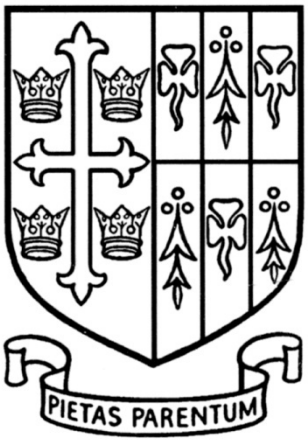
ST EDWARD'S OXFORD



13+ ENTRANCE EXAMINATION
For entry in 2016

ENGLISH

Time: 1 hour

Candidate's name: . . . . . .

Answers should be written on lined paper.

The first **10 minutes** should be spent reading the text in Section A.

- Section A asks you to analyse a prose passage.
- Section B is a creative writing task.

You are advised to spend just under **25 minutes** on each section. Use the last few minutes to read over what you have written and correct any mistakes. The quality of your writing will be assessed in both sections.

SECTION A: READING

The following passage is taken from a novel by Jane Austen published in 1818. In this extract, Catherine is staying with friends at their home, Northanger Abbey. She lets her imagination run wild and begins to explore the building.

The night was stormy; the wind had been rising at intervals throughout the whole afternoon and by the time the party broke up, it blew and rained violently. Catherine, as she crossed the hall, listened to the tempest with a sense of awe; and, when she heard it rage round a corner of the ancient building and close with sudden fury a distant door, felt for the first time that she was really in an abbey. Yes, these were characteristic sounds; they brought to her mind a countless variety of dreadful situations and horrid scenes that often took place in such buildings and on stormy nights such as this. She was happy that the circumstances in which she entered the solemn walls of the building were happy ones!

She had nothing to dread from midnight assassins or drunken men. In a house so furnished, and so guarded, she could have nothing to explore or to suffer, and might go to her bedroom as securely as if it had been her own chamber at Fullerton. Thus wisely fortifying her mind, as she proceeded upstairs, she was enabled, especially on realising that Miss Tilney slept only two doors from her, to enter her room with confidence and a brave heart. Her spirits were immediately lifted also by the cheerful blaze of a wood fire. "How much better is this," said she, as she walked to the fireplace — "how much better to find a fire ready lit, than to have to wait for a faithful old servant to frighten one by coming in with a bundle of sticks to light it! How glad I am that Northanger is what it is! If it had been like some other places, I do not know that, in such a night as this, I would have felt so confident: but now, to be sure, there is nothing to be alarmed about."

She looked round the room. The window curtains seemed to be moving. It could be nothing but the violence of the wind penetrating through the cracks in the shutters; and she stepped boldly forward, carelessly humming a tune, to reassure herself that this was the case. She peeped courageously behind each curtain, saw nothing on either low window seat to scare her, and on placing a hand against the shutter, felt the strong force of the wind. She scorned the causeless fears produced by her imagination, and began with a carefree attitude to prepare herself for bed as the fire died away. On glancing round the room, however, she was struck by the appearance of a high, old–fashioned black cabinet, which, though in a conspicuous position in the room, had never caught her notice before. She took her candle and looked closely at the cabinet. It was black and yellow of the handsomest kind, and as she held her candle, the yellow had very much the effect of gold. The key was in the door, and she would not sleep till she had examined it. So, placing the candle with great caution on a chair, she seized the key with a very tremulous hand and tried to turn it; but it resisted her utmost strength. Alarmed, but not discouraged, she tried it another way; a bolt flew, and she believed herself successful; but how strangely mysterious! The door was still immovable. She paused a moment in breathless wonder. The wind roared down the chimney, the rain beat in torrents against the windows, and everything seemed to speak the awfulness of her situation. Again, she tried the key, and after moving it determinedly in every possible direction in a final effort to open it, the door suddenly yielded to her hand: her heart leaped with exultation at such a victory, and having

thrown open each folding door, a double range of small drawers appeared in view, with some larger drawers above and below them. Catherine's heat beat quickly, but her courage did not fail her. With a cheek flushed by hope, and an eye straining with curiosity, her fingers grasped the handle and drew the mysterious drawer forth.

NOTE

· An abbey is a building where monks or nuns used to live, and can have an appearance that is similar to a church building or castle.

Answer the following questions in full sentences written in clear, precise English. Spend approximately **25 minutes** altogether on this section.

1. Using your own words as far as possible, describe the impression you are given of the weather outside Northanger Abbey in the first paragraph. [5]

2. How does Catherine react to the atmosphere in the abbey that night and reassure herself that she has nothing to fear? Use examples from the whole passage to support your ideas. [10]

3. What is interesting about the language that Austen uses to describe the room in which Catherine is staying? How does she create a mysterious atmosphere and a feeling of suspense? You might like to consider the imagery, diction (the words Austen chooses to use), the different lengths of sentences, and other features. [10]

[Total for Section A: 25 marks]

TURN OVER FOR SECTION B ➤

SECTION B: WRITING

Choose ONE of the following tasks.

Marks will be awarded for originality, clarity and vocabulary as well as spelling and punctuation. Take a few minutes to plan before you begin writing.

EITHER

1. Describe a building that has special meaning to you. Include details of the place, why it is important to you, and how you feel when you are there.

OR

2. "When eventually we face our fears, we often realise that we had nothing to fear in the first place." Do you agree? Use examples to illustrate your views, either from your own life and experience or from the lives of others.

Spend about **25 minutes** on this task.

[Total for Section B: 25 marks]