

SEVENOAKS SCHOOL



YEAR 9 (13+) ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

May 2019
for entry in September 2020

ENGLISH

Your Name: _____

Your School: _____

Time allowed: 1 hour

Equipment needed: Pen and lined paper.

Information for candidates:

1. Dictionaries are NOT allowed.
2. Write your name and school on this page.
3. Write your answers on the separate **paper provided**. Please put your name on all the sheets of paper you use.
4. There are 2 sections in this paper Section A and B. You should attempt both of them.
5. The paper will be marked out of 40. The marks for each question are indicated in square brackets [].

SECTION A

Read the following extract and answer all the questions that follow:

The writer is in a junk shop looking for antiques when he discovers something special:

I am once again the child in the attic, when I notice some taxidermy¹ specimens out of reach on top of a mound of boxes stacked and out of reach. I climb carefully imagining I am in the tomb of the Pharos. I peer into a glass case, finding an angle on it to get a clear view of its contents, correcting for reflection. What confronts me is the beady glare of a lean, contoured, elegantly streaked, stout-chested and imperious bird of prey. 1
5

Looming over me, it looks larger than its two-foot length, given added stature by imposingly powerful wings. Its wings are partly drooped over the prone body of a Magpie, which it dwarfs, and on the breast of which the raptor's² arched talons are emphatically clamped. The bird is muscular of chest and thigh, but beautifully streamlined, long-legged, with a thickly feathered tail, stout shins, and breast feathers decorated with chocolate-brown arrowheads, as though dabbed with an artist's brush. There is a hint of saffron about the feathers, and the flecking of chocolate-brown is, in places, star-shaped and faintly dazzling. 10

She is glaring at me, or through me, and to the world, through surprisingly authentic and piercing yellow-irised glass eyes. Defiance radiates from her, even in this caricatured state. It is most unsettling. Exhausting, dare I say. I have eyes only for this piece of junk. 15

It stirs another memory, of first discovering birds like these – this species in particular – in books, as a child. Somehow this stuffed skin has retained that ferocity and intensity that struck me at a young age when I first encountered these birds of prey on the page. It made me fall for them then, in a way that was to last. In a strange way I am connecting with my childhood after decades in a junk shop. Even in this state and pose, the bird I am now stroking is beautiful with a heavy hint of menace. It is tempting to see anger here, laced with fear, and the noble bearing reflected in the Goshawk's modern day scientific name: *Accipiter gentilis*. 20

This is a piece of natural engineering perfection, a bird beyond birds, a bird with an almost human expression, a furrowed brow that says something back to me about me, about us. It is a look that has haunted me ever since, and held me in a kind of spell. A dream: both a fanciful notion, a semi-fantasy, and a mythical best with the properties of several beasts rolled into one. 25

Taken from *Looking for the Goshawk* by Conor Mark Jameson

¹ Taxidermy - the art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals with lifelike effect.

² Raptor – a bird of prey

1. Why does the writer climb carefully on line 2? [2 marks]
2. Why do you think that the writer imagines that he is in the tomb of the Pharos on line 3? [2 marks]
3. Choose three short phrases where the writer describes the bird and explain what you think they show and why he has selected the particular words he uses. [6marks]
4. Why do you think that the Goshawk is important to the writer? [10 marks]

SECTION B

Choose **ONE** of the question below. You do not have to write a long piece. Think about using good vocabulary and writing accurately. [20 marks]

1. Describe an animal that interests you and explain why it is important to you.
2. Describe a childhood memory and explain why it is still significant to you.