TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Test for Entrance into Year 9 or 10: Specimen A

English

Paper 1

Time allowed : 90 minutes

Total marks : 50

Answer ALL the questions on the lined paper provided

Dictionaries may **NOT** be used.

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on each section.

Section A – Prose

Read the following passage taken from the novel 'A Study in Scarlet' by Arthur Conan Doyle and answer all the questions that follow. The narrator of the passage Dr Watson describes his new room-mate Sherlock Holmes, whom he is meeting for the first time, and tries to work out what Holmes might do for a living.

Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways, and his habits were regular. It was rare for him to be up after ten at night, and he had invariably breakfasted and gone out before I rose in the morning. Sometimes he spent his day at the chemical laboratory, sometimes in the dissecting-rooms, and occasionally in long walks, which appeared to take him into the lowest portions of the City. Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him; but now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving a muscle from morning to night. On these occasions I have noticed such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic, had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion.

As the weeks went by, my interest in him and my curiosity as to his aims in life, gradually deepened and increased. His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch, as I frequently had occasion to observe when I watched him manipulating his fragile philosophical instruments.

The reader may set me down as a hopeless busybody, when I confess how much this man stimulated my curiosity, and how often I endeavored to break through the reticence which he showed on all that concerned himself. Before pronouncing judgment, however, be it remembered, how objectless was my life, and how little there was to engage my attention. My health forbade me from venturing out unless the weather was exceptionally genial, and I had no friends who would call upon me and break the monotony of my daily existence. Under these circumstances, I eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion, and spent much of my time in endeavoring to unravel it.

His ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge. Of contemporary literature, philosophy and politics he appeared to know next to nothing. My surprise reached a climax, however, when I found incidentally that he was ignorant of the Copernican Theory of the composition of the Solar System. That any civilized human being in this nineteenth century should not be aware that the earth travelled round the sun appeared to be to me such an extraordinary fact that I could hardly realize it.

"You appear to be astonished," he said, smiling at my expression of surprise. "Now that I do know it I shall do my best to forget it."

"To forget it!"

"You see," he explained, "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skillful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes

into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones."

"But the Solar System!" I protested.

"What the deuce is it to me?" he interrupted impatiently; "you say that we go round the sun. If we went round the moon it would not make a pennyworth of difference to me or to my work."

1. What impression do you get of Sherlock Holmes from his habits as described in the first paragraph? Choose three quotations and discuss them. [6]

2. How does the writer bring his description of Sherlock Holmes in the second paragraph to life through his choice of physical detail? Choose four quotations and discuss them, making any relevant comments about the language used. [8]

3. What impression do you get of the character of Dr Watson from the third paragraph? Choose three quotations and discuss them in your answer. [6]

4. What are we supposed to make of Holmes's deliberate ignorance of the workings of the solar system? Choose quotations from the second half of the passage, from 'His ignorance was as remarkable…' to the end, to explain how the writer presents Sherlock Holmes's character here. [5]

Total for Section A: 25 marks

TURN OVER FOR SECTION B

Section B: Poetry

The poem below was written by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Read the poem carefully and then answer all the questions which follow.

The Cloud

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail[1] of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling[2] of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph[3],
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

1. There are four quotations underlined; explain how in each one the poet creates a powerful effect through the specific language used. [8]

2. Choose four more phrases or images from this poem and explain why each one is effective in suggesting something about the power of the cloud. [8]

3. This poem personifies the cloud, making it seem human. What kind of a character do you think the cloud has, and why? Give examples from the poem's language and phrasing to explain your ideas. You may refer to quotations you have already discussed in previous answers, and should use a minimum of five or six quotations. [9]

Total for Section B: 25 marks

END OF PAPER

[1] A whip
[2] A baby that has been nursed
[3] A funeral monument