



11+ English Entrance Exam (Sample Paper)

In the last year the comprehension section of the paper has been replaced with a candidate interview. During the interview the pupil will be given time to read a poem or passage of prose and then asked to comment on matters of style, tone, authorial intention and structural organisation. We are particularly interested in the boys' ability to empathise with the texts, recognise subtle meanings and investigate linguistic connections and themes explored in the passages.

The poem 'The Railings' by R McGough is an example of text we might use to encourage literary and wider empathetic discussion between the member of staff and the candidate during the interview.

The Railings

You came to watch me playing cricket once.
Quite a few of the fathers did.
At ease, outside the pavilion
They would while away a Saturday afternoon.
Joke with the masters, urge on
Their flannelled offspring. But not you.

Fielding deep near the boundary
I saw you through the railings.
You were embarrassed when I waved
And moved out of sight down the road.
When it was my turn to bowl though
I knew you'd still be watching.

Third ball, a wicket, and three more followed.
When we came in at the end of the innings
The other dads applauded and joined us for tea.
Of course, you had gone by then. Later,
you said you'd found yourself there by accident.
Just passing. Spotted me through the railings.

Speech-day. Prize givings. School plays
The Twentyfirst. The Wedding. The Christening
You would find yourself there by accident.
Just passing. Spotted me by the railings.

Magdalen College School didn't provide any questions for this part

These Questions are Written By **PiAcademy Tutors**

- 1. What themes are explored in this poem? Give evidence and explain how they are handled.**
- 2. What interests you about the language used in the poem? Use some examples and explain what effects are achieved.**
- 3. What interests you about the structure and form of the poem? Talk about line breaks, rhyme, meter, stanza length, and explain the effects achieved.**
- 4. Do you think the father loves his son? Give reasons for your answer.**
- 5. How would you describe the tone of this poem, and do you think the author wants us to sympathize with the speaker? Give reasons for your answer.**



Magdalen College School

11+ Entrance Examination

English Composition

Time allowed: 1 hour

Please complete one task from Section A and then one task from Section B.

You ought to spend 30 minutes on each chosen task.

Section A- Fiction Writing

Remember that thoughtful planning before you start to write will help you and we are particularly interested in your ability to describe characters, feelings and places in ways that bring the passages to life for the reader.

Either:

1) Describe a journey on a steam train in which you appeal to the reader's senses in recreating the experience.

Or:

2) Imagine either a pirate or a highwayman – describe their physical appearance and habits in some detail. Think about creating a vivid picture in the reader's head. You could suggest things about their personality through this description. Remember – this is a description of a character and not a story.

Or:

3) *“The snow kept flinging coldly suffocating arms about him – as if to hold him forever in its freezing bosom – and, as he rose, the very heavens seemed to beat him down again with their fluffy torrents. The whole universe was turned against him: the earth, the sky, the wind – even his own failing limbs which ached for nothing more than a bed in the dreadful loving snow”.*

Write a continuation of this scene. Try to maintain the atmosphere that is created in the short passage.

Section B- Non Fiction Writing

Make sure that you do what is asked in the task and keep the chosen reader in mind!

Either:

Write a letter to a friend describing a recent holiday.

Or:

Write a short article for your school magazine in which you advise other pupils on the best ways of keeping on top of homework.

Or:

Your teacher has asked you to give a short speech to the rest of your class on the importance of healthy eating. Write out your speech and think carefully about the ways in which you will engage your audience.