

The Leys
11+ Exemplar Material

English
60 minutes

Section A: Comprehension

Read the extract from a novel called *Out Stealing Horses* by Per Petterson and answer the questions that follow.

In this extract, the narrator, Trond, remembers a time in his childhood when, waiting for his father to return, he waded out into a river in Norway one summer's night.

It was a long way off, the blazing hot day, when I opened the door and went out to the yard in my long boots. No-one there and almost cool, but not dark now, it was a summer's night, and above me the clouds split and opened up as they swept at great speed across the sky, and the pale light came flickering down so I could easily make out the path to the river. The water flowed more swiftly now after the drenching rain, running higher up the boulders along the banks, and it swelled and rocked with a faint shine of silver, I could see from some way off, and the sound of the river running was the only sound I heard.

The boat was not in its place. I waded a few paces out into the stream and stood there listening for the sound of oars, but there was only the water sweeping round my legs, and I could see nothing either up river or down. The timber piles were there, of course, and their scent was strong in the humid air, and the crooked pine with the cross nailed to its trunk was there, and the fields were there on the other side from the river bank up to the road, but only the clouds in the sky were on the move, and the flickering light. It was a weird sensation to be standing in the night alone, almost the feeling of light or sound through my body; a soft moon or a peal of bells, with the water surging against my boots, and everything else was so big and so quiet around me, but I did not feel abandoned, I felt singled out. I was perfectly calm; I was the anchor of the world. It was the river that did that to me; I could immerse myself in water up to my chin and sit not moving, with the current pounding away and pulling at my body, and remain the person I was, still be the anchor.

I waded ashore and started walking.

First I walked up among the fresh tree stumps to the narrow gravel track behind our land and walked down between the trees to the south instead of north the way we usually did, to where the bridge was and the shop, and it was not hard to find the route now as there were no clouds and the night was light again, like white flour everywhere, a filter I could see quite clearly and maybe touch if I wanted to, and then of course I couldn't. But I tried. I spread my fingers out as I walked between the dark tree trunks, like a corridor of pillars, and let my hands slide through the air, slowly up and then down again in the powdery light, but I could not feel anything, and everything was as it always was, like any night at all. But life had shifted its weight from one point to another, from one leg to the other, like a silent giant in the vast shadows against the ridge, and I did not feel like the person I had been when this day began, and I did not even know if that was something to be sorry for.

Section A: Comprehension Questions

Answer the questions below in clear, accurate English and full, complete sentences.

Look at the first paragraph in order to answer Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4.

1. How does the reader know that the narrator, Trond, is alone? (1)
2. How is Trond able to see where he is going? (2)
3. What is the only **sound** that Trond can hear? (1)
4. The author uses **three verbs** to describe the movement of the river. Write them down here. (3)

Now look at the second paragraph to answer Questions 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

5. What are the **three** natural things that are moving around Trond? (3)
6. In this paragraph of the extract, what are the **words** that mean:
 - a) 'a strong rush, rise or sweeping forward' (1)
 - b) 'deserted or left alone' (1)
7. What is the **metaphor** that the author uses to describe how stable and strong Trond feels in the river? Include a brief **quotation** to provide evidence. (1)
8. Why does this **metaphor** in Question 7 work so well for his position – and his emotions – standing in the river? (1)
9. How does the reader know that the current is quite strong for Trond, standing in the river? Include brief **quotations** to provide evidence. (2)

Now look at the last paragraph to answer Questions 10, 11 and 12.

10. The light is described using a **simile**. Quote the phrase here. (1)
11. Trond's new perspective on his life is also described using a **simile**. Quote the phrase here. (1)
12. In your opinion, what could be quite worrying and unsettling about the simile you have used in Question 9 that Trond seems not to notice at this moment. (1)
13. Using your imagination and ideas from the extract above, write a dramatic and exciting paragraph in which Trond is swept away in the river.
 - Build tension and a real sense of danger in your writing.
 - Write about the five senses to build atmosphere and set the scene in the river (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch).
 - Include a convincing and powerful ending. (6)

Section B: Writing

Answer **ONE** of the following **ONLY**. You should aim to write at least a side.

But, remember: **what** you write is more important than **how much** you write.

You will also be rewarded for the correct use of paragraphs and good spelling and grammar.

EITHER

1. **'CALM'**: Write a description about a time when you (or an imaginary narrator) felt very calm and peaceful in a particular place. Use plenty of detail and descriptive writing techniques.

(You can write about someone or something you know and experienced for yourself or you can make up a character and setting.)

OR

2. **LETTER**: Write a letter to a friend describing the beautiful countryside around where you live (or an imaginary narrator lives). Use plenty of detail in your writing to set the scene and encourage them to come and visit you.

(You may invent any details you wish or base it on a real place in the countryside.)