BENENDEN

Lower School Entrance Exam 2016

ENGLISH

13+

1 Hour

Name: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

Instructions to Candidates:

- Answer **both** questions – all parts of Question 1, and Question 2 which is on Page 9.
- Total points for exam = 100

QUESTION 1

Read the passage below and then answer the questions that follow it.

The passage is an extract from "The House on Mango Street" by Sandra Cisneros and answer the questions below:

We didn't always live on Mango Street. Before that we lived on Loomis on the third floor, and before that we lived on Keeler. Before Keeler it was Paulina, and before that I can't remember. But what I remember most is moving a lot. Each time it seemed there'd be one more of us. By the time we got to Mango Street we were six – Mama, Papa, Carlos, Kiki, my sister Nenny and me.

The house on Mango Street is ours, and we don't have to pay rent to anybody, or share the yard with the people downstairs, or be careful not to make too much noise, and there isn't a landlord banging on the ceiling with a broom. But even so, it's not the house we'd thought we'd get.

We had to leave the flat on Loomis quick. The water pipes broke and the landlord wouldn't fix them because the house was too old. We had to leave fast. We were using the washroom next door and carrying water over in empty milk gallons. That's why Mama and Papa looked for a house, and that's why we moved into the house on Mango Street, far away, on the other side of town.

They always told us that one day we would move into a house, a real house that would be ours for always so we wouldn't have to move each year. And our house would have running water and pipes that worked. And inside it would have real stairs, not hallway stairs, but stairs inside like the houses on TV. And we'd have a basement and at least three washrooms so when we took a bath we wouldn't have to tell everybody. Our house would be white with trees around it, a great big yard and grass growing without a fence. This was the house Papa talked about when he held a lottery ticket and this was the house Mama dreamed up in the stories she told use before we went to bed.

But the house on Mango Street is not the way they told it at all. It's small and red with tight steps in front and windows so small you'd think they were holding their breath. Bricks are crumbling in places, and the front door is so swollen you have to push hard to get in. There is no front yard, only four little elms the city planted by the curb. Out back is a small garage for the car we don't own yet and a small yard that looks smaller between the two buildings on either side. There are stairs in our house, but they're ordinary hallway stairs, and the house has only one washroom. Everybody has to share a bedroom – Mama and Papa, Carlos and Kiki, me and Nenny.

Once when we were living on Loomis, a nun from my school passed by and saw me playing out front. The laundromat downstairs had been boarded up because it had

been robbed two days before and the owner had painted on the wood YES WE'RE OPEN so as not to lose business.

Where do you live? she asked.

There, I said pointing up to the third floor.

You live *there?*

There. I had to look to where she pointed – the third floor, the paint peeling, wooden bars Papa had nailed on the windows so we wouldn't fall out. You live *there*? The way she said it made me feel like nothing. *There*. I lived *there*. I nodded.

I knew then I had to have a house. A real house. One I could point to. But this isn't it. The house on Mango Street isn't it. For the time being, Mama says. Temporary, says Papa. But I know how those things go.

A) i) Why do you think the family had to keep moving house? (3 marks)

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ii) Why did they have to leave the flat on Loomis so quickly? (3 marks)

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iii) What is good about living in their own house? (4 marks)

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B) Describe in your own words what the family's dream house would be like and in what ways the house on Mango Street is different? (15 marks)

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C) What do you learn about the narrator's character and life from the way this extract is written? *Use examples from the text, and include any literary terminology you might be familiar with when writing your analysis. (*25 marks)

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QUESTION 2

Write a description of your ideal place to live. It can be anywhere you like: real, imagined, city, countryside or outer space. Use your writing abilities and the senses to make your writing vivid and interesting for the reader.

(50 marks)

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