



**YEAR 9 ENTRY
SAMPLE ENGLISH ENTRANCE PAPER**

1 hour 30 minutes

1. Read the poem below and answer the question that follows:

A Prehistoric Camp

It was the time of year
Pale lambs leap with thick leggings
on
Over small hills that are not there,
That I climbed Eggardon.

The hedgerows still were bare,
None ever knew so late a year;
Birds built their nests in the open air,
Love conquering their fear.

But there on the hill-crest,
Where only larks or stars look down,
Earthworks exposed a vaster nest,
Its race of men long flown.

Andrew Young (1885-1971)

Explore how Andrew Young vividly conveys his thoughts about the prehistoric camp at Eggardon. In your essay you might like to consider

- How he depicts the countryside
- How he writes about the animals and birds
- The impact of the final four lines of the poem

25 marks



2. Read the passage below and answer the question that follows:

Save our countryside: Why we are all killing off our rural idyll



Since Neolithic times, our best-loved landscapes have been shaped by farming, Photo: GETTY

The long-term future for many of Britain's smaller, family farmers, especially in our uplands, is very gloomy indeed. This matters for all of us who love the British countryside, its landscapes and its villages; and for those of us who mind about food security and the impact of climate change.

Since Neolithic times, our best-loved landscapes have been shaped by farming, while our villages and market towns grew up over centuries to serve the needs of local agriculture. The need for food to satisfy hungry, booming industrial centres was the driver of a thriving rural economy that employed millions and sculpted the hills, valleys and plains of this country. Today, it is our farmers who continue to maintain and care for these areas. However, many small farmers, especially on picturesque yet incredibly difficult-to-work hill farms, are struggling to exist in the face of harsh economic realities, while rural villages and market towns that once hummed with life and commerce are failing. There are many causes such as falling food prices, the effects of European Union subsidies and fewer people working in the sector, but overall there is a decline in the agricultural economy.

There is another reason to mind about the future of our countryside. The threat of climate change grows ever greater, and almost every day we learn from scientists that the speed and severity with which it will affect us is accelerating exponentially. Not only does this mean we need to have access to home-grown food, but we need the land to be managed as a huge carbon store and the origin of our natural-water supplies.

Dr Richard Baines, of the Royal Agricultural College, says: "We are all familiar with regular weather reports that note the 1-2C difference between our cities and more rural areas. But we should be aware that the natural and agricultural vegetation that covers 80 per cent of the UK is also actually sequestering carbon, or has the potential to do so."

To paraphrase John Donne, "No farm is an island", and many of the villages and towns that once thrived because of farming have begun to lose their hearts as agriculture has declined. According to research, 95 per cent of village halls are struggling to stay open; 36 pubs are closing each week, potentially eliminating 43,000 jobs over the next five years; 800 village shops are shutting annually; and churches, schools, cottage hospitals, banks and many Post Offices are under threat. As more people choose to live in rural areas for "improved quality of life", our villages are losing the network of services that bind together the communities of which they are so desperate to become a part.

Our countryside is threatened as never before; once we lose it, we can never bring it back.

Imagine you are a Dr Richard Baines and you have been asked to give a speech setting out the reasons why people should be concerned about changes to the countryside and farming. In your speech you should include:

- Threats to the countryside
- The reasons why farmers are so important
- Your fears for the future

Try to use specific detail from the text, but use your own words where possible.

20 marks for content

5 marks for accuracy of your writing