



ST PAUL'S SCHOOL  
Est. 1509

# **JUNIOR SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION**

**MAY 2019**

**ENGLISH**

**2 hours**

**Answer questions on the paper provided. Begin each question on a separate sheet.**

**30 marks are available for each answer. A further 10 marks are available for accuracy and ambition in spelling, punctuation and grammar.**

**SECTION A—Poetry**

---

Read carefully the poem overleaf, ‘Icefield’ by David Harsent, and answer the following question.

**How is the icefield presented to the reader in this poem?**

**You should pay close attention to the writer’s choices of form, structure and language throughout your essay.**

In your answer you might consider:

- the way that things used to be on the icefield;
- the way that things are now;
- the significance of the final stanza;
- anything else that you consider to be important.

### Icefield

A place of ice over ice, of white over white  
and beauty in absences. There was a time when the only sound  
was the wind calling its ghosts, when the skyline was set

clean as a scar on glass, when your heartbeat slowed  
with the cold, when your dreams brought in a white bird  
on a white sky and music that could only be heard

from time to time on the other side of night.

Now the horizon's a smudge; now there's a terrible weight  
in the air and a stain cut hard and deep in the permafrost.

Breakage and slippage; the rumble of some vast  
machine cranking its pistons, of everything on the slide;  
and the water rising fast, and the music lost.

**SECTION B—Prose**

---

Read carefully the passage overleaf from *An American Childhood*, by Annie Dillard, and answer the following question.

For information, the passage is set in 1950, when the author was five years old.

**How does the writer vividly present this childhood memory to the reader?**

**You should pay close attention to the writer’s choices of form, structure and language throughout your essay.**

In your answer you might consider:

- the description of the fish tank;
- the significance of the weather;
- the presentation of Jo Ann Sheehy and her skating;
- anything else you consider to be important.

The night Jo Ann Sheehy skated on the street, it was dark inside our house. We were having dinner in the dining room – my mother, my father, my sister Amy, who was two, and I. There were lighted ivory candles on the table. The only other light inside was the blue fluorescent lamp over the fish tank, on a sideboard. Inside the tank, neon tetras, black mollies, and angelfish circled, illumined, through the light-shot water. When I turned the fluorescent lamp off, I had learned, the fish still circled their tank in the dark. The still water in the tank's centre barely stirred.

Now we sat in the dark dining room, hushed. The big snow outside, the big snow on the roof, silenced our words and the scrape of our forks and our chairs. The world outside was dangerously cold, and the big snow held the houses down and the people in it.

Behind me, tall chilled windows gave out onto the narrow front yard and the street. A motion must have caught my mother's eye; she rose and moved to the windows, and Father and I followed. There we saw the young girl, the transfigured Jo Ann Sheehy, skating alone under the streetlight.

She was turning on ice skates inside the streetlight's yellow cone of light – illumined and silent. She tilted and it spun. She wore a short skirt, as if Edgerton Avenue's asphalt had been the ice of an Olympic arena. She wore mittens and a red knitted cap below which her black hair lifted when she turned. Under her skates, the street's packed snow shone; it illumined her from below, the cold light striking under her chin.

I stood tall at the window, barely reaching the sill; the glass fogged before my face, so I had to keep moving or hold my breath. What was she doing out there? Was everything beautiful so bold? I expected a car to run over her at any moment: the open street was a fatal place, where I was forbidden to set foot.

Once, the skater left the light. She winged into the blackness beyond the streetlight and sped down the street; only her white skates showed, and the white snow. She emerged again under another streetlight, in the continuing silence, just at our corner stop sign where the trucks' brakes hissed. Inside that second cone of light she circled backward and leaning. Then she reversed herself in an abrupt half-turn – as if she had skated backward into herself, absorbed her own motion's impetus, and rebounded from it; she shot forward into the dark street and appeared again becalmed in the first streetlight's cone. I exhaled; I looked up. Distant over the street, the night sky was moonless and foreign, a frail, bottomless black, and the cold stars speckled it without moving.

**TURN OVER**

**SECTION C—Writing**

---

Choose one of the following questions.

**EITHER:**

1. Write a story set during, or after, a snow shower.

**OR:**

2. Write a story that begins, ‘I stood tall at the window, barely reaching the sill.’

**OR:**

3. Write a description of a moment when you saw something extraordinary. (N.B. Your description should focus on the extraordinary thing and your thoughts and feelings as you saw it.)

**OR:**

4. You are looking out of a window of your house during, or after, a period of bad weather. Describe what you see, as well as your thoughts and feelings as you look at your surroundings.

**END OF PAPER**

**BLANK PAGE**

**BLANK PAGE**