ST PAUL'S GIRLS' SCHOOL

First Year Entrance Examination

English

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

SAMPLE

READING PASSAGE

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.

A strange cylinder has crash landed on Horsell Common, near Woking, South-West of London. A crowd has gathered at the edge of the pit formed when the cylinder hit the ground.

The end of the cylinder was being screwed out from within. Nearly two feet of shining screw projected. Somebody blundered against me, and I narrowly missed being pitched onto the top of the screw. I turned, and as I did so the screw must have come out, for the lid of the cylinder fell upon the gravel with a ringing concussion. I stuck my elbow into the person behind me, and turned my head towards the Thing again. For a moment that circular cavity seemed perfectly black. I had the sunset in my eyes.

I think everyone expected to see a man emerge - possibly something a little unlike us terrestrial men, but in all essentials a man. I know I did. But, looking, I presently saw something stirring within the shadow: greyish billowy movements, one above another, and then two luminous disks - like eyes. Then something resembling a little grey snake, about the thickness of a walking stick, coiled up out of the writhing middle, and wriggled in the air towards me - and then another.

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned, keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate exclamations on all sides. There was a general movement backwards. I saw a man struggling on the edge of the pit. I found myself alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off. I looked again at the cylinder, and ungovernable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and staring.

A big greyish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear, was rising slowly and painfully out of the cylinder. As it bulged up and caught the light, it glistened like wet leather.

Two large dark-coloured eyes were regarding me steadfastly. The mass that framed them, the head of the thing, was rounded, and had, one might say, a face. There was a mouth under the eyes, the lipless brim of which quivered and panted, and dropped saliva. The whole creature heaved and pulsated convulsively. A lank tentacular appendage gripped the edge of the cylinder, another swayed in the air.

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Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedgelike lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth - above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes - were at once vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the tedious movements unspeakably nasty. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread.

Suddenly the monster vanished. It had toppled over the brim of the cylinder and fallen into the pit, with a thud like the fall of a great mass of leather. I heard it give a peculiar thick cry, and forthwith another of these creatures appeared darkly in the deep shadow of the pit.

I turned and, running madly, made for the first group of trees, perhaps a hundred yards away; but I ran slantingly and stumbling, for I could not avert my face from these things.

There, among some young pine trees and furze bushes, I stopped, panting, and waited further developments. The common round the sand pits was dotted with people, standing like myself in a half-fascinated terror, staring at these creatures, or rather at the heaped gravel at the edge of the pit in which they lay. And then, with a renewed horror, I saw a round, black object bobbing up and down on the edge of the pit. It was the head of the man who had fallen in, but showing as a little black object against the hot western sun. Now he got his shoulder and knee up, and again he seemed to slip back until only his head was visible. Suddenly he vanished, and I could have fancied a faint shriek had reached me. I had a momentary impulse to go back and help him that my fears overruled.

Everything was then quite invisible, hidden by the deep pit and the heap of sand that the fall of the cylinder had made. Anyone coming along the road from Chobham or Woking would have been amazed at the sight - a dwindling multitude of perhaps a hundred people or more standing in a great irregular circle, in ditches, behind bushes, behind gates and hedges, saying little to one another and that in short, excited shouts, and staring, staring hard at a few heaps of sand.

After the glimpse I had had of the Martians emerging from the cylinder in which they had come to the earth from their planet, a kind of fascination paralysed my actions. I remained standing knee-deep in the heather, staring at the mound that hid them. I was a battleground of fear

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and curiosity.

I did not dare to go back towards the pit, but I felt a passionate longing to peer into it. I began walking, therefore, in a big curve, seeking some point of vantage and continually looking at the sand heaps that hid these new-comers to our earth. Once a leash of thin black whips, like the arms of an octopus, flashed across the sunset and was immediately withdrawn, and afterwards a thin rod rose up, joint by joint, bearing at its top a circular disk that spun with a wobbling motion. What could be going on there?

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ST PAUL'S GIRLS' SCHOOL

First Year Entrance Examination
SAMPLE PAPER

English

QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOKLET

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

Write all your answers in this booklet

There are extra pages at the back if you need more space

Don't write in the margins

SAMPLE

- Keep looking back at the passage as you answer the questions
- Take care to do exactly what the question asks you to do
- There are no marks awarded for individual questions – your paper will be assessed as a whole
- Use the space provided for your answers as a guide as to how much we would like you to write
- Write your answers in full sentences

1 Re-read the first paragraph carefully. Why does the narrator fail to see the cylinder open?

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2 In lines 13-15 the narrator says that 'something resembling a little grey snake, about the thickness of a walking stick, coiled up out of the writhing middle, and wriggled in the air towards me--and then another'. What part of the Martian's body do you think this 'something' might be and what is its purpose?

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3 In your own words, explain what happens in the end to the man 'struggling on the edge of the pit' in line 22?

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4 Re-read the paragraph beginning 'Those who have never seen a living Martian…'. The narrator says that he feels 'disgust and dread' when he looks at the Martian. Choose two words or phrases which make you feel his disgust and dread, and explain how they do it.

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5 What does the word 'fungoid' (line 43) mean and why does the writer use it here?

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6 The narrator is clearly scared by what he sees in the pit. Why do you think he doesn't simply run away? Give as full an explanation as you can.

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7 Do you think that the narrator is right to regard the Martians as 'unspeakably nasty'? Give reasons for your answer, mentioning things in the passage that have led you to this conclusion.

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8 Re-read the paragraph beginning ‘Suddenly the monster vanished’. The writer describes the monster falling ‘with a thud like the fall of a great mass of leather’.

a) What does this phrase make you think about the Martian’s body?

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b) Create a description of your own to complete the following sentence: ‘I heard it give a peculiar cry like...’

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9 What kind of person is the narrator? Write a paragraph about him, mentioning three separate things that he says or does and what these tell us about him.

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10 Imagine that you are on Horsell Common and you feel only curiosity about the Martians and no fear or disgust. You approach the Martians. How do you address them and what do you say? You can assume that Martians understand English.

SAMPLE

11 Imagine that you are one of the Martians. Write a letter home, giving your first impressions of Planet Earth. You can assume that Martians can write English.

Write between one and two pages.

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Extra paper

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