



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL
THE CHALLENGE 2019
ENGLISH

Wednesday 1 May 2019

You have TWO HOURS for this paper.

- *The paper is divided into Sections A, B, C and D.*
- *You should spend about 10 minutes on Section A, 35 minutes on Section B, 45 minutes of Section C and 30 minutes on Section D.*
- *The clarity of your expression and accuracy of your spelling, grammar and punctuation will be taken into account, when the paper is marked.*
- **Please write in black or blue ink.**

SECTION A

Write out the short paragraph below, adding punctuation so that it is grammatically accurate and makes sense. The first capital letter and last full stop have been done for you.

The restaurant was full of people seated at a long table Max and his family felt pushed up against the side of the room in the gilded mirror surmounted on the wall above them Max watched the waiter explain to his father I love cooking my family and my dogs being close to the airport we find that most of the time travellers worry about their luggage but look we have space to accommodate all. [15]

SECTION B

Read the following poem, 'On Turning Ten', carefully:

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad light--
5 a kind of measles of the spirit,
a mumps of the psyche,
a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
10 but that is because you have forgotten
the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by two.
I can lie on my bed and remember every digit.
At four I was an Arabian wizard.
15 I could make myself invisible
by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
20 watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the garage
as it does today,
25 all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness, I say to myself,
as I walk through the universe in my sneakers¹.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary friends,
30 time to turn the first big number.

It seems only yesterday I used to believe
there was nothing under my skin but light.
If you cut me I could shine.
35 But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

¹ *sneakers* = trainers

1. Warm-up questions:

a) In what way does the speaker suggest that turning ten years old is worse than getting a childhood illness like the measles, mumps or chicken pox?

[1]

b) Write down two examples of the speaker's imaginative play as a child.

[2]

c) Write down two things that the speaker does now that he is ten years old.

[2]

2. Re-read from line 13 'I can lie on my bed' to the end of the poem.

How does the poet use the language, imagery and form of the poem to show how the speaker has changed now that he is ten years old?

[20]

[Turn over for Section C]

SECTION C

Read the passage below carefully:

Theobald and his son, Ernest, visit a school run by Dr Skinner. They are shown into Dr Skinner’s library:

5 Like all houses, Dr Skinner’s had its peculiar smell. In this case the prevailing odour was one of leather, but along with it there was a subordinate savour as of a chemist’s shop. This came from a small laboratory in one corner of the room—the possession of which, together with the free use of such words as “carbonate,” “hyposulphite,” “phosphate,” and “affinity,” was enough to convince even the most sceptical that Dr Skinner had a profound knowledge of chemistry. I may say in passing that Dr Skinner had dabbled in a great many other things as well as chemistry. He was a man of many small knowledges, and each of them dangerous.

10 But to return to Dr Skinner’s library; over the chimney-piece there was a Bishop’s half length portrait of Dr Skinner himself, painted by the elder Pickersgill, whose merit Dr Skinner had been among the first to discern and foster. There were no other pictures in the library, but in the dining-room there was a fine collection, which the doctor had got together with his usual consummate taste. The table of the library was loaded with books many deep; manuscripts of all kinds were confusedly mixed up with
15 them,—boys’ exercises, probably, and examination papers—but all littering untidily about.

The room in fact was as depressing from its slatternliness as from its atmosphere of erudition. Theobald and Ernest as they entered it, stumbled over a large hole in the carpet, and the dust that rose showed how long it was since it had been taken up and
20 beaten. This was due to the Doctor himself, who declared that if his papers were once disturbed it would be the death of him. Near the window was a green cage containing a pair of turtle doves, whose plaintive cooing added to the melancholy of the place. The walls were covered with book shelves from floor to ceiling, and on every shelf the books stood in double rows. It was horrible. Prominent among the
25 most prominent upon the most prominent shelf were a series of splendidly bound volumes entitled “Skinner’s Works.”

Boys are sadly apt to rush to conclusions, and Ernest believed that Dr Skinner knew all the books in this terrible library, and that he, if he were to be any good, should have to learn them too. His heart fainted within him.

1. Using the passage to help you, write down the meaning of:

a) ‘slatternliness’ (line 16) [1]

b) ‘erudition’ (line 17) [1]

2. Does the writer approve of Mr Skinner?

Support your answer with a short quotation and explanation.

[3]

3. Would you like Mr Skinner to be your teacher? Why or why not?

Refer closely to details in the passage above, in order to explain your answer. Make sure you give lots of reasons.

[20]

4. Your school needs a new English teacher.

Your Head Teacher has asked you to give a speech to the School Governors, explaining what skills you would like the new teacher to have, and what sort of person you think would be best for the job.

Write the words of your speech. Give examples to illustrate your points. [15]

[Turn over for Section D]

SECTION D



This illustration is taken from a C19th novel. After the picture, the novelist writes:

The fall was perilous. The poor prisoner had fallen between two ships. There was reason to fear he might be trapped under one or the other. Four men quickly leapt into a boat. The crowd cheered them on; every soul was filled with anxiety. The man had not risen to the surface. He had vanished into the sea, without a ripple, as though he had fallen into a vat of oil. The search continued until nightfall: they did not even find the body.

The convict's name is James. He survives. Write the story of what happens to him next.

Take a few minutes to plan your answer, before you write.

[20]

[end of paper]

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