

## 11+ PAST PAPER PACK

# Exeter School 11+ Creative Writing 2025

## Complete Past Paper Pack

### CONTENTS

---

#### 01 Practice Paper

Exeter School 11+ Creative Writing. Work through this paper first.  
Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

#### 02 Practice Paper

Exeter School 11+ Creative Writing. Work through this paper first.  
Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

#### 03 Practice Paper

Exeter School 11+ Creative Writing. Work through this paper first.  
Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

PRACTISE THE REAL THING

---

Download more free 11+ past papers at [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.sats-papers.co.uk)

**11+ English**  
**Entrance Examination**  
**2025**



**Time Allowed: 1 hour**

***READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST***

Your answers to this examination should be **written on lined paper**.

Make sure that **your name** is on **all** the pieces of paper you use.

This examination consists of:

- **Section A:** A reading passage with comprehension questions;
- **Section B:** A creative writing section.

You must complete **both** Section A and Section B

## Section A: Comprehension (20 marks).

*The following passage is taken from Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, 'Treasure Island', in which young Jim Hawkins (our narrator) recalls the moment when he first met a mysterious old seaman called Billy Bones.*

**Read the following passage carefully then answer the questions.**

1 I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow - a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man, his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulder of his soiled blue coat, his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cover and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:

6 "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest - Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

In the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan<sup>1</sup> bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike<sup>2</sup> that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

11 "This is a handy cove," says he at length; "and a pleasant sittyated grog<sup>3</sup>-shop. Much company, mate?"

My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity.

"Well, then," said he, "this is the berth for me. Here you, matey," he cried to the man who trundled the barrow; "bring up alongside and help up my chest. I'll stay here a bit," he continued. "I'm a plain man; rum and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch ships off. What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I see what you're at - there"; and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold. "You can tell me when I've worked through that," says he, looking as fierce as a commander.

20 And indeed bad as his clothes were and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast, but seemed like a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came with the barrow told us the mail<sup>4</sup> had set him down the morning before at the Royal George, that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

26 He was a very silent man by custom. All day he hung round the cove or upon the cliffs with a brass telescope; all evening he sat in a corner of the parlour next the fire and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly he would not speak when spoken to, only look up sudden and fierce and blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day when he came back from his stroll he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road. At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question, but at last we began to see he was desirous to avoid them. When a seaman did put up at the Admiral Benbow (as now

<sup>1</sup> A mechanical device turned by bars, used for winding in heavy ropes or cables on a ship.

<sup>2</sup> A metal bar used as a lever.

<sup>3</sup> Alcohol.

<sup>4</sup> The postal service. At this time, post was taken from place to place by a horse drawn carriage.

and then some did, making by the coast road for Bristol) he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present. For me, at least, there was no secret about the matter, for I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms. He had taken me aside one day and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I would only keep my "weather-eye<sup>5</sup> open for a seafaring man with one leg" and let him know the moment he appeared.

39

### Section A: Comprehension Questions (Total: 20 marks)

1. Re-read **lines 1-5**, find three words or phrases that tell us something about the seaman's appearance? **3 marks**
2. In **lines 26-38**, explain how the author makes the seaman sound very **mysterious**. **5 marks**
3. Using the **whole passage**, and brief quotations in your answer, *explore* how the writer creates anticipation.

You may want to consider:

1. Key vocabulary used by the author
2. Paragraph and sentence length or punctuation used by the author

**12 marks**

### Section B: Creative Writing Task (Total: 30 marks)

**Marks will be awarded for thoughtful, imaginative pieces, which have accurate and varied paragraphs and sentence structures, as well as accurate spelling and punctuation.**

1. **Write a description of a trip to the coast (real or imaginary).**

*You may choose to begin it: 'As the path snaked its way closer towards the rocks, I could hear ...'*

---

<sup>5</sup> An eye watchful for developments.



# Paper Notes: 11+ Creative Writing Practice Paper (11+ Creative Writing Practice Paper (2025))

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

## Overview

---

This is an **11+ English entrance examination** published by **Exeter School** for candidates seeking entry in **2025**. The paper combines two distinct skills: comprehension of a classic literary text and creative descriptive writing. Students have **one hour** to complete both sections, requiring careful time management between analysis and composition.

The comprehension section uses an extract from Robert Louis Stevenson's **Treasure Island**, focusing on the atmospheric introduction of Billy Bones. The questions progress from simple retrieval (identifying descriptive phrases) through explanation of effect (how mystery is created) to higher-order analysis (exploring anticipation through vocabulary and structure). This graduated difficulty mirrors the mark allocation, with the final question worth **12 marks**.

The creative writing task asks students to describe a trip to the coast, with an optional opening prompt. Worth **30 marks**, this section rewards imaginative vocabulary, varied sentence structures, accurate paragraphing, and technical accuracy in spelling and punctuation. The coastal setting links thematically to the Treasure Island extract, potentially allowing students to carry forward atmospheric techniques from their reading into their writing.

## How this paper is organised

---

The examination divides into two mandatory sections with a combined time allowance of **60 minutes**. Section A carries **20 marks** and Section B carries **30 marks**, suggesting students should allocate roughly 20 minutes to comprehension and 40 minutes to creative writing, though individual pacing may vary.

**Section A** presents approximately 40 lines of narrative prose from Treasure Island, followed by three comprehension questions. Question 1 is worth 3 marks and requires retrieval skills, question 2 carries 5 marks and tests explanation, whilst question 3 is the most demanding at 12 marks, requiring sustained analysis with brief quotations. The mark weighting clearly indicates where depth and detail are expected.

**Section B** presents a single creative writing task with clear assessment criteria stated upfront. The rubric emphasises imagination, varied paragraph and sentence structures, and technical accuracy. An optional opening sentence is provided ('As the path snaked

its way...!'), giving less confident writers a scaffold whilst allowing others to begin independently. All answers must be written on lined paper with the student's name on every sheet.

## Topics covered

---

- Reading comprehension of Victorian adventure fiction, specifically analysing characterisation and atmosphere in Robert Louis Stevenson's prose
- Retrieval of explicit information from a literary text, identifying descriptive words and phrases about character appearance
- Explanation of authorial techniques for creating mystery and tension through description of behaviour, silence, and vigilance
- Extended analytical writing exploring how anticipation is built through vocabulary choices, sentence structure, and punctuation
- Use of brief quotations to support interpretative points in literary analysis
- Descriptive creative writing with a focus on setting, specifically coastal landscapes and sensory detail
- Narrative perspective and voice in first-person descriptive writing
- Varied sentence structures including simple, compound, and complex sentences for stylistic effect
- Accurate paragraphing to organise descriptive detail and structure a coherent piece
- Technical accuracy in spelling, punctuation, and grammar under timed examination conditions

## How to use this paper for revision

---

- Practise analysing **Victorian prose** extracts, paying attention to archaic language, dialect speech, and long descriptive sentences with multiple clauses, as seen in Stevenson's style.
- Time yourself completing comprehension questions in 20 minutes to ensure you leave adequate time for the higher-value creative writing task.
- When asked to explain an effect, always link the technique (what the writer does) to the impact (what the reader feels or understands).
- For the 12-mark question, plan to write three substantial paragraphs with at least one brief quotation per paragraph to support your points.
- Build a bank of **coastal vocabulary** including weather, landscape features, sounds, smells, and textures to enrich your descriptive writing.
- Read the creative writing assessment criteria carefully before starting: marks are explicitly awarded for imagination, variety, and accuracy, so balance all three.
- Use the optional opening sentence if it helps you start quickly, but feel free to craft your own beginning if you have a strong idea ready.

## Common mistakes to avoid

---

- Spending too long on Section A and leaving insufficient time for the 30-mark creative writing task, which requires sustained composition and checking.
- Identifying quotations in Question 3 but not explaining how they create anticipation, when the question explicitly asks you to explore the effect.
- Writing about mystery in Question 2 when it specifically asks about the seaman's **behaviour and habits** in lines 26 to 38, not his appearance.
- Rushing into creative writing without a brief plan, resulting in descriptive pieces that lack structure or drift away from the coastal setting.
- Using overly simple or repetitive sentence structures in the creative writing when the mark scheme specifically rewards variety and sophistication.
- Forgetting to proofread the final paragraph or two of the creative task, where spelling and punctuation errors often accumulate under time pressure.

## Exam technique

---

Begin by reading the **Treasure Island** extract carefully, annotating unfamiliar words using the footnotes provided. Answer Question 1 quickly (it should take 3 to 4 minutes for 3 marks), then spend slightly longer on Question 2, ensuring you explain how

Stevenson creates mystery through the character's silent, watchful behaviour. Question 3 deserves 10 to 12 minutes: plan three points (perhaps vocabulary, sentence length, and the final revelation about the one-legged man), find a quotation for each, and explain how each builds anticipation.

For Section B, spend at least **40 minutes** including planning and checking time. Take 3 to 4 minutes to jot down a sensory plan: what you will see, hear, smell, and feel on your coastal trip. Decide whether to use the given opening or create your own. As you write, consciously vary your sentence openings and structures. Include at least one short sentence for impact, one complex sentence with subordinate clauses, and some sensory details beyond just visual description.

Leave 3 to 5 minutes at the end to reread your creative piece, correcting obvious spelling errors, checking commas in lists and complex sentences, and ensuring every paragraph begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. Small technical errors can cost marks even if the imaginative content is strong, so proofreading is essential.

## What to revise alongside this paper

---

Before attempting this paper, students should be confident analysing extracts from **classic fiction**, including Victorian and Edwardian adventure stories by writers such as Stevenson, Dickens, and Kipling. Practising identification of narrative voice, characterisation techniques, and how writers build tension will help with Section A. The format resembles many selective school entrance papers, so working through similar comprehensions from publishers like **GL Assessment** or **CEM** would be valuable.

For Section B, broaden your descriptive vocabulary by reading high-quality descriptive passages and maintaining a vocabulary journal of interesting adjectives, verbs, and figurative language. Revise the **five senses** in descriptive writing and practise incorporating sound, smell, touch, and taste alongside visual detail. Study how professional writers use sentence variety for effect, particularly in nature and travel writing.

Once comfortable with this paper, progress to longer comprehensions with unseen poetry or non-fiction, and attempt creative tasks with more open briefs (writing stories rather than descriptions). Exeter School's examination represents a solid foundation in both analytical and compositional skills required for **independent school entry** at 11+, so mastering this format will support applications to similar selective schools.

## Key terms

---

**Characterisation, Atmosphere, Anticipation, Retrieval, Inference, Authorial technique, Quotation, Descriptive writing, Sensory detail, Sentence variety, Complex sentence, Simple sentence, Paragraphing, First-person narrative, Victorian prose**

---

For more free 11+ practice papers, past papers and online practice tests, visit [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk).

**11+ English**  
**Entrance Examination**  
**2025**



**Time Allowed: 1 hour**

***READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST***

Your answers to this examination should be **written on lined paper**.

Make sure that **your name** is on **all** the pieces of paper you use.

This examination consists of:

- **Section A:** A reading passage with comprehension questions;
- **Section B:** A creative writing section.

You must complete **both** Section A and Section B

**Section A: Comprehension (20 marks).**

***The following passage is taken from 'A Monster Calls' by Patrick Ness. The story is about a young boy called Conor. Conor lives with his mother, who is very sick. He has been having terrifying nightmares about darkness and a frightening monster. In this extract, Conor wakes up to find an actual monster outside his house!***

• Read the following passage carefully. Answer all the questions that follow in full sentences, using accurate punctuation and including as much detail as possible.

Conor could see the great yew tree that rose from the centre of the graveyard, a tree so ancient it almost seemed to be made of the same stone as the church. He only knew it was a yew because his mother had told him, first when he was little to make sure he didn't eat the berries, which were poisonous, and again this past year, when she'd started staring out of the kitchen window with a funny look on her face and saying, "That's a yew tree, you know."

And then he heard his name again.

*Conor.*

Like it was being whispered in both his ears.

"What?" Conor said, his heart thumping, suddenly impatient for whatever was going to happen.

A cloud moved in front of the moon, covering the whole landscape in darkness, and a *whoosh* of wind rushed down the hill and into his room, billowing the curtains. He heard the creaking and cracking of wood again, groaning like a living thing, like the hungry stomach of the world growling for a meal.

Then the cloud passed, and the moon shone again.

On the yew tree.

Which now stood firmly in the middle of his back garden.

And here was the monster.

As Conor watched, the uppermost branches of the tree gathered themselves into a great and terrible face, shimmering into a mouth and nose and even eyes, peering back at him. Other branches twisted around one another, inextricably linked, always creaking, always groaning, until they formed two long legs and a second leg to set down beside the main trunk. The rest of the tree gathered itself into a spine and then a torso, the thin needle-like leaves weaving together to make a green furry skin that moved and breathed as though there were muscles and lungs underneath.

Already taller than Conor's window, the monster grew wider as it brought itself together, filling out to a powerful shape, one that looked somehow strong, somehow *mighty*. It stared at Conor the whole time, and he could hear the loud, wind breathing from its mouth. It set its giant hands on either side of his window, lowering its head until its huge eyes filled the frame, holding Conor with its glare. Conor's house gave a little moan under its weight.

And then the monster spoke.

*Conor O'Malley*, it said, a huge gust of warm, compost-smelling breath rushing through Conor's window, blowing his hair back. Its voice rumbled low and loud, with a vibration so deep Conor could feel it resonating in his chest.

*I have come to get you, Conor O'Malley*, the monster said, pushing against the house, shaking the pictures off Conor's wall, sending books and electronic gadgets and an old stuffed toy rhino tumbling to the floor.

A monster, Conor thought. A real, honest-to-goodness monster. In real, waking life. Not in a dream, but here, at his window.

Come to get him.

But Conor didn't run.

In fact, he found he wasn't even frightened.

All he could feel, all he *had* felt since the monster revealed itself, was a growing disappointment.

Because this wasn't the monster he was expecting.

**Section A: Comprehension Questions (Total: 20 marks)**

1. Re-read lines 19-24, identify three words or phrases that describe the tree. *You can write this as bullet point answers.* **(3 marks)**
2. Look again at lines 25-34, explain how a sense of fear is created. *Support your answer with brief quotations.* **(5 marks)**
3. 'Re-read lines 17-37. Using brief quotations, *explore* how the writer creates a scary atmosphere. You may want to consider:
  - Key vocabulary used by the author
  - Paragraph and sentence length or punctuation used by the author**(12 marks)**

**Section B: Creative Writing Task (Total: 30 marks)**

Marks will be awarded for thoughtful, imaginative pieces, which have accurate and varied paragraphs and sentence structures, as well as accurate spelling and punctuation.

**Write a short story about an unusual or unexpected visitor. You can title it: 'An unusual visitor'**

The piece can be funny, moving or frightening, but you should describe the visitor in interesting descriptive detail.

# Paper Notes: 11+ Creative Writing Practice Paper (11+ Creative Writing Practice Paper (2025))

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 **Exeter School 11+ English Entrance Examination** for **2025**, set for candidates applying for Year 7 entry. The paper is divided into two sections: **Section A**, which tests reading comprehension through close textual analysis, and **Section B**, a creative writing task. The comprehension passage is taken from Patrick Ness's modern children's novel *A Monster Calls*, a text that blends fantasy, emotional depth and vivid descriptive language.

Section A awards **20 marks** across three questions that require candidates to identify language features, explain how atmosphere is created, and analyse the writer's craft using quotations. Section B awards **30 marks** for an original short story about an unusual visitor, with assessment focusing on imagination, descriptive detail, and technical accuracy in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.

The paper is designed to assess reading comprehension skills at an advanced primary level, alongside creative writing ability under timed conditions. Candidates have **one hour** to complete both sections, requiring careful time management to produce detailed analytical responses and a polished narrative. The mix of close reading and original composition makes this a well-rounded test of English language skills appropriate for selective independent school entry.

## How this paper is organised

---

The paper opens with clear rubric instructions, specifying that all answers must be written on lined paper with the candidate's name on every sheet. The **one-hour time allowance** covers both compulsory sections, requiring careful division of effort between comprehension and composition.

Section A presents an extract from *A Monster Calls*, a prose passage of approximately 600 words describing the transformation of a yew tree into a living monster. Three questions follow, worth **3, 5 and 12 marks** respectively. The questions increase in complexity, moving from simple identification to explanation with quotations, and finally to extended analysis of atmospheric technique. Question 3, the most substantial, explicitly guides candidates to consider vocabulary, sentence structure and punctuation in their answer.

Section B awards **30 marks** (60% of the total) for a creative story titled 'An Unusual Visitor'. The task allows candidates flexibility in tone (funny, moving or frightening) but emphasises the need for detailed, imaginative description. The marking criteria explicitly value thoughtful content, varied paragraph and sentence structures, and accurate spelling and punctuation, signalling that technical control is weighted equally with creative flair.

## Topics covered

---

- Close reading and textual analysis of contemporary children's fiction (Patrick Ness)
- Identification and selection of descriptive language, including adjectives and figurative phrases
- Explanation of how atmosphere and mood (specifically fear and tension) are created through language choices
- Extended analytical writing using embedded quotations to support points about writer's craft
- Analysis of vocabulary, sentence structure, paragraph length and punctuation effects
- Creative narrative writing with a specified theme (an unusual or unexpected visitor)
- Descriptive writing techniques, including characterisation and sensory detail
- Narrative structure, including establishing setting, introducing conflict, and creating mood or tone
- Technical accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar under timed conditions
- Crafting varied sentence structures for stylistic effect in original composition

## How to use this paper for revision

---

- Practise annotating fiction extracts to identify language techniques such as personification, simile, and emotive adjectives. Highlight key phrases that build atmosphere and label the effect they create.
- When answering comprehension questions, always embed short quotations within your sentences rather than copying out long chunks. For example, write 'The tree seemed "ancient"' rather than listing separate quotations.
- For the analytical question worth 12 marks, aim to write at least three developed paragraphs, each focusing on a different technique (vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation). Use the point-evidence-explanation structure.
- Plan your creative story in the first five minutes, jotting down three or four key moments and deciding on the visitor's appearance and significance. A brief plan prevents you from running out of ideas halfway through.
- Read modern children's and young adult fiction that blends realism with fantasy or the uncanny, such as works by Philip Pullman, David Almond or Frances Hardinge, to develop a feel for vivid descriptive writing.
- Practise writing under timed conditions, allocating roughly 25 minutes to Section A and 35 minutes to Section B. Time yourself regularly so you learn to gauge your pace without panicking.
- Revise key technical terms for your analytical writing: metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration, short sentences for impact, ellipsis for suspense. Use these terms confidently in your answers to show examiner awareness.

## Common mistakes to avoid

---

- Copying out long quotations in comprehension answers without integrating them into sentences or explaining their effect. Always embed short phrases and immediately analyse what they show.
- Writing vague statements like 'the writer uses good adjectives' without naming specific examples or explaining precisely what atmosphere or emotion those adjectives create.
- Spending too long on Section A and leaving insufficient time for the creative writing, which carries 30 of the 50 total marks. The story needs proper development, not a rushed final paragraph.
- In creative writing, focusing only on action and dialogue while neglecting descriptive detail. The brief explicitly asks for 'interesting descriptive detail', so sensory description and characterisation are essential.
- Neglecting to check spelling, punctuation and paragraphing in the creative piece. Even imaginative ideas will lose marks if sentences run on, paragraphs are missing, or common words are misspelt.
- Failing to use technical terminology in the analytical question (Question 3). Examiners expect terms like 'short sentence', 'ellipsis', 'personification' and 'sensory imagery' to feature in a 12-mark response.

## Exam technique

---

Begin by reading the entire paper carefully, including all instructions and the mark allocation. Notice that Section B is worth 30 marks compared to Section A's 20, and plan your time accordingly. Aim to spend no more than 25 minutes on comprehension, leaving 35 minutes for the creative story (including 5 minutes to plan and 5 to check).

For Section A, read the extract twice before attempting the questions. On the first read, absorb the narrative and atmosphere; on the second, underline or mentally note key quotations that could answer the questions. Question 1 is straightforward retrieval for 3 marks, so answer briefly and move on. Question 2 asks you to explain fear with quotations, so choose two or three short phrases and explain the effect of each in a sentence. Question 3 is the major task: write three clear paragraphs, each addressing a different aspect of atmosphere (vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation). Use the point-evidence-explanation structure and make sure every quotation is followed by analysis, not just description.

In Section B, spend five minutes planning. Decide who your visitor is, what makes them unusual, and what will happen in the story (arrival, reaction, outcome). Use paragraphs

to structure your narrative, and vary your sentence lengths for effect (short sentences for impact, longer ones for description). Leave five minutes at the end to reread your work, checking for missing full stops, paragraph breaks, and spelling errors. Examiners reward technical control as much as imagination.

## What to revise alongside this paper

---

Revise other forms of analytical writing, particularly how to comment on the effect of writer's choices in poetry and non-fiction extracts. Practising with different text types will strengthen your ability to identify and explain techniques quickly. Look at how sentence structure and punctuation create pace and tension in a range of genres.

Work on descriptive and narrative writing techniques beyond the 'unusual visitor' prompt. Practise opening paragraphs that establish setting and mood, character descriptions that reveal personality through physical detail and action, and endings that provide closure or surprise. Experiment with different narrative perspectives (first person for intimacy, third person for flexibility) and tenses.

Broaden your reading to include modern children's novels that blend realism with the fantastical or unsettling, such as *Skellig* by David Almond, *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman, or *The Graveyard Book* by the same author. Notice how professional writers build atmosphere, pace their narratives, and balance dialogue with description. This wider reading will deepen your appreciation of craft and enrich your own writing vocabulary.

## Key terms

---

**Atmosphere, Personification, Simile, Metaphor, Sensory imagery, Descriptive language, Narrative voice, Ellipsis, Short sentence for impact, Embedded quotation, Point-evidence-explanation, Characterisation, Figurative language, Tone, Emotive vocabulary**

---

For more free 11+ practice papers, past papers and online practice tests, visit [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk).

**11+ English**  
**Entrance Examination**  
**2025**



5

**Time Allowed: 1 hour**

***READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST***

Your answers to this examination should be **written on lined paper**.

10 Make sure that **your name** is on **all** the pieces of paper you use.

This examination consists of:

- **Section A:** A reading passage with comprehension questions;
- **Section B:** A creative writing section.

15

You must complete **both** Section A and Section B

## Section A: Comprehension (20 marks).

*The following passage is taken from 'The Hobbit' by J.R.R. Tolkien. In this extract, Bilbo Baggins (a hobbit) is lost, and meets the creature Gollum for the first time.*

**Read the following passage carefully, then answer the questions that follow.**

20 Deep down here by the dark water lived old Gollum, a small slimy creature. I don't know where he came from, nor who or what he was. He was Gollum – as dark as darkness, except for two big, round, pale eyes in his thin face. He had a little boat, and he rowed about quite quietly on the lake; for lake it was, wide and deep and deadly cold. He paddled it with large feet dangling over the side, but never a ripple did he make. Not he. He was looking out of his pale, lamp-like eyes for blind fish, which he grabbed with his long fingers as quick as thinking. He liked meat too. Goblin he thought good, when he could get it; but he took  
25 care they never found him out. He just throttled them from behind, if they ever came down alone near the edge of the water, while he was prowling about. They very seldom did, for they had a feeling that something unpleasant was lurking down there, down at the very roots of the mountain. They had stumbled upon the lake, when they were tunnelling down long ago, and they found they could go no further; so there their road ended in that direction, and there was no reason to go that way – unless the Great Goblin sent them. Sometimes he  
30 took a fancy for fish from the lake, and sometimes neither goblin nor fish came back.

Actually, Gollum lived on a slimy island of rock in the middle of the lake. He was watching Bilbo now from the distance with his pale eyes like telescopes. Bilbo could not see him, but he was wondering a lot about Bilbo, for he could see that he was no goblin at all.

35 Gollum got into his boat and shot off from the island, while Bilbo was sitting on the brink altogether flummoxed and at the end of his wits. Suddenly, up came Gollum and whispered and hissed:

'Bless us and splash us, my precioussss! I guess it's a choice feast; at least a tasty morsel it'd make us, *gollum!*' And when he said *gollum* he made a horrible swallowing noise in his throat. That is how he got his name, though he always called himself 'my precious.'

40 The hobbit jumped nearly out of his skin when the hiss came in his ears, and he suddenly saw the pale eyes sticking out at him.

'Who are you?' he said, thrusting his dagger in front of him.

'What iss he, my precious?' whispered Gollum (who always spoke to himself through never having anyone else to speak to). This is what he had come to find out, for he was not really very hungry at that moment, only curious; otherwise he would have grabbed first and whispered afterwards.

45 'I am Mr Bilbo Baggins. I have lost the dwarves and I have lost the wizard, and I don't know where I am; and I don't want to know, if only I can get away.'

'What's he got in his handses?' said Gollum, looking at the sword, which he did not quite like.

'A sword, a blade which came out of Gondolin!'

50 'Sssss' said Gollum, and became quite polite. 'Praps ye sits here and chats with it a bitsy, my precious. It likes riddles, praps it does, does it?' He was anxious to appear friendly, at any rate for the moment, and until he found out more about the sword and the hobbit, whether he was quite alone really, whether he was good to eat, and whether Gollum was really hungry. Riddles were all he could think of. Asking them, and sometimes guessing them, had been the only game he had ever played with other funny creatures sitting in their holes in the long, long ago, before he lost all his friends and was driven away, alone,  
55 and crept down, down into the dark under the mountains.

**Section A: Comprehension Questions (Total: 20 marks)**

60 1. Re-read **lines 18-29**, identify three words or phrases that describe Gollum? *You may answer in bullet points.* **3 marks**

65 2. In **lines 30-39**, explain how the author makes the Gollum sound **scary**. *You should defend your points with quotations.* **5 marks**

3. Using the **whole passage**, and brief quotations in your answer, *explore* how the writer creates an air of mystery.

70 You may want to consider:

1. Key vocabulary used by the author
  2. Paragraph and sentence length or punctuation used by the author
- 12 marks**

**Section B: Creative Writing Task (Total: 30 marks)**

Marks will be awarded for thoughtful, imaginative pieces, which have accurate and varied paragraphs and sentence structures, as well as accurate spelling and punctuation.

**Write a story that ends with the following line:**

*As the darkness stretched out before me in heavy silence, I realised with grim terror that I was lost and alone.*

# Paper Notes: 11+ Creative Writing Practice Paper (11+ Creative Writing Practice Paper (2025))

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 **2025 11+ English Entrance Examination** published by **Exeter School** in Exeter, designed for candidates applying for Year 7 entry. The paper combines reading comprehension and creative writing in a single one-hour assessment, testing both analytical and imaginative skills under timed conditions.

Section A presents an extract from **J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit***, specifically the iconic first encounter between Bilbo Baggins and Gollum by the underground lake. Candidates must answer three comprehension questions worth **20 marks** in total, ranging from straightforward retrieval (3 marks) to detailed analysis of language and atmosphere (12 marks).

Section B requires a complete narrative piece ending with a provided line about being lost and alone in darkness, worth **30 marks**. This dual structure is typical of independent school entrance examinations, which favour the essay-length creative response over the shorter fiction tasks found in state school assessments. The paper suits confident readers comfortable with classic literature and capable of sustaining imaginative writing under pressure.

## How this paper is organised

---

The examination is divided into two compulsory sections within a **one-hour time limit**. Candidates must complete both sections on lined paper, ensuring their name appears on every sheet used.

**Section A: Comprehension** carries **20 marks** and comprises three questions of increasing difficulty. Question 1 (3 marks) asks for simple identification of descriptive words or phrases from lines 18 to 29. Question 2 (5 marks) requires explanation with quotation support from lines 30 to 39. Question 3 (12 marks) demands a fuller exploration of how mystery is created across the entire passage, with explicit guidance to consider vocabulary choices and structural techniques such as sentence length and punctuation.

**Section B: Creative Writing** is worth **30 marks** and requires a complete story ending with a prescribed final line. The marking criteria emphasise thoughtful imagination, varied paragraph and sentence structures, and accuracy in spelling and punctuation.

No word count is specified, but the mark allocation suggests this section should occupy the majority of the hour.

## Topics covered

---

- Reading comprehension of fantasy fiction (specifically Tolkien's prose style and narrative voice)
- Character description and inference (identifying how Gollum is portrayed through language choices)
- Analysis of atmosphere and mood (how fear, mystery and menace are created through vocabulary and sentence structure)
- Close textual reference and quotation embedding in analytical responses
- Understanding of literary techniques including simile, personification and punctuation for effect
- Creative narrative writing with attention to atmosphere and pacing
- Building tension and suspense in fiction writing
- Crafting a coherent narrative arc that culminates in a predetermined ending
- Technical accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar under timed conditions
- Varied sentence structures and paragraph organisation in extended writing

## How to use this paper for revision

---

- Practise reading classic children's literature (Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Philip Pullman) to familiarise yourself with elevated vocabulary and descriptive prose styles commonly used in 11+ comprehension passages.
- When answering comprehension questions, always support your points with brief, embedded quotations rather than simply listing line numbers or paraphrasing the text.
- For high-mark analytical questions, aim to make at least three well-developed points. Question 3 is worth 12 marks, so a single paragraph will not suffice.
- Plan your creative writing before you start. Spend five minutes sketching out key plot points, especially how your opening will lead convincingly to the prescribed ending.
- Practise writing complete stories in 25 to 30 minutes. Section B is worth more marks than Section A, so allocate your hour accordingly (roughly 20 minutes for comprehension, 35 minutes for writing, 5 minutes checking).
- Read your finished creative piece aloud in your head to catch missing words, repetition or sentences that don't make sense.
- Build a bank of sophisticated vocabulary for describing atmosphere: words like 'foreboding', 'desolate', 'oppressive', 'eerie', 'suffocating' will enhance your descriptive writing.

## Common mistakes to avoid

---

- Listing quotations without explaining what they show. In Question 2, you must say how the quoted words or phrases make Gollum sound scary, not just identify them.
- Writing about the wrong lines. Question 1 explicitly directs you to lines 18 to 29; using evidence from later in the passage will not gain marks.
- Ignoring the bullet-point prompts in Question 3. The question specifically tells you to consider vocabulary and structural techniques; a response focusing only on word choice will be incomplete.
- Starting the creative writing task without a plan, leading to a rushed or illogical plot that struggles to reach the prescribed ending naturally.
- Spending too long on Section A and running out of time for the higher-mark creative writing. Section B is worth 30 marks (60% of the paper); it deserves the majority of your time.
- Writing a story that ends with similar wording but not the exact line provided. You must end with the precise sentence given, word for word.

## Exam technique

---

Begin by reading the entire paper to understand what is required in both sections. Allocate approximately **20 minutes to Section A** and **35 minutes to Section B**, leaving five minutes at the end to check your work. The mark distribution (20 marks versus 30 marks) justifies this timing.

For the comprehension questions, work through them in order. Question 1 is straightforward retrieval; scan lines 18 to 29 and select three clear descriptive phrases. Question 2 requires more depth: identify specific techniques (the hissing dialogue, the predatory verbs, the similes) and explain their effect. Question 3 is the most demanding and should receive the most time; aim for three substantial paragraphs covering vocabulary, sentence structure, and punctuation, each supported by brief quotations.

For Section B, spend five minutes planning before you write. Jot down your opening scenario, the sequence of events that will lead to being lost and alone, and key descriptive details. Because the ending is fixed, you need to work backwards: what situation would naturally lead to that realisation of terror and isolation? Write in paragraphs, vary your sentence lengths deliberately (short sentences build tension; longer ones allow for atmospheric description), and remember to check spelling and punctuation. Save two minutes at the end to reread your story and correct obvious errors.

## What to revise alongside this paper

---

To prepare effectively for this paper, revise the full range of **literary techniques** commonly taught in Years 5 and 6: metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and how punctuation (dashes, ellipses, short sentences) creates pace and mood. Practise identifying these in unseen extracts and explaining their effects in your own words.

For creative writing, study different **narrative structures**: how to open a story in the middle of action (in medias res), how to build suspense through withholding information, and how to craft a satisfying ending. Read short stories by classic and contemporary authors to see how professional writers handle pacing within limited word counts.

Broaden your reading to include classic children's and young adult literature (not just modern fiction), as independent school entrance papers frequently use extracts from Dickens, Tolkien, Roald Dahl, and similar authors. Familiarity with slightly older or more complex prose will make the comprehension passages feel less daunting and improve your own vocabulary range.

## Key terms

---

**Inference, Quotation embedding, Atmosphere, Narrative voice, Simile, Personification, Sentence structure, Tension, Foreshadowing, Characterisation, Punctuation for effect, Descriptive vocabulary, Narrative arc, Coherence, Paragraphing**

---

For more free 11+ practice papers, past papers and online practice tests, visit [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk).