to the early spring, when they migrated north again to their

breeding grounds below the Arctic circle.

Rhayader was content in the knowledge that when storms blew, or it was bitter cold and food was scarce, or when the big guns of the distant bag hunters roared, his birds were safe; that he had gathered to the sanctuary and security of his own arms and heart these many wild and beautiful creatures who knew and trusted him.

They would answer the call of the north in the spring, but in the autumn they would come back, barking and whooping and honking in the sky, to circle the landmark of the old lighthouse and drop to earth near by to be his guests again – birds that he well remembered and recognized from the previous year.

And this made Rhayader happy, because he knew that implanted somewhere in their beings was the germ knowledge of his existence and his safe haven, that this knowledge had become part of them and, with the coming of the grey skies and the winds from the north, would send them back to him.

For the rest, his heart and soul went into the painting of the country in which he lived and its creatures. There were not many Rhayader paintings in existence. He hoarded them jealously, piling them up in his lighthouse and the storerooms above by the hundreds. He was not satisfied with them, because as an artist he was uncompromising.

Section A: Questions on *The Snow Goose*

1. In which year did Philip Rhayader start living at the lighthouse? (/1)

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2. **Circle** the verbs in the sentence below:

He lived and worked there alone the year round. (/2)

3. What does the word 'fortnightly' mean? (line 6) (/1)

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4. 'Like the claw of a bird' is an example of which of the following? **Circle** the correct answer. (/1)

metaphor simile personification alliteration

5. Explain what is meant by the word 'supplies' in line 6. (/2)

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6. **Circle THREE** words that the writer uses to describe Philip Rhayader's appearance in paragraphs 2 and 3. (/3)

mis-shapen broken young strange

ugly energetic powerful ungainly

7. What do you think the writer means when he writes 'physical deformity often breeds hatred of humanity in men'? (line 14) (/2)

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8. **Circle** the adverb in the following sentence (lines 14-15). (/1)

'Rhayader did not hate; he loved very greatly'

9. Name one thing that you learn about Philip Rhayader from the line: 'His heart was filled with pity and understanding.' (lines 15-16) (/1)

10. What do you think the writer means when he says, 'But the mere fact that an effort was being made hurt Rhayader and drove him to avoid the person making it'? (lines 20-21) (/3)

11. Several types of birds are mentioned in lines 24-29. Write the names of **TWO** of them (but **not** the adjectives used to describe them). (/2)

12. Three proper nouns are used in line 25. Write them in the spaces provided below. There is 1 mark for each. (/3)

13. Give **TWO** reasons why Philip Rhayader kept wild birds. (/2)

14. What is meant by the sentence: 'They would answer the call of the north in the spring'? (line 40) (/2)

15. Explain, **in your own words**, why, each spring, as described in lines 44-47, Philip Rhayader feels happy. (/2)

16. **In your own words**, why is Philip Rhyader never satisfied with his paintings? (/2)

17. For each of the words **printed in bold in the left-hand column** of the table below, circle the **ONE** word in the other column that would be best used to replace it in the passage. (/5)

Visage	Face	Appearance	Helmet
Deformity	Markings	Disfigurement	Appearance
Rebuffs	Contradictions	Insults	Names
Seclusion	Isolation	Loneliness	Lighthouse
Enclosure	Pen	Care	Aviary

18. For each of the words **printed in bold in the left-hand column** of the table below, **write, in the right-hand column**, a word that has the **OPPOSITE** meaning. The first one has been done for you. (**One** mark for each correct response) (/5)

Spring	Autumn
Powerful	
Repelled	
Wild	
Pity	
Failure	

Total Mark (/40)