



First Year Entrance Examination

Sample Paper

English

Time permitted: 30 minutes

Surname:

First name:

Instructions to the candidate:

1. Divide your time equally between the reading and the writing section.
2. You are advised to spend five minutes reading the extract in section A.
3. Try to answer all questions.
4. Write your answers on the **lined paper**. Make sure you put the question number in the margin.
5. Write your name on the answer paper.
6. Do not rub out any planning.
7. If you get stuck on a question leave it and come back to it later if you have time.
8. DO NOT use a dictionary.

Section A: Read the extract then answer the questions that follow.

The following extract is taken from the first chapter of 'Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children' by Ransom Riggs.

I had just come to accept that my life would be ordinary when extraordinary things began to happen. The first of these came as a terrible shock and, like anything that changes you forever, split my life into halves: Before and After. Like many of the extraordinary things to come, it involved my grandfather, Abraham Portman.

Growing up, Grandpa Portman was the most fascinating person I knew. He had lived in an orphanage, fought in wars, crossed oceans by steamship and deserts on horseback, performed in circuses, knew everything about guns and self-defense and surviving in the wilderness, and spoke at least three languages that weren't English. It all seemed unfathomably exotic to a kid who'd never left Florida, and I begged him to regale me with stories whenever I saw him. He always obliged, telling them like secrets that could be entrusted only to me.

When I was six I decided that my only chance of having a life half as exciting as Grandpa Portman's was to become an explorer. He encouraged me by spending afternoons at my side hunched over maps of the world, plotting imaginary expeditions with trails of red pushpins and telling me about the fantastic places I would discover one day. At home I made my ambitions known by parading around with a cardboard tube held to my eye, shouting, "Land ho!" and "Prepare a landing party!" until my parents shooed me outside. I think they worried that my grandfather would infect me with some incurable dreaminess from which I'd never recover—that these fantasies were somehow inoculating me against more practical ambitions—so one day my mother sat me down and explained that I couldn't become an explorer because everything in the world had already been discovered. I'd been born in the wrong century, and I felt cheated.

I felt even more cheated when I realized that most of Grandpa Portman's best stories couldn't possibly be true. The tallest tales were always about his childhood, like how he was born in Poland but at twelve had been shipped off to a children's home in Wales. When I would ask why he had to leave his parents, his answer was always the same: because the monsters were after him. Poland was simply rotten with them, he said.

"What kind of monsters?" I'd ask, wide-eyed. It became a sort of routine. "Awful hunched-over ones with rotting skin and black eyes," he'd say. "And they walked like this!" And he'd shamble after me like an old-time movie monster until I ran away laughing.

Every time he described them he'd toss in some lurid new detail: they stank like putrefying trash; they were invisible except for their shadows; a pack of squirming tentacles lurked inside their mouths and could whip out in an instant and pull you into their powerful jaws. It wasn't long before I had trouble falling asleep, my hyperactive imagination transforming the hiss of tires on wet pavement into labored breathing just outside my window or shadows under the door into twisting gray-black tentacles. I was scared of the monsters but thrilled to imagine my grandfather battling them and surviving to tell the tale.

SECTION A: Reading

Please note that question four and five require a much more detailed response than questions one to three.

1. What adjective is repeated in the first paragraph? (1 mark)
2. Look at lines 8-11 (highlighted yellow). Our narrator gives several reasons for her grandpa being 'the most fascinating person (she) knew'. Note down two. (2 marks)
3. What do you think the word 'unfathomably' means on line 8? (1 mark)
4. Look at the final two paragraphs. What impression do you get of the monsters described by the narrator's grandfather? (8 marks)

Section B: Writing Task

Take time to plan your response.

Quality is more important than quantity.

Either

1. Write a short description suggested by the below picture (12 marks).



You might want to consider:

- Using sensory description. What can you see, smell, taste, touch and hear?
- Focusing on the experience of somebody - or something- in the picture.
- Describing what might have happened before and after this image.

OR

2. Write a short description of the most fascinating person you know (12 marks).