The Junior King's School
Canterbury

2013

Pupils in Year 6
Entrance Examination (11+)
English

One Hour

READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE CAREFULLY AND THEN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS WHICH FOLLOW IN FULL SENTENCES.

Spend 45 minutes on questions 1 - 8 and 15 minutes on Question 9.

*You **must** attempt Question 9, which is a writing task, even if you have not finished the reading comprehension.*

The year is 2155. Margie's neighbour, Tommy, has found a curious antique called a 'book'.

"Why would anyone want to write about school?" Margie asked.

Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes. "Because it's not our kind of school, stupid. This is the old kind of school they had hundreds and hundreds of years ago." He added loftily, pronouncing the word carefully, "*Centuries* ago."

Margie was hurt. "Well, I don't know what kind of school they had all that time ago." She read the book over his shoulder for a while, then said, "Anyway, they had a teacher."

"Sure they had a teacher, but it wasn't a *regular* teacher. It was a man."

"A man? How could a man be a teacher?"

"Well, he just told the boys and girls about things and gave them homework and asked them questions."

"A man isn't smart enough."

"Sure he is."

"Well, I wouldn't want a strange man in my house to teach me."

Tommy screamed with laughter. "You don't know much, Margie. The teachers didn't live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there."

"And all the kids learned the same thing?"

"Sure, if they were the same age."

"But my mother says a teacher has to be calibrated to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently."

"Just the same, they didn't do it that way then. If you don't like it, you don't have to read the book."

"I didn't say I didn't like it," Margie said quickly. She wanted to read about those funny schools.

They weren't even half-finished when Margie's mother called, "Margie! School!"

Margie looked up. "Not yet, Mamma."

"Now," said Mrs Jones. "And it's probably time for Tommy, too"

Margie said to Tommy, "Can I read the book some more with you after school?"

"Maybe," he said nonchalantly. He walked away whistling, the dusty old book tucked beneath his arm.

Margie went to the schoolroom. It was right next to her bedroom, and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day, because her mother said that little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

The screen was lit up, and it said: "Today's arithmetic lesson is on the addition of proper fractions. Please insert yesterday's homework in the proper slot."

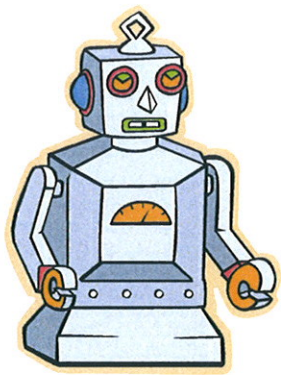
Margie did so with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighbourhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things so they could help one another on the homework and talk about it.

And the teachers were people.

The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen: "When we add the fractions ½ and ¼ ....."

Margie was thinking about how the kids must have loved it in the old days. She was thinking about the fun they had.

Isaac Asimov: "The Fun They Had."



1. Why is Margie surprised that anyone would want to write about school? *(2)*

2. Why does Margie feel hurt? *(2)*

3. Margie has three objections to the idea of a human teacher. What are they? *(6)*

4. Why does Margie say, "I didn't say I didn't like it," *quickly*? *(2)*

5. Write as fully as you can about Tommy's character. *(4)*

6. How do we learn that Margie's mother is quite strict? *(2)*

7. Give the meaning of each underlined word as it is used in the story. Then Identify the part of speech of each word as it is used in the story.
For example: sigh breathe out in an unhappy way noun
a) regular b) screamed c) nonchalantly *(3)*

8. Isaac Asimov wrote this story in 1955. What changes would you make to his description of the 'teacher' taking into consideration modern inventions and developments in technology? State in each case what Asimov refers to and how it would have changed if the story was written today. *(4)*

(25)

THIS FINAL QUESTION TESTS YOUR CREATIVE WRITING.

SPEND 15 MINUTES ON THIS TASK.

9. The Day the Mechanical Teacher Went Wrong

Write another part of this story about a day when the mechanical teacher did not work correctly. What might happen? What would Margie and Tommy do?

You could start... *Several days later Margie went into the schoolroom for her lessons as normal. The mechanical teacher was making strange whirring noises...*

Remember to write in the third person – the same as in the passage. Try to use your most interesting language and accurate spelling, punctuation and paragraphing. End the piece as effectively as possible.

(25)