

Gresham's School
Year 9 Entrance Paper

1 hour

Answer Section A and Section B. You should aim to spend 30 minutes on each section.

Section A

Read the following poem carefully and answer the questions that follow. Try to be as thorough as possible and develop a range of ideas using quotations and analysis to support your ideas.

An Old Woman

Her days are measured out in pails of water,
Drawn from the pump, while drops of milkless tea,
Brewed in the cup, record the passing hours.
Yet neither tea nor heat of the small fire,
Its few red petals drooping in the grate,
Can stop the ice that forms within her veins,
And knots the blood and clouds the clear, blue eye.
At edge of night she sits in the one chair,
That mocks the frailness of her bones, and stares
Out of the leaded window at the moon,
That amber serpent swallowing an egg:
Footsteps she hears not, and no longer sees
The crop of faces blooming in the hedge
When curious children cluster in the dusk,
Vision being weak and ear-drums stiff with age.
And yet if neighbours call she leans and snatches
The crumbs of gossip from their busy lips,
Sharp as a bird, and now and then, she laughs,
A high, shrill, mirthless laugh, half cough, half whistle,
Tuneless and dry as east wind through thistle.

1. How does the poet use language to give a vivid and interesting description of the woman's physical appearance? 5 marks
2. How does the poet make you respond to the way her life is shown? 5 marks

Section B

Describe a character sitting on a bench in a park.

10 marks for content

5 marks for accuracy of writing