OUNDLE

School

2016 Academic Scholarship

English

Time allowed: 2 hours

Instructions

- **Dictionaries are not allowed**
- Answer on lined paper. Clearly mark your name at the top of each sheet of paper you use.
- Answer ALL the questions in Section A. Choose ONE question from Section B. You should divide your time equally between both sections.
- You are expected to write clearly and accurately in your answers. You should leave some time towards the end of the examination to check your work carefully.
- The maximum number of marks for this paper is 50

Section A: poetry comprehension

You should spend 60 minutes on this section.

In both 'The Thrush's Nest' and 'A Blackbird Singing' the poet describes his reaction to the sound of a bird singing. Read both poems and answer the questions that follow. Questions 1 and 2 are about 'The Thrush's Nest'. Questions 3 and 4 are about 'A Blackbird Singing'. Question 5 invites you to consider both poems.

The Thrush's Nest by John Clare

Within a thick and spreading hawthorn bush
That overhung a molehill large and round,
I heard from morn to morn a merry thrush
Sing hymns to sunrise, and I drank the sound
With joy; and often, an intruding guest,
I watched her secret toil from day to day –
How true she warped* the moss to form a nest,
And modelled it within with wood and clay;
And by and by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs, as bright as flowers,
Ink-spotted over shells of greeny blue;
And there I witnessed, in the sunny hours,
A brood of nature's minstrels* chirp and fly,
Glad as the sunshine and the laughing sky.

*warped: turned or twisted
*minstrels: travelling musicians

A Blackbird Singing by R. S. Thomas

It seems wrong that out of this bird,
Black, bold, a suggestion of dark
Places about it, there yet should come
Such rich music, as though the notes'
Ore* were changed to a rare metal
At one touch of that bright bill.

You have heard it often, alone at your desk
In green April, your mind drawn
Away from its work by sweet disturbance
Of the mild evening outside your room.

A slow singer, but loading each phrase
With history's overtones, love, joy
And grief learned by his dark tribe
In other orchards and passed on
Instinctively as they are now,
But fresh always with new tears.

*ore: rock containing important elements, including metals

On 'The Thrush's Nest'

1. Using your own words, name three things we learn about the thrush in this poem. (3 marks)
2. Choose any two words or phrases that you find particularly interesting. Explain why you have chosen them and what you think they contribute to the poem as a whole. (4 marks)

On 'A Blackbird Singing'

3. Look again at the first stanza. Using your own words, what does the poet think about the blackbird's song? (3 marks)
4. The last stanza says that there is something sad about the blackbird's singing. Using two quotations from the stanza to support your answer, show how the poet suggests this sadness. (5 marks)

On both poems

5. Using quotations from both poems to support your answer explain which poem you prefer and why. (10 marks)

   In your answer you might like to comment on:
   - what each poet thinks about the bird's singing
   - the effectiveness of comparisons, such as metaphors and similes
   - the sound of the words in each poem and the way they are grouped together
   - the form and structure of each poem

TURN OVER

Section B: Composition

Spend about 60 minutes on this section

The following are all opening sentences from a selection of different novels. Write a story or a piece of descriptive writing using ONE of these sentences as your opening sentence. Make your writing interesting and original. You are reminded of the importance of clear and accurate written English and of careful presentation in your answer. All questions carry equal marks.

1. 'It was a diamond all right, shining in the grass half a dozen feet from the blue brick wall.'

(25 marks)

OR

2. 'It starts and ends with the knife.'

(25 marks)

OR

3. 'Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him.'

(25 marks)

OR

4. 'This is the saddest story I have ever heard'.

(25 marks)

OR

5. 'In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains.'

(25 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS