

*In this extract from Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876), Tom, an adventurous and daring boy and his friend Becky, are on a school trip viewing an underground cave network when they become separated from the rest of the party.*

Now to return to Tom and Becky's share in the picnic. They tripped along the murky aisles with the rest of the company, visiting the familiar wonders of the cave – wonders endowed with rather over-descriptive names, such as 'The Drawing Room,' 'The Cathedral,' 'Aladdin's Palace,' and so on.

Presently the hide-and-seek frolicking began, and Tom and Becky engaged in it with zeal until the exertion began to grow a little wearisome; then they wondered down a sinuous avenue, holding their candles aloft and reading the tangled webwork of names, dates, post-office addresses, and mottoes with which the rocky walls had been frescoed (in chalk perhaps or elsewhere scratched into the stonework). Still drifting along and talking, they scarcely noticed that they were now in a part of the cave whose walls were not frescoed. They scored their own names into the rock under an overhanging shelf with a jagged piece of stone and moved on.

Presently they came to a place where a little stream of water, trickling over a ledge and carrying a limestone sediment with it, had, in the slow-dragging ages, formed a laced and ruffled Niagara\* in gleaming and imperishable stone. Tom squeezed his small body behind it in order to illuminate it for Becky's gratification. But Tom found that it curtailed a sort of steep natural stairway which was enclosed between narrow walls, and at once the ambition to be a discoverer seized him.

Becky responded to his call, and they made a wax mark for future guidance, and started upon their quest. They wound this way and that, far down into the secret depths of the cave, made another mark, and branched off in search of novelties to tell the upper world about.

In one place they found a spacious cavern, from whose ceiling depended a multitude of shining stalactites\* of the length and circumference of a man's leg; they walked all about it, wondering and admiring, and presently left it by one of the numerous passages that opened into it. This shortly brought them to a bewitching spring, whose basin was encrusted with a frostwork of glittering crystals; it was in the midst of a cavern whose walls had been formed by the joining of great stalactites and stalagmites\* together, the result of the ceaseless water-drip of centuries.

Under the roof vast knots of bats had packed themselves together, thousands in a bunch; the lights disturbed the creatures, and they came flocking down by the hundreds, squeaking and darting furiously at the candles. Tom knew their ways, and the danger of this sort of conduct. He seized Becky's hand and hurried her into the first corridor that offered; and none too soon, for a bat struck Becky's light out with its wing while she was passing out of

the cavern. The bats chased the children a good distance; but the fugitives plunged into every new passage that offered itself, and at last got rid of the perilous things. Tom found a subterranean lake, shortly, which stretched its dim length away until its shape was lost in the shadows. He wanted to explore its borders, but concluded that it would be best to sit down and rest a while first. Now for the first time the deep stillness of the place laid a clammy hand upon the spirits of the children. Becky said:

‘Why, I didn’t notice, but it seems ever so long since I heard any of the others.’

‘Come to think, Becky, we are down below them, and I don’t know how far away north, or south, or east, or whichever it is. We couldn’t hear them here.’

Becky grew apprehensive.

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Niagara – a location on the border between Canada and the United States where there is a collection of impressive waterfalls.

Stalactites – tapering structures hanging like icicles from the roof of a cave.

Stalagmites – tapering columns rising from the floor of a cave.

# **11+ ENTRANCE EXAM**

## **English Sample Questions**

Time allowed: 1 hour 20 minutes

## INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE ANSWER BOTH PARTS OF THE EXAMINATION

### Part A: Reading (approx 30 minutes)

- Spend 5 minutes reading the story and the questions in the booklet.
- You will be told when the 5 minutes are over.
- You can mark the story by underlining or highlighting words and phrases.

**Spend about 25 minutes writing your answers in the answer booklet.**

### Part B: Writing (approx 50 minutes)

**There are two writing sections: you should spend 30 minutes on Section 1 and the remaining 20 minutes on Section 2.**

- Please start each Section on a separate sheet of paper.
- Make sure you put your name at the top of each sheet of paper.

**YOU MAY WRITE IN EITHER INK OR PENCIL**

**PLEASE TURN THE PAGE TO READ  
THE QUESTIONS**

**Part A - Reading (30 minutes)**

1. Considering the passage as a whole, why do you think that certain areas of the caves have been given names such as 'The Drawing Room,' 'The Cathedral' and 'Aladdin's Palace'?

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2 marks

2. Why do you think the narrator refers to these names as being 'over-descriptive'?

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2 marks

3. In the second paragraph, we are told that Tom and Becky wander off from the others. How does the writer communicate their separation from the rest of the party? [2]

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2 marks

4. Looking again at the descriptions of the caves in the 3rd and 5th paragraphs, what do you find interesting about the language and sentence structures in these passages?

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6 marks

5. In the description of the bats at the start of the 6th paragraph, what aspects of the creatures' character and behaviour does the writer try to capture?

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2 marks

6. Why do you think Becky and Tom are referred to as 'fugitives' in the 6th paragraph?

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2 marks

7. At the end of the passage, we are told that ‘the deep stillness of the place laid a clammy hand upon the spirits of the children’. What are the implications of this phrase and what do you find interesting about the writer’s use of language?

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4 marks



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write on this  
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- **Writing – 50 minutes.** You will be marked for the quality of your expression as well as what you write in this section.
- You should spend around 30 minutes on Section 1 and the remaining 20 minutes on Section 2.
- Please write on the lined paper provided and put your first name and surname at the top of each page.
- You should start each section on a separate page of lined paper.

### **Writing – Section 1 (30 minutes)**

Continue the story from the point at which it ends.

20 marks

### **Writing – Section 2 (20 minutes)**

'Many people argue that children are not given enough freedom to explore the world and are over-protected these days.' Write your thoughts in response to this statement. You may choose to agree or disagree or consider more than one viewpoint.

20 marks

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