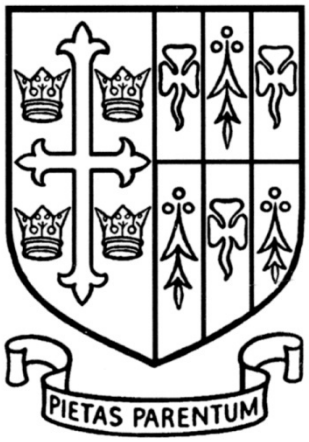
ST EDWARD'S OXFORD



13+ SCHOLARSHIP 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 some poetry.
- Section B is a 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 a taken from **Tales from Ovid** by Ted Hughes, a book of English translations based on Greek and Roman myth.

Hercules, the son of Jupiter,
Was bringing his new bride home
When he came to the river Evenus.

Burst banks, booming torrent
Where there had been a ford. Hercules
Had no fear for himself, only for his wife.

A centaur galloped up. This was Nessus
Familiar with the bed of that river.
Broad haunch, deep shoulder, powerful vehicle
For forcing a way through strong water.

'Let me take her over,' he offered.
'Big as you are, Hercules,
You will be swept off your feet, but you can swim.'

Thinking only of getting across
This earth-shaking menace
That stunned the air with mist,
The hero hoisted his darling
Onto the centaur's back.

Dejanira clung there, white with fear—
Paralysed
Between her dread of the river
And her dread of the goat-eyed centaur
Who now plunged straight into
The high-riding boils of brown water.
Hercules wasted no time either.
He hurled his club and his heavy bow
Right across to the far bank, and muttered:
'No river resists me.'
Then, without pausing
To seek some broader, quieter reach of water,
Leapt in as he was, at the narrowest place,
Dragging the weight of his arrow quiver
And the ponderous pelt of the lion,
Breasting the race right there, where it tightened
In a blaze of brown foam through the narrows.



He came out hard-skinned and glistening
On the other side
And had just picked up his bow
When a human scream tossed clear
Of the river's rumbling stampede
And he saw Nessus
Galloping away with Dejanira.

'You fool,' roared Hercules,
'Do you think your horse hooves are equal
To your mad idea?
Nessus, the cure for you is on its way.
I shall overtake you,
Not on my feet, but flying
On the feather of a weapon.'
As these words left the mouth of Hercules
His arrow arrived,
And Nessus was looking down
At the barbed head, raw with blood,
Jutting from his breastbone
Before he felt it splinter his vertebrae.

He wrenched the arrow clean through him
And the blood burst free,
Thudding jets, at front and back—
Blood already blackened
By the arrow's medication—
The lethal juices of the Lemaean Hydra.

NOTE
· Hercules, a Greek "superhero" (also referred to here as "the Boeotian Hero"), wore a magic lionskin on his shoulders. His main weapons were a club and a huge bow made of antelope horn.
· In Greek myth, centaurs were creatures half-horse and half-man; they were known for their unruly behaviour.
· The Lemaean Hydra was a snake-like monster killed by Hercules. Afterwards he used its blood as arrow poison.

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, write a brief summary of what happens in the passage. Try to write between four and six lines. How is the illustration inaccurate? [4+1]
2. What impression are we given of the character of Hercules? Support your points with evidence from the text. [10]
3. How does the poet make this a vivid and exciting account of the events he describes? [10]

[Total for Section A: 25 marks]

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. Write a short story *ending* with the words, "I never ran so fast in my life!"

OR

2. "Everyone needs escape. Though it can take many different forms, the need is the same in all of us." Write an essay exploring this idea, using examples to illustrate your points.

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

[Total for Section B: 25 marks]