

The John Lyon School 13+ Entrance Examination.

January 2006

English Paper.

Total Time - 1 Hour 30 Minutes

Section A – Reading Comprehension (30 marks)

In Section A, you must read Text A and Text B before answering the questions that follow. You should spend approximately 50 minutes on this section.

Section B – Writing. (20 marks)

You must choose 1 of the three tasks to write about. You should spend approximately 40 minutes on this section.

Write on the A4 lined paper provided and please use a new sheet of paper for the writing task in Section B.

Text A

This passage is from the opening chapter of a novel by Ian McEwan. Here the narrator describes the extraordinary scene that first brings the characters together: a balloon in a dangerous situation.

What we saw when we stood from our picnic was this: a huge grey balloon, the size of a house, the shape of a tear drop, had come down in the field. The pilot must have been half way out of the passenger basket as it touched the ground. His leg had become entangled in a rope that was attached to an anchor. Now, as the wind gusted, and pushed and lifted the balloon towards the escarpment, he was being half dragged, half carried across the field. In the basket was a child, a boy of about ten. In a sudden lull, the man was on his feet, clutching at the basket, or at the boy. Then there was another gust, and the pilot was on his back, bumping over the rough ground, trying to dig his feet in for purchase, or lunging for the anchor behind him in order to secure it in the earth. Even if he had been able, he would not have dared disentangle himself from the anchor rope. He needed his weight to keep the balloon on the ground, and the wind could have snatched the rope from his hands.

As I ran I heard him shouting at the boy, urging him to leap clear of the basket. But the boy was tossed from one side to another as the balloon lurched across the field. He regained his balance and got a leg over the edge of the basket. The balloon rose and fell, thumping into a hummock, and the boy dropped backwards out of sight. Then he was up again, arms stretched out towards the man and shouting something in return – words or inarticulate fear, I couldn't tell.

I must have been a hundred yards away when the situation came under control. The wind had dropped, the man was on his feet, bending over the anchor as he drove it into the ground. He had unlooped the rope from his leg. For some reason, complacency, exhaustion or simply because he was doing what he was told, the boy remained where he was. The towering balloon wavered and tilted and tugged, but the beast was tamed. I slowed my pace, though I did not stop. As the man straightened, he saw us – or at least the farm workers and me – and he waved us on. He still needed help, but I was glad to slow to a brisk walk. The farm labourers were also walking now. One of them was coughing loudly. But the man with the car, John Logan, knew something we didn't and kept on running. As for Jed Parry, my view of him was blocked by the balloon that lay between us.

The wind renewed its rage in the treetops just before I felt its force on my back. Then it struck the balloon which ceased its innocent comical wagging and was suddenly stilled. Its only motion was a shimmer of strain that rippled out across its ridged surface as the contained energy accumulated.

It broke free, the anchor flew up in a spray of dirt, and balloon and basket rose ten feet in the air. The boy was thrown back, out of sight. The pilot had the rope in his hands and was lifted two feet clear of the ground. If Logan had not reached him and taken hold of one of the many dangling lines the balloon would have carried the boy away. Instead, both men were now being pulled across the field, and the farm workers and I were running again.

Extract from *Enduring love* by Ian McEwan

Text B

This passage is an extract from the beginning of a handbook about ballooning. It is written for people who are new to ballooning.

Here the writer describes what a beginner's first balloon flight will be like.

Everyone has a different reaction to his or her first balloon flight: a mixture of fear, appreciation of beauty, and wonder that the thing works at all.

The basket seems so small for two people that it is surprising when the pilot explains that this one is actually for four. It contains a lot of technical-looking gear – fuel tanks strapped in the corners and a burner unit which seems to be mostly coiled tubing. The balloon itself is inside a rather scruffy canvas bag.

Once it has been taken out of the bag, the balloon is attached to the basket and spread out on the grass. The fabric of the balloon appears as thin as a shirt.

Some cold air is blown into the balloon using a motor-driven fan or by flapping the balloon base. The pilot then takes his position behind the burner and gives a blast of flame, which is about two metres long and is an impressive fiery monster. At this point the question uppermost in the mind of the first-time passenger is how to escape without losing face, but it is too late for that.

As the heat enters the balloon there is a magical transformation. The flat lifeless mass of fabric begins to breathe, rise up and expand. Somehow the tangled technical contraption on the ground has transformed itself into a shape which seems so beautiful that it should not be called a 'machine'. Looking up inside the balloon the regular and colourful space is like a vast piece of architecture – the inside of a giant cathedral dome.

Slowly the balloon feels lighter and finally the basket slides a little over the ground and lifts off. There is no motion of any kind, only the impression that the earth is leaving the balloon.

The balloon rises above the tree-tops and, after the first ascent, there is no feeling of height. All fear disappears and the main impression is the beauty and magic of the experience. There is no motion and no one has ever been travel sick in a balloon.

There is also no wind because the balloon is travelling with the wind, making the relative air movement zero. A ribbon hung from the basket of a balloon would hang straight down.

Extract (abridged) from *Ballooning Handbook* by Don Cameron,

Section A Time- 50 minutes.

Read the following questions and write your answers in full sentences. Use evidence from the texts to illustrate your answers where necessary. Questions 1-5 are on text A and questions 6-9 are on text B. Question 10 asks you to compare the passages.

1) From the opening paragraph of text A write down where the narrator was and what he was doing when he saw the balloon.

(2 marks)

2) From this paragraph pick out two pieces of evidence that show that the balloon is being carried by the wind. **(2 marks)**

3) How do we know that the pilot loses control of the balloon? Find evidence for your answer. **(4 marks)**

4) How do we know from paragraph 3 that the danger has not yet passed? **(2 marks)**

5) Explain the meanings of the following words and phrases in the contexts that they are used in the passage:

a) inarticulate fear (paragraph 2)

b) complacency (paragraph 3)

c) but the beast was tamed (paragraph 3)

d) its innocent comical wagging (paragraph 4)

e) a shimmer of strain (paragraph 4) **(5 marks)**

6. Read text B and explain one way in which the use of language in the first 2 paragraphs makes it clear that this information is for people who are new to ballooning. **(2 marks)**

7. The contrast between the balloon on the ground and in the air helps to make this piece of writing effective. Find 2 pieces of evidence which show this contrast and explain why you think the contrast is effective. **(2 marks)**

8. From paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 summarise in your own words as far as possible, the four main stages necessary before the balloon lifts off. **(4 marks)**

9. Explain in your own words the meaning of the word "ascent" in paragraph 7.

(1 mark)

10. Compare and contrast extracts A and B. You should focus on: the way the writers use language, the way they structure and organise the texts; the purposes and viewpoints of the writers; the effects of the texts on the readers. **(6 marks)**

Section B. Time 40 minutes.

Writing.

Choose **one** of the following 3 tasks to write about:

Either

a) Write a letter to a friend, who is afraid of flying, persuading him to join you on a ballooning trip.

Or

b) Describe an exciting journey that you made. It can be either real or imaginary.

Or

c) Write about a hobby or interest that you have, making sure you explain all the details about it.

(20 marks)

End of Exam