Alleyn's

13+ ENGLISH

SAMPLE EXAMINATION PAPER 2

One hour 15 minutes.

Co-educational
excellence

READING PASSAGE

Jack is living with his wife Mabel in Alaska (North America) in the 1920s. A little girl has appeared mysteriously on their land. In this passage Jack follows her into the woods.

Jack had always considered himself if not brave then at least competent and sure. He was very wary of true danger, of flighty horses that could break your back and farm tools that could sever limbs, but he had always **scoffed** at the superstitious, and mystical. Alone in the depths of the wilderness, however, in the fading winter light, he had discovered in himself an animal-like fear. What shamed him all the more was that he could not name it. If Mabel had asked what terrified him when he followed the girl into the mountains, he could only have answered with the timid uncertainty of a child scared of the dark. Disturbing thoughts whirled through his brain, stories he must have heard as a boy about forest hags and men who turned into bears. It wasn't the girl that frightened him as much as the strange world of snow and rock and hushed trees that she navigated with ease.

The girl had deftly jumped logs and scampered through the woods like a fairy. He had got close enough to notice the brown fur of her hat and the knee-high leather moccasins that bound her feet. By the woodpile, when he had spoken to her, he had caught sight of her blond eyelashes and the intensely blue eyes and, when he asked if she like the doll, he saw her smile. The shy, sweet smile of a little girl.

But then she became a **phantom**, a silent blur. As Jack tried to follow her, an icy fog moved through the forest. Minute crystals of ice filled the air and gathered as *hoar frost* along the tree branches and on his lashes. He could see only a few feet into the mist. He stopped occasionally, bent with his hands on his knees while sweat froze at his brow. He tried to silence his heavy breathing, but then all he heard was the snow creaking beneath his boots. The child made no sound. He heard twigs crack, only to watch a *snowshoe hare* bound through the *alders*, and later, as night closed in, an owl hooted from far away. He never heard the girl. At times he wasn't sure he was even following her anymore but instead blindly thrashing though the trees like a bewitched, crazy man. Then he would see her, just ahead, as if she wanted to be seen.

He lost track of how far he had come or how long he had been gone, yet he kept on, past their 160-acre homestead, up into the foothills, of the mountains where he had hunted moose and beyond, to where the trees dwindled to alpine birch shrubs and *Labrador tea*. He followed her still higher until he **crested** a rise and found himself in a narrow mountain gorge with steep shale cliffs.

An eerie gust of wind came down the gorge. Further up he could see a waterfall of ice pouring off the mountain between the rocky cliffs. Below him, the creek trickled and bubbled beneath the ice and wound its way through the rock and willow. The girl, though, was nowhere to be seen.

He cautiously followed her tracks up the **ravine**, and then they disappeared into the snowy hillside. It didn't make sense, yet that is what he saw – her trail didn't continue up the hill or along the creek; it ran into the side of the mountain. The he noticed what looked like a small door set into the hillside beneath a rounded dome of snow. Jack crouched behind a boulder, a cold sweat on the back of his neck. He could go to that little door and call out to the girl, but he didn't. What did he expect to find? A fairy-tale beast that holds young girls captive in a mountainous cave? A cackling witch? Or nothing at all, no child, no tracks, no door, only insanity bared in the untouched snow? That is perhaps what he feared the most, that he would discover he had followed nothing more than an **illusion**.

Rather than face the possibility, Jack turned his back on the little door and set out for home. For a while, he followed the tracks. At times there were two sets – the child's small prints and his larger ones. Other times there were just his own, and Jack knew he had probably destroyed the child's with his big boots as he followed her. Still, the sight of his solitary tracks winding through the trees left him uneasy. As it grew darker, he feared the meandering trail would keep him in the woods into the coldest, bleakest hours of the night, so he left the trail and headed directly toward the riverbed below. From there he could follow the *Wolverine* back to their homestead and, he hoped, be at the cabin within an hour.

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

hoar frost	*a greyish-white crystalline deposit of frozen water vapor.*
snowshoe hare	*a species of hare found in North America.*
alders	*a tree belonging to the birch family.*
Labrador tea	*a low growing shrub with evergreen leaves.*
Wolverine	*the name of a river in Alaska.*

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 the first paragraph of the passage, lines 1-11, list two things Jack thinks are dangerous and for each explain why. (4 marks)

2. Looking at the second paragraph of the passage, lines13-1, list five things about the little girl's appearance. (5 marks)

3. 'The girl had deftly jumped logs and scampered through the woods like a fairy.'

   Find two ways in which the writer uses language to create a sense of the girl's movement at this moment in the passage and explain their effects? (4 marks)

4. Reread the paragraph on lines 19-29. Jack experiences physical discomfort at this moment. Find four things that he physically experiences and explain what these things show us about his journey. (5 marks)

5. Suggest alternative words/phrases for each of the following words (underlined in the passage):

   a. scoffed
   b. phantom
   c. crested
   d. ravine
   e. illusion

   (5 marks)

6. Reread the paragraphs 6 and 7 lines 42-61. In this section Jack feels very uneasy. In your own words (as far as possible) explain why. (4 marks)

7. Reread the final paragraph lines 53-61. Why does Jack leave the trail and how does he plan to get home? (3 marks)

8. Now consider the passage as a whole. How does the writer use words and phrases, a variety of sentence types and sentence lengths and imagery to build mystery and tension? (10 marks)

9. Explore the character of Jack. What do you learn about him through his thoughts, feelings and actions? You should use evidence from the passage to back up your answer. (10 marks)

Section B

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

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. Your answer will be marked out of a possible 50 marks.

Either

a) Write a description of a magical or mysterious place. You should try to make your writing as vivid and interesting as you can.

Or

b) Write about an exciting journey. You should try to make your writing as vivid and interesting as you can.

END OF EXAMINATION