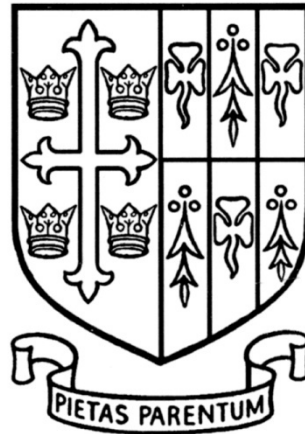


ST EDWARD'S OXFORD



13+ ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

2013-14

ENGLISH

1 hour

Answers should be written on lined paper.

The first **10 minutes** should be spent reading the texts in Section A and Section B.

- Section A asks you to analyse a prose passage.
- Section B is a creative writing task.

You are advised to spend just under **25 minutes** on each section. Use the last few minutes to read over what you have written and correct any mistakes. The quality of your writing will be assessed in both sections.

SECTION A: READING

The following passage is taken from *Cider with Rosie*, in which the poet Laurie Lee describes his childhood. The family has just woken up in their isolated valley to find that there has been a hard frost overnight. The scene opens in the kitchen.

The kitchen that morning would be full of steam, billowing from kettles and pots. The outside pump was frozen again, making a sound like broken crockery, so that the girls tore icicles from the eaves for water and we drank boiled ice in our tea.

"It's wicked," said Mother. "The poor, poor birds!" and she flapped her arms with vigour.

She and the girl were wrapped in all they had, coats and scarves and mittens; some had the shivers and some drops on their noses, while poor little Phyllis sat rocking in a chair holding her chilblains like a handful of bees.

There was an iron-shod clatter down the garden path and the milkman pushed open the door. The milk in his pail was frozen solid. He had to break off lumps with a hammer.

"It's murder out," the milkman said. "Crow's worryin' the sheep. Swans froze in the lake. An' tits droppin' dead in mid-air..." He drank his tea while his eyebrows melted, slapped Dorothy's bottom, and left.

"The poor, poor birds," Mother said again. They were hopping around the windowsill, calling for bread and fats—robins, blackbirds, wood-peckers, jays, never seen together save now. We fed them for a while, amazed at their tameness, then put on our long wool mufflers.

"Can we go out, Mother?"

"Well, don't catch cold. And remember to get some wood! First we found some old cocoa-tins, punched them with holes, then packed them with smouldering rags. If held in the hand and blown on occasionally they would keep hot for several hours. They were warmer than gloves, and smelt better too. In any case, we never wore gloves. So armed with these, and full of hot breakfast, we stepped out into the winter world.

It was a world of glass, sparkling and motionless. Vapours had frozen all over the trees and transformed them into confections of sugar. Everything was rigid, locked-up and sealed, and when we breathed the air it smelt like needles and stabbed our nostrils and made us sneeze.

Having sucked a few icicles, and kicked the water-butt—to hear its solid sound—and breathed through the frost on the window-pane, we ran up into the road. We hung around, waiting for something to happen. A dog trotted past like a ghost in a cloud, panting his aura around him. The distant fields in the low weak sun were crumpled like oyster shells.

Presently some more boys came to join us, wrapped like Russians, with multi-coloured noses. We stood round in a group and just gasped at each other, waiting to get an idea. The thin ones were blue, with hunched up shoulders, hands deep in their pockets, shivering. The fat ones were rosy and blowing like whales; all of us had wet eyes. What should we do? We didn't know. So the fat ones punched the thin ones, who doubled up, saying, 'Sod you.' Then the thin ones punched the fat ones, who half-died coughing. Then we all jumped up and down for a bit, flapped our arms, and blew on our cocoa-tins.

"What we goin' to *do*, then, eh?"

We quietened down to think. A shuddering thin boy, with his lips drawn back, was eating the wind with his teeth. "Giddy up," he said suddenly, and sprang into the air and began whipping himself, and whinnying. At that we all galloped away down the road, bucking and snorting, tugging invisible reins, and lashing away at our hindquarters.

Now the winter's day was set in motion and we rode through its crystal kingdom. We examined the village for its freaks of frost, for anything we might use. We saw the frozen spring by the side of the road, huge like a swollen flower. Water-wagtails hovered above it, nonplussed at its silent hardness, and again and again they dropped down to drink, only to go sprawling in a tumble of feathers. We saw the stream in the valley, black and halted, a tarred path threading through the willows. We saw trees lopped-off by their burdens of ice, cow-tracks like pot-holes in rock, quiet lumps of sheep licking the spiky grass with their black and rotting tongues. The church clock had stopped and the weather cock was frozen, so that both time and the winds were stilled; and nothing, we thought, could be more exciting than this; interference by a hand unknown, the winter's No to routine and laws—sinister, awesome, welcome.

Answer the following questions in full sentences written in clear, precise English. Spend about **25 minutes** altogether on this section.

1. What impression are you given of the home and its atmosphere? [5]
2. How do the children react to the frost? Use examples from the whole passage to support your ideas, but pay particular attention to the final paragraph. [10]
3. What is interesting about the language used by Lee to describe the winter scene in the second half of the passage? You might like to consider the imagery, the author's diction (the words he chooses to use), the length of the sentences, and other features. [10]

[Total for Section A: 25 marks]

SECTION B: WRITING

Choose ONE of the following tasks.

Marks will be awarded for originality, clarity and vocabulary, as well as spelling and punctuation. Take a few minutes to plan before you begin writing.

EITHER

1. Describe a case of extreme weather, including both the details of the scene and the experience of someone encountering it. You could choose very hot weather, torrential rain, tornadoes, very strong winds or other extreme conditions.

OR

2. "Childhood is often presented as a magical time in life, but in truth growing up is painful and often traumatic." Do you agree? Use examples to illustrate your views, either from your life or from the lives of others.

Spend about **25 minutes** on this task.

[Total for Section B: 25 marks]