St Albans School English Department
12+ Exam

10 minutes + 80 minutes = 90 minutes

- **You need three sheets of A4 paper. Label two sheets Section B and the third Section C. Write your NAME and SCHOOL on the top of each sheet of paper. You must answer Section B and Section C on DIFFERENT sheets of A4 paper.**
- **Section A will be completed on the separate paper you have been given. Make sure your NAME and FORM are written in the spaces provided.**
- **Read the questions and instructions carefully.**
- **There are 10 marks available for Section A, 35 marks available for Section B and 25 for Section C. There are 70 marks available for the whole paper.**
- **Spend 10 MINUTES on Section A (Grammar and Punctuation)**
- **Spend 50 MINUTES on Section B, which is a test of Reading comprehension. Your invigilator will warn you when you should start the next Section**
- **Spend 30 MINUTES on Section C: do ONE of the two Writing tasks.**
- **You may NOT use a dictionary or ask your invigilator any questions about the paper once the exam has begun**
- **You should underline useful material on your question paper.**

English Exam Section B

Reading Fiction (50 minutes)

Spend <u>10 minutes</u> <u>reading</u> the following extract carefully and then answer all of the questions on the following pages.

The extract is taken from the beginning of a short story set in India.

'Games at Twilight' by Anita Desai

It was still too hot to play outdoors. They had had their tea, they had been washed and had their hair brushed, and after the long day of confinement in the house that was not cool but at least a protection from the sun, the children strained to get out. Their faces were red and bloated with the effort, but their mother would not open the door, everything was still curtained and shuttered in a way that stifled the children, made them feel that their lungs were stuffed with cotton wool and their noses with dust and if they didn't burst out into the light and see the sun and feel the air, they would choke.

"Please, ma, please," they begged. "We'll play in the veranda and porch—we won't go a step out of the porch."

"You will, I know you will, and then——"

"No—we won't, we won't," they wailed so horrendously that she actually let down the bolt of the front door so that they burst out like seeds from a crackling, overripe pod into the veranda, with such wild, maniacal yells that she retreated to her bath and the shower of talcum powder and the fresh sari that were to help her face the summer evening.

They faced the afternoon. It was too hot. Too bright. The white walls of the veranda glared stridently in the sun. The bougainvillea[1] hung about it, purple and magenta, in livid balloons. The garden outside was like a tray made of beaten brass, flattened out on the red gravel and the stony soil in all shades of metal—aluminum, tin, copper, and brass. No life stirred at this arid time of day—the birds still drooped, like dead fruit, in the papery tents of the trees; some squirrels lay limp on the wet earth under the garden tap. The outdoor dog lay stretched as if dead on the veranda mat, his paws and ears and tail all reaching out like dying travelers in search of water. He rolled his eyes at the children—two white marbles rolling in the purple sockets, begging for sympathy—and attempted to lift his tail in a wag but could not. It only twitched and lay still.

Then, perhaps roused by the shrieks of the children, a band of parrots suddenly fell out of the eucalyptus tree, tumbled frantically in the still, sizzling air, then sorted themselves out into battle

[1] Brightly coloured flowering plant

formation and streaked away across the white sky.

The children, too, felt released. They too began tumbling, shoving, pushing against each other, frantic to start. Start what? Start their business. The business of the children's day which is—play.

"Let's play hide-and-seek."

"Who'll be It?"

"You be It."

"Why should I? You be——"

"You're the eldest——"

"That doesn't mean——"

The shoves became harder. Some kicked out. The motherly Mira intervened. She pulled the boys roughly apart. There was a tearing sound of cloth, but it was lost in the heavy panting and angry grumbling, and no one paid attention to the small sleeve hanging loosely off a shoulder.

"Make a circle, make a circle!" she shouted, firmly pulling and pushing till a kind of vague circle was formed. "Now clap!" she roared, and, clapping, they all chanted in melancholy unison: "Dip, dip, dip—my blue ship——" and every now and then one or the other saw he was safe by the way his hands fell at the crucial moment—palm on palm, or back of hand on palm—and dropped out of the circle with a yell and a jump of relief and jubilation.

Raghu was It. He started to protest, to cry "You cheated—Mira cheated—Anu cheated——" but it was too late, the others had all already streaked away. There was no one to hear when he called out, "Only in the veranda—the porch—Ma said—Ma *said* to stay in the porch!" No one had stopped to listen, all he saw were their brown legs flashing through the dusty shrubs, scrambling up brick walls, leaping over compost heaps and hedges, and then the porch stood empty in the purple shade of the bougainvillea, and the garden was as empty as before; even the limp squirrels had whisked away, leaving everything gleaming, brassy, and bare.

30

35

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Now turn over the page for the questions.

Answer all of the following questions.

1. At the beginning of the story, what is it the children want to do and why?

[2 marks]

2. Identify an image in the opening paragraph and comment on its effect.

[3 marks]

3. What is their mother's initial reaction to what they want to do and why?

[2 marks]

4. What is the effect of the writer using the phrase 'They faced the afternoon.' At the start of line 15?

[3 marks]

5. (a) Select two quotations from lines 15 – 23 which the writer uses to describe the effect the weather is having on the animals.

   (b) For each quotation**, explain** how the writer's choices of **language** give you a vivid impression of the ways the animals are feeling.

[6 marks]

6. Identify a technique the writer uses to describe the parrots in lines 24 – 26 and explain what this suggests about the ways the parrots have been affected by the weather and the noisy children.

[4 marks]

7. What does the writer suggest about the children in lines 27 - 37? Select two quotations to support your answer.

[4 marks]

8. Re-read the dialogue in lines 29 – 34. Why do you think the writer has chosen not to indicate who is speaking each line?

[3 marks]

9. How does the writer present the character of Mira towards the end of the passage. Use one quotation to support your answer.

[3 marks]

10. How do you feel about Raghu at the end of the passage and what makes you feel this way? Use quotation to support your answer.

[5 marks]

Now turn over for Section C

English Exam Section C

Writing Task (30 minutes)

Make sure you begin this section on a <u>DIFFERENT</u> sheet of lined paper.

You will be given marks for accuracy, the way you arrange paragraphs, and the interest of your writing.

Complete <u>one</u> of the following questions. Write no more than one side of A4.

EITHER:

1. Imagine a child's secret hiding place. Write a **description** of this place.

Try to make it as **vivid** as possible for your reader. Make sure you:

- give your description an interesting opening and closing sentence.
- use sensory description
- write a genuine description not a story.

[25 marks]

OR:

2. Write a speech to be delivered at a gaming <u>or</u> sporting conference **persuading** your audience that it is sometimes acceptable to cheat. Entitle your speech: *Why cheating can be a good thing.*

Try to make your writing as interesting as you can. Make sure you:

- write forcefully but **not** in an aggressive or rude way.
- address and involve your audience, finishing in a clever and memorable way.
- use persuasive devices.

[25 marks]

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK YOUR WORK FOR MISTAKES

End of exam