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Tonbridge School 14+ English

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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: 14+ English Sample Paper (14+ 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 paper** for entrance into **Year 9 and Year 10** at **Tonbridge School**, assessing English Language skills at the **14+ level**. The paper is designed to give prospective pupils and their families a clear sense of what the actual entrance examination will require, both in format and in the level of thinking expected. It is split into two equally weighted sections: **reading comprehension** and **discursive writing**.

The first part, worth 25 marks, is a timed 20-minute reading comprehension exercise based on a contemporary article about a conceptual art installation: Doug Fishbone's banana sculpture in Trafalgar Square. Questions test vocabulary in context, inference, evaluation of metaphor, and the ability to distinguish stated claims from information that is merely implied or absent. The second part, also worth 25 marks, requires a piece of formal argumentative or discursive writing (175–250 words) on one of four prompts, covering topics from train travel and artificial intelligence to the arts and sport.

This sample paper is ideal for students preparing for selective secondary school entrance at age 14, particularly those sitting Tonbridge's own English entrance test. It rewards concise, analytical thinking and a mature command of Standard English, rather than sheer length of answer or descriptive padding. The paper assumes no aids: dictionaries and electronic translators are expressly forbidden.

How this paper is organised

The paper is divided into **two parts** of equal weight, each worth **25 marks**, with a total exam time of **45 minutes**. Part One allocates **20 minutes** to reading comprehension, with an opening instruction to spend no more than two minutes scanning the passage before tackling the questions. Students answer **15 questions** in total: five vocabulary questions (Questions 1–5) that ask for synonyms or paraphrases, five longer-answer comprehension questions (Questions 6–10) worth two marks each, and five True/False/Not Given statements (Questions 11–15) worth one mark apiece. All answers must be written directly into the spaces provided in the booklet.

Part Two allocates **25 minutes** to a piece of extended writing, including **5–10 minutes** for planning. Candidates choose one of four essay prompts and must write between **175 and 250 words**, ideally around 200. The instructions emphasise that a written plan is compulsory and will be marked, and that quality of reasoning and expression matters

far more than word count. Rough paper is not permitted, so all working must be shown in the answer booklet. The rubric insists on **formal academic language** and handwritten answers unless prior permission to type has been granted by the school.

Topics covered

- Close reading and inference from a non-fiction article about contemporary conceptual art, requiring students to interpret tone, purpose and implied meaning
- Vocabulary in context: defining compound phrases ('dismantled prematurely', 'hollow publicity stunt', 'aesthetic appeal') and recognising subtle distinctions in register and connotation
- Understanding and explaining metaphor, specifically idiomatic expressions such as 'the jury is still out'
- Evaluating alternative interpretations of a single artwork and justifying a personal judgement about which interpretation is most persuasive
- Distinguishing between information explicitly stated in the text, information that contradicts the text, and information that is not provided (True/False/Not Given logic)
- Timed essay planning and formal discursive writing, including structuring a balanced argument with clear introduction and conclusion
- Arguing for or against a proposition (e.g. the supremacy of football, the necessity of the arts) with reasoned evidence and personal examples
- Problem-solution writing: identifying issues (e.g. AI risks) and evaluating the feasibility of proposed remedies
- Concision and precision: meeting a strict word limit (175–250 words) while maintaining logical coherence and formal academic tone

How to use this paper for revision

- Read the comprehension passage quickly for gist in the first two minutes, then return to specific paragraphs as each question directs you, rather than trying to memorise every detail upfront.
- For vocabulary questions, look at how the word or phrase is used in the sentence, then replace it with your own word to check that the meaning still fits the context logically.
- In True/False/Not Given questions, be cautious: 'Not Given' applies whenever the text is silent or ambiguous, even if the statement sounds plausible from general knowledge.
- Plan your essay on paper before you begin writing the final version. Jot down two or three points for each side (if arguing both sides) or two supporting reasons (if arguing one side only), then decide your conclusion.
- Stick rigorously to the word count. The rubric explicitly values quality over quantity, and exceeding 250 words risks losing marks for not following instructions.
- Use formal academic register throughout your essay: avoid contractions ('don't', 'can't'), colloquialisms and first-person anecdotes phrased informally. Write 'one might argue' rather than 'I reckon'.
- Leave two or three minutes at the end to check your spelling, punctuation and clarity. A few well-placed corrections in neat handwriting can lift your mark.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Spending too long reading the passage in detail at the start, then running out of time for the final questions or the essay. Skim first, then read closely as you answer.
- Writing 'True' when the passage only implies or suggests something, rather than stating it outright. Reserve 'True' for claims the text unambiguously supports.
- Giving one-word answers to two-mark comprehension questions. 'Enough for 2 marks' means a phrase or short sentence that shows understanding, not a single synonym.
- Launching into the essay without a written plan. The rubric warns that 'the absence of a written plan will lose you marks', so always draft a visible outline in the booklet.
- Exceeding the 250-word limit or falling well short of 175 words. Both extremes suggest poor planning and an inability to structure ideas concisely.
- Using informal language or contractions in the essay, despite the clear instruction to 'use formal academic language'. Treat this as you would a piece of coursework, not a chat with friends.

Exam technique

Divide your time strictly: **20 minutes** for reading comprehension and **25 minutes** for the essay, including planning. In Part One, read the instructions for each question carefully before hunting for the answer in the named paragraph. The questions are scaffolded, so tackle them in order rather than jumping around. For the vocabulary items (Questions 1–5), if you are uncertain, write down your best synonym and move on rather than agonising; you can return if time permits.

In Part Two, spend a full five to ten minutes planning. Jot down your chosen prompt number, sketch an introduction, list your main points, and draft a one-sentence conclusion. This skeleton will keep you on track and prevent meandering. When writing, aim for around 200 words (the sweet spot within the 175–250 range) and check your word count as you go. Write clearly and cross out errors neatly; illegible handwriting or heavy scribbling can cost clarity marks.

Leave two or three minutes at the very end to proofread both parts. Check that you have answered every question in Part One and that your essay has a clear thesis and conclusion. In a 45-minute paper, time discipline is everything: practice with a timer at home so that pacing becomes automatic under exam conditions.

What to revise alongside this paper

To prepare fully for this paper, practise reading **non-fiction articles** from broadsheet newspapers or magazines (The Guardian, The Times, National Geographic) and summarising the main argument in one sentence. Work on identifying tone and implicit meaning, skills that underpin the inference questions here. Review common idioms and metaphors, particularly those drawn from law ('the jury is still out'), sport or commerce, as these often appear in comprehension passages at this level.

For the essay section, read model **discursive essays** at GCSE or IGCSE standard to internalise the structure: clear introduction with thesis, two or three developed points each in its own paragraph, acknowledgement of counterarguments, and a decisive conclusion. Practise writing to strict word limits; aim to produce polished 200-word responses on a range of prompts in timed conditions. Tonbridge's English syllabus at Year 9 and Year 10 will build on these skills with close textual analysis of poetry and prose, formal essay writing, and creative composition, so strengthening your ability to write concisely and argue logically now will pay dividends throughout your time at the school.

Key terms

Inference, Metaphor, Context clues, Synonym, Paraphrase, True/False/Not Given, Discursive writing, Formal register, Thesis statement, Counterargument, Concision, Logical coherence, Word limit, Planning, Contemporary art / conceptual art

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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: 14+ English Sample Paper (14+ 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 **14+ English Literature entrance sample paper** published by **Tonbridge School** for candidates applying for entry into Year 9 or Year 10. The paper assesses close reading, poetic analysis, and personal response to literature, with a particular focus on **Christina Rossetti's poem 'Remember'**.

The paper is designed to test literary understanding at a level appropriate for early GCSE preparation. Candidates are required to identify form and poetic devices, analyse enjambment and tone, and demonstrate both textual knowledge and reflective thinking. The format expects written responses on lined paper, with **no dictionary permitted**.

This sample paper is aimed at students preparing for Tonbridge School's selective entrance examination. It offers excellent practice in the kind of analytical and personal writing expected at this level, combining technical knowledge of poetry with the ability to engage thoughtfully with themes and connect them to personal experience.

How this paper is organised

The paper consists of **one section (Section A: Poetry Comprehension)** worth a total of **30 marks**, to be completed in **45 minutes**. Students are presented with Christina Rossetti's sonnet 'Remember' and must answer **five questions** of varying mark values.

The questions are scaffolded in difficulty. The first four questions (worth 3, 5, 5, and 2 marks respectively) focus on identifying poetic form, analysing the speaker's feelings, recognising enjambment, and spotting a tonal shift. The final question is worth **15 marks**, half the total, and requires a personal response to the theme of memory, integrating textual evidence with the student's own experiences.

Candidates are instructed to write on lined paper provided, beginning each section on a new page. The rubric emphasises that quotations from the poem should be used as evidence in every answer, and dictionaries are explicitly forbidden.

Topics covered

- Close reading and comprehension of Victorian poetry, specifically Christina Rossetti's sonnet 'Remember'
- Identification and justification of poetic form, particularly the conventions of the sonnet structure
- Analysis of speaker voice, tone, and emotional register in lyric poetry
- Recognition and interpretation of enjambment as a device expressing continuity of thought or emotion
- Identification of tonal shifts within a poem and the use of conjunctions or volta as structural markers
- Thematic analysis, specifically exploring the significance of memory, death, and selfless love
- Personal response to literature, integrating textual evidence with personal reflection and experience
- Use of quotations as evidence to support analytical and interpretative claims

How to use this paper for revision

- Read the poem at least three times before answering any questions: once for overall meaning, once for structure and form, and once to mark up specific devices and key words.
- Learn the key features of a sonnet (14 lines, volta or turn, rhyme scheme) so you can confidently identify and justify the form in Question 1.
- Practise spotting enjambment by reading poems aloud and listening for where sentences run over line breaks, creating flow or urgency.
- For the 15-mark question, plan a brief structure before writing: decide on two or three main points about memory, each supported by a quotation and a personal example.
- Time yourself strictly. Allocate roughly 1 mark per minute, leaving a few minutes at the end to check your quotations are accurate and your handwriting is legible.
- Annotate the poem directly on the paper if permitted: underline key words, mark the volta, note rhyme schemes, and circle examples of enjambment.
- When discussing your own experiences in Question 5, keep examples concise and relevant to the theme; the examiner wants to see you connect personal insight to Rossetti's ideas, not simply tell a story.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Identifying the poem as 'free verse' or 'blank verse' when it is actually a **Petrarchan or English sonnet**; always count the lines and check for a rhyme scheme.
- Quoting without explanation. Simply writing down a line from the poem does not answer the question; you must explain what the quotation shows or proves about the speaker's feelings or the poet's technique.
- Confusing enjambment with caesura. Enjambment is when a sentence runs over a line break; caesura is a pause within a line, often marked by punctuation.
- Missing the volta at line 9 ('Yet if you should forget me for a while') because they focus only on individual words rather than the structural shift in argument or tone.
- Writing too much on the short-mark questions (1-5 marks) and running out of time for the 15-mark personal response, which requires sustained development and integration of ideas.
- Failing to use the word 'Remember' or other key vocabulary from the poem when discussing themes; specific textual references strengthen every answer.

Exam technique

Begin by reading the poem slowly and carefully, annotating as you go. Underline the word 'Remember' each time it appears, note the rhyme scheme in the margin, and mark where the tone changes. Spend no more than **2 minutes on initial reading and annotation**.

Tackle Questions 1 to 4 efficiently, aiming for precision rather than length. Question 1 (3 marks) needs a clear identification of form and two pieces of supporting evidence. Questions 2 and 3 (5 marks each) require a short paragraph with at least two quotations. Question 4 (2 marks) needs only the word and the device name. Allocate roughly **20 minutes** for these four questions combined.

Reserve at least **20 minutes** for Question 5. Plan briefly: jot down two or three key ideas about memory, matching each with a quotation from the poem and a personal example. Write in clear paragraphs, integrating your analysis of Rossetti's language with your own reflections. Leave 3 minutes at the end to reread your answers and check spelling, punctuation, and quotation accuracy.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students should revise the conventions of **sonnet form**, including Petrarchan and Shakespearean structures, the function of the volta, and typical rhyme schemes.

Familiarity with other **Christina Rossetti poems** (such as 'Goblin Market' or 'A Birthday') will deepen understanding of her recurring themes of love, death, and renunciation.

Practise identifying and analysing a range of **poetic devices** beyond enjambment, including metaphor, simile, alliteration, assonance, and caesura. Work on integrating quotations smoothly into sentences and always explaining their effect or significance.

Develop skills in **personal and reflective writing** that balances textual analysis with genuine personal insight. Read sample responses to thematic questions and note how successful answers move fluently between the poem's language and the writer's own experience, using the text as a springboard for thoughtful reflection.

Key terms

Sonnet, Enjambment, Volta, Speaker, Tone, Theme, Quotation as evidence, Poetic device, Lyric poetry, Personal response, Caesura, Rhyme scheme, Stanza, Victorian poetry, Christina Rossetti

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