KING HENRY VIII SCHOOL

ENGLISH 13+ EXAMINATION

Time allowed - 1 hour

Section A: Shooting An Elephant

You are advised to spend no more that 30 minutes on this section.

In the days of the British Empire, the young George Orwell was a police officer in Burma. Whilst he was still quite inexperienced, some Burmese villagers came to him, shouting that an elephant was on the rampage, crushing house and killing anyone who got in the way. Orwell knew he had a legal right to shoot the elephant if it was a danger to the public, but he also knew the elephant's owner would be very upset and angry if he did this. George Orwell did not relish the task of killing the creature, but he felt he should 'take charge' and do something to impress the Burmese. Anything else would be a humiliation.....

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to with, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behaviour. If he charged I could shoot, if he took no notice of me it would be safe to leave him until the mahout* came back. But I also knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do.

The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sign, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one should shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed at his ear-hole; actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick – one never does when a shot goes home – but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed like a long time – it might have been five seconds, I dare say – he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, his legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shock that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him and he seemed to tower upwards like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

*mahout – *an elephant owner or handler*

Now turn over

Questions

1. What does the second sentence in the second paragraph suggest to you about the crowd? 2 marks

2. Find another sentence elsewhere which gives the same impression. 2 marks

3. In the second paragraph, how can you tell that Orwell is inexperienced at shooting elephants? 5 marks

4. The word "kick" in the third paragraph is used as a metaphor. What is the metaphor describing here? 2 marks

5. When Orwell uses the expression "goes home" in the same sentence, what does he mean? 2 marks

6. "He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered." Explain what "stirred" and "line" mean in the context of this sentence. 2 marks

7. Look at the two sentences in the third paragraph which start with, "He looked suddenly stricken.." and end with, "... his mouth slobbered". 3 marks

   How does the choice of words help Orwell to communicate how unpleasant an experience this was? Try to give three or more examples.

8. Find any two similes from the whole passage, and explain why they succeed in creating a vivid picture in your mind. 2 marks

9. What do you think is meant by the sentence, "An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him"? 5 marks

Section B

Either:

a) Write a story in which you are made to do something cruel because of peer pressure or what others might think. 25 marks

Or

b) *Is it right for humans to capture wild animals?* 25 marks

Imagine that a circus which uses trained wild animals is coming to your town. Will you encourage your fellow pupils to attend?

Write a speech to give to your year group that is either for or against the circus. You should try to give reasons for your views and make the speech persuasive.