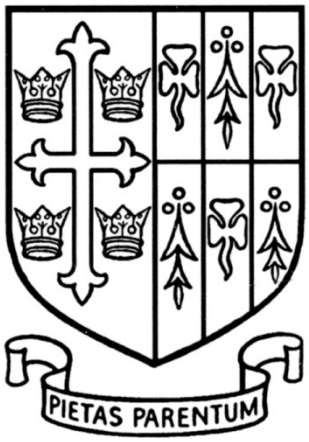
ST EDWARD'S OXFORD



13+ SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION
For entry in 2015

ENGLISH

Time: 1 hour

Candidate's name: . . . . . .

Answers should be written on lined paper. The exam is in **two sections:**

SECTION A mainly tests your reading.

- The first **15 minutes** of the exam must be spent reading. You can make notes on the exam paper if you wish.
- The next **40 minutes** should be spent reading and answering the questions.

SECTION B mainly tests the quality of your writing.

- You are advised to spend just under **20 minutes** writing your answer.
- Use the last few minutes to read over your work and correct any mistakes.

SECTION A: PROSE

The following is a taken from **The Grapes of Wrath** by John Steinbeck. Here he describes the impact of new technologies being used on American farms in the 1920s and 1930s.

> The houses were left vacant on the land, and the land was vacant because of this. Only the tractor sheds of corrugated iron, silver and gleaming, were alive; and they were alive with metal and gasoline and oil, the disks of the plows shining. The tractors had lights shining, for there is no day and night for a tractor and the disks turn the earth in the darkness and they glitter in the daylight. And when a horse stops work and goes into the barn there is a life and a vitality left, there is a breathing and a warmth, and the feet shift on the straw, and the jaws clamp on the hay, and the ears and the eyes are alive. There is a warmth of life in the barn, and the heat and smell of life. But when the motor of a tractor stops, it is as dead as the ore it came from. The heat goes out of it like the living heat that leaves a corpse. Then the corrugated iron doors are closed and the tractor man drives home to town, perhaps twenty miles away, and he need not come back for weeks or months, for the tractor is dead. And this is easy and efficient. So easy that the wonder goes out of work, so efficient that the wonder goes out of land and the working of it, and with the wonder the deep understanding and the relation. And in the tractor man there grows the contempt that comes only to a stranger who has little understanding and no relation. For nitrates are not the land, nor phosphates;* and the length of fiber in the cotton is not the land. Carbon is not a man, nor salt nor water nor calcium. He is all these, but he is much more, much more; and the land is so much more than its analysis. The man who is more than his chemistry, walking on the earth, turning his plow point for a stone, dropping his handles to slide over an outcropping, kneeling in the earth to eat his lunch; that man who is more than his elements knows the land that is more than its analysis. But the machine man, driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; and he is contemptuous of the land and of himself. When the corrugated iron doors are shut, he goes home, and his home is not the land.
>
> When the folks first left, and the evening of the first day came, the hunting cats slouched in from the fields and mewed on the porch. And when no one came out, the cats crept through the open doors and walked mewing through the empty rooms. And then they went back to the fields and were wild cats from then on, hunting gophers and field mice, and sleeping in ditches in the daytime. When the night came, the bats, which had stopped at the doors for fear of light, swooped into the houses and sailed through the empty rooms, and in a little while they stayed in dark room corners during the day, folded their wings high, and hung head-down among the rafters, and the smell of their droppings was in the empty houses.
>
> And the mice moved in and stored weed seeds in corners, in boxes, in the backs of drawers in the kitchens. And weasels came in to hunt the mice, and the brown owls flew shrieking in and out again.
>
> Now there came a little shower. The weeds sprang up in front of the doorstep, where they had not been allowed, and grass grew up through the porch boards. The houses were vacant, and a vacant house falls quickly apart. Splits started up the sheathing from the rusted nails. A dust settled on the floors, and only mouse and weasel and cat tracks disturbed it.

* *Nitrates* are *phosphates* are chemicals used as fertilisers.

One night the wind loosened a shingle and flipped it to the ground. The next wind pried into the hole where the shingle had been, lifted off three, and the next, a dozen. The midday sun burned through the hole and threw a glaring spot on the floor. The wild cats crept in from the fields at night, but they did not mew at the doorstep any more. They moved like shadows of a cloud across the room, into the rooms to hunt the mice. And on windy nights the doors banged, and the ragged curtains fluttered in the broken windows.

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

1. Using your own words as far as possible, explain what you understand by the last sentence of the first paragraph. [5]

2. Judging from the tone and detail of the language he uses in the first paragraph, what appears to be the narrator's attitude towards the science and technology he describes? [10]

3. Remind yourself of the second half of the passage (from "When folks first left …"). What makes this an effective description of this time in American social history? [10]

[Total for Section A: 25 marks]

SECTION B: POETRY

The following poem was published in 1972 by Seamus Heaney.

Good-Night

A latch lifting, an edged cave of light
Opens across the yard. Out of the low door
They stoop in to the honeyed corridor,
Then walk straight through the wall of the dark.

A puddle, cobble-stones, jambs and doorstep
Are set steady in a block of brightness
Till she strides in again beyond her shadows
And cancels everything behind her.

Respond to this poem in any way you wish. You may, for instance, write a literary analysis of the poem, exploring its most interesting features; or you may use it as a stimulus for a piece of creative writing involving the calm and beauty of the night.

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

[Total for Section B: 25 marks]