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Tonbridge School 13+ English

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Scholarship Examination Sample Paper

ENGLISH I

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Answer ALL of the questions in both Section A and Section B.

Total marks: 50

SECTION A – Poetry Comprehension

Read the following poem carefully and answer the questions that follow. You are advised to pay close attention to the marks available for each section. The poem was written by Simon Armitage (1963 – present).

A privet is a shrub often grown into a hedge. The narrator of the poem has been made to cut the hedge as a punishment by his father.

Privet

Because I'd done wrong I was sent to hell,
down black steps to the airless tombs
of mothballed contraptions and broken tools.
Piled on a shelf every daffodil bulb
was an animal skull or shrunken head,
every drawer a seed-tray of mildew and rust.
In its alcove shrine a bottle of meths
stood corked and purple like a pickled saint.
I inched ahead, pushed the door of the furthest crypt
where starlight broke in through shuttered vents
and there were the shears, balanced on two nails,
hanging cruciform on the white-washed wall.
And because I'd done wrong I was sent
to the end of the garden to cut the hedge,
that dividing line between moor and lawn
gone haywire that summer, all stem and stalk
where there should have been contour and form.
The shears were a crude beast, lumpen, pre-war,
rolling-pin handles on iron-age swords,
an oiled rivet that rolled like a slow eye,
jaws that opened to the tips of its wings
then closed with an executioner's lisp.
I snipped and prodded at first, pecked at strands,
then cropped and hacked watching spiders scuttle
for tunnels and bolt-holes of woven silk,
and found further in an abandoned nest
like a begging bowl or a pauper's wreath,
till two hours on the hedge stood scalped
and fleeced, raw-looking, stripped of its green,
my hands blistered, my feet in a litter
of broken arrows and arrowhead leaves.
He came from the house to inspect the work,
didn't speak, ran his eye over the levelled crown
and the shorn flanks. Then for no reason except
for the sense that comes from doing a thing
for its own sake, he lifted me up in his arms
and laid me down on the top of the hedge,
just lowered me onto that bed of twigs,
and I floated there, cushioned and buoyed
by a million matchwood fingertips,
held by nothing but needling spokes and spikes,
released to the universe, buried in sky.

Glossary

- meths* methylated spirits; a liquid, often purple, used for cleaning
crypt an underground room or vault beneath a church, used as a chapel or burial place
pauper an old way of describing a person with very little money
shears hand-worked hedge clippers like large scissors
rivet the round metal joint that hold the shears together
lisp a tendency to over-pronounce the 's' sound
wreath an arrangement of flowers, leaves, or stems fastened in a ring and used for decoration or for laying on a grave
fleeced possibly linked to the idea of sheep shearing, but also a slang term for being cheated or robbed

Questions

1. Why do you think the narrator feels he has been 'sent to hell'? [3 marks]
2. Re-read the underlined lines in the poem ('The shears ... executioner's lisp'). What is the effect of the diction (choice of words), structure, language and imagery (metaphors, similes, etc.) in each line or phrase? [8]
3. How does Armitage effectively portray the act of cutting the hedge?

You should make close reference to the language, imagery and title of the poem in your answer. [9]
4. What, in your view, is suggested about the character of the father, and his relationship with the narrator, by the action of laying his son on the hedge at the end of the poem? [5]

[Total for this section: 25]

SECTION B – Prose Comprehension

Read the following prose extract carefully and answer the questions that follow. You are advised to pay close attention to the marks available for each question.

The passage is taken from *'The Book of Dust: Volume One'* by Philip Pullman (1946 – present). In the world of the novel people's souls exist outside their bodies in the form of animals: the main character's 'daemon', as these animals are known, is called Asta.

Three miles up the river Thames from the centre of Oxford, some distance from where the great colleges of Jordan, Gabriel, Balliol and two dozen others contended for mastery in the boat races, out where the city was only a collection of towers and spires in the distance over the misty levels of Port Meadow, there stood the priory of Godstow, where the gentle nuns went about their holy business; and on the opposite bank from the priory there was an inn called The Trout.

The inn was an old stone-built rambling comfortable sort of a place. There was a terrace above the river where peacocks (one called Norman and the other called Barry) stalked amongst the drinkers, helping themselves to snacks without the slightest hesitation and occasionally lifting their heads to utter ferocious and meaningless screams. There was a saloon bar where the gentry, if college scholars count as gentry, took their ale and smoked their pipes; there was a public bar where watermen and farm labourers sat by the fire or played darts, or stood at the bar gossiping or arguing or simply getting quietly drunk; there was a kitchen where the landlord's wife cooked a great joint of meat every day, with a complicated arrangement of wheels and chains turning a spit over an open fire; and there was a potboy called Malcolm Polstead.

Malcolm was the landlord's son and an only child. He was eleven years old, with an inquisitive, kindly disposition, a stocky build, and ginger hair. He went to Ulvercote Elementary School a mile away, and he had friends enough, but he was happiest on his own playing with his daemon Asta in their canoe ...

Like every child of an innkeeper, Malcolm had to work hard around the tavern, washing dishes and glasses, carrying plates of food and tankards of beer, retrieving them when they were empty. He took the work for granted. The only annoyance in his life was a girl called Alice, who helped with washing the dishes. She was fifteen years old, tall and skinny, with lank dark hair that she scraped back in an unflattering ponytail. Lines of self-discontent were already gathering her forehead and around her mouth. She teased Malcolm from the day she arrived: 'Who's your girlfriend, Malcolm, En't you got a girlfriend? Who was you out with last night? Did you kiss her? En't you ever been kissed?'

He ignored her for a long time, but finally Asta leaped at Alice's scrawny jackdaw-daemon, knocking him into the washing-up water and then biting and biting the sodden creature till Alice screamed for pity. She complained bitterly to Malcolm's mother, who said, 'Serves you right. I got no sympathy for you. Keep your nasty mind to yourself.'

Questions

1. Re-read the extract. How does the writer effectively depict the inn called the Trout in the first two paragraphs?

Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer. [10]

2. What impression of Malcolm and his character emerges in this extract, and how is this sense created by the writer?

Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer. [10]

3. How does Pullman capture the sense of tension and conflict between Malcolm and Alice?

Refer to the effects of individual words and phrases in your answer, as well as the form in which the extract is written. [5]

[Total for this section: 25]

END OF PAPER

Paper Notes: 13+ English Sample Paper (13+ 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 **13+ English scholarship examination sample paper** published by **Tonbridge School**, one of the country's leading independent schools in Kent. It is designed to help candidates preparing for the school's competitive entrance and scholarship examinations at **13+** (Year 9 entry). The paper tests advanced close-reading, literary analysis, and critical interpretation skills across both poetry and prose.

The examination is divided into **two sections**, each worth **25 marks**, and candidates have **1 hour 30 minutes** to complete the paper. Section A focuses on **poetry comprehension** using Simon Armitage's contemporary poem "Privet", while Section B examines **prose comprehension** through an extract from Philip Pullman's "The Book of Dust". Both sections require detailed textual analysis and sophisticated written responses.

This paper is particularly suitable for high-achieving students aiming for academic scholarships or places at selective independent schools. The level of analysis demanded goes well beyond standard 13+ entrance requirements, expecting candidates to identify and explain the effects of literary techniques, authorial choices, and structural features with precision and insight.

How this paper is organised

The paper is organised into **two equally weighted sections**, each carrying **25 marks** and requiring extended written responses rather than multiple-choice answers. Candidates must answer **all questions** in both sections within the **90-minute time limit**.

Section A contains **four questions** on Simon Armitage's poem "Privet", with marks ranging from 3 to 9 per question. The questions progress from basic comprehension (3 marks) through detailed analysis of specific lines (8 marks) and broader interpretation of technique (9 marks) to evaluation of character and relationship (5 marks). A glossary is provided to support understanding of less familiar vocabulary.

Section B presents **three questions** on the Philip Pullman prose extract, each worth 5, 10, or 10 marks. The questions require candidates to analyse the writer's depiction of setting, character, and conflict, consistently asking for reference to "individual words and phrases" to support interpretations. The final question also asks candidates to consider how the **form** of the extract contributes to meaning.

Topics covered

- Close reading and analysis of contemporary poetry, specifically Simon Armitage's work and its use of extended metaphor, religious imagery, and rite-of-passage narratives
- Identification and explanation of poetic techniques including metaphor, simile, personification, and symbolic imagery (the shears as "crude beast", the cruciform hanging)
- Analysis of diction (word choice) and its effects, particularly in creating mood, characterisation, and thematic significance
- Understanding of structural features in poetry, including how line breaks, repetition, and volta (turning points) shape meaning
- Prose comprehension and critical analysis of literary fiction, using an extract from Philip Pullman's fantasy novel
- Evaluation of how writers establish setting and atmosphere through descriptive detail, syntax, and accumulation of images
- Character analysis through close attention to authorial presentation, direct description, dialogue, and action (particularly daemon interaction in Pullman's fictional world)
- Recognition of narrative voice, tone, and perspective in both first-person poetry and third-person prose narration
- Understanding of thematic concerns such as punishment and redemption, father-son relationships, class distinctions, and coming-of-age conflict
- Analysis of tension and conflict in fiction through examination of dialogue, physical action, and authorial commentary

How to use this paper for revision

- Read both the Armitage poem and the Pullman extract at least twice before attempting any questions, annotating as you go to identify key techniques, shifts in tone, and significant imagery.
- Practise writing about specific words and phrases under timed conditions, always linking the technique you identify to its effect on the reader or the meaning it creates.
- Familiarise yourself with contemporary poetry, particularly work by Simon Armitage, Carol Ann Duffy, and other poets who use everyday language to explore complex emotional territory.
- When revising prose comprehension, focus on how writers establish atmosphere, characterisation, and conflict in opening scenes, as these are commonly set for analysis.
- Learn the technical vocabulary for literary devices (personification, sibilance, anaphora, cumulative listing, etc.) and practise using these terms accurately and naturally in your answers.
- Time yourself carefully: with 90 minutes for 50 marks, aim for roughly 20 to 25 minutes per 10-mark question, leaving time to read the texts thoroughly at the start.
- For higher-mark questions (8, 9, or 10 marks), plan to write at least three substantial paragraphs, each making a distinct point supported by close textual reference.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Failing to refer closely to specific words and phrases from the text, instead offering general comments about themes or plot that lack textual evidence.
- Identifying techniques (such as metaphor or simile) but not explaining their effect or significance, which gains no credit for analysis.
- Writing overly long responses to low-mark questions (such as the 3-mark question in Section A) and then rushing the higher-mark questions that require detailed exploration.
- Misinterpreting the symbolic or metaphorical level of the Armitage poem by reading it only literally, missing the father-son reconciliation and the ritualistic, almost sacramental quality of the ending.
- Neglecting to address all parts of a question, for example discussing Malcolm's character without explaining how Pullman creates that impression through specific language choices.
- Using quotations that are too long or not well-integrated into sentences, which wastes time and disrupts the flow of analysis.

Exam technique

Allocate your time proportionally to the marks available, spending roughly **45 minutes on each section** and dividing that time according to individual question weightings. In Section A, do not linger too long on the 3-mark opening question; a paragraph with two or three clear points will suffice. Save the bulk of your time for the 8-mark and 9-mark questions, which demand sustained analysis across multiple techniques and effects.

For every question, underline or highlight the key instruction words: "effect", "how", "in your view", "suggested". These tell you whether to focus on technique, on interpretation, or on both. Always support your points with **brief, embedded quotations** and follow each quotation with explicit explanation of its effect. Avoid simply paraphrasing the text or listing techniques without analysis.

In Section B, pay particular attention to the instruction to refer to "individual words and phrases". Examiners are looking for precise, word-level analysis, not broad summaries. Question 3 also asks you to consider **form**, so think about how Pullman uses sentence structure, paragraph organisation, dialogue layout, and narrative perspective to convey tension. If you finish early, reread your answers to check clarity, accuracy of quotation, and whether you have addressed every part of each question.

What to revise alongside this paper

To prepare thoroughly for this level of examination, revise the full range of **poetic techniques** and practise applying them to unseen modern and contemporary poems. Study other Simon Armitage poems such as "Mother, any distance" or "Remains" to understand his characteristic use of ordinary settings, Yorkshire dialect influences, and psychological depth. Work through past GCSE Literature Poetry Anthology questions to build confidence in writing about effects.

For prose comprehension, read widely in **literary fiction aimed at young adults and older readers**, particularly novels with strong narrative voice and vivid settings. Practise analysing how writers establish character in opening chapters, how they use dialogue to convey conflict, and how descriptive detail contributes to mood. Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy and "The Book of Dust" series provide excellent material for understanding complex world-building, multi-layered symbolism, and moral themes.

Beyond this paper, explore scholarship-level English papers from other independent schools to familiarise yourself with the range of texts and question styles you may encounter. Work on building stamina for extended analytical writing and develop a vocabulary of critical terms that allows you to write with precision and sophistication about any literary text.

Key terms

Metaphor, Simile, Personification, Imagery, Diction, Tone, Anaphora, Enjambment, Caesura, Symbolism, Narrative voice, Characterisation, Setting, Atmosphere, Alliteration, Sibilance

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Scholarship Examination Sample Paper

ENGLISH II

Time allowed: 1 hour

*Attempt ONE question, taking care to read the
instructions. Total marks: 50*

Composition (50 marks)

Write on **one** of the following in **prose** in either fiction or non-fictional form. Credit will be given for quality, not quantity.

You should aim to display imagination in your ideas as well as your use of English expression / imagery / style / variety.

Descriptive power and/or characterisation is rewarded more than complexity of plot.

1. 'The room rose to a point.'
2. Metal balloons.
3. 'Oh, isn't life a terrible thing, thank God?'
4. The airport beneath the water of the bay.
5. The hermit.

END OF PAPER

Paper Notes: 13+ English Sample Paper (13+ 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 **Tonbridge School's English II Scholarship Examination**, a creative composition paper designed for candidates applying for **13+ entrance scholarships**. The paper offers five evocative prompts from which students must select one and produce a piece of imaginative writing in one hour.

The paper explicitly values **quality over quantity**, with the marking criteria emphasising imagination, descriptive power, and characterisation above plot complexity. This focus on literary craft rather than narrative drive distinguishes the scholarship paper from standard entrance examinations, where comprehension and technical accuracy typically dominate.

The five prompts range from cryptic single lines to intriguing conceptual phrases, each designed to stretch the most able writers. Candidates are expected to demonstrate sophistication in expression, imagery, style, and variety, hallmarks of scholarship-level writing that extend well beyond the requirements of typical 13+ entrance papers.

How this paper is organised

The paper is concise and focused, comprising a single task worth **50 marks** to be completed in **one hour**. Students must choose one prompt from five options and develop it into a prose piece in either fiction or non-fiction form.

The instructions occupy the majority of the paper, making clear that examiners reward **descriptive power and characterisation** more heavily than complex plotting. This guidance steers candidates away from intricate narratives that might sacrifice literary quality for action and twists.

No word count is specified, reinforcing the quality-over-quantity principle. The five prompts vary in form: some are complete sentences with enigmatic meanings (prompts 1 and 3), others are noun phrases suggesting surreal or atmospheric scenarios (prompts 2, 4, and 5). This variety allows candidates to play to different strengths, whether philosophical reflection, descriptive scene-setting, or character study.

Topics covered

- Creative writing across fiction and non-fiction prose forms
- Imaginative interpretation of abstract or surreal prompts
- Descriptive writing techniques: sensory detail, atmosphere, and setting
- Characterisation: revealing personality through dialogue, action, and interiority
- Sophisticated vocabulary and varied sentence structures
- Literary devices including imagery, metaphor, simile, and symbolism
- Control of narrative voice and perspective
- Structural choices: openings, closings, pacing, and paragraph craft
- Stylistic range and tonal control appropriate to subject matter
- Thematic development and subtext in original writing

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise writing to unusual or open-ended prompts regularly, aiming to generate ideas quickly and choose the most fertile direction within five minutes of reading the options.
- Read widely in both literary fiction and high-quality non-fiction to absorb techniques of description, voice, and style that you can adapt in your own compositions.
- Focus on crafting a strong opening paragraph that establishes mood, setting, or character immediately rather than building up slowly to something interesting.
- Develop your ability to show rather than tell: reveal character through specific actions, gestures, and speech patterns rather than summarising personality traits.
- Keep a vocabulary notebook of striking words and phrases encountered in reading, grouped by theme (weather, emotion, architecture, nature) for quick recall under exam conditions.
- Reread your practice pieces aloud to identify repetitive sentence structures or flat rhythms, then revise for variety and musicality.
- Study published examples of short fiction and personal essays to understand how much can be achieved in brief compass through precision and selectivity of detail.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Attempting an over-ambitious plot with multiple twists and turns, leaving insufficient time to develop character, setting, or style with the care that scholarship examiners expect.
- Choosing the prompt that seems easiest or most obvious rather than the one that genuinely sparks imagination, resulting in generic or clichéd responses.
- Neglecting to establish a clear sense of place or atmosphere early in the piece, leaving the writing feeling abstract or ungrounded.
- Telling the reader about emotions or qualities ('She was frightened', 'He was mysterious') instead of showing them through sensory details, dialogue, and action.
- Using overly complex vocabulary or forced literary devices in an attempt to impress, which can obscure meaning and disrupt the natural flow of the prose.
- Failing to reserve time for proofreading, allowing careless errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar to undermine an otherwise strong piece of writing.

Exam technique

Begin by reading all five prompts carefully and noting your immediate responses. Spend the first five to seven minutes brainstorming ideas for two or three options before committing, choosing the prompt that generates the most vivid images or interesting character possibilities rather than the one that seems safest.

Allocate roughly **ten minutes for planning**, sketching out the structure, key images, and tone before you begin writing. This prevents narrative drift and helps you pace the piece to finish strongly within the time limit. Since there is no word count, aim for depth rather than length: two or three pages of carefully crafted prose will score more highly than four pages of rushed or superficial writing.

Reserve the final seven to ten minutes for **rereading and polishing**. Check for repetition of words or sentence patterns, sharpen any vague descriptions, and correct errors. Small revisions at this stage can elevate the entire piece, particularly strengthening the opening and closing paragraphs which frame the examiner's impression of your work.

What to revise alongside this paper

Alongside creative writing practice, study **literary analysis techniques** that deepen your understanding of how professional writers achieve their effects. Close reading of short stories by authors such as Katherine Mansfield, Raymond Carver, or Alice Munro reveals sophisticated methods of characterisation and economy of style that translate directly into your own composition work.

Explore different **prose forms beyond traditional narrative**, including personal essays, travel writing, and memoir, which can provide fresh approaches to non-fiction prompts. Writers such as George Orwell, Joan Didion, and Robert Macfarlane demonstrate how factual or reflective writing can be as vivid and engaging as fiction.

Broaden your engagement with **poetry and poetic techniques**, particularly in relation to imagery, compression, and sound. Many of the skills that make poetry effective (precise word choice, figurative language, rhythm) enhance prose composition at scholarship level, where examiners actively seek literary sophistication and stylistic confidence.

Key terms

Descriptive writing, Characterisation, Imagery, Narrative voice, Atmosphere, Sensory detail, Metaphor, Symbolism, Tone, Show, don't tell, Literary style, Prose fiction, Non-fiction prose, Thematic development, Structural cohesion

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Sample Paper for Entrance into Year 9 and 10

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Time allowed:

45 minutes

Name

School

Total marks: 50

Part One: 25 marks

Part Two: 25 marks

Instructions

Part One: Reading Comprehension 20 minutes

Answer the questions in the spaces provided in this booklet.

Part Two: Writing 25 minutes.

Make sure you **plan** for 5-10 minutes
and write your plan in the booklet.

Dictionaries or electronic translators may NOT be used.

Answers must be handwritten unless permission to type
has been granted in advance by Tonbridge School.

PART ONE: READING COMPREHENSION

Spend **20 minutes** on Questions 1 – 15, which are based on the passage below.

Take no longer than **2 minutes** to scan for the main ideas of the passage before starting the questions. It is not necessary to read it all through first.

CAN BANANAS BE ART?

Paragraph 1: From well before dawn one summer's day, early visitors to Trafalgar Square in London were surprised to see a mountain of bananas piled up on the ground near the National Gallery steps. The 30,000 pieces of fruit had been deposited there by a large truck just after midnight. The mound was fully eight feet high, and its creator, Doug Fishbone, said nothing more than that it was an art installation with which he wanted the public to engage. Local art students had been drafted in to guard the heap to make sure that it was not dismantled prematurely, but by around 3pm the artist had begun to take it apart and hand out small bunches of bananas to passers-by.

Paragraph 2: Are bananas art? The jury is still out on that. Throughout the day the artwork was described in a variety of ways by chance onlookers and official visitors such as art critics and journalists: it was a post-modern work of staggering genius, a cunning marketing ploy, an impromptu food bank, a communist message about sharing resources, a damning comment on food travel miles, or a chimpanzee's dream. The free bananas were popular, though, and some enterprising individuals arrived with carrier bags to collect as many as possible and even sell them on. One man, when challenged, was completely unrepentant. "If these people can call a bunch of bananas art, then so can I. I'll give them a fancy name and sell them at the tube station for 100% profit."

Paragraph 3: Despite being pressured by the public for an explanation, Fishbone refused to give one, saying that he wanted this piece to acquire meaning by involving the audience. "It's such a big physical presence and changes so much in different contexts that I cannot honestly say any more whether it still has its original meaning," he said. The crowd resorted to their own theories. Some thought it could be a war memorial. Marxists felt it was a comment on capitalist greed. Older people seemed more inclined to dismiss it as just a stunt, whereas younger people accepted the idea that there could be artistic merit in everyday objects and so were more sympathetic. Art students admired its vivid hue and composition.

Paragraph 4: Fishbone did, however, let slip the origin of his inspiration: while he was living in South America a few years ago, he had come across a heap of plantains dumped on the road to sell. He was brought up short by its golden beauty. It looked magnificent in the sunlight, and immediately he decided to construct a work with the same aesthetic appeal in an artistic context. He had created five similar installations in major cities in several continents across the world, and they had been positively received on the whole, even in sophisticated art centres like New York.

Paragraph 5: Critics were reluctant to accept the sculpture as anything other than a prosaic heap of fruit, or a hollow publicity stunt. One said, "I could get the same kind of public attention by standing on my head and it would be equally meaningless. A heap of bananas in Trafalgar Square is not art." Another called it a freakshow and commented that when folks back home in the States saw the photos, they would think the Brits were idiots. Hardly the effect the artist was looking for, you might think. But you would be wrong: Fishbone was delighted with the controversy... while still refusing to attribute a particular meaning of his own to the work. "If people think I'm bananas, then that's just fine," he grinned. "The debate has already lasted longer than the installation and so I've gained my objective, which was to get people talking about what art is and what it means."

Answer ALL the questions 1 – 15. Use the indicated paragraph numbers to help you find the answers in the text.

Questions 1 – 5 Give equivalent words or short phrases for the following expressions to demonstrate their meaning as used in the context of the passage:

1 'dismantled prematurely' (paragraph 1)	2 marks
2 'chance onlookers' (paragraph 2)	2 marks
3 'vivid colour and composition' (paragraph 3)	2 marks
4 'same aesthetic appeal' (paragraph 4)	2 marks
5 'hollow publicity stunt' (paragraph 5)	2 marks

Questions 6 – 10 Find answers to the following questions from the indicated paragraphs. Make sure you write enough for **2 marks** for each answer.

6 Explain the metaphor '*the jury is still out on that*' in **paragraph 2**.

7 Which is the best description of the work in **paragraph 2** in your opinion and why?

8 Why did the artist refuse to comment on the meaning of the work (**paragraph 3**)?

9 How did art critics react to the installation (**paragraph 5**)? *Make 2 points.*

10 Why was the artist not upset by any of the adverse comments (**paragraph 5**)?

Write your answers to Questions 6 – 10 in the boxes below.

6	2 marks
7	2 marks
8	2 marks
9	2 marks
10	2 marks

Questions 11 – 15

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer of the passage?

In each of the boxes 11 – 15 below write one of the following:

- TRUE** if the statement agrees with claims in the indicated paragraph.
- FALSE** if the statement contradicts claims in the indicated paragraph.
- NOT GIVEN** if it is not known from the indicated paragraph what the writer thinks about the statement.

11 The bananas were brought to Trafalgar Square a short while before dawn by trucks (**paragraph 1**).

1 mark

12 Some members of the public made further artworks of their own on Trafalgar Square with the bananas they took (**paragraph 2**).

1 mark

13 The age of the observer affected how much they liked or disliked the installation (**paragraph 3**).

1 mark

14 Plantains are fruit grown in South America which are similar to bananas in size, shape and colour (**paragraph 4**).

1 mark

15 Doug Fishbone was disappointed with the response of the critics to his installation (**paragraph 5**).

1 mark

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS CAREFULLY & THEN GO ON TO PART TWO.

PART TWO: WRITING

You should spend about 25 minutes on this task, with 5 –10 minutes used for planning. Write your plan legibly in this booklet. The absence of a written plan will lose you marks. There are 25 marks in total available for this task.

Rough paper is not allowed.

Please write **ONLY** between 175 and 250 words, ideally aiming for around 200 words. Please use formal academic language. Evidence of careful thinking, logical organisation and quality of expression is **MUCH** more important than a large quantity of words (please do not exceed 200 words).

Write on **ONE** of the following topics, giving reasons for your answer and including relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of travelling by train.

Make 2 or 3 points on each side and in your conclusion state clearly your opinion on which side outweighs the other.

2. Describe 2 or 3 of the problems that might be caused by the development of Artificial Intelligence and offer possible solutions for them, assessing how well each might work in practice.

Make sure you tackle both parts of this question, i.e., problems and solutions. Give examples to support your answer.

3. 'The arts (music, theatre, art etc.) are a luxury, not a necessity.'

How far do you agree with this statement? Give clear reasons for your opinion and illustrate them with examples from your own knowledge and experience.

4. 'There is no sport better than football.'

Develop an argument either for or against this claim (but not both) and support it with evidence and / or examples from your own knowledge and experience.

Paper Notes: 13+ English Sample Paper (13+ 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 **Tonbridge School's** sample English Language paper for entry into **Year 9 and 10**, designed for 13+ candidates preparing for entrance examinations. The paper carries **50 marks in total** and is divided into two parts: a 20-minute reading comprehension section worth 25 marks and a 25-minute writing section also worth 25 marks. The paper must be completed in **45 minutes** without dictionaries or electronic translators.

The reading comprehension centres on a non-fiction passage about a contemporary art installation in Trafalgar Square. Questions test vocabulary in context, inference, metaphor, critical analysis, and the ability to distinguish between claims the writer makes and information not given. The paper uses a mix of short-answer questions and True/False/Not Given statements, requiring candidates to demonstrate close reading and precise interpretation.

The writing section offers four essay prompts covering transport, artificial intelligence, the arts, and sport. Candidates must choose one topic, plan their response in 5 to 10 minutes, and produce a formal academic essay of 175 to 250 words. The paper suits students who are comfortable with extended reading passages, analytical questioning, and timed argumentative writing. Planning is mandatory and marked, emphasising the school's expectation of structured thought.

How this paper is organised

The paper opens with instructions and is split into **two equally weighted parts**. Part One allocates 20 minutes for 15 reading comprehension questions based on a single passage of approximately 600 words about Doug Fishbone's banana installation. Questions 1 to 5 (2 marks each) ask for synonyms or paraphrases of phrases in context. Questions 6 to 10 (2 marks each) require fuller explanations, drawing on specific paragraphs to explain metaphors, evaluate interpretations, and analyse the artist's intentions. Questions 11 to 15 (1 mark each) are True/False/Not Given statements testing close reading and the ability to distinguish evidence from inference.

Part Two provides 25 minutes for a single essay from a choice of four prompts. Candidates are instructed to spend 5 to 10 minutes planning and must write their plan in the booklet; the absence of a plan incurs a mark penalty. Essays should be between **175 and 250 words** in formal academic style, with quality of reasoning and expression

prioritised over length. The prompts require balanced argument, problem-solution analysis, personal opinion with justification, or a one-sided defence of a claim, all supported by examples from the candidate's knowledge or experience.

Topics covered

- Reading comprehension of a non-fiction article about contemporary art and public reaction, including inference and critical evaluation
- Vocabulary in context: identifying synonyms and paraphrasing phrases such as 'dismantled prematurely', 'hollow publicity stunt', and 'aesthetic appeal'
- Metaphor and figurative language: explaining expressions like 'the jury is still out on that' and recognising wordplay in 'if people think I'm bananas'
- Critical reading and textual evidence: distinguishing between statements explicitly supported by the text, those contradicted by it, and those for which no information is given
- Analytical writing: evaluating different interpretations of an artwork and justifying a personal opinion with textual evidence
- Balanced argument construction: discussing advantages and disadvantages of a topic (e.g. train travel) and reaching a reasoned conclusion
- Problem-solution essay structure: identifying issues caused by a development (e.g. artificial intelligence) and proposing practical solutions with evaluation
- Opinion essays with justification: defending a position on a statement (e.g. 'the arts are a luxury') using examples from personal knowledge and experience
- One-sided argumentative writing: building a case for or against a claim (e.g. football as the best sport) with coherent reasoning and supporting evidence
- Essay planning under timed conditions: structuring ideas in 5 to 10 minutes and demonstrating logical organisation before writing

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise reading non-fiction articles on art, culture, or current affairs and summarising the main arguments in your own words to build comprehension speed and accuracy.
- Learn to identify synonyms and paraphrases quickly by covering a word in a sentence and thinking of three alternative ways to express the same idea in context.
- For True/False/Not Given questions, underline the relevant section of the passage and check whether the statement is directly supported, contradicted, or simply not addressed.
- Time yourself strictly on the reading section: aim to finish Questions 1 to 10 in 15 minutes, leaving 5 minutes for Questions 11 to 15 and a final check.
- Practise planning essays in under 10 minutes by jotting down a thesis, two or three supporting points, and a conclusion before you begin writing.
- Write practice essays on similar prompts (e.g. advantages and disadvantages of technology, the value of music education) and ask a teacher or tutor to mark them for structure and formality.
- Review common metaphors and idiomatic expressions in English, focusing on how their meaning shifts depending on context, as the paper tests this skill explicitly.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Giving definitions instead of paraphrases in Questions 1 to 5: the question asks for equivalent words or phrases in context, not dictionary definitions or explanations.
- Writing one-word answers for 2-mark questions: Questions 6 to 10 explicitly state 'write enough for 2 marks', so a single sentence or phrase will not score full marks.
- Confusing 'False' with 'Not Given' in Questions 11 to 15: if the passage does not provide evidence either way, the answer is Not Given, even if the statement seems unlikely.
- Starting the essay without a written plan: the instructions state that the absence of a plan will lose marks, so even a brief outline is essential.
- Exceeding 250 words in Part Two: the paper emphasises that quality is more important than quantity and explicitly warns against writing too much.
- Using informal language or contractions in the essay: the paper requires formal academic style, so avoid 'don't', 'it's', or conversational phrases.

Exam technique

Read the passage once quickly in the first 2 minutes to grasp the overall topic and structure, then refer back to specific paragraphs as directed by each question. For Questions 1 to 5, check the surrounding sentences to understand how the phrase is used before writing your paraphrase. For Questions 6 to 10, aim for two or three sentences per answer to ensure you score both marks; support your points with brief references to the text.

In the True/False/Not Given section, work methodically through each statement and locate the relevant paragraph before deciding. If you cannot find evidence for or against the claim, choose Not Given rather than guessing True or False. Check your answers carefully before moving to Part Two, as these questions are quick to mark and easy to lose marks on through careless errors.

For the essay, spend a full 5 to 10 minutes planning: write down your thesis, list your main points, and note one example for each. Choose the prompt you feel most confident about, not necessarily the first one you read. Write clearly and concisely, keeping an eye on the word count. Leave 2 minutes at the end to reread your essay and correct any obvious spelling or punctuation errors. Remember that logical organisation and quality of argument are valued more highly than length, so a well-structured 200-word essay will outscore a rambling 250-word response.

What to revise alongside this paper

Candidates should practise reading a wide range of non-fiction texts, including newspaper articles, opinion pieces, and cultural commentary, to build familiarity with different writing styles and argumentative structures. Work on identifying rhetorical devices such as irony, understatement, and wordplay, as the Fishbone passage uses humour and ambiguity to test close reading. Review common idiomatic expressions and metaphors in British English, as these appear frequently in comprehension passages at this level.

For the writing section, study model essays on similar prompts and analyse how they structure balanced arguments, problem-solution discussions, and opinion pieces. Practise writing under timed conditions with a strict word limit, as this paper rewards concision and clarity. Look at past Tonbridge English papers or similar 13+ entrance materials to understand the level of formality and analytical depth expected.

Broaden your general knowledge by reading about current debates in areas such as technology, the arts, transport, and sport, so you have examples and evidence ready to support your arguments. Work on identifying weak reasoning and strengthening

conclusions, as the essay prompts explicitly ask for evaluation and judgement rather than simple description.

Key terms

Paraphrase, Synonym, Metaphor, Inference, Figurative language, Aesthetic appeal, True/False/Not Given, Balanced argument, Problem-solution essay, Thesis statement, Formal academic style, Textual evidence, Contemporary art, Critical evaluation, Essay planning

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Sample Paper for Entrance into Year 9 and 10

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Time

allowed:

45 minutes

Name

School

Total marks: 30

Instructions:

Answer the questions on the lined paper provided.

Begin each section on a new page.

Dictionaries may **NOT** be used.

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on this.

SECTION A

Poetry Comprehension

Read the poem below carefully. Then answer all the questions which follow. Quote specific words or lines from the poem in each answer as evidence.

Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
5 Remember me when no more day by day
 You tell me of our future that you planned:
 Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
10 And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
 For if the darkness and corruption leave
 A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina Rossetti

1. What is the form of the poem? How do you know? [3]
2. How does the speaker in the poem feel? [5]
3. Can you identify enjambment in the poem? What does this tell you about how the speaker is feeling? [5]
4. There is a shift in tone on line 9. Can you identify the word that shows this and what is the name of this poetic device? [2]
5. One of the themes covered in 'Remember' is 'the significance of memories'. What are your own thoughts about memories? Do you think that they are important? Use quotes from the poem as part of your answer, but share your own experiences, too. [15]

Paper Notes: 13+ English Sample Paper (13+ 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 English Literature paper** published by **Tonbridge School** for pupils preparing for entry into **Year 9 or Year 10** (13+ entrance). The paper focuses exclusively on **poetry comprehension**, using Christina Rossetti's Victorian sonnet *Remember* as the set text. Candidates answer five questions worth **30 marks** in total over **45 minutes**, with no dictionary permitted.

The questions range from technical analysis (identifying poetic form, devices such as enjambment and shifts in tone) to interpretative responses requiring personal reflection on the poem's themes. This blend of knowledge, understanding and original thought mirrors the demands of independent school entrance examinations, where literary sensitivity and maturity of expression are prized alongside accurate technical terminology.

The paper is suitable for strong Year 8 pupils applying to selective independent schools, particularly those targeting schools with a traditional humanities focus. Tonbridge's emphasis on extended personal response in question 5, worth half the total marks, signals that fluency, empathy and the ability to connect literature to lived experience are central to what the school values in its English candidates.

How this paper is organised

The paper comprises a single section, **Section A: Poetry Comprehension**, built around Christina Rossetti's *Remember*. The poem is printed in full with line numbers to aid precise quotation. Five questions follow, with marks clearly indicated in square brackets beside each: question 1 is worth **3 marks**, questions 2 and 3 each carry **5 marks**, question 4 is worth **2 marks**, and question 5, the essay-style reflection on memory, commands **15 marks**, exactly half the total.

Candidates write on separate lined paper, beginning each section (though only one section exists here) on a fresh page. The rubric explicitly forbids dictionaries, placing a premium on vocabulary already internalised and the ability to infer meaning from context.

With 45 minutes available and 30 marks at stake, a sensible pace allows roughly 1.5 minutes per mark, suggesting about 7 minutes for question 1, 7-8 minutes each for questions 2 and 3, 3-4 minutes for question 4, and a substantial 20-22 minutes for the

extended personal response in question 5. Time management is therefore critical, particularly as the final question requires planning, drafting and integration of quotation with original thought.

Topics covered

- Poetic form and structure, specifically the identification and defining features of the Petrarchan or Shakespearean sonnet
- Tone and mood in Victorian poetry, including how a speaker's emotional state is conveyed through diction, syntax and imagery
- Enjambment as a poetic device, with analysis of how run-on lines create urgency, continuity or emotional overflow
- Volta or turn in argument, particularly the shift in tone or perspective that occurs at a structural hinge in a sonnet
- Thematic exploration of memory, mortality and love in 19th-century verse, with emphasis on personal engagement and empathy
- Close reading and quotation skills, selecting and embedding textual evidence to support interpretative claims
- Personal reflective writing, connecting literary themes to the candidate's own experiences and values
- Technical terminology for poetry analysis, including sonnet, enjambment, tone, theme and device

How to use this paper for revision

- Revise the structural features of both **Petrarchan** and **Shakespearean sonnets**, including rhyme schemes (ABBAABBA CDECDE vs ABABCDCDEFEGG) and the typical position of the volta, so you can identify and explain form confidently.
- Practise close reading of Romantic and Victorian poetry, annotating for shifts in tone, mood and argument. Focus on poets such as Rossetti, Keats, Tennyson and Browning, whose work often appears in 13+ papers.
- Learn to spot and name **enjambment**, **caesura**, **assonance** and **sibilance**, and articulate their effects. Examiners reward precise terminology paired with perceptive analysis.
- When answering interpretative questions, always embed short quotations in your sentences rather than bolting them on. For example, write 'The speaker's plea to "remember me" conveys both love and anxiety' rather than listing the quotation separately.
- For extended personal responses, plan a brief three-part structure: introduce the theme as Rossetti presents it, discuss your own view with at least two examples from your life, then link back to the poem's insights. Aim for two to three developed paragraphs.
- Time yourself on past poetry questions, aiming to leave at least 20 minutes for any essay-length response. Speed and fluency under timed conditions are as important as depth of insight.
- Read Remember aloud several times before the exam. Hearing Rossetti's rhythms and repetitions will deepen your feel for the speaker's conflicted emotions and the poem's elegiac tone.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Confusing the two main sonnet forms. Candidates sometimes state 'it's a sonnet' without specifying Petrarchan or Shakespearean, or misidentify the rhyme scheme, losing easy marks on question 1.
- Quoting without comment. Simply copying lines from the poem does not demonstrate understanding; you must explain how the quotation supports your point about tone, feeling or effect.
- Overlooking the volta. Question 4 asks explicitly for the shift in tone and the device that signals it. Many pupils fail to identify 'Yet' at line 9 and miss the term **volta** or **turn**, forfeiting straightforward technical marks.
- Writing a personal essay that ignores the poem. Question 5 requires you to 'use quotes from the poem as part of your answer'. An answer that is purely anecdotal, with no textual anchor, will be penalised however heartfelt.
- Misunderstanding enjambment. Some candidates confuse it with **caesura** (a mid-line pause) or point to end-stopped lines by mistake. Ensure you can define enjambment as a sentence running over the line break without pause.
- Running out of time on question 5. Because it carries 15 marks, some pupils write at excessive length and leave earlier questions rushed or incomplete. Allocate your 45 minutes proportionally to the marks available.

Exam technique

Begin by reading Remember slowly and carefully, twice if time permits, annotating the printed text for tone shifts, repeated words and structural features. This initial investment pays dividends across all five questions. Answer questions 1 to 4 briskly but accurately, aiming to spend no more than 20-22 minutes in total on them, so that you have a full **22-23 minutes** for question 5, which alone is worth half your marks.

For the shorter questions, quote directly from the poem in every answer. Embed brief phrases in your sentences and explain their significance. For question 3, circle or underline examples of enjambment on the printed text before you write, so your answer is precise. For question 4, look for a conjunction or adverb at the start of line 9 that signals contrast or reversal, and name the device (volta or turn).

Question 5 is an essay in miniature. Spend two to three minutes planning a simple structure: one paragraph on what Rossetti suggests about memory, one or two paragraphs on your own experiences and views, and a short conclusion that ties your reflection back to the poem. Write in clear, fluent paragraphs, and aim for at least three well-developed quotations woven into your argument. Tonbridge values personal voice

and maturity of thought, so be honest and specific about your own memories rather than offering bland generalisations. Finish by re-reading your answers if time allows, checking that quotations are accurate and that you have labelled every poetic device the questions ask for.

What to revise alongside this paper

Alongside Rossetti's *Remember*, broaden your knowledge of **Victorian poetry** by reading her *Goblin Market*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (another meditation on loss and memory), and Browning's dramatic monologues. Understanding the 19th-century preoccupation with death, faith and the afterlife will enrich your interpretative confidence. Revise the full range of **poetic devices**, including metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration, assonance and sibilance, so you can identify and discuss them fluently under exam conditions.

Practise writing **personal reflective responses** that integrate quotation and analysis with your own experiences. This skill is tested in GCSE English Literature coursework and A-level personal study, so developing it now will serve you well beyond 13+ entry. Finally, read widely in the Romantic and Victorian canon. Familiarity with Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, the Brontës and Hardy will give you a richer vocabulary for discussing tone, imagery and theme, and will make unfamiliar poems in future exams feel less daunting.

Key terms

Sonnet, Petrarchan sonnet, Shakespearean sonnet, Enjambment, Volta, Turn, Tone, Shift in tone, Theme, Poetic device, Caesura, Rhyme scheme, Octave, Sestet, Close reading

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