

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.

War Poetry

The class has dropped its books. The janitor's*
disturbed some wasps, broomed the nest
straight off the roof. It lies outside, exotic
as a fallen planet, a burst city of the poor;
its newsprint halls, its ashen, tiny rooms
all open to the air. The insects' buzz
is low-key as a smart machine. They group,
regroup, in stacks and coils, advance
and cross like pulsing points on radar screens.

And though the boys have shaven heads
and football stripes, and would, they swear,
enlist at once, given half a chance,
march down Owen's darkening lanes
to join the lads and stuff the Boche* –
they don't rush out to pike the nest,
or lap the yard with grapeshot faces.
They watch the wasps through glass,
Silently, abashed, the way we all watch war.

*janitor - caretaker

*Boche - colloquial term for the German soldiers in the First World War

1. How does the poet use language to give a vivid and interesting description of the wasps and the nest? 5 marks
2. What do you think the poem conveys about the boys and attitudes to war? 5 marks

Section B

Describe a scene that you are looking at through glass.

10 marks for content

5 marks for accuracy of writing