



**OUNDLE**

School

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**EXAMINATION PAPER**  
**Non Common Entrance 2024**

**English**

**Time allowed: 1 hour**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions**

- Dictionaries are not allowed.
- Answer on lined paper. Write your name clearly at the top of each sheet of paper that you use.
- Answer **ALL** the questions in Section A. Choose **ONE** question from Section B. You should divide your time equally between both sections.
- You are expected to write clearly and accurately throughout each of your answers. You should leave some time towards the end of the examination to check your work carefully.
- The maximum number of marks for this paper is 50.

## SECTION A: READING

**Read the passage carefully and answer the questions below. Please note the final question carries 8 marks.**

*Persepolis is a ruined ancient city in what was Persia and is now Iran. It was once a capital city withing the Persian empire. In this extract, the travel writer Robert Byron approaches the city.*

There are still things to be said about Persepolis.

In its prime, when the walls were mud and the roofs wood, it may have looked rather shoddy—rather as it would look, in fact, if reconstructed at Hollywood. Today, at least, it is not shoddy. Only the stone of the city has survived, but for a few of Alexander's<sup>1</sup> ashes which they dig up now and then. And stone worked with such opulence and precision has great splendour, whatever one may think of the figures which are sculptured on it. This is increased by the contrast between the stones used, the hard opaque grey and the more lucent white. Isolated ornaments have also been discovered in a jet-black marble without vein or blemish.

10 Is that all?

Patience!

In the old days you arrived by horse. You rode up the steps on to the platform. You made a camp there, while the columns and winged beasts kept their solitude beneath the stars, and not a sound or movement disturbed the empty moonlit plain. You thought of Darius<sup>2</sup> and Xerxes<sup>3</sup> and Alexander. You were alone with the ancient world. You saw Asia as the Greeks saw it, and you felt their magic breath stretching out towards China itself. Such emotions left no room for the aesthetic question, or for any question.

20 Today you step out of a car, while a couple of lorries thunder by in a cloud of dust. You enter by leave of a gate-keeper, and are greeted, on reaching the platform, by a light railway, a neo-German hostel, and a lot of signs with lots of information. These useful additions clarify the intelligence. You may persuade yourself, in spite of them, into a mood of romance. But the mood they invite is that of a critic at an exhibition. This is the penalty of greater knowledge. It isn't my fault. No one would have been more pleased than I to leave the brain idle in a dream of history and landscape and light wind and other impalpable accidents. But if circumstances insist on showing me more than I want to see, it is no good telling lies about it.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander (the Great): Macedonian king who conquered Persia in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC.

<sup>2</sup> Darius. Another 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC Persian king.

<sup>3</sup> Xerxes A Persian ruler from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC. Also often known as Xerxes the Great.

30 The columns, therefore, can be disposed of in a word. They are surprising, as Sir Gilbert Scott's town hall in Mumbai is surprising because it combines Hindu themes with Gothic. Like mules, these mixtures are infertile. They have no bearing on the general course of architecture, and hold no precepts for it. You may like them in a casual way, if they happen to agree with some current of contemporary fashion. The columns at Persepolis don't.

35 The columns jump to the eye first. Other architectural features are the stairs, the platform, and the palace doors. The doorways alone boast a gleam of true invention; they suggest ideas, they utter a comment, with regard to other doorways. Their proportions are narrow and thick, thus inviting a perpetual to and fro; whereas our doors ask the figure to pause and frame itself. Like the arches at Stonehenge, they are made of monoliths, one for each side and one on top. But their mouldings and angles are as sharp and delicate as if cut by a machine. The friezes inside the doorways have proved impervious to age; they remain a bright smooth grey, as slick as an aluminium saucepan. This cleanness reacts on the carving like sunlight on a fake painting; it reveals, instead of the genius one expected, a disconcerting void. I see only too well what Christopher meant when he said the sculptures were 'unemotional without being intellectual'.

45 *Adapted from The Road to Oxiana by Robert Byron*

1. Explain these phrases in your own words.
  - a) "In its prime". (Line 1) [2 marks]
  - b) "Looked rather shoddy". (Lines 2- 3) [2 marks]
  
2. Look at lines 5 to 9. What features of the remaining stonework remain impressive. **Explain your answer in your own words.** [3 marks]
  
3. Look at lines 12 to 26. How does the writer convey the difference between arriving in ancient times and modern times? You may use brief quotations to support your answer. [6 marks]
  
4. Look at lines 34 to 41. How does the writer convey his admiration for the doorways? Comment on the imagery and language the writer uses. [4 marks]
  
5. Do you think the writer likes Persepolis? **This question carries the most marks.** Look at the whole passage and explain your answer beyond what you wrote for question 3. You may use brief quotations to support your answer. [8 marks]

## SECTION B: EXTENDED WRITING

You should spend **30 minutes** on this section.

Answer ONE of the following questions. You are reminded of the importance of clear and accurate written English and of careful presentation in your answer. All questions carry equal marks.

**1. Describe a place which you think your reader will find interesting. Write in a way that creates a clear picture of what this place looks like and how your reader would feel if they were there.**

*[25 marks]*

OR

**2. "My brain was idle in a dream of history". Write a story that begins with these words.**

*[25 marks]*

OR

**3. "Museums and ancient buildings such as castles should do more to bring history alive for young people ". Use this view as the basis for**

*EITHER*

- a) a letter to the manager of a museum or ancient building arguing for a more engaging experience for young people.

*[25 marks]*

OR

- b) The words for a leaflet encouraging young people to come to a museum or ancient building. (The museum or building does not have to actually exist.)

*[25 marks]*