JAMES ALLEN'S GIRLS' SCHOOL

11+ SPECIMEN ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

ENGLISH

CANDIDATE NUMBER ……

If you speak a language other than English at home (eg Spanish, Cantonese, Urdu), write the name of the language here:

……..

TIME ALLOWED: 1 hour 15 minutes

Section A Comprehension

Section B Composition

Section C Comprehension

Complete all sections.

You should aim to spend **no more than 25 minutes** on each section.

A. Comprehension: Whale-watching

Aim to spend no more than 25 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

Welcome to Gaansbai, in the Western Cape of South Africa, the whale-watching capital of the world. Of the 350 Southern Right whales that complete the epic migration from the Antarctic to South Africa's southern coast, up to 160 make Walker Bay their home from June to December to calve and frolic in the bays. For visitors it represents the most accessible and astounding land-based viewing as mothers, calves and bulls play and bathe among the protected bays, less than 50 meters from the rocky shoreline. But for those who have dreamed of getting really up close and personal with these 50 kilogramme animals, then simply hop on board the regular boat trips with Dyer Island Cruises.

By the time we left the bay and set a course for Dyer Island, the wind had picked up and a sizeable swell was leaving one or two passengers a little green around the gills. But any discomfort we felt was quickly forgotten when the first Southern Right loomed large on the starboard side. Excited cries of "whale" went up, but from my viewing point, I could see there were actually two enormous dark shadows shifting menacingly beneath the surface. Suddenly, two plumes of water were fired high into air as if to announce their arrival—the 'V' shaped plume of spray distinguished them from all other whales, explained one of the guides on board. They surfaced to a chorus of gasps, before tail-slapping the water and diving back below.

It is hard to describe the colossal size of these animals. Imagine six elephants, then double that and you are just about there. The pair we spent most of our time tracking were some 15 metres long. At first, the realisation that they dwarfed our boat was a little alarming, but they appeared entirely untroubled by our close company.

1. Explain in your own words what is meant by 'epic migration.' (line 2) [2]

2. When is the best time of year to see these whales? [1]

3. What three things can the whales be seen doing in Walker Bay? [3]

4. Some passengers on the boat were 'a little green around the gills' (line 10)
   This means that they were:

   a) slightly envious of those on the shore
   b) feeling like a fish out of water
   c) feeling rather ill
   d) unused to being at sea [1]

5. When the writer first sees the shape of the two whales in the water he feels:

   a) very excited
   b) frightened
   c) threatened
   d) amazed [1]

6. What is unique about the Southern Right Whale? [2]

7. In the last paragraph the writer is alarmed by the size of the whales because:

   a) they are as large as elephants
   b) they make those on the boat feel very small
   c) they are very near to the boat
   d) they are a long way from the safety of the shore [1]

B. Composition (25 minutes)

Aim to spend no more than 25 minutes on this section.

Read this extract from *Encounters with Animals* by Gerald Durrell**:**

Keeping wild animals as pets, whether on an expedition or in your own home, can be a tedious, irritating, and frustrating business, but it can also give you a great deal of pleasure. Many people have asked me why I like animals, and I have always found it a difficult question to answer. You might just as well ask me why I like eating. But an animal who likes you is sometimes a mixed blessing.

Now look carefully at the picture below.



Imagine that this crow was your pet.

Write a <u>description</u> of the "mixed blessing" of looking after it.
You should avoid writing a whole story.

You should comment upon:

- the crow's appearance
- the crow's actions

As you describe these things, you should make clear what the frustrations and pleasures are.

When you write:

- use the first-person ('I')
- use a varied and interesting vocabulary
- make sure that spelling and punctuation are accurate

You should write **no more than two paragraphs** of description.

Try to use all the time available and check your work carefully.

C. Comprehension: King Gannet

Aim to spend no more than 25 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

When Quill was only halfway up the rock face, King Gannet[1] gave a shriek and rose to his full height, wings wide and flapping – orchestrating chaos. Five thousand birds took off. Quill held perfectly still, though the damage seemed done. The lookout bird teetered, hopped and took off, shrieking, *Intruder!* Close by Quill's head a clutch of puffins burst from a crevice in the cliff face, like little fireballs being lobbed at him. But Quill did not recoil. He did not flex a muscle, just clung steadfastly to the cliff – chiefly because he could not think what else to do. He turned his face downwards to shield it from puffin beaks … and so saw what had roused King Gannet.

A garefowl[2]. It must have mistakenly swum ashore below the wrong colony, and strayed into gannet territory while looking for its own kind. Being flightless, it could not extricate itself quickly, only clear a path with its massive beak and bulk. Delightedly, Quill watched the comical tottering majesty of the "sea-witch", one minute standing waist-deep in gannets, the next standing, solitary and bewildered, as every last gannet took off. It alone had triggered the panic. And as soon as it had plodded its way onwards on its big webbed feet, the gannets would finish circling and settle back down.

Quill took the opportunity, while the sentinel bird was away from his perch, to clamber as far as the ledge that ran along behind the finger of rock. He inched along the ledge – even began to climb the pinnacle – but hearing the flapping of huge wings above him, froze to the stillness of a stone statue. Patiently, patiently, he waited, though his fingers lost their feeling and the summer flies droned around his hands and hair. The gannets circled, then sank down, a hundred at a time. King Gannet stood at full stretch, flapping his wings – all fussy self-importance. Then he settled back on to his throne, shoulders hunched, and peered down at the host returning to their roosts.

[1] *gannet – a kind of seabird*
[2] *garefowl – a different kind of seabird, nowadays extinct*

1. Why do you think King Gannet is flapping his wings in line 2?

   a) He is warning the gannets about Quill.
   b) He wants to bring chaos to the colony.
   c) He is stretching in order to show off.
   d) He is warning the gannets about another bird. [1]

2. Explain the meaning of the simile which describes the puffins bursting from a crevice ' like little fireballs being lobbed at him.' [2]

3. 'But Quill did not **recoil**. He did not **flex** a muscle, just clung **steadfastly** to the cliff'. Using your own words, explain the meaning of each of the three words in bold, as they are used in paragraph 1. [3]

4. 'Being flightless, it could not extricate itself quickly' (line 9). This means that because the garefowl was unable to fly it could not:

   a) flap its wings
   b) move
   c) feed
   d) escape [1]

5. Look again at lines 10-12, and explain using your own word or short phrase the meaning of:

   a) tottering _____

   b) solitary _____

   c) bewildered _____ [3]

6. The phrase 'sentinel bird' in line 14 tells you that the bird is:

   a) the wisest one
   b) an observer
   c) missing
   d) the largest [1]

7. Select the two verbs in paragraph 4 which suggest that moving across the rock face is difficult for Quill. [2]

8. Quill began to 'climb the pinnacle'.
   This means that he climbed the:

   a) face of the cliff
   b) the precipice
   c) the summit
   d) the sharp side [1]

9. The summer flies '**droned** around his hands and hair'. (line 17)
   Explain the meaning of the word in bold precisely using your own words. [2]

10. Find and write out **two** amusing details about King Gannet's appearance or behaviour in lines 18-20, and explain in what ways they are amusing. [6]