



OUNDLE

School

Academic Scholarship 2021

Preliminary Examination

English

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- **Dictionaries are not allowed.**
- Answer on lined paper. Clearly mark your name at the top of each sheet of paper you use.
- Answer ALL the questions in Section A. Choose ONE question from Section B. You should divide your time equally between both sections.
- You are expected to write clearly and accurately throughout each of your answers. You should leave some time towards the end of the examination to check your work carefully.
- The maximum number of marks for this paper is 60.

Section A: Comprehension

You should spend 30 minutes on this section

The following poem is by the poet John Heath-Stubbs (1918-2006). Read the poem carefully and answer the questions that follow. You should support your answers with quotations from the poem, as appropriate. Leave yourself enough time to answer the last question in full detail.

The Starling

The starling is my darling, although
I don't much approve of its
Habits. Proletarian bird,
Nesting in holes and corners, making a mess,
And sometimes dropping its eggs 5
Just any old where – on the front lawn, for instance.

It thinks it can sing too. In springtime
They are on every rooftop, or high bough,
Or telegraph pole, blithering away
Discords, with clichés picked up 10
From the other melodists.

But go to Trafalgar Square,
And stand, about sundown, on the steps of St. Martin's;
Mark then, in the air,
The starlings, before they roost, at their evolutions – 15
Scores of starlings, wheeling,
Streaming and twisting, the whole murmuration
Turning like one bird: an image
Realized, of the City.

1. What impression of the starling is created in stanza one? (4 marks)
2. 'Blithering away / Discords' (lines 9-10). What does this tell us about the starlings' singing? (5 marks)
3. What impression do you receive from the words used to describe the starlings' movements in the final stanza? (5 marks)

4. Does the poet's attitude to the starlings change in the final stanza? If so, how would you describe the change? *(6 marks)*
5. What is your opinion of this poem? As well as writing about the meaning of the poem, in your answer you might like to comment on:
- the effectiveness of comparisons, such as metaphors and similes;
 - the sound of the words in the poem and the way they are grouped together;
 - the form and structure of the poem.

(10 marks)

(Total: 30 marks)

End of Section A

Section B: Composition

Spend about 30 minutes on this section

The following are all opening sentences from a selection of different novels or short stories. Write a story or a piece of descriptive writing using ONE of these sentences as your opening sentence. Make your writing interesting and original. Credit will be given to how well your writing fits with and develops from your chosen sentence. You are reminded of the importance of clear and accurate written English and of careful presentation in your answer. All questions carry equal marks.

1. My mother was sure that, in the future, I would be a good person.

(30 marks)

OR

2. On Wednesdays, after school, Sylvia took the bus to the outskirts of the nearest town for her music lesson.

(30 marks)

OR

3. He'd been sent out to pick firewood from the forest, sticks and timbers wrenched loose in the storm.

(30 marks)

OR

4. To go back to the beginning – if one must – there were two women in the parish when I was a child, who were to a certain extent rivals in good looks.

(30 marks)

OR

5. The eleventh apartment had only one closet, but it did have a sliding glass door that opened onto a small balcony, from which he could see a man sitting across the way, outdoors in only a T-shirt and shorts even though it was October, smoking.

(30 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS