Independent Schools Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 11+

ENGLISH

PAPER 1

Practice Paper 2008–2009

Please read this information before the examination starts.

- You have 5 minutes' reading and planning time.
- After that you may start writing your answers when you are ready to do so. You have 40 minutes for writing.
- Answer in full sentences.
- Use your best handwriting and take care with spelling and punctuation.

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Read the passage below and answer the questions which follow it.

Matt has just moved to a new area. While out exploring on his bike, he has a strange experience.

The lane was hardly more than a track, plunging downhill between tall hedges. Taking a deep breath, he pushed off; he felt the rush of air against his face and through his hair, and the irresistible whizz of speed that sang in his ears. Hedges and trees rushed back in a blur, the wind battered his lashes and gusted into his mouth, his knuckles were tight on the handlebars. The bike was almost out of control in this headlong swoop – his reward for the tiring slog up. His eyes watered as he looked to the bend ahead. Here he'd have to brake, bring the giddy rush to an end, freewheeling on down the gentler slope that led to the main road.

The bend, and the solid trunk of a tree right on the corner, slammed into view faster than he could gather his wits. He heard no engine sound until the Land Rover was speeding towards him. Too late, he realised that it wasn't a bend, but a T-junction. He swerved violently to the right, braking hard, too hard, almost pitching himself over the handlebars. In an instant of panic he glimpsed a face behind the windscreen, hands on the wheel; heard the skid of tyres and the screech of brakes as the Land Rover loomed. It was inevitable; the second before the collision stretched out into long slowness. Then the impact of metal meeting metal jarred through him, and a floating sensation of being lifted right off the bike and dumped on the grass verge, sprawling on his side.

After a shocked moment, he registered that he was still alive. His eyes were open, staring at grass stems and ridgy tree bark, and he smelled the coolness of earth. The heavy fall had slammed the air out of his lungs and his first breath felt like surfacing from under water. He tried moving a hand, then his whole arm. One leg, then the other. Everything seemed to work. He pushed himself up and looked at the bike, flat on the empty road, one pedal still rotating.

The empty road.

Dizzy, he got up to his feet.

No Land Rover, no driver: just him and his bike. But he'd heard no sound of a vehicle driving away; no one had shouted to him, asked if he was all right. He looked along the road in all directions, all three branches of the T. Nothing. No one. No smell of burning rubber, no tyre marks, no exhaust fumes.

How long had he been lying there? Only a minute, surely?

Sick and shaken, he was unable to make sense of what had happened. Had he only dreamed the Land Rover? But he hadn't dreamed coming off his bike. His left arm and thigh were bruised and sore; looking down, he saw grass stains on his jeans and sweatshirt, and some muddy smears. Nothing worse.

His bike was unmarked. No buckling or bending; not even any scrape marks on its paint.

He righted it, checking that no spokes had been damaged. Then, pushing it to the verge, he came face to face with his initials, on the trunk of the tree,

M.L.

Matthew Lanchester.

1. Matt has just moved to the country. Pick out two words or phrases from the first paragraph which show that the story is set in the countryside. (2)

2. How can we tell in the first paragraph that Matt is cycling fast? Give two examples which show this and explain your choices. (2)

3. How does the writer show in this paragraph that Matt **enjoys** cycling fast? (2)

4. (a) What does 'inevitable' (line 14) mean? (1)

   (b) Why is the crash described as inevitable? (2)

5. Which words in paragraph 2 tell us that Matt has been hurt? (2)

6. After the crash, Matt's 'first breath felt like surfacing from under water' (line 20). Why do you think the writer describes it like this? (2)

7. After the crash, how can you tell that Matt is confused? (4)

8. Imagine you are Matt. Write down your thoughts and feelings about this incident, explaining what you think it all means. (8)

(Total marks: 25)

The passage is from *Lost Boy* by Linda Newbery, published by Orion Children's Books, a division of the Orion Publishing Group.

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