



ST. ANSELM'S COLLEGE
Edmund Rice Academy Trust

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

**SAMPLE
ENGLISH PAPER**

(Time allowed - 45 minutes)

**OPEN EVENING
28th JUNE 2012**

**OPEN EVENING
13th SEPTEMBER 2012**

SECTION A: COMPREHENSION

The following is an extract from *Private Peaceful* by Michael Morpurgo. The soldiers are sitting around, bored, when suddenly the Germans attack them with deadly gas shells

- 1) I am writing to Mother – I haven't written for a while and am feeling guilty about it. My pencil keeps breaking and I am sharpening it again. Everyone else is lying asleep in the sun or is sitting about smoking and chatting. Nipper Martin is cleaning his rifle again. He's always very particular about that.
- 2) "Gas! Gas!"
- 3) The cry goes up and is echoed all along the trench. For a moment we are frozen with panic. We have trained for this time and again, but nonetheless we fumble clumsily, feverishly with our gas masks.
- 4 "Fix bayonets!" Hanley's yelling while we're still trying frantically to pull on our gas masks. We grab our rifles and fix bayonets. We're on the firestep looking out into no-man's-land, and we see it rolling towards us, this dreaded killer cloud we have heard so much about but have never seen it for ourselves until now. Its deadly tendrils are searching ahead, feeling their way forward in long yellow wisps, scenting me, searching for me. Then finding me out, the gas turns and drifts straight for me. I'm shouting inside my gas mask. "Christ! Christ!" Still the gas comes on, wafting over our wire, through our wire, swallowing everything in its path.

- 5) I hear again in my head the instructor's voice, see him shouting at me through his mask when we went out on our last exercise. "You're panicking in there, Peaceful. A gas mask is like God, son. It'll work miracles for you, but you've got to believe in it." But I don't believe in it! I don't believe in miracles.
- 6) The gas is only feet away now. In a moment it will be on me, around me, in me. I crouch down hiding my face between my knees, hands over my helmet, praying it will float over my head, over the top of the trench and seek out someone else. But it does not. It's all around me. I tell myself I will not breathe, I must not breathe. Through a yellow mist I see the trench filling up with it. It drifts into the dugouts, snaking into every nook and cranny, looking for me. It wants to seek us all out, to kill us all, every one of us. Still I do not breathe. I see men running, staggering, falling. I hear Pete shouting out for me. Then he's grabbing me and we run. I have to breathe now. I can't run without breathing. Half blinded by my mask I trip and fall, crashing my head against the trench wall, knocking myself half-senseless. My gas mask has come off. I pull it down, but I have breathed in and know already it's too late. My eyes are stinging. My lungs are burning. I am coughing, retching, choking. I don't care where I'm running so long as it is away from the gas.
- 7) At last I'm in the reserve trench and it is clear of gas. I'm out of it. I wrench off my mask, gasping for good air. Then I am on my hands and knees vomiting violently. When at last the worst is over I look up through blurred and weeping eyes. A Hun in a gas mask is standing over me, his rifle aimed at my head. I have no rifle. It is the end. I brace myself, but he does not fire. He lowers his rifle slowly. "Go boy," he says, waving me away with his rifle. "Go. Tommy, go."

Unfamiliar words:

Firestep – a narrow ledge that allowed the soldiers to see over the trench.

Fritz/Hun – British name for the German soldiers.

Tommy – German name for the British soldiers.

SECTION A

COMPREHENSION (20 marks)

After you have read the extract answer the questions below, IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

The figure in brackets shows the number of marks for that question.

1. In paragraph 1, how do you know everyone is relaxed? [1 mark]

2. Why are the words, "Gas! Gas!" written as a separate paragraph? [1 mark]

3. From paragraph 3, explain in your own words the meaning of:

- a) frozen with panic
b) feverishly

[4 marks]

4. In paragraph 4, how does the narrator suggest the following characteristics of the gas:

- a) it is directly attacking him personally;
- b) it is inescapable;
- c) it is greedy

[3 marks]

5. How do you know he has lost his faith (in paragraph 5)? [1 mark]

6. Explain the meaning of these expressions in paragraph 6. [4 marks]

- a) snaking into every nook and cranny;
- b) know already it's too late.

SECTION B

ESSAY (20 marks)

Write an essay on

Either:

a) **An occasion, real or imaginary, when you have been very frightened.**

Or

b) **Imagine you are a soldier in the front line trenches, under attack. Describe what happens, including your thoughts and feelings.**

- Spend some time planning your story.
- Try to bring out your thoughts and feelings about the experience.
- Try to write about **TWO SIDES**, because your story is marked out of 20 and you cannot be given a good mark if you do not write enough.
- Check your work for errors.
- Marks will be awarded for:
 - a) Accurate spellings, punctuation and sentence structure.
 - b) Clear expression and your attempt to describe your emotions.