

Magdalen College School



English Test

For entry to the Junior School at 8+

SAMPLE PAPER

English Comprehension

Read the following passage carefully and then try to answer the following questions.

Timbavati

Bertie was born in South Africa, in a remote farmhouse near a place called Timbavati. It was shortly after Bertie first started to walk that his mother and father decided a fence must be put around the farmhouse to make a compound where Bertie could play in safety. It wouldn't keep the snakes out- nothing could do that- but at least Bertie would be safe now from the leopards, and the lions and the spotted hyenas. Enclosed within the compound were the lawn and gardens at the front of the house, and the stables and barns at the back- all the room a child would need or want, you might think. But not Bertie.

The farm stretched away as far as the eye could see in all directions, twenty thousand acres of veld. Bertie's father farmed cattle, but times were hard. The rains had failed too often, and many of the waterholes had all but dried up. With fewer wildebeest and impala to prey on, the lions would sneak up on the cattle whenever they could. So Bertie's father was more often than not away from home with his men, guarding the cattle. Every time he left, he'd say the same thing: "Don't you ever open that gate, Bertie, do you hear me? There's lions out there, leopards, elephants, hyenas. You stay put, you hear?" Bertie would stand at the fence and watch him ride out, and he would be left behind with his mother, who was also his teacher. There were no schools for a hundred miles. And his mother too was always warning him to stay inside the fence.

Passage taken from The Butterfly Lion by Michael Morpurgo

Now try and answer all the following questions. If you find you cannot answer one, leave it and go on to the next question. Come back to it at the end and try to answer it. Give full answers; try to write in full sentences for questions 2-7.

1. Choose **and underline one correct meaning** for each of the following words from the passage.
 - a. **Compound** (line 4):
 - a. fortress
 - b. closed space or yard
 - c. climbing frame
 - b. **Veld** (line 12):
 - a. open land
 - b. lake
 - c. collection of farm buildings
 - c. **Prey** (line 15):
 - a. watch carefully
 - b. hunt
 - c. graze on grass

3 marks

2. Why did Bertie's parents put a fence around their farmhouse?

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2 marks

3. What tells you that there were not many people living near Bertie's house?

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2 marks

4. Name **two** animals mentioned in the story which attack and kill other animals.

..... **and**
.....

Name **two** animals mentioned in the story which are commonly attacked by wild animals (don't include people)

..... **and**
.....

2 marks

5. What **problems** or **difficulties** did the farm have, that caused the writer to describe things as: "times were hard" (line 13)? Try to find **two**.

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4 marks

6. "Bertie would stand at the gate and watch him ride out." (line 11) Write down what you think the main thought in Bertie's mind would have been at this moment.

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2 marks

7. Write what you learn about Bertie's **father** from the story. Try to find as many as you can (at least four)! You may number your points (but do not repeat the example given).

e.g. 1. Bertie's father lived in a farmhouse near Timbavati in South Africa.

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5 marks



English Writing: Story

You will have 30 minutes to write a story about **ONE** of the following. On the paper provided you should plan your story out first (in any way you have been taught).

Either: **The Forbidden Box.**

Write a story about a boy who is forbidden to open a box (which might be in his house, perhaps in the attic or in a room). Eventually, of course, he does open it... What then happens as a result of this?

Or: **The Boy who could Paint the Future.**

Write a story about a boy who turns out to have a strange gift – the pictures he paints then really happen! What happens to the boy as people begin to realise this?

Or: **Camping Catastrophe!**

Write a story about a boy who goes on a camping holiday – and everything goes wrong! Your story should be humorous and fast-paced.