Name:	Age:

Leicester High School for Girls

Specimen Entrance Examination

English for Year 8 Entry

Time: 1 hour

Write your answers in the spaces provided

There are two sections:

Section A Reading Task
Section B Writing Task

Spend 30 minutes on each.

Marks will be given for presentation, spelling and punctuation so check your work carefully.

Section A: Reading Task

Read the passage carefully, then answer the questions fully, in complete sentences, referring to the text whenever possible.

From 'Watership Down' by Richard Adams

The primroses were over. Toward the edge of the wood, where the ground became open and sloped down to an old fence and a brambly ditch beyond, only a few fading patches of pale yellow still showed among the dog's mercury and the oak-tree roots. On the other side of the fence, the upper part of the field was full of rabbit holes. In places the grass was gone altogether and everywhere there were clusters of dry droppings, through which nothing but the ragwort would grow. A hundred yards away, at the bottom of the slope, ran the brook, no more than three feet wide, half choked with kingcups, watercress and blue brooklime. The cart track crossed by a brick culvert and climbed the opposite slope to a five-barred gate in the thorn hedge. The gate led into the lane.

The May sunset was red in clouds, and there was still half an hour to twilight. The dry slope was dotted with rabbits - some nibbling at the thin grass near their holes, others pushing further down to look for dandelions or perhaps a cowslip that the rest had missed. Here and there one sat upright on an ant heap and looked about, with ears erect and nose in the wind. But a blackbird, singing undisturbed on the outskirts of the wood, showed that there was nothing alarming there, and in the other direction, along the brook, all was plain to be seen, empty and quiet. The warren was at peace.

At the top of the bank, close to the wild cherry where the blackbird sang, was a little group of holes almost hidden by brambles. In the **green half-light,** at the mouth of one of these holes, two rabbits were sitting together side by side. At length, the larger of the two came out, slipped along the bank under cover of the brambles and so down into the ditch and up into the field. A few moments later the other followed.

The first rabbit stopped in a sunny patch and scratched his ear with rapid movements of his hind leg. Although he was a yearling and still below fall weight, he had not the harassed look of most "outskirters" - that is, the rank and file of ordinary rabbits in their first year who, lacking either **aristocratic parentage** or unusual size and strength, get sat on by their elders and live as best they can -- often in the open -- on the edge of their warren. He looked as though he knew how to take care of himself. **There was a shrewd, buoyant air about him** as he sat up, looked around and rubbed both front paws over his nose. As soon as he was satisfied that all was well, he laid back his ears and set to work on the grass.

His companion seemed less at ease. He was small, with wide, staring eyes and a way of raising and turning his head which suggested not so much caution as a kind of **ceaseless, nervous**

tension. His nose moved continually, and when a bumblebee flew humming to a thistle bloom behind him, he jumped and spun round with a start that sent two nearby rabbits scurrying for holes before the nearest, a buck with black-tipped ears, recognized him and returned to feeding.

1. Name two of the plants or flowers that are growing in the field. (2)

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2. Which words does the author use in the second paragraph to suggest that the 'warren was at peace'? (2)

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_____

3. Explain what an "outskirter" is. (3)

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4. Explain the meaning of the following phrases as they appear in the passage: (4)

"green half light" (paragraph 3)

_____

_____

_____

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"aristocratic parentage" (paragraph 4)

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“a shrewd, buoyant air” (paragraph 4)

“ceaseless, nervous tension” (paragraph 5)

5. In the fourth paragraph, how does the author describe the movements of the rabbits and why is it effective? (2)

6. In the fifth paragraph, how does the author give the impression that the second rabbit is nervous? Select some interesting phrases to support what you say. (4)

7. Explain what time of day it is and how you know this. (2)

8. Examine how the author uses language to describe the setting of the extract (the rabbit warren and surrounding fields) Select some descriptions which you have not already written about that help you picture the rabbit warren and discuss why they work so well.

(6)

25 marks

Section B: Writing Task

Either:

'My home'

Write a descriptive passage about what 'home' means to you, making your description as lively and interesting as possible.

Or:

"There is no point in recycling, unless everyone agrees to do it."

Write an argument essay in which you discuss this statement.
Include points *for* and *against* the subject, making it clear in your conclusion which view point you believe.

25 marks