

Year 9 Entrance Exam- sample

English

Time allowed: 1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions:

Answer all questions in Section A and one question from Section B

Section A: 20 marks

Section B: 25 marks (including 10 marks for the accuracy of writing)

Total for paper: 45 marks

Section A: Reading

You should spend 10 minutes reading and 30 minutes answering the questions

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) opens one of his most famous novels with a description of a November day in Victorian London.

London. Relentless November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes. Dogs, indistinguishable in mire¹. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Pedestrians, jostling one another's umbrellas in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other pedestrians have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement. 5 10

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits³ and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient pensioners wheezing by their firesides. People on the bridges peeping over the parapets⁴ into a sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon and hanging in the misty clouds. 15

From *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens (1852)

Glossary:

1. *mire*: an area of deep mud.
2. *ait*: a small island in a river.
3. *parapet*: a low wall along the edge of a bridge, to stop people falling.

Read the extract from *Bleak House* and answer the following questions:

1. What sort of weather is London experiencing? Use your own words to describe it. (2 marks)
2. What do the following words mean? (3 marks)
 - a) relentless (line 1)
 - b) indistinguishable (line 6)
 - c) wheezing (line 16)
3. Identify a word or phrase from the text which suggests the same idea as the words underlined:
 - a) The mud is sticking in a determined way to the pavement (1 mark)
 - b) Pedestrians were pushing and shoving each other's umbrellas (1 mark)
 - c) People looking over the edge of the bridge (1 mark)
4. Dickens mentions a prehistoric animal, the Megalosaurus. How does he describe it? Use quotations from the passage to support your ideas. (2 marks)
5. Where exactly in London does Dickens imagine seeing the Megalosarus? (1 mark)
6. What details or language choices show that this passage is set in the nineteenth century and not more recently? Use quotations from the passage to support your answer (4 marks)
7. Re-read the second paragraph, lines 12-18.
What word does Dickens repeat and what atmosphere does this create for the reader? (5 marks)

Total: 20 marks

Section B: Composition

You should spend 35 minutes on this section.

Please show your planning.

Choose **one** of the following tasks:

1. Write your own story entitled 'The Desert'

OR

2. Imagine and describe a **quiet** time of day in a town, city or location (i.e. market /theatre/ fairground) that is usually bustling with activity.

OR

3. Use the following as the opening line of a story:
'At about half past ten of a cold December morning an old gentleman got furiously out of his carriage...'

(25 marks)

There are 15 marks available for the content and structure of your writing.

There are 10 marks available for the style and accuracy of your writing.