DULWICH COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1619

Year 9 Entrance and Scholarship Examination English

Specimen Paper B

Time allowed for this paper is 90 minutes.

There is 5 minutes' reading time at the start of the examination.

You should spend 55 minutes on Section A and 30 minutes on Section B.

SECTION A: Prose Comprehension [60 marks]

Frank Cook and Jack Keech are friends from York who enlisted together to fight in World War One. They are engaged to two sisters. Frank is engaged to Nell, and Jack is engaged to Lillian. The sisters live in Lowther Street in York.

[Adapted from *Behind the Scenes at the Museum* by Kate Atkinson]

Frank thought it was probably the noise that got to Jack in the end. For three days and nights the artillery barrage never stopped and as the guns seemed to get louder, so Jack seemed to get quieter and quieter. He didn't go mad like some chaps, he was just quiet. Funnily enough, the noise didn't bother Frank anymore. He thought it was because he had got used to the guns, although in fact he'd gone deaf in his right ear.

It wasn't the noise that bothered Frank anyway. It was death, or rather how he was going to die, that worried him; after all, he'd been out here nearly two years and the odds were piled high against him. He no longer prayed that he wouldn't die, just that he would see it coming. He was terrified of dying without any warning and prayed that he might at least see the mortar shell or the sniper's bullet that was coming for him so he would have time to prepare himself. And please God, he begged, don't let me be gassed. Only a week ago a whole battalion had been taken by a tide of gas and now they were all quietly drowning to death in some field-hospital.

The night before the attack nobody could sleep. At four in the morning Frank and Jack lolled against the wall of the trench while Frank rolled a cigarette for each of them. Then Jack said, 'I'm not going,' and Frank said, 'Not going where?' so that Jack laughed and pointed at No Man's Land and said, 'There, of course, I'm not going there.' Frank felt sick because he knew it wasn't a joke. It was silent before the order came. The guns had stopped and there was no laughing or joking. The clouds floated above No Man's Land as if it was any bit of countryside and not the place where Frank knew he would die shortly. The new lieutenant looked as green as the grass that didn't grow here anymore. You could see the beads of sweat on his forehead as big as raindrops.

When the order came to go over the top, everyone scrambled up the ladders until there were only three of them left – Frank, Jack and the new lieutenant. Then the new lieutenant started screaming at them and waving his gun around, saying he was going to shoot them if they didn't go over. Then Jack said, 'You don't have to do that, sir,' and he dragged Frank over the top, yelling 'Run!' at him, which Frank did because now he was more afraid of being shot in the back by the new lieutenant than he was of being blown away by the enemy.

Frank was determined not to lose sight of Jack but within seconds he had disappeared and Frank found himself advancing alone through a wall of fog which was actually smoke from the big guns. It was only after quite a long time that he thought he knew what had happened. He thought he had died, probably a sniper's bullet, and now he was walking through Hell. Just as he was trying to adjust to this new idea he slipped and he was falling down the side of a muddy crater, screaming because he was convinced this was one of the pits of Hell.

But then he stopped falling and realized that he was about two-thirds of the way down the side of a huge crater. Below him was thick, muddy-brown water. A rat was swimming around and he was suddenly reminded of a sweltering hot day when he and Jack taught themselves to swim. The River Ouse had been the same colour as the water in the shell-crater. He stayed in the crater for several hours. He thought he might have fallen asleep

because he looked up suddenly and the gunsmoke fog had cleared and the sky was blue. Standing above him on the edge of the crater he thought he saw Jack, looking like an angel dressed in khaki. There was a thin line of blood along his cheek and his eyes were as blue as the sky, bluer than the flowers on the tea-service in the parlour in Nell's house in Lowther Street.

Frank tried to say something but he couldn't. Being dead was like being trapped in a dream. Then Jack put up his hand as if he was waving goodbye and he disappeared over the horizon. Frank felt a terrible sense of despair but decided he should try to find Jack so he dragged himself out of the crater and set off in the direction of Jack's disappearance. When, some time later, he staggered into a dressing-station and announced to the nurse that he was dead, the nurse merely said, 'Go and sit in that corner with the lieutenant then.' Frank walked over to where the lieutenant, covered in blood, was leaning against the wall, staring at nothing. Frank offered him a cigarette and the two 'dead' men stood in silence inhaling cigarettes with dizzy pleasure as daylight faded over the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

On the day of the attack Lillian was taking fares on a tram in the middle of Blossom Street when she felt a sudden cold shiver pass through her. Without thinking, she pulled her ticket machine over her head, left it on a seat, and stepped off the tram, much to the amazement of her passengers. She was running as if the dead were at her heels by the time she turned into Lowther Street. Nell was waiting for her, sitting on the doorstep. Lillian was retching for breath, but Nell just sat there, not moving.

Lillian was the one who finally broke the silence. 'He's dead, isn't he?' she gasped, walking slowly up the path until she sank down next to Nell. By the time she opened the telegram – 'Regret to inform you that Jack Keech was killed in action on July 1st, 1916' – Lillian had already been in mourning a week.

A mortar shell had killed Jack. He had died moments after leaving the trench. The only mark on him had been a line of blood on his cheek and you would have wondered what had killed him until you lifted him up and saw that the back of his head was missing.

1. Look at lines 1–5. In your own words, explain two things which Frank fails to understand. **(4 marks)**

2. Look at lines 6–13. Aside from the constant noise of gunfire, which other aspects of the soldiers' situation cause suffering? Make three points. **(6 marks)**

3. Look at lines 14–36. Explain, in your own words, what we learn about Jack's character and state of mind. Make four points, referring to details in the passage. (**8 marks**)

4. Look at lines 30–56. How does the writer convey the horror and confusion of Frank's experiences? Select five phrases from the passage and comment concisely on each. (**10 marks**)

5. Look again at lines 47–56.

(i) Explain why Frank feels a terrible sense of despair. (line 49)

(ii) Explain what you think about the nurse's reply. (line 52)

(iii) Write an adjective to describe the tone of the nurse's reply.

(**5 marks**)

6. Look again at lines 57–69. What are your feelings, as you read the last three paragraphs? You should aim to make several points. Quote words and phrases to support your opinions. (**10 marks**)

7. Imagine you are Frank. Write a letter to Nell in which you describe your recent experiences. You may use invented material *and* information from the passage. Try to capture a convincing tone. (**17 marks**)

Dearest Nell,

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 vivid vocabulary.
Choose one of the following topics and underline your chosen title:

(i) Bonfire Night

(ii) Inside the Ruined Castle

(iii) The Great Storm

(iv) At the Aquarium

END OF EXAM