

11+ PAST PAPER PACK

Bablake School 11+ English 2023

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CONTENTS

01 Sample Paper

Bablake School 11+ English. Work through this paper first.

Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

02 Sample Paper

Bablake School 11+ English. Work through this paper first.

Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

03 Sample Paper

Bablake School 11+ English. Work through this paper first.

Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

04 Sample Paper

Bablake School 11+ English. Work through this paper first.

Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

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The Snow Goose by Paul Gallico

This passage tells the story of Philip Rhayader, a man who is disabled and, as a result, is ignored by people around him. He takes comfort from the wild birds that visit his lighthouse every year.

In the late spring of 1930 Philip Rhayader came to the abandoned lighthouse at the mouth of the River Aelder. He bought the lighthouse and many acres of marshland surrounding it.	
He lived and worked there alone the year round. He was a painter of birds and of nature, who had withdrawn from all human society. Some of the reasons for this were apparent on his fortnightly visits to the little village of Chelmbury for supplies, where the natives looked disapprovingly at his misshapen body and dark visage. For he was a hunchback and his left arm was crippled, thin and bent at the wrist, like the claw of a bird.	5
They soon became used to his strange figure, small but powerful, the massive dark, bearded head set just slightly below the mysterious mound on his back, the glowing eyes and the clawed hand, and marked him off as 'that painter chap that lives down at the lighthouse'.	10
Physical deformity often breeds hatred of humanity in men. Rhayader did not hate; he loved very greatly: man, the animal kingdom, and all nature. His heart was filled with pity and understanding. He had mastered his handicap, but he could not master the rebuffs that he suffered due to his appearance. The thing that drove him into seclusion was his failure to find anywhere a return of the warmth that flowed from him. He repelled women. Men would have warmed to him had they got to know him. But the mere fact that an effort was being made hurt Rhayader and drove him to avoid the person making it.	15
He was a friend to all things wild, and the wild things repaid him with their friendship.	20
Tamed in his enclosure were the geese that come travelling down the coast from Iceland and Spitzbergen each October, in great flocks that darkened the sky and filled the air with the rushing noise of their passage – the brown-bodied pink feet, white breasted barnacles, with their dark necks and clowns' masks, the wild fronts with black-barred breasts, and many species of wild ducks, widgeon, mallard, pintails, teal and shovellers.	25
Some were not allowed to leave, so that they would remain there as a sign and signal to the wild ones that came down at each winter's beginning that here were food and sanctuary.	30
Many hundreds came and remained with him all through cold weather from October to the early spring, when they migrated north again to their	35

breeding grounds below the Arctic circle.

Rhayader was content in the knowledge that when storms blew, or it was bitter cold and food was scarce, or when the big guns of the distant bag hunters roared, his birds were safe; that he had gathered to the sanctuary and security of his own arms and heart these many wild and beautiful creatures who knew and trusted him.

40

They would answer the call of the north in the spring, but in the autumn they would come back, barking and whooping and honking in the sky, to circle the landmark of the old lighthouse and drop to earth near by to be his guests again – birds that he well remembered and recognized from the previous year.

45

And this made Rhayader happy, because he knew that implanted somewhere in their beings was the germ knowledge of his existence and his safe haven, that this knowledge had become part of them and, with the coming of the grey skies and the winds from the north, would send them back to him.

50

For the rest, his heart and soul went into the painting of the country in which he lived and its creatures. There were not many Rhayader paintings in existence. He hoarded them jealously, piling them up in his lighthouse and the storerooms above by the hundreds. He was not satisfied with them, because as an artist he was uncompromising.

Section A: Questions on *The Snow Goose*

1. In which year did Philip Rhayader start living at the lighthouse? (/1)

2. **Circle** the verbs in the sentence below:

He lived and worked there alone the year round. (/2)

3. What does the word 'fortnightly' mean? (line 6) (/1)

4. 'Like the claw of a bird' is an example of which of the following? **Circle** the correct answer. (/1)

metaphor simile personification alliteration

5. Explain what is meant by the word 'supplies' in line 6. (/2)

6. **Circle THREE** words that the writer uses to describe Philip Rhayader's appearance in paragraphs 2 and 3. (/3)

misshapen broken young strange

ugly energetic powerful ungainly

7. What do you think the writer means when he writes 'physical deformity often breeds hatred of humanity in men'? (line 14) (/2)

8. **Circle** the adverb in the following sentence (lines 14-15). (/1)

'Rhayader did not hate; he loved very greatly'

9. Name one thing that you learn about Philip Rhayader from the line: 'His heart was filled with pity and understanding.' (lines 15-16) (/1)

10. What do you think the writer means when he says, 'But the mere fact that an effort was being made hurt Rhayader and drove him to avoid the person making it'? (lines 20-21) (/3)

11. Several types of birds are mentioned in lines 24-29. Write the names of **TWO** of them (but **not** the adjectives used to describe them). (/2)

12. Three proper nouns are used in line 26. Write them in the spaces provided below. There is 1 mark for each. (/3)

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13. Give **TWO** reasons why Philip Rhayader kept wild birds. (/2)

14. What is meant by the sentence: 'They would answer the call of the north in the spring'? (line 40) (/2)



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15. Explain, **in your own words**, why, each autumn, as described in lines 44-47, Philip Rhayader feels happy. (/2)

16. **In your own words**, why is Philip Rhayader never satisfied with his paintings? (/2)

17. For each of the words **printed in bold in the left-hand column** of the table below, circle the **ONE** word in the other column that would be best used to replace it in the passage. (/5)

Visage	Face	Appearance	Helmet
Deformity	Markings	Disfigurement	Appearance
Rebuffs	Contradictions	Insults	Names
Seclusion	Isolation	Loneliness	Lighthouse
Enclosure	Pen	Care	Aviary

18. For each of the words **printed in bold in the left-hand column** of the table below, **write, in the right-hand column**, a word that has the **OPPOSITE** meaning. The first one has been done for you. (One mark for each correct response) (/5)

Spring	Autumn
Powerful	
Repelled	
Wild	
Pity	
Failure	

Total Mark (/40)

Paper Notes: 11+ English Sample Paper (11+ English Sample Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is a **Bablake School 11+ English Comprehension Sample Paper** from 2023, designed to give students an authentic preview of the entrance examination format and content. The paper is built around a reading passage titled '**The Snow Goose**' by **Paul Gallico**, an evocative extract about Philip Rhayader, a disabled man who finds solace in nature and wild birds at a remote lighthouse. Candidates are given **10 minutes reading time** followed by **30 minutes** to answer comprehension questions that test literal understanding, inference, vocabulary, and language analysis.

The question booklet contains a mix of **multiple-choice, short-answer, and extended-response questions**, covering grammar, figurative language, character interpretation, and textual retrieval. This structure closely mirrors the actual 11+ examination format at Bablake, ensuring that students can practise under realistic conditions and become familiar with the command words and mark allocations they will encounter on exam day.

The paper suits students preparing for **Year 7 entry to Bablake School** and other independent or selective secondary schools that use similar comprehension-based assessments. The passage itself is rich in descriptive language and themes of isolation, compassion, and connection with nature, providing ample scope for questions that explore both surface detail and deeper meaning.

How this paper is organised

The paper is divided into clear **reading and answering phases**. Students first have 10 minutes to read the extract from 'The Snow Goose', which runs to approximately 56 lines of narrative text. They are then given 30 minutes to tackle **Section A: Questions on The Snow Goose**, which comprises 18 questions worth a total of **40 marks**.

Questions range from single-mark retrieval tasks (e.g. identifying the year Rhayader arrived at the lighthouse) to three-mark extended responses requiring explanation and inference (e.g. interpreting Rhayader's emotional response to the birds' return). The paper explicitly labels each question type and provides worked examples on the front page: **multiple-choice answers** (circle one word), **short answers** (one word or brief phrase on a line), and **longer answers** (several lines for detailed explanation).

The layout is clean and accessible, with generous spacing between questions and clear mark allocations printed in the right margin. Students are instructed to work at their own

pace, check answers if time permits, and make any corrections neatly. This structure reflects the thoughtful, skills-focused design typical of independent school entrance papers.

Topics covered

- Literal comprehension: retrieval of specific details from the text, including dates, character descriptions, and factual information about setting and events
- Vocabulary in context: explaining the meaning of words such as 'fortnightly' and 'supplies' as used in the passage, demonstrating understanding of register and period usage
- Identification of grammatical features: recognising and circling verbs and adverbs within given sentences, and understanding their function in conveying action and manner
- Figurative language analysis: identifying and interpreting similes (e.g. 'like the claw of a bird') and understanding their effect in descriptive writing
- Character interpretation and inference: explaining why Rhayader feels happy when the birds return, and what the text reveals about his emotions, motivations, and relationships
- Proper nouns and place names: recognising and listing geographical references (Iceland, Spitzbergen) and demonstrating awareness of capitalisation conventions
- Opposite meanings (antonyms): generating words with opposite meanings to those printed in bold, testing vocabulary range and precision
- Extended written response: constructing multi-sentence explanations that synthesise textual evidence and personal insight, demonstrating both comprehension and analytical skill

How to use this paper for revision

- Read the passage twice during the 10-minute reading time: once for overall meaning and atmosphere, then a second time noting key details such as character traits, dates, and descriptive phrases you might need to retrieve later.
- Annotate lightly as you read, underlining or starring important facts (when Rhayader arrived, what he looks like, why he keeps birds) so you can locate them quickly when answering questions.
- Pay close attention to the mark allocations printed beside each question. A one-mark question needs only a single word or short phrase; a three-mark question requires a fuller explanation with evidence or multiple points.
- For vocabulary questions, read the sentence around the word carefully. Often the context will give you clues about meaning, even if the word itself is unfamiliar or old-fashioned.
- When asked to identify grammatical features (verbs, adverbs, proper nouns), reread the specified line and test each word systematically. Don't rush or rely on first impressions.
- For longer-answer questions, plan a brief two or three-point response in your head before you write. Use connectives like 'because', 'which shows that', or 'this suggests' to link your points to the text.
- Leave a couple of minutes at the end to check your answers. Make sure you have circled or underlined the correct number of words in multiple-choice or selection tasks, and that longer answers are clearly written.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Copying out entire sentences from the passage when a question asks for a short answer. If the question has a single line for the response, one word or a brief phrase is expected, not a full quote.
- Confusing word classes: circling nouns instead of verbs, or adjectives instead of adverbs. Always double-check what the question is asking you to identify and test each word's function in the sentence.
- Missing the instruction to circle or underline a specific number of words (e.g. 'Circle THREE words'). Students often circle too many or too few, losing easy marks.
- Writing vague interpretations in extended-response questions without referring to the text. Phrases like 'it makes him feel good' are too general; specify what the text says and why it has that effect.
- Mixing up opposites with synonyms in antonym questions. Read the instruction carefully: if it asks for a word with the OPPOSITE meaning, don't write a word that means the same thing.
- Rushing through the reading time and starting to answer questions before the 10 minutes are up. Use the full reading period to absorb the passage; you cannot write answers yet, so make the most of that focused reading time.

Exam technique

Start by using the **full 10 minutes of reading time** effectively. Read the passage through once for understanding, then reread more carefully, annotating key details and unfamiliar words. When the answer time begins, skim through all the questions to see what is being asked and plan your route through the paper.

Tackle questions in order, but if you encounter a difficult multi-mark question early on, mark it lightly and move on rather than stalling. Come back to it once you have secured easier marks elsewhere. Allocate your 30 minutes roughly in proportion to the marks available: a one-mark retrieval question should take less than a minute, while a three-mark explanation may need three or four minutes to plan and write properly.

For multiple-choice and selection tasks, eliminate obviously wrong answers first, then choose the best remaining option by referring back to the text. For extended answers, always support your points with evidence or close reference to the passage. Write clearly and check spelling, especially of names and terms from the text. If you finish early, use any spare time to reread your longer answers and check that they make sense and answer the question directly.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students should revise **other types of descriptive and narrative writing**, particularly classic and literary fiction, to build familiarity with older or more formal registers and vocabulary. Practise identifying and explaining the effect of figurative language such as similes, metaphors, and personification, as these are common features in 11+ comprehension passages. Work on distinguishing between literal and inferred meaning, and practise writing concise but well-supported explanations that reference the text directly.

Grammar revision is essential: ensure you can confidently identify word classes (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) in context, and understand how sentences are constructed. Expand your vocabulary by reading widely and keeping a notebook of unfamiliar words with their meanings and example sentences. This will help with both comprehension and the vocabulary-in-context questions that appear in many 11+ papers.

Finally, practise working under timed conditions with other 11+ English papers. Build stamina for reading and writing within a set period, and develop your own strategies for managing reading time, question selection, and checking your work. Familiarity with the format and timing will reduce anxiety and help you perform at your best on exam day.

Key terms

Simile, Verb, Adverb, Proper noun, Personification, Alliteration, Metaphor, Inference, Retrieval, Context, Antonym, Figurative language, Character interpretation, Textual evidence, Comprehension

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Entrance Examination SAMPLE PAPERS 11+ English Composition Paper

You will have 10 minutes in which to think about your composition and do some planning.

Write your notes on the planning sheet overleaf. Your notes will NOT be marked.

You will then have 30 minutes to write your answer. Leave time to read back over your work and make any changes neatly and clearly.

You will gain marks for:

- Writing in paragraphs
- Using interesting words and expressions
- Using punctuation
- Spelling words correctly

CHOOSE ONE OF THE TITLES BELOW AND WRITE FOR 30 MINUTES.

CHECK PARAGRAPHING, PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED.

EITHER

1. Imagine you are Philip Rhayader. Describe a typical day in your life. **DO NOT COPY DETAILS FROM THE TEXT.**

You **MIGHT** want to include some of the following **OR** simply use your own ideas:

- your daily routine;
- your feelings about the people of Chelmbury and how they treat you;
- your feelings about the birds.

OR

2. Describe a lonely or isolated place. You **MIGHT** want to include some of the following **OR** simply use your own ideas:

- how you came to be at the place;
- how it looks, sounds and smells;
- how you feel about it.

OR

3. Write a continuation of the story, showing your understanding of the main character and his life.

In your answer you **MIGHT** want to consider the following **OR** simply use your own ideas:

- what happens next to Philip;
- how he feels about events;
- how others respond to him.

Paper Notes: 11+ English Sample Paper (11+ English Sample Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is the **English Composition Paper** from **Bablake School's 11+ Entrance Examination sample materials** for 2023. It offers candidates a choice of three creative writing tasks, each designed to assess written expression, imagination and technical accuracy at Year 6 level. The paper allocates **10 minutes for planning** and **30 minutes for writing**, with a clear emphasis on paragraph structure, vocabulary range, punctuation and spelling.

The three prompt options vary in approach. Option 1 requires first-person narrative writing from the perspective of **Philip Rhayader**, a character evidently introduced in a preceding comprehension text. Option 2 asks for descriptive writing about a lonely or isolated place, while Option 3 demands story continuation that demonstrates character understanding. Each prompt offers guided suggestions but explicitly invites candidates to use their own ideas.

This paper suits students preparing for selective school entrance at 11+, particularly those applying to independent schools with multi-stage English examinations. The composition element tests sustained writing under timed conditions and rewards technical control as much as creativity.

How this paper is organised

The paper opens with clear administrative instructions, specifying the **10-minute planning phase** followed by a **30-minute writing window**. Candidates are explicitly told that planning notes will not be marked, removing any anxiety about messy drafting. The mark scheme criteria are stated upfront: paragraphing, interesting vocabulary, punctuation and correct spelling.

Three composition prompts are presented with equal weighting. The first ties directly to a comprehension text about **Philip Rhayader**, requiring imaginative engagement with a pre-existing character. The second is an open descriptive task centred on place and atmosphere. The third combines narrative continuation with character analysis. Each prompt includes bullet-pointed suggestions but emphasises that candidates may disregard these in favour of original ideas.

The paper concludes with a reminder to check paragraphing, punctuation and spelling, reinforcing the technical assessment priorities. No word count is specified, which is

typical of timed 11+ composition tasks where quantity is less important than sustained quality.

Topics covered

- First-person narrative writing from an established character's perspective, requiring inference and empathy
- Descriptive writing focused on setting, atmosphere and sensory detail
- Story continuation demonstrating character understanding and plot development
- Paragraph structure and topic organisation within extended prose
- Vocabulary range and the deployment of 'interesting words and expressions'
- Punctuation accuracy across sentence types, including dialogue and complex sentences
- Spelling conventions for Year 6 level vocabulary
- Time management and planning techniques for timed creative writing
- Adaptation of written voice to suit narrative perspective and genre
- Integration of character motivation, emotion and viewpoint in fiction writing

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise planning under timed conditions. Use the full 10 minutes to sketch a beginning, middle and end for whichever prompt you choose, noting key vocabulary or phrases you want to include.
- Read varied fiction extracts to absorb different narrative voices, especially first-person perspectives. Notice how published authors convey character emotions without stating them directly.
- Build a personal word bank of ambitious vocabulary for common descriptive needs: weather, emotions, movement, sounds. Avoid overused adjectives like 'nice' or 'good'.
- Revise punctuation rules for dialogue, complex sentences using subordinating conjunctions, and the correct use of apostrophes for possession and contraction.
- Write practice compositions to a 30-minute timer, then spend 5 minutes editing your own work. Learn to spot missing full stops, paragraph breaks and spelling errors quickly.
- For story continuation tasks, reread the source text carefully and list key character traits or plot details before you begin. Consistency with the original tone matters.
- Practise descriptive writing by observing real places. Note specific sensory details rather than vague impressions, and try to evoke mood through carefully chosen concrete nouns and verbs.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Failing to plan properly and running out of ideas halfway through the 30 minutes, resulting in a rushed or incomplete ending that undermines earlier strong work.
- Copying large sections verbatim from the comprehension text when attempting Option 1, despite the explicit instruction not to do so. This loses marks for originality and imagination.
- Writing in a single unbroken block of text without paragraph breaks, ignoring one of the four explicit assessment criteria stated on the front page.
- Overusing simple sentence structures or starting every sentence with the subject ('I went... I saw... I felt...'). This limits marks for interesting expression and variety.
- Neglecting the proofreading phase and submitting work with easily correctable errors in basic spellings, missing capital letters or absent punctuation.
- Choosing the continuation task (Option 3) without sufficient understanding of Philip Rhayader's character from the comprehension text, leading to contradictory or shallow characterisation.

Exam technique

Choose your prompt within the first minute of planning time. If the comprehension text about Philip Rhayader resonated with you, Option 1 or 3 may feel natural; if you prefer descriptive writing without character constraints, select Option 2. Spend the remaining 9 minutes sketching your structure: jot down four or five paragraph topics, key vocabulary you want to use and a strong opening sentence.

During the writing phase, aim to produce **four to six well-developed paragraphs** rather than a longer piece that sacrifices quality for length. Start a new paragraph when you shift time, place, speaker or focus. Keep an eye on the clock and ensure you reach a satisfying conclusion with at least 3 minutes remaining. An abrupt ending or incomplete story damages the overall impression significantly.

Use the final few minutes to reread your work aloud in your head, checking for missing punctuation, spelling errors and unclear phrasing. Cross out mistakes neatly with a single line and write corrections above. Examiners expect minor amendments; a page with no corrections can suggest a lack of careful checking rather than perfection.

What to revise alongside this paper

Alongside composition practice, revise **reading comprehension skills** for character analysis and inference, as the Philip Rhayader prompts assume familiarity with a source text. Understanding how authors build character through action, speech and description will strengthen your ability to write convincingly from another's perspective.

Study **grammar and punctuation** in detail, particularly the punctuation of direct speech, the use of commas in complex sentences and apostrophe rules. These technical elements form explicit assessment criteria and are easily improved through focused revision. Work through exercises on sentence variety, using subordinate clauses and different sentence openers to avoid monotonous rhythm.

Read widely across genres to develop your **descriptive vocabulary and narrative techniques**. Classic children's literature, short stories and descriptive essays offer models of how to evoke place, convey emotion and structure a short piece of writing. Note techniques you admire and try imitating them in your own timed practice pieces.

Key terms

First-person narrative, Characterisation, Descriptive writing, Sensory detail, Paragraph structure, Topic sentence, Vocabulary range, Story continuation, Dialogue punctuation, Narrative voice, Atmosphere, Planning and drafting, Proofreading, Creative writing

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Entrance Examination

11+ SAMPLE PAPERS

English Comprehension Paper

You will have 10 minutes in which to read the story and then 30 minutes for answering the questions.

In the answer booklet there are different types of questions for you to answer in different ways.

1. Multiple-choice answers – You do not need to do any writing for these questions. You need to circle the word which best answers the question.

Example: The story is set in the Past Present Future Circle ONE

2. Short answers – Some of the questions are followed by a short line, showing that you have to write just one word or a short phrase.

Example: What is the name of the writer? William Shakespeare

3. Longer answers – Some of the questions are followed by a few lines, showing that you need a more details answer.

Answer the question as carefully as you can. Do not ask to turn over the pages, but carry on in your own time. Check your answers if you have time, and if you need to make any changes do so neatly and clearly.

In this adapted extract from 'I'm the King of the Castle', a young boy named Charles has decided to go exploring the fields and forest, called Hang Wood, which are behind his new home.

At the back of the house, a winding path led through the rugged field and beyond this were only more fields, containing the forest, sloping this way and that, overlapping like so many pillows.

Charles began to walk. They had been here for over a week and he was tired of hanging about the house. The fields sloped upwards at first. It was very hot. He went through an assembly of smaller yew trees and hesitated by the entrance to the forest. Great black shadows guarded the entrance and he could not see for more than a few yards inside. Stinging nettles and thistles grew up as high as his chest, obscuring the path.

Charles carefully backed away from the entrance and decided to skirt the edge of the forest. The grass was thick with dense clots of dock leaves and a tractor had made giant ruts in the earth making it uncomfortable and difficult to walk. Thorns from wild bushes pricked his feet through his thin sandals.

Before long, Charles came to a fence beyond which was a field full of ripe corn. He noticed a narrow track and followed it, the corn coming up to his waist.

The cornfield was high up. He stood in the very middle of it and the sun came glaring down. He could feel the sweat running over his back and in the creases of his thighs. His face was burning and his throat was fast becoming dry and prickly. He sat down and looked over at the dark line of trees on the edge of Hang Wood. The fields around him were absolutely still.

When he first saw the crow, he took no notice. There had been several crows. This one glided down into the corn on its enormous, ragged black wings. He began to be aware of it when it rose up suddenly, circled overhead and then dived to land not very far away from him. Charles could see the feathers on its head, shining black in between the butter-coloured cornstalks. Then it rose,

and circled, and came down again, this time not quite landing but flapping about his head, beating its wings and making a sound like flat leather pieces being slapped together. It was the largest crow he had ever seen. As it came for the third time, he looked up and noticed its beak, opening in a
25 screech. The inside of its mouth was scarlet and it had small, glinting eyes.

Charles got up and flapped his arms; the bird retreated a little way off. Feeling isolated, he began to walk rather quickly back through the path in the corn. For a moment, he could only hear the soft thudding of his own footsteps and the silky sound of the corn, brushing against him. Then, there was a rush of air as the great crow came beating down and wheeled about his head. Charles
30 began to run; he thought that the corn might be the crow's food store in which he was seen as an invader.

His progress was slow as the thick stalks bunched together and got in his way and he had to shove them back with his arms. But the crow kept coming. It dived again and Charles felt the tip of its black wing, beating against his face. Charles keeled over, landing with his face in the corn, panting
35 and sobbing in turns with the sound of his own blood pumping through his ears. He raised his head and wiped two fingers across his face – a streak of blood came off from where a thistle had scratched him. He could not see the crow.

But when Charles began to scramble wildly forwards again, it rose up from a little way off and began to circle and swoop. Then, there was a single screech and the terrible beating of wings;
40 the crow lunged down and landed in the middle of his back. Charles froze and closed his eyes; he felt the claws of the bird digging into his skin and the crow's beak begin to peck at his thin shirt. After a moment or two, Charles began to scream in a gasping, strangled sort of way. Eventually, the bird released its vice like grip and swooped into the thick foliage of the forest.

Susan Hill's 'I'm The King Of The Castle'

Section A: Reading Comprehension

1. Write the **TWO** adjectives used in line one. (2)

2. Write the **ONE WORD** that the fields are compared to in the opening paragraph. (1)

3. What does the word 'assembly' mean in line 4? (2)

4. On line 5, Hill describes the shadows as guarding the entrance to the forest. What technique does she use in this description? **Circle ONE** of the following: (1)

personification onomatopoeia metaphor alliteration

5. Explain in your **OWN WORDS two** reasons why Charles backed away from the entrance to the forest. (2)

6. Write **TWO** reasons Charles is struggling to walk. (2)

7. Suggest **ONE** possible reason why the writer has the thorns prick Charles's feet. (1)

8. What sort of word is 'glaring' (line 14)? **Circle ONE** of the following: (1)

adjective noun verb adverb

9. Looking at paragraph 5, write **TWO** ways the writer shows Charles might be in a difficult situation. (2)

10. From lines 18-20, **list two** things we learn about the crow. (2)

11. Why did Charles ignore the crow at first? (1)

12. Why is the crow easy to see in the cornfield? (1)

13. **Copy out** the simile that describes the sound of the crow's beating wings. (1)

14. From paragraph 6, circle the **TWO** word classes to describe the word 'largest'. (2)

adjective comparative adverb superlative

15. Explain in your **OWN WORDS**, what the writer is trying to imply about the bird with the phrase 'small, glinting eyes'? (2)

16. What **TWO** things does Charles do to escape the crow in lines 26-31? (2)

17. **What technique** is the writer using with the words 'silky sound' (line 28)? (1)

18. Look again at lines 32-37. Name **ONE** thing other than the crow that also seems to want to hurt Charles. (1)

19. Find **TWO VERBS** which describe Charles's emotions in lines 33-35. (2)

20. Find **the adverb** in line 38 that describes Charles's panic. (1)

21. In the last paragraph, how exactly does the crow finally punish Charles for invading the cornfield? (1)

22. Write **TWO** ways in which Charles responds to the crow's actions in the last paragraph. (2)

23. Looking again at lines 39-43, in your **OWN WORDS**, give two reasons that show the crow is more powerful than Charles. (2)

24. For each of the words printed in bold in the **left-hand column** of the table below, **circle** the **one word** in the **other column** that could be best used to replace it in the passage. (5)

clots	mud	sludge	smooth	lumps
obscuring	hiding	shouting	clearing	whispering
invader	victim	attacker	hostage	prey
keeled	bounced	ran	tipped	jumped
foliage	insects	vegetation	feathers	clouds

End of SECTION A

Paper Notes: 11+ English Sample Paper (11+ English Sample Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is **Bablake School's 11+ English Comprehension sample paper**, published in 2023 to help candidates prepare for the school's entrance examination for Year 7 entry. The paper tests close reading, inference, and language analysis through a single prose extract adapted from Susan Hill's psychological novel *I'm the King of the Castle*, in which a young boy named Charles encounters a menacing crow in a cornfield.

Candidates are given **10 minutes to read the passage** followed by **30 minutes to answer 24 comprehension questions**. The questions combine multiple-choice, short-answer, and longer-response formats, requiring students to retrieve information, explain vocabulary, identify literary techniques such as personification and simile, and comment on how the writer builds tension and characterisation.

The paper is designed for pupils in Year 6 preparing for selective secondary entry and assumes familiarity with grammatical terminology (adjectives, verbs, adverbs, superlatives) and basic literary devices. The extract is atmospheric and suspenseful, making it an engaging test of both technical reading skills and the ability to articulate implied meaning in your own words.

How this paper is organised

The paper opens with clear instructions explaining the three question types: **multiple-choice** (circling the correct answer), **short-answer** (a word or phrase on a single line), and **longer-answer** (several lines for a more detailed response). Candidates are reminded to work at their own pace, check answers if time permits, and make corrections neatly.

The reading passage runs to approximately 43 numbered lines and is preceded by a brief contextual note identifying the source and setting. **Section A contains 24 questions**, each clearly numbered and followed by its mark allocation in brackets. Marks range from 1 to 5 per question, with a total of 42 marks available. Question types progress from straightforward retrieval (identifying adjectives, copying phrases) to analysis of language techniques and inference about character and power dynamics.

The final question (Question 24) is a vocabulary table worth 5 marks, requiring candidates to select synonyms for five words in bold from the passage. The paper

concludes with the rubric 'End of SECTION A', though no subsequent sections are included in this sample.

Topics covered

- Close reading and retrieval of specific details from a literary prose extract
- Identification of adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and other word classes in context
- Recognition of literary techniques including personification, simile, onomatopoeia, metaphor, and alliteration
- Inference and deduction: explaining implicit meaning and the writer's intentions
- Vocabulary analysis: finding synonyms and explaining contextual meaning of sophisticated words such as 'assembly', 'obscuring', 'invader', 'keeled', and 'foliage'
- Comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and their grammatical classification
- Analysis of how writers build atmosphere, tension, and suspense through descriptive language
- Explaining character motivation, emotion, and the power dynamics between Charles and the crow
- Paraphrasing and expressing textual evidence in your own words
- Understanding narrative structure and the progression of a suspenseful episode

How to use this paper for revision

- Read the passage twice during the 10-minute reading window: first for overall understanding, then to note descriptive language, literary techniques, and moments of high tension.
- Underline or mentally note key adjectives, verbs, and phrases as you read so you can locate them quickly when answering retrieval questions.
- For 'in your own words' questions, avoid copying phrases directly from the text. Paraphrase by changing sentence structure and substituting synonyms where possible.
- When identifying literary techniques, recall definitions clearly: personification gives human qualities to non-human things, simile uses 'like' or 'as', and alliteration repeats initial consonant sounds.
- In vocabulary synonym questions, eliminate obviously incorrect options first, then test the remaining choices by substituting them into the original sentence to see which preserves the meaning.
- Allocate roughly one minute per mark: a 2-mark question deserves two distinct points or pieces of evidence, so don't rush through higher-value questions.
- For questions about the writer's intentions or effects, think about why Hill includes a detail (e.g. thorns pricking feet may foreshadow pain or show nature turning hostile).

Common mistakes to avoid

- Copying chunks of text verbatim when the question explicitly asks for answers 'in your own words', which typically earns no marks even if the content is correct.
- Confusing word classes: identifying 'glaring' as an adjective when it functions as a verb in the sentence, or failing to recognise that 'largest' is both an adjective and a superlative.
- Selecting the first plausible synonym in Question 24 without checking whether other options fit the context more precisely (e.g. 'lumps' vs 'sludge' for 'clots').
- Writing only one point for a 2-mark question, or giving two points that essentially repeat the same idea in different words rather than identifying two distinct reasons or effects.
- Misidentifying literary techniques: calling any comparison a metaphor, or confusing personification with simple descriptive adjectives that do not give human qualities.
- Overlooking line references and answering from memory or the wrong part of the passage, leading to answers that do not match the evidence requested.

Exam technique

Start by using the **10-minute reading period** strategically: read the passage once for comprehension and atmosphere, then skim it a second time whilst jotting mental notes on structure, key descriptive moments, and any obvious techniques. When the 30-minute answer period begins, tackle questions in order but flag any that require lengthy thought so you can return to them if time runs short.

Pace yourself by checking the mark allocation: a 1-mark question may need only a word or short phrase, whilst a 5-mark vocabulary table requires careful comparison of all synonym options. For inference questions, support your explanation with brief reference to specific details in the text, even when paraphrasing. If a question asks for two reasons or examples, ensure you provide two genuinely different points rather than restating one idea.

Leave a few minutes at the end to review your answers, checking spelling, neatness, and that you have circled or written the correct number of responses where specified. If you revise an answer, cross out the original clearly and rewrite rather than overwriting messily, as the instructions emphasise clarity.

What to revise alongside this paper

To build confidence for this style of paper, practise identifying the **full range of word classes** (nouns, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions) and revise how words can shift function depending on context (e.g. 'glaring' as verb vs adjective). Study common **literary techniques** beyond the basics: explore how writers use pathetic fallacy, foreshadowing, and sensory imagery to manipulate mood and pace.

Strengthen your **inference skills** by reading extracts from classic and contemporary children's literature, then practising explaining a character's thoughts, feelings, or motivations without directly quoting the text. Work on expanding your vocabulary so you can recognise sophisticated synonyms and understand nuances between near-synonyms (e.g. 'obscuring' vs 'hiding', 'invader' vs 'attacker').

Once confident with this paper, progress to **longer comprehensions with multiple texts** or non-fiction passages that test comparison and evaluation skills. Practise writing under timed conditions, as the 30-minute limit requires both accuracy and efficiency. Familiarise yourself with other Susan Hill novels or atmospheric short fiction to develop sensitivity to tone and suspense-building techniques.

Key terms

Adjective, Verb, Adverb, Personification, Simile, Metaphor, Alliteration, Onomatopoeia, Superlative, Comparative, Inference, Synonym, Atmosphere, Characterisation, Paraphrase

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Bablake

Entrance Examination

11+ SAMPLE PAPERS

English Composition Paper

You will have 10 minutes in which to think about your composition and do some planning.

Write your notes on the planning sheet overleaf. Your notes will NOT be marked.

You will then have 30 minutes to write your answer. Leave time to read back over your work and make any changes neatly and clearly.

You will gain marks for:

- Writing in paragraphs
- Using interesting words and expressions
- Using punctuation
- Spelling words correctly

Total/50		
Markers:		

SECTION B: WRITING

CHOOSE ONE OF THE TITLES BELOW AND WRITE FOR 30 MINUTES.

CHECK PARAGRAPHING, PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED.

EITHER

1. Imagine you are Charles. Write your diary for the day when you met the crow. In your answer you **MIGHT** want to consider the following **OR** simply use your own ideas:

- what happened as you approached, during and after you left the cornfield;
- how you felt when you got home;
- what happened if you told anyone;
- your thoughts about exploring in future.

OR

2. Write the story where Charles decides to go into Hang Wood instead of the cornfield. In your answer you **MIGHT** want to consider the following **OR** simply use your own ideas:

- why Charles is able to overcome his fear and enter the forest;
- who and/or what he meets and what events take place;
- how he feels;
- how it ends.

OR

3. Write a description of the most memorable day out you have ever experienced. In your answer you **MIGHT** want to consider the following **OR** simply use your own ideas:

- what this experience was;
- what you loved/hated about it;
- where this experience took place;
- who was involved.

YOU MAY USE IDEAS FROM THE TEXT BUT YOU MUST NOT COPY FROM THE TEXT.

Write your COMPOSITION here.

Task number:

A series of 20 horizontal dashed lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a template for handwriting practice.

A series of 20 horizontal dashed lines for writing.

A series of 20 horizontal dashed lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a template for handwriting practice.

Paper Notes: 11+ English Sample Paper (11+ English Sample Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is the **11+ English Composition Paper** published by **Bablake School** as part of their entrance examination for Year 7 entry in 2023. The paper is designed to assess creative and descriptive writing skills for candidates seeking admission to the school, offering a structured yet flexible framework for composition.

Candidates receive **10 minutes of planning time** followed by **30 minutes of writing time**. The paper presents three distinct prompts: a diary entry written from the perspective of a character named Charles after meeting a crow, a narrative continuation where Charles enters Hang Wood, or a personal description of a memorable day out. Students select one task and must demonstrate their ability to organise ideas, employ varied vocabulary, punctuate accurately, and spell correctly.

The paper is worth **50 marks** and clearly targets the skills expected of strong Year 6 writers approaching secondary school. Bullet-point prompts are provided for each task to scaffold thinking, though candidates may develop their own ideas. This format is typical of independent school entrance assessments, where creativity, technical accuracy, and maturity of expression are equally valued.

How this paper is organised

The paper is divided into a planning phase and a writing phase. Candidates are given a dedicated **Planning Sheet** at the start, with the explicit instruction that their notes will not be marked. This encourages structured thinking without penalising messy or incomplete jotting.

The composition section itself is titled **Section B: Writing**, offering three distinct tasks numbered 1 to 3. Task 1 requires a first-person diary entry, Task 2 demands a narrative continuation, and Task 3 calls for a descriptive personal recount. Each prompt includes four bullet-point suggestions to guide content, though the rubric emphasises that candidates may use their own ideas instead.

The mark scheme awards credit for four explicit criteria: writing in paragraphs, using interesting words and expressions, using punctuation, and spelling words correctly. Lined pages are provided for the final composition, with space for approximately three to four A4 pages of handwritten work. The total mark allocation is 50, and the paper

instructs students to check their work for paragraphing, punctuation, and spelling once the 30-minute writing window has elapsed.

Topics covered

- First-person narrative writing in diary form, requiring sustained voice and personal reflection
- Creative storytelling with a focus on overcoming fear and encountering the unknown
- Descriptive writing recounting a real-life memorable experience, balancing sensory detail with personal response
- Paragraph structure and thematic organisation within extended prose
- Vocabulary range and the deliberate choice of interesting, precise words and expressions
- Punctuation for effect, clarity, and grammatical accuracy across sentence types
- Spelling accuracy, including common and subject-specific vocabulary appropriate to Year 6 level
- Character voice and perspective, particularly in adopting the viewpoint of a fictional character
- Planning techniques for timed composition, including note-making and idea generation

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise planning within a strict 10-minute window. Use spider diagrams or numbered bullet points to capture ideas quickly without full sentences.
- Read the bullet-point prompts carefully but remember they are optional. If you have a stronger idea, develop it fully rather than ticking off every suggestion.
- Time your practice compositions at home to build stamina. Aim to write at least two full pages in 30 minutes, leaving three minutes to proofread.
- Study a range of diary entries, adventure narratives, and descriptive recounts to see how experienced writers structure their paragraphs and vary sentence length.
- Build a personal word bank of interesting verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Practise substituting common words like 'said', 'went', or 'nice' with more precise alternatives.
- Review punctuation rules for direct speech, commas in complex sentences, and apostrophes for possession and contraction.
- Proofread systematically: read once for sense and paragraphing, once for punctuation, and once specifically for spelling errors.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Spending too long on the planning sheet and leaving insufficient time to write a complete composition, resulting in an abrupt or missing ending.
- Writing in one continuous block without paragraph breaks. Examiners expect clear paragraphing to organise ideas and signal shifts in time, place, or focus.
- Overusing simple sentence structures. Candidates should vary sentence openings and lengths to create rhythm and interest.
- Neglecting to adopt a consistent narrative voice, particularly in Task 1 where the diary format requires first-person intimacy and reflection.
- Copying phrases directly from the bullet-point prompts instead of developing original ideas, which limits vocabulary range and creativity.
- Forgetting to proofread, leading to easily avoidable errors in spelling (especially homophones like 'their/there/they're') and missing punctuation in dialogue.

Exam technique

Start by reading all three tasks carefully during the planning phase. Choose the prompt that sparks the strongest ideas, not the one that looks easiest at first glance. Use the full 10 minutes to sketch a rough structure: jot down the beginning, middle, and end of your story or the key points of your description, and note any vivid vocabulary or phrases you want to include.

During the 30-minute writing phase, pace yourself to ensure you reach a satisfying conclusion. Aim to complete your composition with at least three minutes remaining. If you find yourself running short on time, write a concise but effective ending rather than leaving the piece unfinished. Remember that the mark scheme rewards paragraphing, so start a new paragraph whenever the focus shifts, even if it feels frequent.

In the final minutes, proofread methodically. Check that each paragraph begins with a capital letter and focuses on a single idea or moment. Look for missing full stops, especially after long sentences, and ensure all proper nouns and the pronoun 'I' are capitalised. Circle any words you suspect are misspelt and try to correct them neatly. Examiners value clarity and care, so legible corrections are better than ignored errors.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students preparing for this paper should revise the full range of narrative techniques, including how to structure a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and how to develop character through action and dialogue. Practising different text types, such as

letters, reports, and playscripts, will also build flexibility with voice and format, even though those genres are not directly assessed here.

Revision of core punctuation rules is essential. Focus on commas in lists and clauses, apostrophes for contraction and possession, and the conventions of direct speech. Spelling practice should target common Year 6 words, subject-specific vocabulary from reading texts studied in class, and tricky homophones that often appear in creative writing.

Reading widely in the months before the exam will strengthen both vocabulary and structural awareness. Adventure stories, historical fiction, and memoirs offer excellent models for the narrative and descriptive tasks in this paper. Students should also practise writing under timed conditions regularly, as stamina and pacing are skills that develop only through repeated practice.

Key terms

Diary entry, First-person narrative, Narrative voice, Paragraphing, Descriptive writing, Vocabulary range, Figurative language, Direct speech, Apostrophes, Homophones, Sentence variety, Planning techniques, Proofreading, Character perspective, Sensory detail

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