



CATERHAM
SCHOOL

11+ ENGLISH SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Section A: Comprehension
Reading Passage
(50 Minutes)

Instruction to Candidates:

1. Read this passage carefully before you look at the answer booklet.
2. You should spend 50 minutes in total on this comprehension section of the English exam.

Section A : Comprehension

Read the passage below, which is taken from the opening of 'Watership Down' by Richard Adams and then answer the questions which follow.

1 The primroses were over. Toward the edge of the wood, where the ground became open and
2 sloped down to an old fence and a brambly ditch beyond, only a few fading patches of pale
3 yellow still showed among the dog's mercury and oaktree roots. On the other side of the
4 fence, the upper part of the field was full of rabbit holes. In places the grass was gone
5 altogether and everywhere there were **clusters** of dry droppings, through which nothing but
6 the ragwort would grow. A hundred yards away, at the bottom of the slope, ran the brook,
7 no more than three feet wide, half choked with kingcups, watercress and blue brooklime. The
8 cart track crossed by a brick culvert and climbed the opposite slope to a fivebarred gate in the
9 thorn hedge. The gate led into the lane.

10 The May sunset was red in clouds, and there was still half an hour to twilight. The dry
11 slope was dotted with rabbits -- some nibbling at the thin grass near their holes, others
12 pushing further down to look for dandelions or perhaps a cowslip that the rest had missed.
13 Here and there one sat upright on an ant heap and looked about, with ears erect and nose in
14 the wind. But a blackbird, singing undisturbed on the outskirts of the wood, showed that there
15 was nothing alarming there, and in the other direction, along the brook, all was plain to be
16 seen, empty and quiet. The warren was at peace.

17 At the top of the bank, close to the wild cherry where the blackbird sang, was a little
18 group of holes almost hidden by brambles. In the green half-light, at the mouth of one of
19 these holes, two rabbits were sitting together side by side. At length, the larger of the two
20 came out, slipped along the bank under cover of the brambles and so down into the ditch and
21 up into the field. A few moments later the other followed.

22 The first rabbit stopped in a sunny patch and scratched his ear with rapid movements
23 of his hind leg. Although he was a yearling and still below full weight, he had not the **harassed**
24 look of most "outskirters" -- that is, the rank and file of ordinary rabbits in their first year who,
25 lacking either aristocratic parentage or unusual size and strength, get sat on by their elders
26 and live as best they can -- often in the open -- on the edge of their warren. He looked as
27 though he knew how to take care of himself. There was a **shrewd**, buoyant air about him as
28 he sat up, looked around and rubbed both front paws over his nose. As soon as he was
29 satisfied that all was well, he laid back his ears and set to work on the grass.

30 His companion seemed less at ease. He was small, with wide, staring eyes and a way
31 of raising and turning his head which suggested not so much caution as a kind of ceaseless,
32 nervous tension. His nose moved continually, and when a bumblebee flew humming to a
33 thistle bloom behind him, he jumped and spun round with a start that sent two nearby rabbits

34 scurrying for holes before the nearest, a buck with black-tipped ears, recognized him and
35 returned to feeding.

36 "Oh, it's only Fiver," said the black-tipped rabbit, "jumping at bluebottles again. Come
37 on, Buckthorn, what were you telling me?"

38 "Fiver?" said the other rabbit. "Why's he called that?"

39 "Five in the litter, you know: he was the last -- and the smallest. You'd wonder nothing
40 had got him by now. I always say a man couldn't see him and a fox wouldn't want him. Still, I
41 admit he seems to be able to keep out of harm's way."

42 "Let's go a bit further, Hazel," he said. "You know, there's something queer about the
43 warren this evening, although I can't tell exactly what it is. Shall we go down to the brook?"

44 "All right," answered Hazel, "and you can find me a cowslip. If you can't find one, no
45 one can."

46 He led the way down the slope, his shadow stretching behind him on the grass. They
47 reached the brook and began nibbling and searching close beside the wheel ruts of the track.

48 It was not long before Fiver found what they were looking for. Cowslips are a **delicacy**
49 among rabbits, and as a rule there are very few left by late May in the neighbourhood of even
50 a small warren. This one had not bloomed and its flat spread of leaves was almost hidden
51 under the long grass. They were just starting on it when two larger rabbits came running
52 across from the other side of the nearby cattle wade.



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Section A: Answer Booklet
(50 Minutes)

Instruction to Candidates:

1. Good writing and spelling are most important.
2. You should spend 50 minutes in total on this comprehension section of the English exam.

Questions

1. Explain what these words mean as they are used in the passage:

a) clusters

b) harassed

c) shrewd

d) delicacy

4 marks

2. In lines 7, when describing the brook, the writer uses the metaphor 'half choked'. Explain why you think the writer has used this metaphor and what image it presents to the reader.

2 marks

3. Re-read the first two paragraphs. How does the writer create a sense of peacefulness in this section? You should make direct reference to the language/imagery within by using quotations.

4 marks

4. Below are three adjectives which describe the first rabbit; find one quotation to support each word between lines 22-29:

i) Streetwise

ii) Wise

iii) Cautious

3 marks

5. Based on information from the passage, using your own words, describe the second rabbit (lines 30-35).

3 marks

6 marks

Total: 25 Marks



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Section B: Writing Task

(30 minutes)

Instruction to Candidates:

1. Good writing and spelling are most important.
2. You should spend 30 minutes in total on this Writing Task section of the English exam.






