



**YEAR 9 ENTRY
ENGLISH ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP PAPER
SAMPLE**

1 hour 30 minutes

1 hour and 30 minutes

You should aim to spend 45 minutes on each question.

1. Read the following poem carefully and answer the question that follows

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.

How does the poet use language to give us a vivid and interesting description of the old woman and her life?

To help you answer you might consider:

- Physical description
- Description of her activities and the kind of life she leads
- How you respond to the way her life is shown

25 marks

2. Read the passage below.

This is an account of the disastrous eruption of the volcano Vesuvius, and what happened at that time to an eighteen-year-old student and his uncle.

Vesuvius

Across the Bay of Naples, in Italy, the volcano Mount Vesuvius dominates your view from almost every angle. It stands like a guard over the cluster of towns with their busy markets



and decorated pavements that huddle in its fertile foothills.

The disastrous eruption in the year 79 AD was one of the world's most famous natural catastrophes. In that period of history of course, there were no rescue teams, no earth-moving apparatus and no emergency hospitals. Anyway, there could have been no rescue, since the

city of Pompeii was covered with 29 metres of small pumice stones and volcanic ash.

Anyone who stayed behind or who revisited the site in the next day or two was either smothered or killed by a cloud of poisonous gases dust and cinders. It was estimated that 20,000 died there. Many people were turned to statues as they died.

We are fortunate in having an account of the eruption of Vesuvius which was written by an eighteen-year-old student called Pliny. His uncle, Pliny the Elder, was a famous academic who wrote an encyclopaedia called Natural History and other books on war. He was famous for his military service. At that time of the explosion he was in charge of the Roman Navy in the Bay below Vesuvius and therefore called for a boat so that he could rescue stranded citizens.

Young Pliny described 'the sea being sucked back, as if it was driven by the convulsions of the earth and a black and dreadful cloud with gusts of fiery, snakelike vapour.

Young Pliny's uncle reached safety, but went to bed exhausted. His friend, Pomponius, reported that 'His breathing was heavy and sonorous and could be heard outside his

bedroom door.' Later he drank copious amounts of water and then collapsed and died - whether from the weakness of his heart or the results of inhaling toxic gas, nobody knew.

Question [This question could take the form of a newspaper report, speech, letter or diary entry]

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter, writing from the area at the time of the explosion in 79 AD. Write the newspaper report which would have appeared in the few days following the explosion. It should

- describe the change in the landscape as a result of the explosion
- cover the terror and destruction of the event
- explain Pliny the Elder's role in the event and its result

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

Tragic death of respected Naval Commander;

Eruption causes terror and destruction in the Bay of Naples

15 marks for content

10 marks for accuracy of your writing