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Eltham College 11+ English

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11+ Entrance Examination

English Sample Paper

Reading Section

Name:

Time: **25 Minutes**

Instructions:

- You should spend about **25 minutes** on the Reading Section
- Try to spend **5 minutes** reading the passage and **20 minutes** answering the questions
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
 - *use these as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question*
- The accuracy of your spelling/punctuation/grammar will be assessed in the Writing Section.

Section A: Reading Section 20 marks

Section B: Writing Section 20 marks

**Read the passage carefully, then answer all the questions in Section A**

1 Fern loved to visit the barn every morning. It smelled of hay and sweet grain and the warm bodies of animals. Her favourite spot was an old wooden stool in the corner, where she could sit quietly and listen. The animals made a comforting sound - the gentle cluck of hens, the creak of the old barn beams, and the steady chewing of cows. But Fern came for one reason above all: to see Wilbur.

5 Wilbur was a spring pig, small and pink and full of energy. He had soft bristles, bright eyes, and a little snout that he pushed into everything - food, hay, and sometimes Fern's pockets. But on this particular morning, Wilbur was restless. The sky outside was a dull silver, and a thin layer of frost clung to the barn roof.

Wilbur had already eaten his breakfast and was growing bored. No one was playing with him. Fern was busy reading a book, and the other animals seemed half-asleep.

10 "I'm lonely," Wilbur said aloud. No one answered. The sheep merely blinked at him and closed her eyes again.

He began pacing up and down his pen. "There must be something more exciting than this," he muttered.

Then, quite suddenly, he had an idea. The gate wasn't latched tightly. If he nudged it, just a little, maybe it would swing open.

15 Wilbur trotted to the gate, gave it a shove with his snout, and to his delight, the latch lifted with a click. The gate creaked open. Heart racing, Wilbur stepped outside.

The air was cold on his nose, and the ground was crisp with frost. But to Wilbur, it smelled of adventure. He ran across the barnyard, hooves clicking, tail twitching.

Fern looked up and gasped. "Wilbur! Come back!"

20 But Wilbur didn't stop. He dashed past the chicken coop, under the wagon, and toward the orchard. For the first time in his life, he was free - and it was wonderful.

He sniffed the air, trotted in circles, and even tried a little jump. The trees looked strange in the morning mist, their bare branches stretching like arms. Somewhere nearby, a bird chirped.

25 But as Wilbur wandered farther from the barn, something began to change. The wind picked up, and the open space didn't feel so friendly anymore. There were no familiar smells, no friendly voices, and no warm corner filled with straw.

Suddenly, Wilbur felt very small.

"I don't like this," he whispered. "Not one bit."

30 He turned and began to run back toward the barn. But everything looked different now, and the path wasn't as clear as it had been.

Just then, Fern appeared, calling his name. She ran toward him with her boots crunching through the frost. Wilbur squealed with relief. She knelt beside him, wrapped her arms around his middle, and smiled.



Section A: Reading - 20 marks

Please answer these questions. Look at the passage again if you need to. You *do not* need to write full sentences for the 1-mark questions.

1. Re-read lines 1-2. Where does Fern like to sit when she visits the barn?

[1 mark]

2. List three sounds or smells Fern notices in the barn.

[1 mark]

3. What does Wilbur do to escape from his pen?

[1 mark]

4. What does the word "restless" mean in the sentence: "But on this particular morning, Wilbur was restless" (lines 6-7)?

[1 mark]

5. "The trees looked strange...their bare branches stretching like arms." (lines 22-23) What technique is this?

[1 mark]

6. "The sheep merely blinked at him and closed her eyes again." (lines 10-11). How many verbs are in this sentence?

[1 mark]

7. What doesn't Wilbur like about the outside world? Give two examples to support your answer.

[2 marks]



8. Write down one thing that we learn about each of the following:

- a. The barn
- b. Fern
- c. Wilbur

Include **one short quotation** for each to support your point of view.

[6 marks]

The barn:

Fern:

Wilbur:

9. How does the writer use language to present Wilbur's personality? In your answer, you should try to consider the writer's use of:

- Vocabulary (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs...)
- Language features and techniques (alliteration, simile, repetition...)

Include **short quotations** to support your point of view.

[6 marks]

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

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 **sample 11+ English paper** published by **Eltham College** in London, designed to help students prepare for the school's entrance examination. The paper focuses on **reading comprehension** and assesses a candidate's ability to retrieve information, analyse language, and comment on the writer's craft. The passage centres on a young pig named Wilbur who escapes his pen and experiences both the thrill of freedom and the anxiety of being lost, before being rescued by Fern, the girl who cares for him.

The paper is divided into **two sections**: Section A (Reading) and Section B (Writing), though only the reading component appears in this document. Students are given **25 minutes** to read the passage and answer **nine questions** worth a total of **20 marks**. The questions range from simple one-mark retrieval tasks to more challenging six-mark extended responses that require close textual analysis and the use of quotations.

This sample paper is particularly suitable for Year 6 pupils preparing for selective independent school entry. It reflects the expectations of **Eltham College's 11+ entrance exam** and provides a clear model of the question types, passage length, and analytical depth required. The informal instruction that spelling, punctuation, and grammar will be assessed in the Writing Section suggests that Section A prioritises comprehension and interpretation over technical accuracy.

How this paper is organised

The paper opens with a **reading passage** of approximately 350 words, numbered by line for ease of reference. Students are advised to spend **five minutes reading** the passage and **20 minutes answering the questions**. The passage is a narrative extract featuring Wilbur, a spring pig, and his escape from the barn, written in a gentle, descriptive style that recalls classic children's literature.

Section A contains **nine questions** worth **20 marks in total**. The first six questions each carry **one mark** and test retrieval, vocabulary, and grammatical knowledge. Question 7 is worth **two marks** and requires two pieces of textual evidence. Question 8 carries **six marks** and asks students to identify and quote one thing learned about each of three elements (the barn, Fern, and Wilbur). The final question, also worth **six marks**, is an extended response on the writer's use of language to present character.

The layout is clear and accessible, with generous line spacing and ruled answer spaces. The instructions explicitly state that full sentences are not required for the one-mark questions, helping students manage their time efficiently. The paper emphasises the use of **short quotations** to support analytical points, a key skill at 11+ level.

Topics covered

- Reading comprehension of narrative prose with close attention to character, setting, and atmosphere
- Retrieval of explicit information from specified lines of text
- Vocabulary in context: understanding the meaning of words such as 'restless' within a sentence
- Identification of literary techniques, including simile and personification
- Grammatical analysis: recognising and counting verbs within a sentence
- Inference and deduction: identifying what a character dislikes and supporting answers with textual evidence
- Quotation skills: selecting and embedding short quotations to support interpretations
- Analysis of the writer's language choices, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and their effects
- Extended response writing on how language presents character and personality
- Understanding narrative structure: the shift from excitement to fear in Wilbur's adventure

How to use this paper for revision

- Read the passage carefully at least twice before attempting the questions, once for the story and once to notice language choices and techniques.
- Use the line numbers provided to locate answers quickly; questions 1, 2, and 5 direct you to specific lines.
- For one-mark questions, keep your answers brief and to the point; bullet points or short phrases are acceptable where stated.
- When asked for quotations, copy accurately from the text and keep them short (a few words or a single phrase is usually sufficient).
- In the six-mark questions, aim to make at least three distinct points, each supported by a quotation and a comment on its effect.
- Practise identifying literary techniques such as simile, metaphor, personification, and alliteration so you can spot them confidently under timed conditions.
- Allocate your time according to the marks: spend roughly six minutes on the final question, which is worth a third of the total.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Writing overly long answers to one-mark questions, wasting time that could be spent on higher-value responses.
- Failing to use quotations in questions 8 and 9, or quoting entire sentences when a short phrase would be more effective.
- Identifying a technique (such as simile) but not explaining its effect on the reader or its contribution to characterisation.
- Misreading the question requirements, for example, giving only one example when two are asked for in question 7.
- Rushing the extended response (question 9) and making general comments about Wilbur without analysing specific vocabulary or language features.
- Ignoring the bullet-point prompts in question 9, which guide students to consider vocabulary and language techniques separately.

Exam technique

Begin by reading the passage slowly and carefully, annotating or underlining key moments such as Wilbur's escape, his feelings of excitement, and his subsequent fear. This initial reading will help you locate answers quickly when you turn to the questions.

Pay attention to the **mark allocation**: one-mark questions require factual answers, while six-mark questions demand detailed analysis with multiple quotations.

Work through the paper in order, as the questions guide you through the passage sequentially. For the shorter questions (1 to 6), aim to spend no more than **one to two minutes each**. For question 7 (two marks), ensure you give **two clear examples** with brief explanation or evidence. Question 8 (six marks) requires three mini-paragraphs, one for each character or setting element, so budget around **five minutes** for this.

Save adequate time for **question 9**, the most demanding task. Write in paragraphs, making at least three points about the writer's language. Each point should identify a specific word or technique, quote it, and explain its effect on the reader's impression of Wilbur. Use the bullet-point prompts to structure your answer, covering both vocabulary (word choices) and techniques (simile, alliteration, etc.). If you are working through this paper as practice, check your answers against the mark scheme or discuss them with a teacher to refine your analytical skills.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students preparing for this paper should practise **close reading of fiction extracts**, particularly animal stories and classic children's literature (E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, from which this passage style draws inspiration, is excellent preparation). Familiarity with **figurative language** (simile, metaphor, personification) and the ability to explain their effects is essential.

Broader 11+ English preparation should include work on **grammar and word classes**, as question 6 tests verb recognition. Practise identifying parts of speech within sentences and understanding how writers use verbs, adjectives, and adverbs to create mood and character. Alongside reading comprehension, students should develop their **writing skills** (the second half of the Eltham College paper), focusing on narrative and descriptive techniques.

Once confident with this level of analysis, students can progress to more demanding passages featuring **older or more complex narrators**, multiple perspectives, or denser descriptive language. Reading widely, both classic and modern fiction, will build the vocabulary and interpretative confidence needed for 11+ success.

Key terms

Simile, Personification, Verb, Quotation, Inference, Character, Narrative voice, Adjective, Adverb, Alliteration, Retrieval, Language analysis, Textual evidence, Effect on the reader, Writer's craft

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11+ Entrance Examination

English Sample Paper

Writing Section

Time allowed: **20 Minutes**

You **MUST** follow these Instructions:

- **Check** that your **name** on the answer sheet is **correct** (printed at the bottom)
- **Do not** write your name on the answer sheet
- **Start** your answer on **page 1**
- You **only** have 2 pages - **no extra pages** are allowed
- Make your writing as descriptive and vivid as possible
- Description is as important as narrative
- Accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar will form part of the assessment in this section.



Writing Section - 20 marks

Choose ONE of the following tasks:

EITHER

1. Continue writing the story from the narrator's point of view.

Good answers will show:

- Describe what you think the inside of the barn might be like, based on what you've read.
- An understanding of how Fern or Wilbur are likely to be feeling.
- An understanding of what might reasonably happen next.
- We have started the paragraph for you. You may use it if you wish to.

Back inside, the barn felt warmer than ever. The air smelled of straw and oats, and the soft noises of animals stirred again as the two re-entered. The sheep opened one eye and gave a low bleat, as if to say, "Well, that didn't last long."

OR

2. Write a story which is set on a farm.

Good answers will show:

- Detailed descriptions

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

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Overview

This is the **Writing Section** of **Eltham College's 11+ Entrance Examination** for **English**. It is a sample paper designed to help candidates preparing for entry into Year 7 at this independent school in London. The paper focuses exclusively on creative writing skills and offers two distinct task options: continuing a story from a given prompt (featuring characters Fern and Wilbur in a barn setting) or writing an original story set on a farm.

Candidates have **20 minutes** to complete one task and are limited to **two pages** of writing with no extra pages permitted. The paper carries **20 marks** and places heavy emphasis on descriptive writing, with instructions explicitly stating that description is as important as narrative. This is a clear signal that candidates must demonstrate rich, vivid language rather than simply telling a story.

The assessment criteria include accuracy of **spelling, punctuation and grammar** alongside the quality of descriptive language and narrative structure. This paper is particularly useful for students who need practice balancing descriptive detail with plot development under timed conditions, and for those familiarising themselves with Eltham College's specific expectations for creative writing in their entrance process.

How this paper is organised

The paper consists of a single section worth **20 marks** with a strict **20-minute** time limit. Candidates must choose between two creative writing tasks, responding to only one. The first option provides a continuation task with a detailed prompt: candidates must continue a story involving characters named Fern and Wilbur returning to a barn, and a starter paragraph is supplied (though optional). This task requires candidates to demonstrate understanding of character emotion, setting description, and logical plot progression based on prior reading.

The second option is more open-ended, requiring candidates to write an **original story set on a farm** with detailed descriptions. Both tasks are assessed against the same core criteria: descriptive and vivid writing, accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and the balance between description and narrative.

The instructions are unusually prescriptive about the physical constraints: candidates have exactly **two pages** to write their response with no additional pages allowed. This space limitation requires careful planning and concise expression. The paper also

includes administrative instructions about checking names and starting on page 1, indicating that answer booklets are pre-printed with candidate details.

Topics covered

- Creative narrative writing under timed conditions with strict word-count or page constraints
- Descriptive writing techniques including sensory detail (smell, sound, visual imagery) as demonstrated in the barn scene prompt
- Story continuation from a given prompt, maintaining narrative voice and character consistency
- Character emotion and motivation, specifically understanding how Fern and Wilbur might feel in the barn context
- Original story composition with specified setting (farm environment)
- Integration of description and narrative, balancing atmospheric writing with plot progression
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar accuracy under exam pressure
- Planning and organising extended writing to fit within a two-page physical limit
- Third-person narrative perspective as suggested by the 'narrator's point of view' instruction
- Inferential reading comprehension to understand what might 'reasonably happen next' based on prior text

How to use this paper for revision

- Read a variety of well-written children's and young adult fiction that features strong descriptive passages, particularly books set in rural or farm environments such as *Charlotte's Web* (which the Fern and Wilbur prompt references).
- Practise writing short descriptive paragraphs focusing on each of the five senses, then incorporate these techniques into your narrative writing so description becomes natural rather than forced.
- Time yourself writing two-page stories in exactly 20 minutes, leaving two minutes at the end to proofread for spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors which will cost you marks.
- Before starting any creative writing task, spend two minutes planning: decide on your beginning, middle and end, and identify three key descriptive moments you want to include.
- Study how professional writers show character emotion through action, dialogue and internal thought rather than simply stating 'he felt sad' or 'she was happy'.
- Build a personal vocabulary bank of vivid verbs, precise nouns and evocative adjectives that you can deploy confidently in exam conditions without having to pause and think.
- If choosing the continuation task, read the prompt paragraph carefully and identify its tone, pace and style so your continuation feels consistent rather than jarring.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Writing far too much plot and not enough description, forgetting that the instructions explicitly state description is **as important as narrative** in the marking criteria.
- Choosing the continuation task without understanding the source material (likely *Charlotte's Web*), leading to inconsistent characterisation of Fern and Wilbur or implausible plot developments.
- Running out of space before finishing the story because of poor planning, or writing so large that two pages cannot contain a complete narrative arc.
- Using generic, overused descriptive phrases ('as white as snow', 'crystal clear') rather than original, specific sensory details that bring the setting to life.
- Neglecting to proofread in the final minutes, leaving careless spelling and punctuation errors that reduce marks even when the creative content is strong.
- Starting the story too slowly with excessive scene-setting, then rushing the ending because time runs out, resulting in an unbalanced narrative structure.

Exam technique

Allocate your 20 minutes carefully: spend the first **two to three minutes** deciding which task to attempt and planning your story structure. For the continuation task, consider what you know about Fern and Wilbur's relationship and what might logically happen next in the barn. For the original farm story, quickly outline a simple plot with a clear beginning, middle and end. Aim for quality over complexity.

Write for approximately **14 to 15 minutes**, keeping an eye on your page space and pacing the story so that you reach a satisfying conclusion within the two-page limit. Include at least three or four substantial descriptive passages, woven naturally into the narrative rather than added in clumsy blocks. Show character emotion through what they do and say, not by telling the reader directly.

Reserve the final **two to three minutes** for proofreading. Check every sentence for spelling errors, missing punctuation (especially speech marks and commas), and grammatical mistakes such as inconsistent tense or subject-verb disagreement. Because accuracy is explicitly part of the assessment, these final minutes can make a significant difference to your overall mark. If you spot an error, correct it neatly rather than leaving it.

What to revise alongside this paper

To prepare thoroughly for this paper, students should revise the key **literary techniques** used in descriptive writing: simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration and onomatopoeia. Understanding how these tools work and practising their subtle integration into narrative prose will strengthen the quality of your descriptive passages without making them feel forced or artificial.

Reading comprehension skills are also relevant, particularly for the continuation task which requires you to infer character motivation and predict plausible story developments based on prior reading. If you are unfamiliar with *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, reading or re-reading it will give you valuable insight into the Fern and Wilbur prompt, though this is not strictly essential.

Broader revision should include the technical aspects of **grammar and punctuation**: correct use of speech marks, comma placement in complex sentences, apostrophes for possession and contraction, and maintaining consistent past or present tense throughout your writing. These fundamentals are often overlooked under time pressure but carry significant weight in the marking. Practising past or specimen papers from Eltham College, if available, will help you become familiar with the school's specific expectations and marking style.

Key terms

Descriptive writing, Sensory detail, Narrative voice, Third-person narrator, Character emotion, Story continuation, Setting, Plot structure, Vivid language, Show don't tell, Dialogue, Proofreading, Narrative pacing, Consistency, Literary techniques

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