



THE PERSE

UPPER SCHOOL

CAMBRIDGE

Year 9 (13+) Entrance Assessments

Sample English Paper 1

The English paper lasts 45 minutes and is a single task, taken from a choice of two tasks. The task is a creative response to a given passage, and will focus on a pupil's understanding of the passage as well as their creative and writing ability.

Instructions to candidates

Time allowed: 45 minutes

1. There is one section to this paper.
2. Remember to plan your answer, but also to leave enough time to write your answer.
3. Please remember that you cannot ask any questions about the paper during the exam.
4. There are **40 marks** available in total.

Read the extract below, and then complete **one** of the two tasks. There are 40 marks available for this task.

20 marks are for the content of your writing, which should demonstrate your understanding of the passage.

20 marks are for the written accuracy and techniques in your writing, including your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

This extract is from a novel where a plane full of school children has crashed on a desert island. All of the children have survived, and the first child off the plane is exploring the island for the first time.

The shore was fledged with palm trees. These stood or leaned or reclined against the light and their green feathers were a hundred feet up in the air. The ground beneath them was a bank covered with coarse grass, torn everywhere by the upheavals of fallen trees, scattered with decaying coconuts and palm saplings. Behind this was the darkness of the forest proper and the open space of the scar. Ralph stood, one hand against a grey trunk, and screwed up his eyes against the shimmering water. Out there, perhaps a mile away, the white surf flinked on a coral reef, and beyond that the open sea was dark blue. Within the irregular arc of coral the lagoon was still as a mountain lake-blue of all shades and shadowy green and purple. The beach between the palm terrace and the water was a thin stick, endless apparently, for to Ralph's left the perspectives of palm and beach and water drew to a point at infinity; and always, almost visible, was the heat.

He jumped down from the terrace. The sand was thick over his black shoes and the heat hit him. He became conscious of the weight of clothes, kicked his shoes off fiercely and ripped off each stocking with its elastic garter in a single movement. Then he leapt back on the terrace, pulled off his shirt, and stood there among the skull-like coconuts with green shadows from the palms and the forest sliding over his skin. He undid the snake-clasp of his belt, lugged off his shorts and stood there, looking at the dazzling beach and the water.

Tasks – complete **one** of the two tasks below.

EITHER

- 1) Continue the story from this point, with a focus on the beauty and perfection of the desert island. You don't need to write the entire story, just the next section.

Things you could include might be:

- Describe more of the island setting
- Explore Ralph's feelings on the island
- Describe what Ralph does next [40]

OR

- 2) Despite the apparent perfection of the desert island, the passage suggests the potential for danger and negativity lurking beneath it. Write a description of the island that develops these threatening aspects.

Things you could include might be:

- Describe more of the island setting
- Explore Ralph's feelings on the island
- Describe what Ralph does next [40]

Notes for applicants (these notes will not be included on the paper)

The purpose of this assessment is to examine two elements of your English ability – your understanding of a text (the passage given), and your writing ability.

- For the Year 9 test, the extract will be between 250-275 words.

The style of questions will be the same for both the Year 7 and the Year 9 and the papers will be 45 mins.

Below is some guidance on what we will be looking for in responses, but we will reward all appropriate material, and there is no fixed way of approaching the question. You should feel free to be creative and express yourself.

The answer booklet they will be given will have 4 pages to write on, but there is no expectation as to length, and we certainly do not expect you to write this much.

You may plan your answers, but there will be no marks given for your plan.

20 marks are for the content of your writing, which should demonstrate your understanding of the passage.

Here we will be looking for the following:

- Have you understood the passage and developed your answer from it appropriately?
- Have you maintained the style and tone of the passage?
- Have you developed a variety of different aspects of the passage, for example the character, the setting and the actions?

The content of your answer will show your understanding of the passage by continuing to follow the style, tone and genre of the passage, or adapting it appropriately. You should utilise a variety of areas of the passage, including character, setting and plot.

In this passage, for example, it could be appropriate to describe the character coming across some animals, hidden communities or natural features – it could even become supernatural or fantastical.

However, it would not show your understanding of the passage if you wrote about a sudden alien invasion and the character was taken off to a new planet, or if the football world cup happened to be taking place behind a wall of trees.

20 marks are for the written accuracy and techniques in your writing, including your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Here we will be looking for the following:

- Have you used a variety of punctuation and vocabulary accurately?
- Have you used paragraphs and structured your writing clearly?
- Have you used a variety of images and description to engage the reader?

We want to see a variety of punctuation used correctly, and also some interesting and appropriate vocabulary alongside accurate sentence and paragraph structures.

We will be looking for whether spelling is accurate, including frequently used words and more complex vocabulary.

You can be creative, and explore ways of incorporating speech or internal thought into your writing.

You can use a variety of literary techniques in your writing to engage the reader, but these should fit the passage – the use of literary techniques shouldn't be used for the sake of it. For example, in this passage, a simile that said, "animals ran past as fast as Formula One racing cars" wouldn't fit the tone and setting of the passage – Formula One cars would seem out of place!