The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School
Elstree, Herts

11+ Entrance Examination 2017

ENGLISH

Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

Please follow these instructions

Candidate Name ……

Candidate Number ……..

- Write your name and candidate number in the spaces at the top of this page.
- Answer all questions in this booklet.
- Pay special attention to the instructions at the start of each section.
- If you run out of space on any question, please use the space provided at the end of the booklet, making sure you number the additional work carefully.

You have 1 hour and 10 minutes to complete this paper.

Section 1	30 minutes (+ 10 minutes reading time)
Section 2	30 minutes

A/50	
B/50	

Section 1 Reading Exercise

In the following passage, a young boy enters private property to fish. He is surprised when he catches something unexpected.

It was an eel, and, even as he realised it, something brushed against his legs, nearly knocking him off balance. He looked down and saw a second eel darting away through the water.

Well, there was nothing else to do: he had to land the thing to retrieve his hook and line. He hoisted it out of the water and tried to grab hold of it, but it was thrashing about in the air, twisting itself into knots, snarling itself round the line, and, as he reached for it, it tangled round his arm. It was a monstrous thing; it must have been at least two feet long, streaked with slime, cold and sleek and brownish grey.

He hated eels.

He tried to pull it off his arm, but it was tremendously powerful and single-minded, like one big, writhing muscle, and it simply twisted itself round his other arm. He swore and shook it, nearly losing his footing. He told himself to calm down and he carefully moved closer to the rock, which he managed to slap the eel against and pin it down. Still it squirmed and writhed like a mad thing, even though its face showed nothing. It was a cold, dead mask, flattened and wide, with small, dark eyes.

Finally he was able to hold its head still enough to get a grip on the deeply embedded hook, and he began to twist and wrench it free. It was hard work. He'd used a big hook and the end of it was barbed to stop it from slipping out once it had stuck into a fish's mouth.

'Come on,' he muttered, grunting with the effort, and then – he wasn't sure how it happened, it went too fast – all at the same time, the hook came loose, the eel gave a frantic jerk and, the next thing he knew, the hook was in his thumb. The pain was awful, like a freezing bolt shooting all the way up his arm. He gasped and clamped his teeth together and managed not to shout… It was a still evening and any sound up here would travel for miles, bouncing off the high rocks and water.

The eel slithered away and plopped back into the water. A wave of sickness passed over the boy and he swayed, nearly fainting. For a long while he couldn't bring himself to look at his hand, but at last he forced his eyes down. The hook had gone in by his palm and right through the fleshy base of his thumb, where it stuck out on the other side. There was a horrible gash and flap of skin where the barb had broken through on its way out. Blood was already oozing from the wound and dripping into the icy water.

He was lucky that the point had come out and not stayed sunk deep inside his flesh, but he knew that he couldn't just pull the hook free; it had the curved barb on one end and a ring on the other where the line was attached.

There was only one thing to do. He rested his rod against the rock and with his other hand he reached into his tackle bag and got out his cutters.

He took a deep breath, clamped the cutters on the end of the hook where the line was knotted, pressed them together and – *SNAK* – the end broke off. Then, quickly, so that he didn't have time to think about it, he pulled the hook out by the barb. A fresh pain hit him and he leant against the rock to stop his knees from giving way.

He knew he wouldn't do any more fishing today. He started to cry. All that effort for this: a lousy eel and a wounded thumb. It just wasn't fair. Then he pulled himself together. He had to do something about his situation. Blood was flowing

freely from the wound. He washed his hand in the loch, the blood turning black and oily in the cold water, then he took a handkerchief from his shirt pocket and wrapped it tightly round his thumb. He was shaking badly now and felt very light-headed. As carefully as he could, he secured all his gear and set off back to the shore, wading through the dark slick in the water that his blood had made.

And then he felt it. A jolt against his legs. And then another. More eels. But what were they doing? Eels never attacked people. They ate scraps and frogs and small fish…

He pressed on; maybe he'd imagined it. No. There it came again. A definite bump. He peered down into the water and in the dim light he saw them… hundreds of them, a seething mass in the water, balled up and tangled together like the writhing hair of some underwater Medusa. Eels. All round him. Eels of all sizes, from tiny black slivers to huge brutes twice the length of the one he'd caught. The water was alive with them, wriggling, twisting, turning over and over… They surged against his legs and he stumbled. His wounded hand splashed down into the water and he felt hungry mouths tug the bloodied handkerchief from his hand and drag it away into the murky depths.

He panicked, tried to run for the shore but slipped and, as his feet scrabbled to get a hold, he stumbled into the deep part of the loch. For a moment his head went under and he was aware of eels brushing against his face. One wrapped itself round his neck and he pulled it away with his good hand. Then his feet touched the bottom and he pushed himself up to the surface. He gulped in a mouthful of air, but his waders were filled with water now… water and eels, he could feel them down his legs, trapped by the rubber.

He knew that if he could get his feet up he might float, but in his terror and panic his body wasn't doing what he wanted it to do.

'Help,' he screamed, 'help me!' Then he was under again, and this time the water seemed even thicker with eels. The head of one probed his mouth and clamped its jaws on to his lip. He tore it away, and his anger gave him fresh strength. He forced his feet downwards, found a solid piece of ground, and then he was up out of the water again. All about him the surface of the lake was seething with frenzied eels.

'Help, help… Please, somebody, help me…' His mouth hurt and blood was dripping from where the eel had bitten his lip. He thrashed at the water, but nothing would scare the beasts away.

And then out of the corner of his eye he saw someone… a man running along the far shore. He waved crazily and yelled for help again. He didn't care any more if it was an estate worker… anything was better than being trapped here with these terrible fish.

The man ran closer and dived into the loch.

No, the boy wanted to shout. Not in the water. Not in with the eels. But then he saw a head bob to the surface. He looked all right. It was all right. He was going to be rescued.

The man swam towards him with strong, crude strokes. Thank God. Thank God. He was going to be saved. For a while he almost forgot about the eels and just concentrated on the man's steady progress towards him, but then a fresh surge knocked him off balance and he was once more in the snaking embrace of a hundred frenzied coils of cold flesh.

No. No, he would not let them beat him. He whirled his arms, kicked his legs and he was out again, gasping and spluttering for breath.

But where was the man? He had disappeared.

The boy looked round desperately. Had the eels got him?

It was quiet; the movement in the water seemed to have stopped, almost as if none of this had ever happened…

And then he saw him, under the water, a big, dark shape among the fish, and suddenly, with a great splash, he rose out of the loch and the boy screamed.

The last thing he saw before he sank back into the black depths of the water was the man's face; only it wasn't a man's face… It was an eel's face, a nightmare face; chinless, with smooth, grey, utterly hairless skin pulled tight across it, and fat, blubbery lips that stretched almost all the way back to where the ears should be. The front of the face was deformed, pushed forward, so that the nose was hideously flattened, with splayed nostrils, and the bulging eyes were forced so wide apart that they didn't look in any way human.

The ghastly thick lips parted and a wet belching hiss erupted.

Then the waters closed over the boy and he knew nothing more.

QUESTIONS (50 marks)

Answers for the first six questions <u>do not</u> require full sentences. For question seven onwards, you should answer in complete sentences.

1. What colour is the eel? (2 marks)

2. Explain the meaning of the following words, in the context of the story:

   a) Snarling (line 6)
   b) Writhing (line 12)
   c) Footing (line 13)
   d) Embedded (line 19)
   e) Blubbery (line 107)
   f) Ghastly (line 111) (12 marks)

3. What simile is used in the paragraph that begins 'Come on,' he muttered…..?' (2 marks)

4. Explain the effect of the simile you have identified for question 3. (2 marks)

5. Using your own words, explain why the narrator could not just pull the hook straight out of his thumb. (4 marks)

6. The word SNAK (line 41) is an example of what technique? (2 marks)

7. Re-read lines 56 to 71 (He pressed on… trapped by the rubber). Explain how the writer makes this a tense moment in the story. You should support your answer with evidence selected from these two paragraphs. (6 marks)

8. In which country do you think this novel is set? Justify this answer. (3 marks)

9. How does the writer make the final section of the story terrifying? (lines 100-112) It was quiet…. Nothing more) Support your answer with quotation from the text. (7 marks)

10. What do we learn about the character of the young boy? Write in as much detail as you can and include evidence to support your points. (10 marks)

Section 2

Writing

Use the picture on the separate piece of paper as inspiration for a short piece of writing. This can be imaginative or descriptive. Please write no more than three paragraphs. You will be marked on your choice of vocabulary, your ability to use punctuation and correct spelling and the overall quality of your writing. Answers which are not linked to this picture will be penalised.

(50 marks)

[50]