ST PAUL'S GIRLS' SCHOOL

First Year Entrance Examination

English

READING PASSAGE

SAMPLE

One hour and fifteen minutes
(including the 10 minutes reading time)

Read the passage inside and the short introduction to it very carefully. The numbers on the left of the passage are line numbers.

You should spend 10 minutes reading before you go on to answer the questions in the booklet. You may not write anything during this time. You will be told when the 10 minutes are up.

Read through the passage below slowly and carefully. It is in three parts: an introduction; a small story for the month of April; and a second story for the month of June. The events take place on the islands of Orkney, off the north coast of Scotland, and concern a tinker boy called Ikey. 'Tinker' is a word used in Scotland and the Orkneys for travellers, or 'gypsies' as they are sometimes called in England.

There was once a tribe of tinkers in Orkney, who went from island to island selling clothespegs and tin mugs and bootlaces.

There was a boy called Ikey in this sprawling rootless family. Ikey liked to wander off by himself. He wasn't missed, there were so many laughing fighting sisters and brothers and cousins.

Sometimes the old tinker chief might say, 'Where's that boy Ikey? I haven't seen him for a week or two.' And a tinker wife would reply, 'Ikey's like the moon, he's here and gone again.' A tinker lass would say, 'Ikey's like a wave of the sea, he comes shining among us and then he's nothing but echoes and spray.'

The old chief said, 'Ikey is the tinker of the tinkers. He's even an outcast from us vagrants. He's like the wind on the hill…'

April

Miss Instone the teacher in Greenvoe village blew her whistle and all the island children – twenty of them – went swirling in through the door of the small school.

Ikey looked from the road outside.

Miss Instone took the whistle from her mouth and she said, 'You, boy, why aren't you at school? You're the age for school attendance, I know that…Why can't your mother clean you up, you're filthy! Why can't she put a stitch in your rags? Oh, you're a tinker boy, are you…Well all the bairns in my school are neat and washed and shod, however poor they are…I don't want them getting fleas and lice…So you'd better not come in, not today…Still, realise this, you little wretch, you're breaking the law by not attending school. Your parents – if you have any – could be in serious trouble…'

Miss Instone went into the classroom and shut the door. 'Slates out!' she shouted. 'Spell the following words…'

On the hillside, a mile further on, Ikey sat on a stone. A little company of early daffodils, in bud still, hung their heads nearby. A small cloud moved over, scattering drops of rain. The green heads twinkled. Then there was a wash of sun across the hill.

A lark went up and up into the new patch of blue and was lost, but the sky went on ringing, it seemed even louder, over the hill of Greenvoe.

SAMPLE

In the field above, a ewe called anxiously for her lamb, wandering here and there among the rocks and little marshes. (There had been much rain this April.) Then Ikey was aware of a small flutter beside him. It was a lamb like a tiny masker, all black with a white mask for eyes and white forelegs and a white tail. Ikey thought it strange that the very young have no fear, but soon the world is full of shapes of dread. The harlequin lamb nuzzled Ikey's knee. Ikey lifted it and carried it to the ewe.

The lark went on stammering out sweetness between two rain clouds.

Ikey was on the road, passing the small farm of Cleftbreck. He moved round Cleftbreck in a wide circle, because Rover the dog there had a bad reputation – indeed, once Rover had ripped a rag out of Ikey's trousers, and Ikey hadn't stopped running for a mile, his rags all a-flutter, his breath coming in sobs and gasps…

But Rover must have been out with Berston the farmer at the hill, for there was only Mistress Berston coming in from the henhouse with an aluminium bowl brimming over with eggs.

'Is that you, Ikey?' said the farm wife. 'Hold out your cap. I have more eggs than I know what to do with.'

Ikey held out his bonnet and Mistress Berston put six warm eggs into it, three brown and three white.

Ikey had never learned to say thank-you but his teeth flashed in his tinker face.

He hadn't eaten for two days. He broke an egg with his thumb and emptied it down his throat, then another…

The big cloud that had covered the sun ten minutes before dropped its rain, a lingering prismatic shower. Mistress Berston drew her shawl about her head and scurried indoors.

Ikey held his face up to the rain until his hair and his hands were streaming, and his hundred rags clung wetly about him. The sun came out again. Ikey glittered like a fish or a bird. The whole island was clean and sparkling.

Ikey broke another egg into his mouth. His throat wobbled.

Ikey ran back across the hill. More lambs had been born since he had sat on the stone at lark-rise.

As he looked, there was a faint stirring in the cluster of daffodil buds. Slowly, slowly, with a gesture of delight, the first daffodil opened in the wind.

June

The fishermen of Farn village were going down to their boat *Kestrel* one morning when whom should they meet but Merran with the black whisker.

SAMPLE

No fisherman would dare put to sea, having met Merran.

It was a promising fishing day. They sat on their boat and smoked and complained about witches and the evil eye.

'Look!' said Willie the famous creel-maker. 'Here's that tinker boy coming.'

Ikey was roaming here and there among the rockpools, looking for sea treasure, a salt-eaten boot or a broken oar.

'An innocent boy like Ikey might cancel a spell,' said Thorfinn, whose hooks were sharper and more barbed than any in Orkney.

Ikey refused to go out in the *Kestrel*. 'You don't have to do anything,' said the oldest fisherman, Jeemo. 'Just sit on the thwart and enjoy the sail.'

Ikey sat in the stern thwart. The sea got rough beyond Rousay, and Ikey leaned over the stern and spasms of sickness went through him.

But the lines came up burgeoning with haddocks, again and again. It was the best morning the Farn men had had fishing all that June. The five baskets amidship were over-brimming with fine fat haddocks.

At last they turned the *Kestrel* for home.

Ikey floundered ashore like a dying seal, gray in the face.

'The seasickness never killed anybody,' said the old skipper. 'You'll be as right as rain once you're on the shore road.'

There was a great feast of fish round the tinkers' fire that night.

Ikey's appetite was sharper than any seal's.

'I'm never going fishing again,' said Ikey, licking cod juice from his fingers. 'Never.'

SAMPLE

ST PAUL'S GIRLS' SCHOOL

Name: _____ Group: _____

First Year Entrance Examination

English

QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOKLET

One hour and fifteen minutes
(including the 10 minutes reading time)

There are two sections in this booklet

Spend no more than 35 minutes on Section A
Spend no more than 25 minutes on Section B

This will leave you about 5 minutes for checking

Write all your answers in this booklet
When you finish Section A you may go straight on to Section B
There are extra pages at the back if you need more space
Don't write in the margins

SAMPLE

SECTION A **30 MARKS**

Spend no more than 35 minutes on this section

- Keep looking back at the passage as you answer the questions
- Take care to do exactly what the question asks you to do
- The marks for each question are shown on the right
- Do NOT write in the margins
- Write your answers in full sentences

SAMPLE

1 **In your own words**, say what you learn about the life of the tinkers in lines 1 to 5. (2 marks)

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2 Ikey is compared to a number of different things in the passage as a whole. Find three things to which he is compared and list them; then write **one sentence** explaining what these comparisons, taken together, tell us about Ikey. (3 marks)

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3 Re-read what Miss Instone says to Ikey. Does she want Ikey to attend her school or not? Give a reason for your answer. (2 marks)

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4 What impression does the author want to create when he writes ‘a wash of sun’ in line 33? (3 marks)

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5 When Ikey thinks about the world being full of ‘shapes of dread’ in line 41, what things might he have in mind? Think about Ikey’s life and experiences before you answer and explain why you have chosen the things you mention. (4 marks)

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SAMPLE

6 Why do you think Mistress Berston gives Ikey the eggs? (2 marks)

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7 What do you find interesting about the difference between Mistress Berston's and Ikey's responses to the rain (lines 61 to 67)? (3 marks)

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8 Why do the fishermen want Ikey to go out to sea with them? Give as full an explanation as you can. (3 marks)

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9 'burgeoning' comes from the French word 'bourgeonner' meaning 'to bud'. Why do you think the writer has used it in line 93? (2 marks)

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10 What kind of boy is Ikey? Write a paragraph about him, mentioning three separate things he does in the passage and explaining what each one tells us about him. (6 marks)

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SAMPLE

SECTION B **20 MARKS**

Spend about 25 minutes on this section

Answer both questions

1 Children go to school to learn but they can also learn many things outside school. Write a short paragraph consisting of **no more than three sentences** about the kinds of things children learn outside school. (5 marks)

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2 Write an Ikey story for the month of January. Write **between one and two pages.** (15 marks)

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Extra paper .....

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