

Section A: Reading Comprehension

Spend up to 20 minutes on this section. Read the passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

In this extract, which is from the opening to a novel, Meshak and his father, Otis, are travelling to Gloucester.

Meshak tightened the straps round the mule's belly. He ignored the faint kitten-like wails which came from the sacks and tried not to look at the sneering face of the man he called his father. From his driving seat Otis peered round the covered wagon and flicked his whip at him. Jester, the brown scraggy lurcher, shadowed Meshak among the mules as the boy
5 tried to compensate for his **negligence** by meticulously checking all the panniers. The other dogs, tied to the wagon by bits of string, barked their heads off and leapt and twisted in a **frenzied** bid to pull free. They didn't calm down till Meshak and Jester were back on the wagon.

Meshak was an awkward lad. At fourteen he was taller than his father and growing. But he
10 looked as if he had been put together all wrong; his body was all over the place, his head too large, his ears too sticking out, his lips never quite closing. There seemed always to be a sleeve at his runny nose. His arms and legs dangled from his body, uncoordinated and clumsy; he dropped things, tripped over things, fumbled and stumbled. All this meant that people – especially his father – shouted at him, cuffed him, jeered and sneered at him, so his
15 whole look was that of a cowering dog. If he had had a tail, it would have always been between his legs, as he slunk by waiting for the next kick. He had a vulnerable, infantile look, with his pale-freckled face beneath a stack of wild red hair, and his large, watery, blue eyes, which often stared round at the world with incomprehension. But no one ever saw him cry or laugh. People called him a simpleton – a loon – and wondered why his father hadn't
20 abandoned him years ago. People assumed that he was nothing but an empty vessel, lacking in all substance, feeling or emotion; neither able to love nor in need of being loved.

How could Meshak speak of his terrors? There was no one to tell except Jester. He saw trolls and witches; evil creatures crouching in shadows, lingering round trees, hanging in the sky; demons with hairless heads and glinting teeth. He never knew when they would come
25 to poke and prod him, to torment his sleep and rampage through his head. Even now, the darkness of the forest they had just left behind seemed to be creeping down the road after them, gobbling up their tracks, soon to consume them too.

His father was mean with the lamps and only kept one up in front for the road ahead, so Meshak hated being out on the highway at night. He was afraid of the dark. It was not just
30 the spirit world which frightened him, but the real world of robbers and highwaymen, especially near the forest. And then there were the wild animals. He hated the green eyes which glimmered in the dense undergrowth, and the scufflings and gruntings of unseen creatures stalking among the trees.

Now answer each of the following questions in full sentences.

You will be awarded marks for your spelling, punctuation and grammar, so check your answers once you have finished.

1. **In your own words**, describe Meshak's physical appearance.

[2 marks]

/2

2. Explain, **in your own words**, what each of the following sentences shows about Meshak.

- a. "If he had had a tail, it would have always been between his legs" (line 15-16)

[2 marks]

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- b. “his large, watery, blue eyes [...] stared round at the world with incomprehension” (line 17-18)

[2 marks]

/4

3. Look closely at lines 22-27. How does the author show Meshak’s fears? Refer to at least two details from the paragraph.

[4 marks]

/4

4. Explain the meanings of the following two words, which are in **bold** in the passage.
You do not need to write in full sentences. [2 marks]

a. negligence (line 5)

b. frenzied (line 7)

/2

5. In the following extract you will find several mistakes in spelling and punctuation.
Copy out the extract, **putting in the correct punctuation and spelling**. [5 marks]

meeshak and his father are travelling toogether, their going to catch a ferrie witch will
take them too gloucester and there they will trie to find someware to stay.

/5

Mark for SPaG	/3
Total mark for Section A	/20

Please turn over for Section B

Section B: Composition

Spend up to 25 minutes on this section.

Answer the following question:

Continue the story, describing the rest of Meshak's journey. You do not have to finish the story – just include some interesting details about where he goes next and how he feels about it.

- Remember to plan the events carefully so that your story is well-structured.
- Use interesting descriptions and details in your writing.
- Pay close attention to your spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Use the lines printed on the exam paper for your writing.

[20 marks]

[illegible]

End of examination. Now check your work carefully.

Content:	/15
Accuracy:	/10
Total:	/25