

11+ PAST PAPER PACK

The John Lyon School 11+ English

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MARKING	
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11+ SPECIMEN PAPER

ENGLISH

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Time allowed: 45 minutes

Instructions

- Use **black or blue** ink or ball-point pen.
- Answer **all** questions.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided – there may be more space than you need.

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 35
- The marks for each question are shown in bracket, use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.
- There are two sections:
Section A – Comprehension
Section B – Creative Writing

Advice

- Try to answer every question.

PLEASE COMPLETE IN CAPITAL LETTERS:

FIRST NAME :	
SURNAME :	
CURRENT SCHOOL :	

SECTION A (allow 20 minutes for this section)

Read the following extract, taken from Roald Dahl's "Matilda", and answer the multiple-choice questions that follow.

Matilda was a little late in starting school. Most children begin Primary School at five or even just before, but Matilda's parents, who weren't very concerned one way or the other about their daughter's education, had forgotten to make the proper arrangements in advance. She was five and a half when she entered school for the first time. The village school for younger children was a bleak brick building called Crunchem Hall Primary School. It had about two hundred and fifty pupils aged from five to just under twelve years old. The head teacher, the boss, the supreme commander of this establishment was a formidable middle-aged lady whose name was Miss Trunchbull.

Naturally Matilda was put in the bottom class, where there were eighteen other small boys and girls about the same age as her. Their teacher was called Miss Honey, and she could not have been more than twenty-three or twenty-four. She had a lovely pale oval madonna face with blue eyes and her hair was light-brown. Her body was so slim and fragile one got the feeling that if she fell over she would smash into a thousand pieces, like a porcelain figure.

Miss Jennifer Honey was a mild and quiet person who never raised her voice and was seldom seen to smile, but there is no doubt she possessed that rare gift for being adored by every small child under her care. She seemed to understand totally the bewilderment and fear that so often overwhelms young children who for the first time in their lives are herded into a classroom and told to obey orders. Some curious warmth that was almost tangible shone out of Miss Honey's face when she spoke to a confused and homesick newcomer to the class.

Miss Trunchbull, the Headmistress, was something else altogether. She was a gigantic holy terror, a fierce tyrannical monster who frightened the life out of the pupils and teachers alike. There was an aura of menace about her even at a distance, and when she came up close you could almost feel the dangerous heat radiating from her as from a red-hot rod of metal. When she marched – Miss Trunchbull never walked, she always marched like a storm-trooper with long strides and arms aswinging – when she marched along a corridor you could actually hear her snorting as she went, and if a group of children happened to be in her path, she ploughed right on through them like a tank, with small people bouncing off her to left and right. Thank goodness we don't meet many people like her in this world, although they do exist and all of us are likely to come across at least one of them in a lifetime. If you ever do, you should behave as you would if you met an enraged rhinoceros out in the bush — climb up the nearest tree and stay there until it has gone away. This woman, in all her eccentricities and in her appearance, is almost im-possible to describe, but I shall make some attempt to do so a little later on. Let us leave her for the moment and go back to Matilda and her first day in Miss Honey's class.

After the usual business of going through all the names of the children, Miss Honey handed out a brand-new exercise-book to each pupil.

"You have all brought your own pencils, I hope," she said.

"Yes, Miss Honey," they chanted.

"Good. Now this is the very first day of school for each one of you. It is the beginning of at least eleven long years of schooling that all of you are going to have to go through. And six of those years will be spent right here at Crunchem Hall where, as you know, your Headmistress is Miss Trunchbull. Let me for your own good tell you something about Miss Trunchbull. She insists upon strict discipline throughout the school, and if you take my advice you will do your very best to behave yourselves in her presence. Never argue with her. Never answer her back. Always do as she says. If you get on the wrong side of Miss Trunchbull she can liquidise you like a carrot in a kitchen blender. It's nothing to laugh about, Lavender. Take that grin off your face. All of you will be wise to remember that Miss Trunchbull deals very very severely with anyone who gets out of line in this school. Have you got the message?"

Multiple Choice Questions (use the separate answer sheet to circle the correct answer)

1. Which best describes Miss Honey's age?

A: Early twenties	B: Late twenties	C: Early thirties	D: Late thirties
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2. Which is the most accurate description of Miss Honey's appearance?

A: Long face with light brown hair	B: Long face with dark brown hair
C: Oval face with light brown hair	D: Oval face with dark brown hair

3. How many pupils are in the bottom class?

A: Eighteen	B: Nineteen	C: Twenty-three	D: Twenty-four
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4. Which word best describes how the extract describes how young children feel when they first enter a classroom?

A: Lonely	B: Excited	C: Anxious	D: Eager
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5. Miss Honey's figure is related to an ornament. Of what material is the ornament made?

A: Wood	B: Plastic	C: Brass	D: China
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6. The extract describes Miss Trunchbull. Several of the terms to describe her, would normally be associated with

A: metallurgy	B: farming	C: military	D: religion
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7. If Miss Trunchbull was near you, what would you be almost in danger of experiencing?

A: Ringing in your ears	B: The bad smell of her breath
C: Too much heat	D: Too much cold

8. As Miss Trunchbull marches around Crunchem Hall, the pupils:

A: are shouted at to "move aside"	B: hold the door open for her
C: know to stand out of her way	D: are barged out of the way

9. At least how many years will pupils spend in education away from Crunchem Hall?

A: Six	B: Seven	C: Eleven	D: Twelve
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10. In the phrase “Some curious warmth that was almost tangible shone out” what does the term “almost tangible” mean?

A: Close to a shade of orange	B: Had quite a spicy taste
C: Originating from Tangier in Morocco	D: Could nearly be felt

11. What did Miss Honey do before handing Matilda an exercise book?

A: Took the register	B: Checked she had a pencil
C: Described correct behaviour	D: Liquidised a carrot

12. Who might have laughed during the extract?

A: Matilda	B: Jennifer	C: Miss Trunchbull	D: Lavender
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13. The “enraged rhinoceros” is likely to:

A: climb the nearest tree	B: become extinct
C: be angry	D: be bigger than the average rhinoceros

14. In the phrase “when she spoke to a confused and homesick newcomer”, the word “confused” is:

A: a noun	B: an adjective	C: a verb	D: a conjunction
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15. From whose perspective is the extract written?

A: Matilda’s	B: Miss Honey’s	C: Lavender’s	D: Someone else’s
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(15 marks)

END OF SECTION A

MARKING

/15

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ENGLISH: MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWER SHEET

Question No	Answers (please circle only one letter per row)			
1	A	B	C	D
2	A	B	C	D
3	A	B	C	D
4	A	B	C	D
5	A	B	C	D
6	A	B	C	D
7	A	B	C	D
8	A	B	C	D
9	A	B	C	D
10	A	B	C	D
11	A	B	C	D
12	A	B	C	D
13	A	B	C	D
14	A	B	C	D
15	A	B	C	D

PLEASE COMPLETE IN CAPITAL LETTERS:

FIRST NAME :

SURNAME :

CURRENT SCHOOL :

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 **specimen 11+ English paper** published by **The John Lyon School** in Harrow-on-the-Hill, designed to give prospective candidates an authentic preview of the school's entrance examination format. The paper carries a total of **35 marks** and is divided into two distinct sections: **Section A (Comprehension)** tests close reading and inference through 15 multiple-choice questions based on an extract from Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, whilst **Section B (Creative Writing)** asks candidates to produce a narrative piece about their first day in a new school, assessed for content, organisation, and technical accuracy.

The time limit is **45 minutes** (20 minutes recommended for Section A, 25 minutes for Section B), which demands efficient time management and the ability to switch quickly between analytical and creative tasks. The comprehension extract is richly descriptive, exploring character, figurative language, and narrative perspective, so candidates must read carefully and refer back to the text when answering.

This paper is particularly useful for children preparing to sit the John Lyon School's actual 11+ entrance examination, as it mirrors the house style and difficulty level. It is also valuable for any student practising for selective school entrance tests that combine comprehension and creative writing under timed conditions.

How this paper is organised

The paper opens with clear instructions on materials (black or blue ink or ballpoint pen), the importance of attempting every question, and the overall mark total of 35. A separate **multiple-choice answer sheet** is provided at the end of the booklet for Section A responses.

Section A allocates 20 minutes and 15 marks to comprehension. Candidates read a substantial extract from *Matilda* (approximately 600 words) and then answer **15 multiple-choice questions**, each worth one mark, covering retrieval, inference, vocabulary in context, grammatical terminology, and narrative perspective. The questions progress from straightforward factual retrieval (Miss Honey's age, the number of pupils in the class) to more interpretive challenges (the connotations of military imagery, the meaning of 'tangible').

Section B allocates 25 minutes and 20 marks to creative writing. Of these, **12 marks assess content and organisation** (narrative structure, character development, descriptive detail, engagement), whilst the remaining **8 marks evaluate technical accuracy** (spelling, punctuation, grammar). Candidates write directly into the space provided, which spans several pages of ruled lines, encouraging extended, sustained writing.

Topics covered

- Close reading and retrieval of explicit information from narrative fiction (character descriptions, ages, numbers of pupils)
- Inference and deduction about characters' emotions, motivations, and relationships (understanding Miss Honey's warmth and Miss Trunchbull's menace)
- Interpretation of figurative language, simile, and metaphor (Miss Honey as a porcelain figure, Miss Trunchbull as a tank or storm-trooper)
- Vocabulary in context, particularly abstract and sensory terms ('tangible', 'bewilderment', 'aura of menace')
- Identification of semantic fields and thematic imagery (military language used to describe Miss Trunchbull)
- Recognition of narrative perspective and narrative voice (third-person omniscient with authorial commentary)
- Grammatical word classes and their function in sentences (recognising adjectives, nouns, verbs, conjunctions)
- Creative narrative writing with a focus on personal or imagined experience (first day at a new school)
- Organisational and structural skills in extended writing (paragraphing, sequencing of events, coherent plot development)
- Technical accuracy in writing, including spelling of common and topic-specific vocabulary, punctuation for clarity and effect, and grammatical correctness

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise reading extracts from classic and contemporary children's literature (Roald Dahl, Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Morpurgo) and answering multiple-choice questions under timed conditions to build stamina and speed.
- When answering multiple-choice comprehension questions, always refer back to the text to check your answer; eliminate obviously incorrect options first to narrow down your choice.
- Build a strong vocabulary of literary terminology (simile, metaphor, personification, narrative perspective) and grammatical terms (noun, adjective, verb, conjunction) so you can answer technical questions confidently.
- For the creative writing task, spend the first two or three minutes planning your narrative: jot down a simple structure (opening, build-up, climax, resolution) to keep your story focused and coherent.
- Revise common spelling patterns and rules (silent letters, homophones, double consonants, tricky plurals) and practise writing extended pieces in timed conditions to improve accuracy under pressure.
- Read your creative writing through in the final minute or two, checking for missing punctuation (especially full stops and capital letters), unclear sentences, and basic spelling errors.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Rushing through the comprehension extract and missing key details, then selecting plausible-sounding answers that aren't actually supported by the text.
- Confusing similar options in multiple-choice questions (e.g. 'oval face with light brown hair' vs 'long face with light brown hair') because of careless reading or failing to double-check the passage.
- Misinterpreting figurative language questions by taking metaphors literally (e.g. thinking 'tangible warmth' refers to actual temperature rather than an almost physical sense of kindness).
- Spending too long on Section A and leaving insufficient time to plan, write, and check the creative writing in Section B, resulting in a rushed or incomplete narrative.
- Writing a creative piece that lacks structure or wanders off-topic, often because no planning time was taken at the start of Section B.
- Making careless technical errors (missing capital letters, run-on sentences, incorrect homophones like 'their/there/they're') that lose marks in the technical accuracy component of Section B.

Exam technique

Begin by reading the **Section A extract** carefully and actively. Underline or mentally note key character descriptions, figurative language, and any unusual or striking phrases. Then move through the multiple-choice questions methodically, referring back to the text for each one. If a question stumps you, eliminate the obviously wrong answers and make an educated guess rather than leaving it blank, since there is no negative marking.

Allocate your time strictly: aim to finish Section A within 20 minutes, leaving a full 25 minutes for Section B. Before you start writing your narrative, spend two or three minutes planning. Note down your opening (how you will hook the reader), two or three main events or scenes, and a satisfying conclusion. This skeleton plan will keep your story coherent and prevent you from running out of ideas halfway through.

As you write, keep an eye on technical accuracy. Write in clear, varied sentences, check your spelling as you go, and use paragraphs to structure your narrative (a new paragraph each time the focus shifts to a new moment or idea). Save the final two minutes to re-read your creative writing, correcting any glaring errors in punctuation, grammar, or spelling. Even small improvements at this stage can make a noticeable difference to your technical accuracy mark.

What to revise alongside this paper

To strengthen your comprehension skills, read a wide range of narrative fiction extracts, paying particular attention to how authors use descriptive language and characterisation. Practise identifying the **tone and mood** of passages, recognising how word choice and sentence structure contribute to atmosphere. Work on expanding your vocabulary by keeping a reading journal in which you note down unfamiliar words and their meanings in context.

For creative writing, explore different **narrative techniques** such as dialogue, sensory description, and varying sentence structure for effect. Practise writing short narratives to different prompts under timed conditions, experimenting with openings that grab attention and endings that leave a lasting impression. Study model texts (short stories, extracts from novels) to see how professional writers structure plots and develop characters over a few hundred words.

Strengthen your grammatical foundations by revising **word classes** (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions), **sentence types** (simple, compound, complex), and **punctuation rules** (commas, apostrophes, speech marks). Regular practice with grammar exercises and proofreading activities will build the technical accuracy needed to score highly on timed writing tasks.

Key terms

Comprehension, Multiple-choice questions, Inference, Retrieval, Figurative language, Simile, Metaphor, Narrative perspective, Third-person omniscient, Creative writing, Content and organisation, Technical accuracy, Paragraphing, Adjective, Narrative voice

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11+ SPECIMEN PAPER

ENGLISH: ANSWERS

SECTION A

One mark per question:

Question No	Answers (please circle only one letter per row)			
1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
2	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input checked="" type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
3	<input type="radio"/> A	<input checked="" type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
4	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input checked="" type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
5	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D
6	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input checked="" type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
7	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input checked="" type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
8	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D
9	<input type="radio"/> A	<input checked="" type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
10	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D
11	<input checked="" type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
12	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D
13	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input checked="" type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
14	<input type="radio"/> A	<input checked="" type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input type="radio"/> D
15	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input type="radio"/> C	<input checked="" type="radio"/> D

SECTION B

The 20 marks in this section are divided as 12 marks for content and organisation and 8 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar. For the content and organisation marks, the highest marks are given for:

- A clear narrative that is interesting to read and easy for the reader to follow;
- Division of the story into sensible sentences and paragraphs;
- Expressive descriptions that demonstrate an impressive vocabulary;
- A story of their own recollection or imagination that does not borrow significantly from Section A.

Answer-Key Notes: 11+ English Answers (11+ English Answers)

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you mark this paper and learn from each answer.

How to use this answer key

Use this answer key to mark Section A objectively: one mark per question, fifteen marks total. For Section B (creative writing), read the criteria carefully before awarding marks out of twelve for content and organisation, then out of eight for spelling, punctuation and grammar. The criteria explicitly penalise stories that borrow too heavily from the Roald Dahl extract in Section A.

When a student loses marks in Section A, determine whether the error was careless (misreading the question, rushing) or rooted in comprehension difficulty. If three or more answers are incorrect, the student may need further practice with close reading and inference.

The worked examples below explain why certain answers in Section A are correct, focusing on questions that test vocabulary in context, inference, and grammatical understanding. Use them to diagnose recurring weaknesses, not simply to confirm right or wrong.

Score interpretation

Section A is worth fifteen marks. A score of thirteen or above demonstrates strong comprehension and attention to detail. Students at this level can extract meaning from vocabulary in context, recognise narrative perspective, and identify grammatical features accurately. Ten to twelve marks suggests solid understanding with occasional lapses in inference or vocabulary; review the questions missed to see whether the student is misreading options or missing subtleties in the passage.

Below ten marks in Section A indicates that the student may struggle with inference, vocabulary range, or careful reading under timed conditions. Check whether errors cluster around particular question types (for example, figurative language, grammatical terminology, or subtle distinctions between similar answers).

Section B is worth twenty marks (twelve for content and organisation, eight for technical accuracy). A total score of thirty or above (Section A plus Section B) represents a strong performance overall. Between twenty-five and twenty-nine suggests competence with room to improve either creative expression or accuracy. Below twenty-five indicates that further practice in both comprehension and written composition is needed before sitting an entrance examination.

Worked examples

Section A: Reading comprehension, Q1–15

This section tests close reading of a passage from *Matilda*. **Markers reward precise retrieval of detail and understanding of vocabulary in context.** Students lose marks by choosing answers that are plausible but not supported by the text, or by misreading figurative language as literal description. Questions 6, 10, and 14 require knowledge of grammatical and literary terminology; ensure the student understands these terms before attempting similar papers.

Q2 : C

The passage states that Miss Honey 'had a lovely pale oval madonna face with blue eyes and her hair was light-brown'. **Option C ('Oval face with light brown hair') is the only choice that matches both features accurately.** Option A incorrectly describes the face as 'long', and options B and D incorrectly describe the hair as 'dark brown'.

Q3 : B

The text says 'Naturally Matilda was put in the bottom class, where there were *eighteen other* small boys and girls about the same age as her'. **Eighteen others plus Matilda herself makes nineteen pupils in total.** A common mistake is to choose A (eighteen) by overlooking the word 'other'.

Q6 : C

The passage describes Miss Trunchbull using phrases such as 'marched like a storm-trooper', 'fierce tyrannical monster', and 'ploughed right on through them like a tank'. **These terms are all associated with military language and imagery.** Option A (metallurgy) is a distractor based on the phrase 'red-hot rod of metal', which is a simile, not the dominant semantic field.

Q10 : D

'Tangible' means able to be touched or felt physically. **In context, 'almost tangible' describes warmth that is so strong it feels as though you could physically sense it.** The phrase 'could nearly be felt' captures this meaning precisely. Options A, B, and C are distractors that play on superficial similarity to the word 'tangible' (tangerine colour, taste, Tangier) but are incorrect.

Q14 : B

In the phrase 'when she spoke to a confused and homesick newcomer', the word 'confused' describes the noun 'newcomer'. **A word that describes a noun is an adjective.** Option A (noun) would apply to 'newcomer' itself, whilst option C (verb) and option D (conjunction) do not fit the grammatical function of 'confused' in this sentence.

Section B: Creative writing

This creative writing task awards twelve marks for content and organisation, and eight marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar. **The highest marks go to narratives that are original, well-structured, and expressive.** A common pitfall is retelling the *Matilda* extract with minor changes (for example, renaming characters or transplanting Miss Trunchbull into the student's own school). The mark scheme explicitly penalises borrowing significantly from Section A, so originality is essential. Technical accuracy (spelling, punctuation, grammar) is marked separately; a story with strong ideas but many technical errors will score well in content but lose marks in accuracy.

Content and organisation (12 marks) : High marks (10–12)

A high-scoring response presents a clear, engaging narrative with a beginning, middle, and conclusion. It uses paragraphs to separate ideas (for example, one paragraph for arrival, another for meeting the teacher, another for an incident or turning point). Vocabulary is varied and expressive (for example, 'trepidation' instead of 'nervousness', 'cavernous corridors' instead of 'big hallways'). The story draws on genuine recollection or imagination rather than echoing the Dahl passage.

Technical accuracy (8 marks) : High marks (7–8)

To achieve seven or eight marks, the student must demonstrate **consistent control of sentence demarcation (full stops, capital letters, question marks), accurate spelling of common and ambitious vocabulary, and correct use of commas and apostrophes.** One or two minor slips are acceptable at this level, but recurring errors in basic punctuation or frequent misspellings will reduce the mark. Sentences should be varied in length and structure, avoiding a monotonous list of simple sentences.

Next steps

After marking, review each incorrect answer in Section A with the student. For comprehension errors, return to the passage and ask the student to find the sentence or phrase that supports the correct answer. This trains close reading and evidence-based reasoning. For vocabulary or grammar questions (such as Q6, Q10, or Q14),

ensure the student understands the term or concept before moving on; if necessary, practise similar questions using other texts.

For Section B, if the content mark is low, practise planning short narratives before writing: a simple three-part plan (beginning, turning point, ending) helps structure ideas. If the technical accuracy mark is low, focus on one or two specific skills (for example, using full stops correctly, or checking spellings of common words) in the next piece of writing. If the student scored well overall (thirty marks or above), consider attempting past papers from specific schools to build familiarity with entrance-examination formats and time limits.

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