

Entrance Examination

E N G L I S H

Reading Passage

SAMPLE

Read the passage that follows, then answer **ALL** the multiple choice questions in Sections A, B and C.

This is a passage from Edgelands by Michael Symmons Roberts and Paul Farley

1 Is den building a lost art? A generation or two ago our edgelands were
2 full of these most private and local of constructions, which have more in
3 common with badger setts or fox lairs than any human habitation. Picture a
4 typical scene...

5 Inside a large ditch overhung with whitethorn that marks the border
6 between a few acres of unkempt meadow and the perimeter of a private golf
7 course, a tepee-like vertical frame has been attempted using pliant elder
8 branches, which in turn have been cross-woven then packed with grasses to
9 disguise its presence; the floor inside has been carpeted with an off-cut of
10 ratty Axminster and the rubberised foot mats from an abandoned car; a red
11 plastic milk crate, partially melted in one corner from the heat serves as both
12 chair and table. The entry point is a crawlspace that only the slimmest child
13 can enter, beaver like, into its hidden space; a hole has been left in the crown
14 of the construction to act as a chimney for the fires that will kipper the clothes
15 and hair of its occupants with wood smoke.

16 The den is a secret place, built outside the confines of the adult world. It
17 is a place of retreat, but also a place of togetherness, a social space, that
18 reinforces allegiances and bonds between small groups or gangs. Children
19 have always built them instinctively, but could it be that the English post-war
20 edgelands saw a Golden Age of den building? The construction of huge new
21 housing estate developments, put children on the edge of what seemed a
22 prairie-vast wilderness often littered with the detritus left behind after their new
23 houses had been built. It was paradise. In summer, time at home indoors

24 contracted to sleeping, and occasional visits for food. The edgelands provided
25 a space of abandonment out of the watchful eye of the adult world, and also
26 provided all of the terrain and materials a child's imagination needed to
27 physically make its own world and reinforce a new sense of itself.

28 A tree house is the ultimate den. To succeed it must be inaccessible to
29 adults once the rope ladder is pulled up, hidden high in the canopy like a
30 rook's nest. From Dennis the Menace to Bart Simpson, childhood's HQ is
31 located in a small makeshift covered platform on the bough of a sturdy tree,
32 like an elevated shed. The standard model has four wooden walls with narrow
33 window holes, a waterproof roof and a trapdoor in the floor to permit, or repel,
34 visitors. The best of them are not built in a scrawny backyard tree by your dad,
35 but built by you and your mates with 'borrowed' tools in an overgrown oak in
36 the edgelands. This of course raises other issues. If it's not in your garden, a
37 tree house must be well hidden and defensible. This is tree house as castle,
38 fortress. Edgelands tree houses, like any edgelands den, can change hands,
39 can be kicked to matchwood by other kids, or taken over as their own,
40 padlocked and painted with their own KEEP OUT warnings. But with any good
41 tree house, as with any hill fort, the incumbent has the key advantage –
42 height. Peering through your arrow-slit windows, you get early warning of
43 potential invaders from every angle. And besides, the view up there is
44 fantastic.



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Entrance Examination
E N G L I S H
PART 1: Multiple Choice
SAMPLE

Time allowed: 35 minutes

Instructions

- You have been given a passage to read on one sheet of paper, this question paper and a multiple choice answer sheet.
- First, read the passage through. You may use highlighters or pen to make notes on the passage.
- Then, answer the 25 multiple choice questions about the passage. You must choose one answer A, B, C, D or E for each question and write that letter in the box on the answer sheet.
- You will have 35 minutes to complete this section. At the end of the 35 minutes the teacher will collect in your answer papers.

PART 1: MULTIPLE CHOICE
Each question is worth 1 mark

SECTION A

1) In line 2 the phrase '**most private and local of constructions**' means that:

- a) Dens were constructed on building sites
- b) Dens were built as temporary structures for children to play in
- c) Dens were secret places characteristic of an area
- d) Dens were supervised by local councils
- e) Dens were looked after by security companies

2) In lines 5 – 7, the writer tells us that:

- a) The den has been built in woods
- b) The den has been built in a disregarded and unattractive place
- c) The den has been built on a golf course / sports centre
- d) The den has been built in meadows
- e) The den has been built on private land

3) Lines 5 – 9 tell us that:

- a) The den is clearly visible from the golf course
- b) The den is quite well hidden
- c) The den is messy
- d) The den has been expertly constructed
- e) The den is overgrown with grass

4) In lines 9 – 12 the writer describes the interior of the den as:

- a) Furnished with discarded items
- b) Like the inside of a car
- c) Full of children's possessions
- d) A place where a criminal could hide
- e) Carpeted with animal skins

5) Lines 13 – 15 tell us that:

- a) The children cook kippers in the den
- b) The den has a well-constructed ceiling
- c) The dens often burn down
- d) The occupants of the den often smell of fish
- e) The chimney is not totally efficient

6) In line 20, the writer refers to a '**Golden Age**'. Does he mean:

- a) Dens built at the time were made of gold
- b) Dens built at the time were particularly well made
- c) It was a time when den building was at its height
- d) Dens built at the time were like Classical temples
- e) The time was a very expensive one for building dens

7) The sentence '**It was paradise**' in line 23 suggests that:

- a) The children loved their new homes
- b) The children were happy that the war was over
- c) The children enjoyed their summer holidays
- d) The children enjoyed being in gangs
- e) The children had plenty of empty space to play in

8) The '**edgelands**' referred to in line 24 are:

- a) The dens that the children have built
- b) The back gardens of their houses
- c) The woods near the golf course
- d) Bomb-sites left after the war
- e) Unoccupied areas created by property development

9) In line 25 the word '**abandonment**' suggests that:

- a) The children are neglected by their parents
- b) The children are homeless
- c) The children have plenty of space to play freely
- d) The children are safe from danger
- e) The children do not go to school

10) In lines 28 – 30 we are told that a good tree house:

- a) Must have plenty of space
- b) Must be impossible for adults to find or get into
- c) Must be in an oak tree
- d) Must look like a bird's nest
- e) Must have a rope ladder

11) In line 31, '**makeshift**' means:

- a) Temporary
- b) Unstable
- c) Improvised
- d) Hand-made
- e) Mobile

12) Lines 34 – 36 tell you that the best tree houses are:

- a) Built in the back garden by your father
- b) Built in the woods with your father's help
- c) Built in your friend's garden with tools his father has lent him
- d) Built on a disregarded piece of land with tools obtained without permission
- e) Built out in the woods with tools borrowed from your father

13) The phrase '**the incumbent has the key advantage**' in line 41 means that:

- a) The person who built the den has the key to the padlock
- b) The best thing about a tree house is the view
- c) If you lie down you are well hidden
- d) The person already there is in a superior position
- e) The person who owns the land is in charge

14) Considering the passage as a whole, the writer:

- a) Thinks that building dens was very dangerous for children
- b) Is glad that all the empty spaces and building sites have now gone
- c) Is nostalgic for a past time of greater freedom for children
- d) Thinks that summer holidays are too long
- e) Thinks that den-building encouraged bullying between gangs

15) Considering the passage as a whole, the writer thinks that:

- a) Adults should take more care of their children
- b) Children need more unsupervised freedom
- c) More fathers should build dens for their children
- d) Every child should have a treehouse
- e) Every child should spend more time at home

SECTION B

Answer these questions about the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in this extract.

16) What is the closest definition to the word '**unkempt**' in line 6?

- a) Forgotten
- b) Messy
- c) Unmeasured
- d) Dangerous
- e) Empty

17) What is the closest definition to the word '**pliant**' in line 7?

- a) Thin
- b) Thick
- c) Easily broken
- d) Easily bent
- e) Light

18) What is the closest definition to the word '**allegiances**' in line 18?

- a) Loyalties
- b) Hostilities
- c) Rules
- d) Understanding
- e) Connections

19) What is the closest definition to the word '**detritus**' in line 22?

- a) Rubbish
- b) Bricks
- c) Tiles
- d) Empty cans
- e) Paper

20) What is the closest definition to the word '**matchwood**' in line 39?

- a) Wood that is in thin shreds
- b) Wood made into matches
- c) Wood which is similar to other pieces of wood
- d) Wood used for stakes to mark out a football pitch
- e) Kindling

SECTION C

Answer the following questions about these words and phrases.

21) What type of word are:

Scene (line 4) **Ditch** (line 5) **Lair** (line 3) **Detritus** (line 22)?

- a) Verbs
- b) Adverbs
- c) Nouns
- d) Adjectives
- e) Pronouns

22) Which of the lines from the extract includes a metaphor?

- a) '**which have more in common with badger setts or fox lairs than any human habitation**' (lines 2-3)
- b) '**inside a large ditch overhung with whitethorn**' (line 5)
- c) '**the fires that will kipper the clothes and hair of its occupants with wood smoke**' (lines 14–15)
- d) '**A tree house is the ultimate den**' (line 28)
- e) '**with “borrowed” tools in an overgrown oak**' (line 35)

23) Which of these words as they are used in the extract is a verb?

- a) Occupants
- b) Enter
- c) Space
- d) Large
- e) Most

24) Which of these words from the extract is an adverb?

- a) Acres
- b) Partially
- c) Paradise
- d) Provided
- e) Waterproof

25) 'A tree house is the ultimate den.' Is:

- a) A complex sentence
- b) A phrase
- c) A clause
- d) A past participle
- e) A simple sentence

This is the end of Part 1. Please go back and check your answers.



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Entrance Examination
E N G L I S H
Part 2: Expressive Writing
SAMPLE

Time allowed: 45 minutes

Instructions

- *This part is worth 25 marks.*
- *Complete the writing task that follows.*
- *You should write about 1 ½ - 2 sides.*
- *Take care with your spelling, punctuation and grammar.*
- *Try to use some interesting and ambitious vocabulary.*

