



Aldenham School

13+ Sample Paper

Subject: English

Time allowed: 60 mins

Instructions:

1. Use the lined paper provided for your answers.
2. You should spend about 30 minutes on Section A and 30 minutes on Section B.

Mark: _____ / 40 %: _____

English Comprehension

Read the following extract carefully.

Answer the comprehension questions which follow.

Thimble Summer by Elizabeth Enright is the story of Garnet Linden and her brother Jay who live on a remote farm in the American Midwest. After a long period of summer drought, Garnet's parents are worried that the farm will be ruined. Then one day Garnet finds a silver thimble in the riverbank and their luck immediately begins to change. This novel was based on the writer's own experience of life on a farm in Wisconsin. It won the Newbery Medal for the 'most distinguished contribution to American literature for Children.

Garnet thought this must be the hottest day that had ever been in the world. Every day for weeks she had thought the same thing, but this was really the worst of all. This morning the thermometer outside the village drugstore had pointed a thin red finger to one hundred- and ten-degrees Fahrenheit.

It was like being inside of a drum. The sky like a bright skin was stretched tight above the valley, and the earth, too, was tight and hard with heat. Later, when it was dark, there would be a noise of thunder, as though a great hand beat upon the drum; there would be heavy clouds above the hills, and flashes of heat lightning, but no rain. It had been like that for a long time. After supper each night her father came out of the house and looked up at the sky, then down at his fields of corn and oats. "No," he would say, shaking his head, "No rain tonight."

The oats were turning yellow before their time, and the corn leaves were torn and brittle, **rustling** like newspaper when the dry wind blew upon them. If the rain didn't come soon there would be no corn to harvest, and they would have to cut the oats for hay. Garnet looked up at the smooth sky angrily, and shook her fist. "You!" she cried, "why in time can't you let down a little rain!" At each step her bare feet kicked up a small cloud of dust. There was dust in her hair, and up her nose, making it tickle.

Slowly Garnet walked to the yellow house under tall maple trees and opened the kitchen door. Her mother was cooking supper on the big black coal stove, and her little brother Donald sat on the floor making a noise like a train.

Her mother looked up. Her cheeks were red from the hot stove. "Any mail, darling?" she asked. "Bills," replied Garnet.

"Oh," said her mother and turned back to her cooking.

Garnet set the table by the open window. Knife, fork, knife, fork, knife, fork, knife, fork but only a spoon for Donald, who managed even that so **absentmindedly** that there was usually as much cereal on the outside of him as inside at the end of a meal. Then she went down to the cold room.

It was still and dim down there. A tap dripped peacefully into the deep pool of water below, where the milk cans and stone butter crock were sunk. Garnet filled a jug with milk and put a square of butter on the plate she had brought. She knelt down and plunged both her arms into the water. It was **cloudy** with spilled milk but icy cold. She could feel coolness spreading through all her veins and little shiver ran over her.

Going to the kitchen again was like walking into a red-hot oven.

Donald had stopped being a train and had become a fire engine. He charged round and round the room hooting and shrieking. How could he be so lively, Garnet wondered. He didn't even notice the awful heat although his hair clung to his head like wet feathers and his cheeks were red as radishes.

After she had helped with the dishes, Garnet and Jay put on their bathing suits and went down to the river. They had to go down a road, through a pasture, and across half a dozen sand bars before they came to a place that was deep enough to swim in. This was a dark, quiet pool by a little island; trees hung over it and roots trailed in it. Three turtles slid from a log as the children approached, making three slowly widening circles on the still surface.

"It looks like tea," said Garnet, up to her neck in brownish lukewarm water.

"Feels like it too," said Jay. "I wish it was colder."

Still it was water and there was enough of it to swim in. When they were finally sufficiently waterlogged to be red-eyed and streaming, they went exploring on the sandy flats that had emerged from the river during the weeks of drought. They wandered in different directions, bending over, examining and picking things up. The damp flats had a rich, muddy smell. After a while the sun set brilliantly behind the trees, but the air seemed no cooler.

Garnet saw a small object, half-buried in the sand, and glittering. She knelt down and dug it out with her finger. It was a silver thimble! She dropped the old shoe, bits of polished glass, and a half dozen clam-shells she had collected and ran breathlessly to show Jay.

"It's solid silver!" she shouted triumphantly, "and I think it must be magic too!"

"Magic!" said Jay. "Don't be silly, there isn't any such thing."

Section A Comprehension

You should spend about 30 minutes of your time on this section.

Refer to the text to support your answers.

- 1) Write down a word or phrase from the first paragraph that shows that Garnet does not like the heat (1 mark)
- 2) Explain what is meant by saying the thermometer 'pointed a thin red finger' (2 marks)
- 3) 'It was like being a drum'
 - a) What figure of speech is being used in this expression? (1 mark)
 - b) Explain using short quotations, how the comparison to a drum is continued in the next two sentences (2 marks)
- 4) 'The oats were turning yellow before their time, and the corn leaves were torn and brittle, rustling like newspaper when the dry wind blew upon them.'

Explain in your own words what is happening with the oats (2 marks)

- 5) Using the text to help you, write in your own words the meaning of the following words (also **highlighted, bold and underlined** the text). (3 marks)

Rustling

Absentmindedly

Cloudy

- 6) *Then she went down to the cold room. It was still and dim down there. A tap dripped peacefully into the deep pool of water below, where the milk cans and stone butter crock were sunk. Garnet filled a jug with milk and put a square of butter on the plate she had brought. She knelt down and plunged both her arms into the water. It was cloudy with spilled milk but icy cold. She could feel coolness spreading through all her veins and little shiver ran over her.*
 - a) How does the writer highlight the difference between the kitchen and the cold room? (2 marks)
 - b) How does the writer create a sense of coolness? (2 marks)
- 7) In the last section of the passage from: 'Still it was water and there was enough of it to swim in' to the end of the passage 'Magic! Said Jay. Don't be silly, there isn't any such thing' How does the writer use language, form and structure to highlight the wonder and surprise of the discovery of the silver thimble? (5 marks)

Total: 20 marks

Section B: Composition

Spend 30 minutes on this section.

Choose **ONE** of the following creative writing tasks. You should spend a few minutes planning your work and leave time to proof-read.

You should check that you have:

- Punctuated correctly
- Used different and interesting verbs, adverbs and adjectives
- Included a variety of sentence structures
- Varied the length of your sentences
- Organised your writing into paragraphs
- Checked spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Used descriptive techniques such as similes and metaphors

EITHER

Write a story which uses the phrase 'The discovery'

OR

Describe **either** a very hot **Or** a very cold environment

Total: 20 marks

