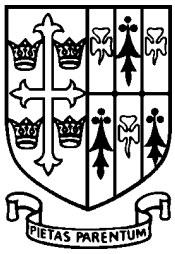
ST EDWARD'S

OXFORD



16+ ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

For entry in

September 2015

English as an Additional Language

Time: 1 hour

Candidates Name: ……

Task 1 (25 marks): First read the article

28 October 2014

The high-stakes world of rare-plant theft

By Anne-Marie Bullock BBC Radio 4's Costing the Earth



The theft of endangered and rare flowers has led botanical gardens to go to extreme measures to protect their plants, locking them down with cables and installing CCTV. But is this enough to preserve such species?

The gently swaying trees and luscious foliage of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in Hampshire hardly look like a crime hotspot. Young families amble with pushchairs and pensioners take tea and cake.

But the staff must remain vigilant.

"Each time there's a theft it's as shocking as the first time," head gardener Fran Clifton explains.

"Earlier this year we put out two of a certain rare species of mahonia, and within a week one of them had gone."



They say thefts take place regularly, including hundreds of bulbs of new snowdrop varieties worth up to £100 each. Now the snowdrops are kept locked away and on limited display.

"Records show 10 to 20 plants are stolen a year from here," says the site's botanist Barry Clarke. "In reality it's probably much more than this. I imagine 50% of those plants will die shortly after being taken."

He also has his suspicions about who's responsible: "We've caught people taking cuttings before - and they can be anyone from the little old lady down the street to a young person out of agricultural college.

"But sometimes the mother plant is stripped to such a degree the plant is damaged beyond repair. We are of the opinion that unscrupulous nurserymen may be to blame for this kind of theft."

A more sinister black market has also developed. Kew Gardens hit the headlines in January when a priceless rare African water lily, the *Nymphaea thermarum*, **was stolen** - likely dug or pulled up from a shallow water lily pond.

The plant, which is now extinct in the wild, has never been recovered and may well have died.



Kew's Madeleine Groves believes it was stolen to order for a collector: "A lot of people are recognising that [such thefts] involve organised crime," she says.

"Criminals will use wildlife and plants and flowers - [they think] it's a commodity. If you get a new species of orchid - say from Asia or South America - sometimes you can see them go for $500 [£300] a pop."

What have you learnt about the problem of plant theft?

Write about 150 words. Use your own words. Mention the following aspects:

- What sort of plants are stolen
- Why
- What is being done to prevent it

Task 2 (15 marks). First read the article:

Rocket Explodes, Aborting NASA Mission to Resupply Space Station

No injuries were reported in the launch explosion



A rocket failure six seconds after launch destroyed a mission to supply the International Space Station.

Dan Vergano

National Geographic

Published October 28, 2014

In a fiery nighttime explosion, an Antares rocket carrying supplies to the International Space Station exploded six seconds after launch.

Launched at 6:22 p.m. EDT, the spacecraft ascended straight up before an explosion blossomed from its tail, and the rocket fell back to the Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia, a "catastrophic anomaly" in NASA jargon.

No injuries were reported from the launch site near Washington, D.C.

The Cygnus supply spacecraft carried by the rocket held 5,000 pounds (more than 2,200 kilograms) of supplies and science experiments headed to astronauts aboard the International Space Station. Experiments included a meteor detector and an intended test of the astronaut's gut bacteria, or microbiome.

Space station crew members should not face shortfalls as a result of the loss, although the rocket did carry 1,360 pounds (617 kilograms) of food. The space station was resupplied by a European mission earlier this month, still docked at the space station. A Russian Progress cargo spacecraft is scheduled to head for the orbiting lab on Wednesday.

An accident investigation headed by Richard Straka of Orbital Sciences Corp. of Dulles, Virginia, maker of the rocket, will start once Federal Aviation Administration investigators collect all the records and debris from the crash site. Orbital Sciences is one of two U.S. firms that send cargo missions to the space station. The other is SpaceX of Hawthorne, California.

The Antares rocket relied on two Russian-built NK33 engines built more than 40 years ago and refurbished to serve as its first stage (the first-to-fire rocket at the bottom that exploded), notes Marcia Smith. The destroyed launch was the third of eight resupply missions that NASA ordered from Orbital Sciences for $1.9 billion in 2008.

According to NASA, the launch spacecraft also contained classified "crypto" equipment for secure communications, raising national security concerns as investigators secure the crash site. Fiery debris could be seen along the beach at the crash site nearly an hour after the explosion.

Now answer the following questions:

1. Where was the rocket going?

2. Why was it going there? (Mention at least three things it was carrying)

3. Was anyone hurt?

4. How serious is this failure? (Give your reasons)

5. What evidence do we find in the article for international co-operation?

Task 3 (10 marks):

Write about a species of animal that you like or admire. Say why you like it, and what you know about its appearance and behaviour. (100 – 150 words)