



ALDENHAM SCHOOL

13 + Entrance Paper

13 January 2010

ENGLISH

Length of examination – One hour

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

This examination consists of two parts:

Answer **all** questions in Section A

Answer **one** question in Section B

Start each section on a new piece of paper

Remember to write your full name and school on each piece of paper you use.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Section A is worth 25 marks

Section B is worth 25 marks

Read the following extract carefully and the answer **ALL** the questions which follow in **Section A**

In the Streets of New York

Chris Ayres

Chris Ayres, a Times journalist, reports on the Twin Towers disaster as seen from New York's streets. In this disaster two aircraft were flown into two large skyscrapers in New York.

At first we thought it was burning debris falling from the upper floors of the 110-storey World Trade Centre (WTC). Then we noticed that the debris had arms and legs. Soon, the horrible truth became clear: the bankers and lawyers who inhabited the most prestigious¹ floors of the WTC had decided to take the quarter-of-a-mile plunge to the street below rather than be incinerated² by aircraft wreckage.

The Hollywood comparisons were unavoidable. The sight of the half-destroyed WTC reminded me of the scene in *Independence Day* when an alien warship blows up the White House, or the scene in *Die Hard* when terrorists plant explosives in a Los Angeles building. But even Hollywood's most wildly creative minds would have dismissed yesterday morning's events as implausible.

All the clichés of the disaster-movie genre were being played out on the streets. On Canal Street, cars piled into the back of each other drivers leant out of their windows to stare at the WTC. Crowds assembled wherever there was a television set or a radio. They listened to the events in Washington and elsewhere in America with disbelief. "It's World War Three!" shouted one skateboarder, to anyone who would listen. The only people enjoying themselves were the hot-dog sellers, who were doing a roaring trade.

At my apartment in Greenwich Village, a 30-minute walk from the WTC, the first explosion at about 9am (2pm BST) went almost unnoticed. It was the kind of metal-on-metal impact that New Yorkers learn to ignore after a few months. Outside the building, however, it became clear that something was wrong. Very wrong. The WTC appeared to have a gaping black hole in its side, with flames licking out.

As I tried to make my way towards the inferno, I was met by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of the world's most expensively dressed refugees. They were office workers from the buildings surrounding the WTC who had fled after the first explosion. When the second plane hit the WTC, the refugees began to run, blocking all the northbound streets in West Manhattan. Everyone was trying to use their mobile phones, but the networks had jammed. Those who tried to call friends or colleagues in the WTC, myself included, were answered with an endless engaged tone.

There were many surreal sights on Greenwich Street and Washington Street, the main routes heading away from the disaster. One man sat and read nursery rhymes to his distraught young

¹ **Prestigious** :desirable and smart

² **Incinerated**: burned

son. A shell-shocked campaigner for the New York City elections continued to march with his placard

Diane Rieck, an American Express employee who works in the World Financial Centre, a glorious glass-roofed building opposite the WTC, said she had seen the second plane crash into it. "I heard a big bang and then saw a really huge red fireball," she said "But the worst thing was seeing people jump from this side, two or three from the other side." Then she broke down in uncontrollable tears.

Section A Answer ALL the questions in this section.

Marks are awarded for reference to the passage.

- 1) What are the first signs in the passage that a disaster has occurred? (2 marks)
- 2) The scene is more dramatic than any disaster movie. What 'clichés' (overused ideas from this sort of film) does Chris Ayres notice in the streets? (3 marks)
- 3) The skateboarder shouts 'It's World War Three!' Explain in your own words why this is a good way of conveying to readers the disaster scene (5 marks)
- 4) Why did he half ignore the sound of the first impact? (2 marks)
- 5) What were the effects of panic among the crowds of refugees? (3 marks)
- 6) 'Surreal' means very weird or strange. What two surreal sights does he notice near him? (3 marks)
- 7) Why does Diane Rieck break down into 'uncontrollable tears?' (2 marks)
- 8) Pick out two short descriptions which you feel describe the drama particularly well. For each choice comment upon why you have chosen the phrases and why you think they work particularly well. (5 marks)

Section B Choose ONE of the following tasks to answer

Write a descriptive piece entitled 'Devastation' (25 marks)

Write a story entitled 'Survival' (25 marks)