



Aldenham School

13+ 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

Section A - Comprehension

Read the following passage taken from Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* and answer the questions in Section A. Then move on to Section B.

Hard Times was the tenth novel published by Charles Dickens. The story is set in a fictitious Victorian industrial town called Coketown. Mr Gradgrind is a man only concerned with hard cold facts and numbers, he places no value on creativity and imagination.

To his matter-of-fact home, which was called Stone Lodge, Mr. Gradgrind directed his steps. He had virtually retired from the wholesale hardware trade before he built Stone Lodge, and was now looking about for a job in Parliament. Stone Lodge was situated on a moor within a mile or two of a great town—called Coketown in the guide-book.

A very regular feature on the face of the country, Stone Lodge was. Not the least disguise toned down or shaded off that uncompromising fact in the landscape. A great square house, with a heavy entrance darkening the principal windows, as its master's heavy brows overshadowed his eyes. A calculated, cast up, balanced, and proved house. Six windows on this side of the door, six on that side; a total of twelve in this wing, a total of twelve in the other wing; four-and-twenty carried over to the back wings. A lawn and garden and an infant avenue, all ruled straight like a botanical account-book. Gas and ventilation, drainage and water-service, all of the primest quality. Iron clamps and girders, fire-proof from top to bottom; mechanical lifts for the housemaids, with all their brushes and brooms; everything that heart could desire.

Everything? Well, I suppose so. The little Gradgrinds had cabinets in various departments of science too. They had a little shell cabinet, and a little metallurgical cabinet, and a little mineralogical cabinet; and the specimens were all arranged and labelled, and the bits of stone and ore looked as though they might have been broken from the parent substances by those tremendously hard instruments their own names; and, to paraphrase the idle legend of Peter Piper, who had never found his way into their nursery, If the greedy little Gradgrinds grasped at more than this, what was it for good gracious goodness' sake, that the greedy little Gradgrinds grasped it!

Their father walked on in a hopeful and satisfied frame of mind. He was an affectionate father, after his manner; but he would probably have described himself as 'an eminently practical' father. He had a particular pride in the phrase eminently practical, which was considered to have a special application to him. Whatsoever the public meeting held in Coketown, and whatsoever the subject of such meeting, some Coketowner was sure to seize the occasion of alluding to his eminently practical friend Gradgrind. This always pleased the eminently practical friend.

He had reached the neutral ground upon the outskirts of the town, which was neither town nor country, when his ears were invaded by the sound of music. The clashing and banging band attached to the horse-riding establishment, which had there set up its rest in a wooden pavilion, was in full bray. A flag, floating from the summit of the temple, **proclaimed** to mankind that it was 'Sleary's Horse-riding' which claimed their suffrages. Sleary himself, a stout modern statue with a money-box at its elbow, in an ecclesiastical niche of early Gothic architecture, took the money. Miss Josephine Sleary, as some very long and very narrow strips of printed bill announced, was then **inaugurating** the entertainments with her graceful equestrian flower-act. Among the other pleasing but always strictly moral wonders which must be seen to be believed, Signor Jupe was that afternoon to 'elucidate the

diverting accomplishments of his highly trained performing dog Merrylegs.’ He was also to exhibit ‘his **astounding** feat of throwing seventy-five hundred-weight in rapid succession backhanded over his head, thus forming a fountain of solid iron in mid-air, a feat never before attempted in this or any other country,

Thomas Gradgrind took no heed of these trivialities of course, but passed on as a practical man ought to pass on, either brushing the noisy insects from his thoughts, or consigning them to the House of Correction. But, the turning of the road took him by the back of the booth, and at the back of the booth a number of children were congregated in a number of stealthy attitudes, striving to peep in at the hidden glories of the place.

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 Mr Gradgrind’s house called? (1 mark)

2. Where is the house situated? (1 mark)

3. In your own words, explain what is meant by the phrase ‘an eminently practical’ father.

(2 marks)

4. *‘A very regular feature on the face of the country, Stone Lodge was. Not the least disguise toned down or shaded off that uncompromising fact in the landscape. A great square house, with a heavy entrance darkening the principal windows, as its master’s heavy brows overshadowed his eyes.*

How does the narrator describe the house? Aim to find a language technique and explain its effect.

(3 marks)

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

a) Proclaimed

b) Inaugurating

c) Astounding

(3 marks)

6. Looking at only paragraph three explain how the writer creates a sense of what life would be like for Mr Gradgrind's children? You should support your ideas with quotation and analysis.

(5 marks)

7. How does the writer use language and structure to contrast Mr Gradgrind with Sleary and Miss Sleary?

(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 proofread.

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

- 1) Write a description focused on visiting a fairground or circus.

OR

- 2) Write a story which begins, 'finally it was here, the most exciting day lay ahead of me'

Total: 20 marks