STOCKPORT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

SENIOR SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMINATION – PRACTICE PAPER

ENGLISH COMPREHENSION and CREATIVE WRITING

TIME: Comprehension: 30 minutes

Creative Writing: 30 minutes

SECTION A: Comprehension

The following passage is an extract from 'The Hunger Games' by Suzanne Collins. The author introduces us to Katniss, the narrator, who describes where she lives: District 12. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow on the sheet provided. Your essay will be on a related subject; you will be given a choice of titles in the next examination session.

When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim's warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course, she did.

I prop myself up on one elbow. There's enough light in the bedroom to see them. My little sister, Prim, curled up on her side, cocooned in my mother's body, their cheeks pressed together. In sleep, my mother looks younger, still worn but not so beaten-down. Prim's face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named. My mother was very beautiful once, too. Or so they tell me.

Sitting at Prim's knees, guarding her, is the world's ugliest cat. Mashed-in nose, half of one ear missing, eyes the colour of rotting pumpkin. Prim named him Buttercup, insisting that his muddy yellow coat matched the bright flower. He hates me. Or at least distrusts me. Even though it was years ago, I think he still remembers how I reacted when Prim brought him home. Scrawny kitten, belly swollen with worms, crawling with fleas. The last thing I needed was another mouth to feed. But Prim begged so hard, cried even, I had to let him stay. It turned out okay. My mother got rid of the vermin and he's a born mouser. Even catches the occasional rat. Sometimes, when I clean

a kill, I feed Buttercup the entrails. He has stopped hissing at me. Entrails. No hissing. This is the closest we will ever come to love.

I swing my legs off the bed and slide into my hunting boots. Supple leather that has moulded to my feet. I pull on trousers, a shirt, tuck my long dark braid up into a cap, and grab my forage bag. I slip outside.

Our part of District 12, nicknamed the Seam, is usually crawling with coal miners heading out to the morning shift at this hour. Men and women with hunched shoulders, swollen knuckles, many who have long since stopped trying to scrub the coal dust out of their broken nails, the lines of their sunken faces. But today the black cinder streets are empty. Shutters on the squat grey houses are closed. May as well sleep in. If you can.

End of passage.

Glossary:

Primrose – a pale yellow flower

CANDIDATE No.

COMPREHENSION

CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER TO EACH QUESTION.

1) Where does Katniss live?
    a. London.
    b. District 12.
    c. With her father.
    d. In a forest.

2) What is the nickname of her 'District'?
    a. Primrose.
    b. Buttercup.
    c. The Seam.
    d. The Mining District.

3) What seems to be the main industry there?
    a. Fabric manufacturing.
    b. Tourism.
    c. Foraging.
    d. Coal Mining.

4) Who is the narrator of this passage?
    a. Katniss.
    b. Katniss' mother.
    c. Prim.
    d. Buttercup.

5) Which tense is this passage written in?
    a. Past tense.
    b. Present tense.
    c. Future tense.
    d. None of the above.

6) Which time of day is it when the passage begins?
    a. Morning.
    b. Afternoon.
    c. Evening.
    d. The middle of the night.

7) Circle any of the following statements about Katniss and Prim's relationship that are true.
    a. Katniss and Prim normally share a bed.
    b. Katniss and Prim are sisters.
    c. Katniss admires Prim's beauty.
    d. Katniss is jealous of Prim.

8) Which of these words is an adverb in line 2?
    a. Cold
    b. Only
    c. Bed
    d. Wake

9) Circle any of the following statements about Katniss' mother that are true.
    a. Katniss' mother is named after a flower.
    b. Katniss' mother looks older when she sleeps.
    c. Katniss' mother is very beautiful.
    d. Katniss' mother generally looks beaten-down.

10) In the clause 'Prim named him Buttercup' on lines 14/15, which word is the object?
    a. Prim
    b. Named
    c. Him
    d. Buttercup

11) Which of these words best describes Buttercup's attitude towards Prim?
    a. Protective.
    b. Aggressive.
    c. Cold.
    d. Suspicious.

12) Why did Prim choose to name the cat Buttercup?
    a. Because of its mashed-in nose.
    b. Because of its missing half-ear.
    c. Because of its muddy yellow fur.
    d. Because she wanted it to be named after a flower like she was.

13) Which of these colours best describes Buttercup's eyes?
    a. Blue.
    b. Grey.
    c. Orange.
    d. Black.

14) Which of these words are verbs in line 13?
    a. Sitting.
    b. Is.
    c. Guarding.
    d. All of the above.

15) How long has Prim had Buttercup?
    a. Weeks.
    b. Months.
    c. Years.
    d. Days.

16) Why was Buttercup's belly swollen when Prim first bought him home?
    a. He had overeaten.
    b. He had worms.
    c. He was crawling with fleas.
    d. He was hungry.

17) Which of these words best describes Buttercup's attitude towards Katniss now?
    a. Protective.
    b. Loving.
    c. Suspicious.
    d. All of the above.

18) Why did Katniss decide to let Buttercup stay? Circle any statement that is correct.
    a. Prim begged her to.
    b. She decided it would be a good challenge to have another mouth to feed.
    c. Her mother was very fond of Buttercup.
    d. All of the above.

19) What do you think a 'forage bag' might be? (line 24).
    a. A bag for transporting Katniss' shopping.
    b. A bag for collecting things that Katniss finds.
    c. A bag for carrying Katniss' school books.
    d. A bag for carrying Katniss' clothes.

20) Look at the phrase 'I slip outside' in line 27. Circle any statement that you believe to be true.
    a. 'I slip outside' is a metaphor.
    b. 'I slip outside' is a simile.
    c. 'I slip outside' suggests that Katniss fell over.
    d. 'I slip outside' suggests that Katniss moved smoothly and quietly.

21) What does Katniss' notice about District 12 when she leaves the house?
    a. Its streets are crawling with coal miners.
    b. Its residents are miserable.
    c. The morning shift is beginning.
    d. The streets are strangely empty.

22) What does the word 'squat' suggest about the houses in District 12?
    a. They are dirty.
    b. They are small.
    c. They are dull.
    d. They are all the same.

23) Circle any statement that you think describes the coal miners of District 12 accurately.
    a. They are physically exhausted.
    b. They are hopeful about the future.
    c. Their work can be painful.
    d. Their body language is negative and defeated.

24) Which of these words is an adjective in line 32?
    a. Scrub.
    b. Nails.
    c. Broken.
    d. Trying.

25) Which of these words best describes the last sentence of the passage?
    a. Optimistic.
    b. Humorous.
    c. Sarcastic.
    d. Ominous.

TOTAL OUT OF 25:

Creative Writing Tasks

Complete one of the following:

1) Write a short story that begins with the line: 'The door slammed shut'.

   OR

2) Imagine that you are walking across the landscape pictured below. Write a description of your experience.



Whichever task you choose, you should aim to write three developed paragraphs.
Do your best to demonstrate:

- A wide and interesting vocabulary.
- A good range of different sentence structures.
- Accurate punctuation and spelling.

Your writing will be marked out of 25.

Mark Scheme

Comprehension

1) B
2) C
3) D
4) A
5) B
6) A
7) A, B and C
8) B
9) D
10) C
11) A
12) C
13) C
14) D
15) C
16) B
17) C
18) A
19) B
20) A and D
21) D
22) B
23) A, C and D
24) C
25) D