



Aldenham School

11+ Sample Paper

Subject: English

Name _____

School _____

Time allowed: 60 mins (+15mins Extra Time)

Instructions: *Write all your answers on the lined paper provided. Make sure you spend about 30 minutes on Section A and then 30 minutes on Section B.*

Mark: _____ / 40

English Comprehension

Read the following passage taken from Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* and answer the questions in Section A. Then move on to Section B.

The Woman in Black is a horror novel published in 1983. The narrator, Arthur Kipps, has come to live in the secluded and creepy Eel Marsh House, which is situated within a marsh that gets cut off from the mainland when the sea is at high tide. In this extract, Arthur wakes in the night to a strange sound.

“During the night the wind rose. As I had lain reading I had become aware of the stronger gusts that blew every so often against the casements. But when I awoke abruptly in the early hours it had increased greatly in force. The house felt like a ship at sea, battered by the gale that came roaring across the open marsh. Windows were rattling everywhere and there was the sound of moaning down all the chimneys of the house and whistling through every nook and cranny.

At first I was alarmed. Then, as I lay still, gathering my wits, I reflected on how long Eel Marsh House had stood here, steady as a lighthouse, quite alone and exposed, bearing the brunt of winter after winter of gales and driving rain and sleet and spray. It was unlikely to blow away tonight. And then, those memories of childhood began to be stirred again and I dwelt nostalgically upon all those nights when I had lain in the warm and snug safety of my bed in the nursery at the top of our family house in Sussex, hearing the wind rage round like a lion, howling at the doors and beating upon the windows but powerless to reach me. I lay back and slipped into that pleasant, trance-like state somewhere between sleeping and waking, recalling the past and all its emotions and impressions vividly, until I felt I was a small boy again.

Then from somewhere, out of that howling darkness, a cry came to my ears, catapulting me back into the present and banishing all tranquillity.

I listened hard. Nothing. The tumult of the wind, like a banshee, and the banging and rattling of the window in its old, ill-fitting frame. Then yes, again, a cry, that familiar cry of desperation and anguish, a cry for help from a child somewhere out on the marsh.

As I went out onto the landing, Spider the dog following me at once, two things happened together. I had the impression of someone who had just that very second before gone past me on their way from the top of the stairs to one of the other rooms, and, as a tremendous blast of wind hit the house so that it all but seemed to rock at the impact, the lights went out. I had not bothered to pick up my torch from the bedside table and now I stood in the pitch blackness, unsure for a moment of my bearings.

And the person who had gone by, and who was now in this house with me? I had seen no one, felt nothing. There had been no movement, no brush of a sleeve against mine, no disturbance of the air, I had not even heard a footstep. I had simply the absolutely certain sense of someone just having passed close to me and gone away down the corridor. Down the short narrow corridor that led to the nursery whose door had been so firmly locked and then, inexplicably, opened.

For a moment, I actually began to **conjecture** that there was indeed someone – another human being – living here in this house, a person who hid themselves away in that mysterious nursery and came out at night to fetch food and drink and to take the air. Perhaps it was the woman in black? Had Mrs Drablow harboured some **reclusive** old sister or retainer, had she left behind her a mad friend that no one had known about? My brain span all manner of wild, **incoherent** fantasies as I tried desperately to provide a rational explanation for the presence I had been so aware of. But then they ceased.

There was no living occupant of Eel Marsh House other than myself and Samuel Daily's dog. Whatever was about, whoever I had seen, and heard rocking, and who had passed me by just now, whoever had opened the locked door was not '50 real'. No. But what was 'real'? At that moment I began to doubt my own reality.

The first thing I must have was a light and I groped my way back across to my bed, reached over it and got my hand to the torch at last, took a step back, stumbled over the dog who was at my heels and dropped the torch. It went spinning away across the floor and fell somewhere by the window with a crash and the faint sound of breaking glass. I cursed but managed, by crawling about on my hands and knees, to find it again and to press the switch. No light came on. The torch had broken."

Section A: Comprehension

Spend 30 minutes on this section.

All questions should be answered in full sentences. Try to include as many details as you can.

1. What is the weather like in this extract? (1 mark)
2. What can the narrator hear within the wind? (1 mark)
3. *"And then, those memories of childhood began to be stirred again and I dwelt nostalgically upon all those nights when I had lain in the warm and snug safety of my bed in the nursery at the top of our family house in Sussex, hearing the wind rage around like a lion, howling at the doors and beating upon the windows but powerless to reach me"*.

How is the narrator's childhood presented in this sentence? Aim to find a language technique and explain its effect.

(3 marks)

Using the text to help you, write a definition of the following words (in **bold** and **underlined** in the text as well).

- a) Conjecture
- b) Reclusive
- c) Incoherent

(3 marks)

4. Looking only at the first two paragraphs, explain how the writer creates a sense of isolation. You should support your ideas by quoting from the passage.

(3 marks)

5. How does the writer use language and structure to create tension and horror throughout this extract? You should support your ideas by quoting from the passage.

(4 marks)

6. In your own words, describe the thoughts and feelings of the narrator in this extract.

(5 marks)

Total: 20 marks

Section B: Composition

Spend 30 minutes on this section.

Choose ONE of the following creative writing tasks. You should spend a few minutes planning your work, and leave time to proof read.

You should check that you have:

- Punctuated correctly
- Used different and interesting verbs, adverbs and adjectives
- Included a variety of sentence structures
- Varied the length of your sentences
- Organised your writing into paragraphs
- Checked spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Used descriptive techniques such as similes and metaphors

EITHER

Write a story which begins 'The ghostly moon hung in the darkening sky'

OR

Describe a time where you have felt scared and confused.

Total: 20 marks