DULWICH COLLEGE

YEAR 9 ENTRANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION

2009

ENGLISH

1 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES

There are two parts to this examination

There is 10 minutes reading time at the start of the examination
You are advised to spend 50 minutes on Section A and 30 minutes on Section B

NAME:

Answer SECTION A and SECTION B

You should spend 10 minutes reading the paper very carefully before you start writing. Spend no more than 50 minutes on Section A.

SECTION A: Prose Comprehension [60 marks]

Read the following passage from *My Family and other Animals* by Gerald Durrell, then answer the questions which follow it. The meanings of more difficult words (underlined) are given after the passage

July had been blown out like a candle by a biting wind that ushered in a leaden August sky. A sharp, stinging drizzle fell, billowing into opaque grey sheets when the wind caught it. Along the Bournemouth sea-front the beach-huts turned blank wooden faces towards a greeny-grey, froth-chained sea that leapt eagerly at the cement bulwark of the shore. The gulls had been tumbled inland over the town, and they now drifted above the house-tops on taut wings, whining peevishly. It was the sort of weather calculated to try anyone's endurance.

Considered as a group my family was not a very prepossessing sight that afternoon, for the weather had brought with it the usual selection of ills to which we were prone. For me, lying on the floor, labelling my collection of shells, it had brought catarrh, pouring it into my skull like cement, so that I was forced to breathe stertorously through open mouth. For my brother Leslie, hunched dark and glowering by the fire, it had inflamed the convolutions of his ears so that they bled delicately but persistently. To my sister Margo it had delivered a fresh dappling of acne spots to a face that was already blotched like a red veil. For my mother there was a rich, bubbling cold, and a twinge of rheumatism to season it. Only my eldest brother, Larry, was untouched, but it was sufficient that he was irritated by our failings.

It was Larry, of course, who started it. The rest of us felt too apathetic to think of anything except our own ills, but Larry was designed by Providence to go through life like a small, blond firework, exploding ideas in other people's minds, and then curling up with cat-like unctuousness and refusing to take any blame for the consequences. He had become increasingly irritable as the afternoon wore on. At length, glancing moodily round the room, he decided to attack Mother, as being the obvious cause of the trouble.

"Why do we stand this bloody climate?" he asked suddenly, making a gesture towards the rain-distorted window. "Look at it! And, if it comes to that, look at

us . . . Margo swollen up like a plate of scarlet porridge . . . Leslie wandering around with fourteen fathoms of cotton wool in each ear . . . Gerry sounds as though he's had a cleft palate from birth . . . And look at you: you're looking more decrepit and hag-ridden every day."

Mother peered over the top of a large volume entitled *Easy Recipes from Rajputana*. "Indeed I'm not," she said indignantly.

"You are," Larry insisted; "you're beginning to look like an Irish washerwoman . . . and your family looks like a series of illustrations from a medical encyclopedia."

Mother could think of no really crushing reply to this, so she contented herself with a glare before retreating once more behind her book.

"What we need is sunshine," Larry continued; "don't you agree, Les? . . . Les . . . Les!"

Leslie unravelled a large quantity of cotton-wool from one ear.

"What d'you say?" he asked.

"There you are!" said Larry, turning triumphantly to Mother, "it's become a major operation to hold a conversation with him. I ask you, what a position to be in! One brother can't hear what you say, and the other one can't be understood. Really, it's time something was done. I can't be expected to produce deathless prose in an atmosphere of gloom and eucalyptus."

"Yes, dear," said Mother vaguely.

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bulwark	a breakwater or sea-wall
stertorously	with a snoring sound
unctuousness	oily smugness
cleft palate	a scarred roof of the mouth

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1. Look again at the first paragraph. Explain, in your own words, what we learn of that particular English summer afternoon in Bournemouth. Make five separate points. (**10 marks**)

2. Look again at paragraphs two and three. Explain, in your own words, four ways in which the writer is critical of his family. (**8 marks**)

3. Explain fully, in your own words, the image created by each of the following similes:

(i) July had been blown out like a candle… (line 1)

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(ii) … pouring it into my skull like cement (line 12)

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(iii) … like a plate of scarlet porridge (line 29)

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(**9 marks**)

4. Explain the meaning of the following words, as they are used in the passage:

(i) leaden (line 1)

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(ii) opaque (line 2)

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(iii) peevishly (line 7)

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(iv) endurance (line 8)

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(v) apathetic (line 20)

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(**5 marks**)

5. Describe fully the character of Larry as it is presented to us in the passage. You should look particularly at paragraphs three, four and eleven. Quote from the passage to provide evidence for your opinions. (**10 marks**)

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6. The writing in this passage is often at its most humorous when dealing with Mother. Copy out a short extract of no more than two lines from the passage which shows Mother in a humorous light, then explain what makes it funny.

(6 marks)

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7. Write an appropriate title for the comprehension passage. **(2 marks)**

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8. Imagine you are the young Gerald Durrell, the narrator of the passage. Then, write an account of the family dinner later that day. The characters in your account should speak and act in ways similar to the characters in the passage.

(10 marks)

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SECTION B: Descriptive Writing [40 marks]

You should spend 30 minutes on this section.
What you write may be true, or invented.

Write a description in which you use plenty of vivid vocabulary.
Respond to ONE of the following topics and give your description a title:

(i) August Afternoon in the Country

(ii) A Favourite Place

(iii) A Railway Station

(iv) An Old Cat

END OF EXAM