Independent Schools Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 13+

ENGLISH

PAPER 1

READING

Monday 27 February 2006

Please read this information before the examination starts.

- You have 1 hour 10 minutes which includes reading and note-making time.
- The paper is divided into two sections.
- Answer **all** the questions.
- Vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation are important and will be taken into account.

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COMMON ENTRANCE 13+ READING PAPER

This is the script of a radio broadcast by John Betjeman, delivered in January 1951.

This is a story about a very unimportant station on the Underground railway in London. It was called South Kentish Town, and its entrance was on the Kentish Town Road, a busy street full of shops. Omnibuses and tramcars passed the entrance every minute, but never stopped. True, there was a notice outside the station saying: STOP HERE IF REQUIRED. But no one required, so nothing stopped.

Hardly anyone used the station at all. I should think about three people a day. Every other train on the Underground railway went through without stopping. Passengers used Camden Town Station to the south of it, and Kentish Town Station to the north of it, but South Kentish Town they regarded as an unnecessary interpolation, like a comma in the wrong place in a sentence, or an uncalled-for remark in the middle of an interesting story. When trains stopped at South Kentish Town, the passengers were annoyed.

Poor South Kentish Town. But we need not be very sorry for it. It had its uses. It was a rest-home for tired ticket collectors who were also lift-men: in those days there were no moving staircases as they had not been invented. 'George,' the Station Master at Leicester Square would say, 'you've been collecting a thousand tickets an hour for the past six months. You can go and have a rest at South Kentish Town.' And gratefully George went.

Then progress came along as, alas, it so often does: and progress, as you know, means doing away with anything restful and useless. There was an amalgamation of the Underground railways, and progressive officials decided that South Kentish Town should be shut. So the lifts were wheeled out of their gates, the great black shafts were boarded over at the top, as was the winding spiral staircase up from the Underground station. This staircase had been built in case the lifts went wrong – all old Underground stations have them. The whole entrance part of the station was turned into shops. All you noticed as you rolled by in a tramcar down the Kentish Town Road was something that looked like an Underground station, but when you looked again it was two shops, a tobacconist's and a coal-merchant's. Down below they switched the lights off on the platforms and in the passages leading to the lifts, and then they left the station to itself. The only way you could know, if you were in an Underground train, that there had ever been a South Kentish Town station, was that the train made a different noise as it rushed through the dark and empty platform. It went quieter with a sort of swoosh instead of a roar and if you looked out of the window you could see the lights of the carriages reflected in the white tiles of the station wall.

Well, now comes the terrible story I have to tell. . . .

SECTION A

NON-FICTION

Read the insert sheet entitled **This is the script of a radio broadcast by John Betjeman, delivered in January 1951** ***and then answer all the questions. The marks at the end of each question are a guide as to how much you should write in your answers.***

1. Explain in your own words why the station was closed. (3)

2. What impression of the station is created in paragraphs 2 and 3, and how does Betjeman create this? (8)

3. What is Betjeman's attitude to progress, and how is this attitude conveyed in paragraph 4? (8)

4. This is a radio script. What evidence can you find to support the view that it is meant to be listened to rather than to be read? (6)

[25]

SECTION B

POETRY

Read the poem* Badger *below and answer the questions which follow, using complete sentences.

Badger

Harmless, they call him, a lovable nocturnal thing,
A family man spending daylight in his deep sett.
He has an old reputation for remaining aloof.
I thought he stuffed himself on insects and roots,
A fallen egg, a few mice, nothing of his size.
But from a cable drum he came sniffing for our buck
After dark, baiting him and scratching at the mesh,
Then deadly serious one night with his big jaws
And his bone-crushing molars rampant.
He wanted much more than a boring vegetable dish.

Grizzled snouter with his claws and thick white stripe,
He scooped a hole under the boxwood hutch,
Splintered the floor with his ramming head
And then clambered up and through it.
Our poor young rabbit must have died of fright
But not before the badger minced him
Into string and red slippery pulp.
That lovable thing left a smear of blood and droppings
On a mile-long strip of hutch and run
Before a smallholder blew his head off.

by John Tripp

1. What impression of the badger do you get from lines 1 to 5? (3)

2. The badger is described as 'lovable' on line 1, and also on line 18. How does the meaning differ from one to the other? (4)

3. The poet uses some striking images to make us adjust our attitude towards the badger. Select any three which you find effective and explain why. (9)

4. How do you respond to the final line of the poem? (4)

5. This is a violent poem. Do you consider that such material is suitable for poetry? (5)

[25]

(Total marks: 50)