Alleyn's

13+ ENGLISH
SAMPLE EXAMINATION PAPER 1

One hour 15 minutes.

Co-educational
excellence

READING PASSAGE

In this passage the narrator goes back to where he used to live as a child and remembers what it was like living there fifty years ago, during World War II.

I walk slowly up to the little turning circle at the end of the Close. The same fourteen houses sit calmly complacent in the warm, dull summer afternoon, exactly as they always did. I walk slowly back to the corner again. It's all still here, exactly as it always was. I don't know why I should find this so surprising, I wasn't expecting anything different. And yet, after fifty years….

As the first shock of familiarity subsides, though, I begin to see that everything's not really as it was at all. It's changed completely. The houses have become tidy and tedious, their disparate architectural styles somehow homogenised by new porches and lamps and add-on timbering. I remember each of them as being a world unto itself, as different from all the others as the people who occupied them. Each of them, behind its screen of roses or honeysuckle, of limes or buddleia, was a mystery. Now almost all that luxuriant growth has vanished, and been replaced by *hard standing** and cars. More cars queue silently along the kerb. The fourteen separate kingdoms have coalesced into a kind of landscaped municipal car park. The mysteries have all been solved. There's a polite, international scent of fast-growing evergreens in the air. But of that wild, indecent smell that lured me here- even on this late June day not a trace remains.

I look up at the sky, the one feature of every landscape and townscape that endures from generation to generation and century to century. Even the sky has changed. Once the war was written across it in a tangled scribble of heroic vapour trails. There were the upraised fingers of the search-lights at night, and the immense coloured palaces of falling flares. Now even the sky has become mild and bland.

I hesitate on the corner again. I'm beginning to feel rather foolish. Have I come all this way just to walk up the road and back, and smell the cypress hedges? I've come to the end of my plans.

And then I become aware of the atmosphere changing around me, as if the past were somehow rematerializing out of the air itself.

It takes me a moment to locate the cause. It's a sound - the sound of an unseen train, muffled and distant at first, then bursting into the clear as it emerges from the *cutting** through the

high ground behind the houses at the top of the Close, just like the train I arrived on twenty minutes earlier. It passes invisibly along the open embankment behind the houses on the left-hand side of the street, then crosses the hollowness of a bridge and slows towards the station beyond.

What I'm looking at now is No.2. It seems to have acquired a name: Wentworth. It was just a number when I lived in it, and scarcely even a number, since the plate on the gatepost had been creosoted over. There's still something faintly embarrassing about it, though, in spite of its grand new name, and its fresh white plaster, and the iron control exercised over its front garden by paving stones and impersonal - looking ground cover. Beneath the clean smoothness of the plaster I can almost see the old cracked and water-marked grey. Through the heavy *flags** sprout the ghosts of the promiscuous muddle of unidentified shrubs that my father never tended, and the little patch of bald lawn. Our house was made even more shameful by the partner it's yoked to, which was in an even worse state than ours because the Pinchers' garden was a dump for abandoned furniture warped by the rain, and offcuts of lumber and metal that Mr Pincher had stolen from work. Or so everyone in the street believed. Perhaps it was just because of the name, it occurs to me now.

This is what I see as I look at it now. But is that the way that he saw it then? I mean the awkward boy who lives in that unkempt house between the Hardiments and the Pinchers - Stephen Wheatley, the one with the stick-out ears and the too-short grey flannel school shorts. I watch him emerge from the warped front door, still cramming food into his mouth from tea. Everything about him is in various shades of grey - even the elastic belt, striped like the hatband of an old-fashioned boater, and fastened with a metal snake curled into the shape of an S. The stripes on the belt are in two shades of grey, because he's entirely monochrome, and he's monochrome because this is how I recognise him now, from the old black-and-white snaps I have at home, that my grandchildren laugh at in disbelief when I tell them it's me. I share their incredulity. I shouldn't have the slightest idea what Stephen Wheatley looks like if it weren't for the snaps, or ever guess that he and I were related if it weren't for the name written on the back.

Glossary – these words are all indicated in italics in the passage

**hard standing – tarmac/pavement*

**cutting – where part of a hill/mountain is cut out to make way for a railway line*

**flag(stones) – paving stones*

END OF READING PASSAGE

SECTION A

Read the passage very carefully at least once.

Write your name and your candidate number at the top of each sheet of paper.

Answer the following questions in full sentences, quoting from the text to support the points made. Detailed answers will be rewarded here.

1. Looking at lines 1 - 4, give 2 ways in which the writer makes the place seem unexciting.

[2 marks]

2. Looking at lines 5 – 14, name 2 different things that have changed.

[2 marks]

3. Reread lines 5-14, suggest alternative words/phrases for the following words (underlined in the passage):
   - tedious
   - disparate
   - homogenised
   - coalesced
   - lured

[5 marks]

4. Reread lines 15 – 19. Here the narrator remembers the night sky during the war. Looking at the sentence below, explain 3 ways in which the writer uses language and what these suggest the boy feels.

"There were the upraised fingers of the search-lights at night, and the immense coloured palaces of falling flares."

[6 marks]

5. Looking at lines 24 – 28, name 3 ways in which the narrator uses sound to locate the train on its journey. Explain your answer.

[6 marks]

6. Looking at lines 29 – 39, name 3 changes the narrator can see have been made to his old house and explain what he thinks of each.

[6 marks]

7. Looking at lines 29 - 39, name 3 things the narrator can remember about the appearance of the house and garden when he lived there, fifty years ago.

[3 marks]

8. Look at lines 40 - 50. The narrator remembers what an awkward and inadequate boy he was. How does the writer use words and phrases, and a variety of sentence types and lengths to show this?

[10 marks]

Please turn over

9. Now consider the passage as a whole. Explore the character of the adult narrator (not the boy he used to be). What does the reader learn about the man through his thoughts and feelings? You should use evidence from the passage to back up your answer.

[10 marks]

[TOTAL MARKS FOR SECTION A = 50 marks]

END OF SECTION A

PLEASE NOW MOVE ON TO SECTION B

SECTION B

Begin your answer on a fresh sheet of paper and write your name and candidate number at the top.

- **You should spend about 30 minutes on this section.**
- **Remember to plan and check your work.**
- **Presentation and accuracy of spelling and punctuation will be assessed in the marking of this section.**

You should answer **ONE OF THE QUESTIONS** in this section.

Either

a) Write a description of a place which has changed, trying to link it to memories of past events. You should try to make your writing as vivid and interesting as you can.

[50 marks]

Or

b) Write about a journey you take. Write about a particular moment/episode in detail and your feelings about what you encounter. You should try to make your writing as vivid and interesting as you can.

[50 marks]

END OF EXAMINATION