OUNDLE

School

Sample Paper:
Junior Entrance Examination

English

Time allowed: **1 hour**

Wick reckoned the loot, if it was there at all, would be buried under no more than three feet of earth; and if his estimate was correct some kind of cavity would be showing on the wall of the ravine within this distance below the rim. The tangle of vegetation hung much lower than that and would conceal it from below. So the next step was to examine the top three feet of the raw face left by the slip-out and this meant one of them hanging over the edge while the other held onto his feet. Wick, being the featherweight, was given the privilege of putting his neck in jeopardy.

This part of the expedition could have been prolonged almost indefinitely; but again the luck was with them and Wick was no sooner lowered headfirst over the edge than he found himself staring at what might have been a rabbit hole except that a gold coin lay gleaming on its lip.

Anybody else would have shouted his head off but Wick never uttered. Instead he grabbed the coin and put it, for want of a better place, into his mouth; then, hanging on to the exposed root of a low-growing shrub with one hand, he eased the other gently into the hole. Immediately he was, as Judd put it, "in the money". He could feel it all round his fist which was stopped by a solid wall of it less than a foot in from the face of the slip-out. For a moment or two he scratched away at the tightly packed mass of coin and managed to dislodge a few pieces which collected on the bottom of the little tunnel under his hand. Then his groping fingers encountered something much bigger than a gold guinea and a different shape. It was more like a knob on the end of something with length, rather than a flat disc. After some more groping that cost him most of the finger nails of his right hand, he got a grip on the thing and pulled it free of the specie among which it lay.

The sheer deadweight of the piece astounded him and he almost dropped it as his hand came clear of the cavity; then he saw it in the light of day. It was a massive gold cross, about nine inches long and so big in section his clutching fingers were a couple of inches short of encircling the stem by which he held it. A ruby as big as a pigeon's egg was set in each of its four corners and emeralds cut like elongated lozenges, filled in the space between them.

For a moment Wick stared at the thing in stunned silence, unbelieving and even a little scared of its magnificence. Then, while he still hung there upside down over the fifty-foot drop, the true meaning of his find got through to him. It was not only final confirmation of the existence of Domingo's hoard, but proof positive that they had discovered its hiding-place.

From *The Albatross* by Richard Armstrong

Section A

Read the passage and answer the questions which follow.
You have 30 minutes and there are 30 marks.

1) What has Wick "reckoned" ? Lines 1-4 (2 marks)

2) Explain in your own words the joke in the comment: "Wick, being the featherweight, was given the privilege of putting his head in jeopardy." Lines 8-9 (4 marks)

3) What does Wick discover as soon as he is lowered over the edge? (2 marks)

4) A) Why do you think that Wick does not say anything when he finds the first coin? (1 mark)

   B) What does he do with the coin? (1 mark)

5) What is meant by the phrase "in the money" ? Line 19 (2 marks)

6) Using lines 19-28, what words, phrase and details show you that it was difficult for Wick to get at the treasure? Explain your choices. (6 marks)

7) Using lines 29-35, what does Wick discover and what details show the reader that it is an important discovery? (6 marks)

8) What are Wick's reactions as he looks at his discovery and why do you think that he might feel this way? (2 marks)

9) Explain the meaning of the following phrases as used in the passage:
   A) "tangle of vegetation" line 4
   B) "prolonged almost indefinitely" line 10
   C) "his groping fingers encountered something" line24
   D) "final confirmation" line 39 (4 marks)

30 marks total

Section B

Choose **ONE** of the following topics.

You have 30 minutes and there are 30 marks for this section

EITHER

A) Continue the story from the point at which the passage leaves off.

OR

B) Imagine you were one of the people who originally hid the treasure. Write about the hiding of the treasure.

OR

C) Wick finds a magnificent treasure in this story. Write a description of an object or a place which you could describe as "magnificent".