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Tonbridge School 16+ English

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Sample Paper for Entrance into Year 12

English Language

Time allowed:

45 minutes

Name

School

Instructions

Part One: total 20 minutes

Answer the questions in the spaces provided in this booklet.

Part Two: total 40 minutes.

Make sure you **plan** for 10 minutes.

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

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1 – 12, which are based on the reading passage below. There are two marks available for each answer.

The Problem of Wildfires

1. Wildfires have increasingly emerged as a significant environmental challenge, affecting various parts of the world with devastating consequences. These uncontrolled and often uncontrollable fires have long been a natural occurrence, playing a vital role in fact in maintaining ecological balance. Perhaps the most amazing fire adaptation is that some species actually *require* fire for their seeds to sprout. Some plants, such as the lodgepole pine, *Eucalyptus* and *Banksia*, have cones or fruits that are completely sealed with resin. These can only open to release their seeds after the heat of a fire has physically melted the resin. Other species, including a number of shrubs and annual plants, require the chemical signals from smoke and charred plant matter to break seed dormancy. Some of these plants will only sprout in the presence of such chemicals and can remain buried in the soil seed bank for decades until a wildfire awakens them.

2. Wildfires of this kind have mostly been manageable and not too dangerous to humans or the rest of nature. However, due to a combination of factors such as climate change, more intensive land-use practices and many other human activities, wildfires have recently intensified in frequency, scale, and severity, posing significant threats to ecosystems, human lives, and socioeconomic stability. Climate change has contributed to increased temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and prolonged droughts, creating favourable conditions for wildfires. Rising temperatures and changing weather patterns lead to drier vegetation and increased fuel availability, making landscapes more susceptible to ignition. Humanity must recognise its responsibility for much of the acceleration of global warming, but other human activities also, such as the careless disposal of barbecue equipment or cigarette butts, campfire mismanagement, electrical equipment failures, and even deliberate arson, are obvious and direct major causes of wildfires. Additionally, land-use practices like deforestation, urban sprawl, and the expansion of agricultural activities into fire-prone areas, all further exacerbate the risk of wildfires.

3. Wildfires often have severe consequences on the natural environment. They result in the loss of (sometimes endangered) wildlife species and habitats, the destruction of vegetation, and the release of substantial amounts of greenhouse gases and toxins into the atmosphere. The subsequent erosion and degradation of soil may further impair the ability of ecosystems to recover, leading to long-term ecological damage. Fires also pose significant threats to human life and well-being. Direct impacts include injuries, fatalities, and the displacement of communities. The smoke produced by wildfires deteriorates air quality, causing respiratory problems and exacerbating existing health conditions. Furthermore, wildfires can damage infrastructure, including homes, schools, hospitals, and transportation networks, leading to economic losses and possible disruption in the distribution of essential food, water, medical aid, and fuel supplies. The pollution caused

by the global increase in wildfires has also created widespread long-term impacts on human health, in addition to these immediate problems.

4. It is no longer acceptable to ignore the harm wildfires cause. A recent example serves to demonstrate this: the Canadian wildfire season of 2023 was the worst in the country's history, severely affecting eleven provinces and territories. By the start of June, over 2,000 fires had burned 43,000 square kilometres. On just one day, June 6th, there were 413 active wildfires, of which 249 were deemed out of control. Smoke emitted from the fires caused air quality alerts in Canada, the United States, and even northern Europe. Media photographs of the density of smoke over New York, about 900 kilometres away from the fires, were extremely alarming. Landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty were all but invisible. Roughly half of all wildfires in Canada are caused by lightning and, due to climate change, lightning strikes are happening more frequently. Direct human behaviour causes the other half of wildfires in Canada, often unintentionally started by things such as discarded cigarettes, abandoned smouldering campfires, or sparks from braking trains.

5. Effective wildfire management requires a comprehensive approach that includes prevention and preparedness measures. These include public awareness campaigns, stricter regulations on fire-prone activities, and improved infrastructure planning. Early warning systems, enhanced firefighting resources, and prescribed burning can also contribute to reducing the frequency and severity of wildfires.

6. Addressing the root cause of intensified wildfires necessitates efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Implementing sustainable land management practices, such as reforestation, afforestation, and the use of fire-resistant materials in construction, can enhance ecosystem resilience and reduce vulnerability to wildfires. Engaging local communities in wildfire management is also crucial. Educating individuals about fire-safe practices, promoting responsible land-use decisions, and encouraging the development of community-based fire response plans, can foster a collective approach to wildfire prevention and mitigation. Effective wildfire management requires good collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, firefighting services, scientists and researchers, landowners, and communities. Collaboration can facilitate the sharing of resources, knowledge, and best practices, enabling a more co-ordinated and effective response to the danger of wildfires.

7. The problem of wildfires presents a multi-faceted challenge with far-reaching implications for the environment, human lives, and socioeconomic stability. Addressing this problem requires a combination of preventive measures, community engagement, climate change adaptation, and collaborative approaches. By adopting a comprehensive approach to wildfire management, societies can mitigate the risk of wildfires, protect ecosystems, and ensure the safety and well-being of communities. Continued research, investment, and international co-operation will be crucial to developing innovative strategies that promote sustainable coexistence in the face of a changing climate with those wildfires that we cannot prevent.

Answer ALL the following questions on the passage

Questions 1 – 5 (2 marks per question)

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

In boxes 1 – 5 below write

TRUE ***if the statement fully agrees with the writer's claims***

FALSE ***if the statement contradicts the writer's claims***

NOT GIVEN ***if there is no explicit information on the statement***

- 1 Economies suffer when wildfires, however caused, are not kept under human control.
- 2 Rainfall around the world has decreased, thus causing more widespread wildfires.
- 3 The most common cause of naturally occurring wildfires is lightning strike.
- 4 Deliberately setting fire to vegetation in the countryside is an act of careless antisocial behaviour.
- 5 The best way to combat the dangers of wildfires to human beings and the environment is to bring climate change successfully under control.

1
2
3
4
5

Questions 6 – 8 (2 marks per question)

From information in the passage, but IN YOUR OWN WORDS, write answers to the following questions in the boxes below. Make sure you write enough each time to be worth 2 marks.

- 6 Briefly describe two strategies that some types of plant have developed to help them manage to survive wildfires.
- 7 According to the writer, why are wildfires more dangerous and difficult to manage in the present day than they were in times past?
- 8 What measures can be taken to reduce the occurrence of wildfires and the amount of damage they do to humans and the environment?

6
7
8

Questions 9 – 12 (2 marks per question)

Give equivalent but DIFFERENT words of your own for the following phrases, so as to demonstrate their meaning as used in the context of the passage:

9 <i>'devastating consequences'</i> (paragraph 1)
10 <i>'expansion of agricultural activities into fire-prone areas'</i> (paragraph 2)
11 <i>'widespread long-term impacts'</i> (paragraph 3)
12 <i>'prevention and preparedness measures'</i> (paragraph 5)

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

PART TWO: WRITING

You should spend about 40 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. Rough paper is not allowed.

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

Write ONLY between 250 and 300 words. (Further writing after 300 words will not be awarded any marks and your essay will be considered incomplete.) Use a formal register and academic language. Evidence of careful thinking and quality of expression is much more important than a large quantity of words.

Choose ONE TOPIC from the following:

1. How far is ecotourism (holiday travel prompted by an interest in observing and preserving the natural environment) acceptable nowadays?

Give reasons for your answer and support them with examples from your own knowledge and / or experience.

2. What future difficulties for humanity will the rapidity of the development of Artificial Intelligence be likely to cause? Describe several potential problems and suggest some possible solutions to them, assessing how well each might work in practice.

Make sure you tackle all the parts of this question. Give practical examples to support your points.

3. 'The ability to use language is the one thing that distinguishes humankind from the rest of the animal kingdom.'

Develop an argument either for or against this claim and support it with evidence and examples from your own knowledge and experience.

4. If you could spend a day with any famous person who is living now or who has ever lived, who would you choose and why?

Give reasons and evidence to support your choice.

Paper Notes: 16+ English Sample Paper (16+ 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 **Tonbridge School sample paper** for entry into **Year 12 (Sixth Form)**, testing **English Language at 16+ level**. The paper is undated and serves as general practice material for candidates preparing for Tonbridge's internal entrance examination. It is structured in two parts: a **20-minute reading comprehension** based on a substantial passage about wildfires, followed by a **40-minute writing task** (with 10 minutes allocated for planning) that offers a choice of four essay questions.

The reading passage explores the environmental and societal challenges posed by wildfires, covering ecological adaptations, climate change impacts, human causes, and management strategies. The comprehension questions test inference, factual retrieval, vocabulary in context, and the ability to paraphrase and synthesise information. The writing section requires candidates to produce a formal, academic essay of **250-300 words** on topics ranging from ecotourism and artificial intelligence to the nature of language and personal choice.

This paper is designed for students who have completed their **GCSEs** and are applying to study English at A Level. It assesses mature analytical reading skills, precise vocabulary, and the ability to construct a well-reasoned argument under timed conditions. Dictionaries and electronic translators are not permitted, and answers must be handwritten unless special permission has been granted in advance.

How this paper is organised

The paper is divided into **two distinct parts**. Part One lasts **20 minutes** and comprises **12 comprehension questions** (Questions 1-12), each worth **two marks**, for a total of 24 marks. Questions 1-5 are True/False/Not Given statements that test close reading and inference; Questions 6-8 require short written answers in the candidate's own words; Questions 9-12 ask for synonyms or paraphrases of phrases from the passage, demonstrating vocabulary range and contextual understanding.

Part Two lasts **40 minutes**, including a mandatory **10-minute planning period**. Candidates must choose **one essay question** from a set of four diverse prompts and write a response of **250-300 words**. The plan must be written in the booklet and will be marked; rough paper is not allowed. Essays exceeding 300 words will not receive credit for the additional content, and the response will be considered incomplete. The writing

is expected to use a **formal register** and academic language, with marks awarded for the quality of reasoning and expression rather than sheer length.

All answers must be written in the spaces provided in the booklet. The paper enforces strict conditions: no dictionaries, no electronic aids, and handwriting is required unless prior permission to type has been granted by Tonbridge School.

Topics covered

- True/False/Not Given inference questions testing close reading of non-fiction passages
- Short-answer comprehension requiring paraphrasing and synthesis of textual evidence
- Vocabulary in context: identifying synonyms and explaining meaning in relation to a passage about environmental science
- Analysis of argumentative and discursive prose on climate change, ecology, and human impact on the environment
- Timed essay planning and structure under formal examination conditions
- Discursive and argumentative writing on contemporary issues (ecotourism, artificial intelligence, language and humanity)
- Reflective and personal writing (choosing and justifying a meeting with a famous person)
- Use of formal register and academic tone in extended writing
- Word-count discipline and conciseness (250-300 words)
- Integration of evidence and examples from personal knowledge and experience

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise reading complex non-fiction passages on scientific and environmental topics, timing yourself to extract key information quickly and accurately.
- When answering True/False/Not Given questions, look for explicit statements in the text rather than making assumptions based on general knowledge or inference.
- Build your vocabulary by learning synonyms and practising paraphrase exercises; avoid lifting phrases directly from the passage when questions ask for 'your own words'.
- For the essay, spend the full 10 minutes planning: sketch an argument structure, list examples, and draft a thesis statement before you begin writing.
- Practise writing to a strict word count (250-300 words); aim for precision and depth rather than quantity, and learn to self-edit as you write.
- Read widely on contemporary debates (climate change, AI ethics, linguistics) so you can draw on concrete examples and scholarship in your essays.
- Review formal essay conventions: topic sentences, linking phrases, balanced arguments, and conclusions that synthesise rather than repeat.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Writing 'Not Given' when a statement is false: if the text contradicts a claim, the answer is False, not Not Given; reserve Not Given for genuinely absent information.
- Copying phrases directly from the passage when asked for 'your own words'; examiners expect synonyms and restatement, not quotation.
- Exceeding the 300-word limit in the essay, which results in the extra content being ignored and the essay marked as incomplete.
- Starting the essay without a written plan, leading to a rambling or unbalanced argument; the plan is marked and its absence will lose marks.
- Using informal or conversational language in the essay (e.g. contractions, slang, rhetorical questions) when a formal academic register is required.
- Failing to address all parts of the essay question; for example, Question 2 asks for problems, solutions, and an assessment of each solution's practicality.

Exam technique

In **Part One**, read the passage once carefully before attempting the questions, underlining key phrases that relate to the question stems. For True/False/Not Given questions, locate the relevant section of text and check whether the statement is

supported, contradicted, or simply not discussed. When paraphrasing, use different sentence structures and vocabulary, not just swapped-out synonyms. Budget roughly 90 seconds per question to stay within the 20-minute limit.

In **Part Two**, choose your essay title quickly (within 2 minutes) and commit to it; do not waste time drafting multiple plans. Spend 8-10 minutes sketching a clear structure: introduction with thesis, two or three body paragraphs with evidence, and a conclusion. Write your plan legibly in the booklet because it will be assessed. As you write, keep an eye on word count; 250-300 words is roughly three substantial paragraphs, so aim for conciseness and avoid padding.

Pace yourself so you finish writing with 2-3 minutes remaining to proofread. Check for grammatical errors, clarity, and formal tone. If you reach 300 words mid-sentence, stop cleanly rather than exceeding the limit. Remember that the quality of reasoning and the precision of your language matter far more than hitting the maximum word count.

What to revise alongside this paper

Alongside this paper, revise close reading and inference skills using a variety of non-fiction texts (scientific articles, opinion pieces, historical accounts). Practise paraphrasing exercises and expand your vocabulary through active reading and the use of a thesaurus. Study formal essay structure and argumentation techniques, including how to construct a thesis, use evidence, and write balanced conclusions.

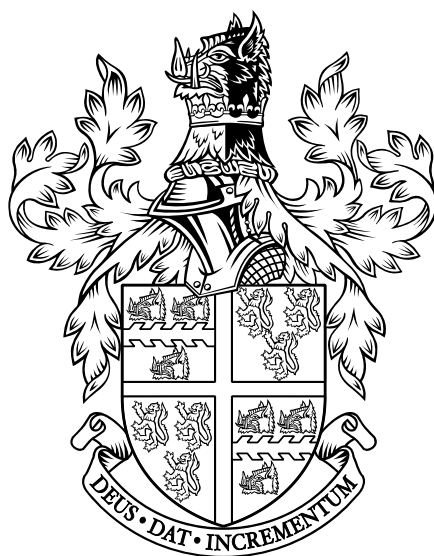
For the environmental content, read around topics such as **climate change**, **ecological resilience**, and **sustainable land management** to deepen your contextual knowledge. For the essay prompts, explore contemporary debates on **artificial intelligence ethics**, **ecotourism**, and **linguistic theory** (e.g. Chomsky, Pinker). Familiarise yourself with formal writing conventions and practise timed essays under exam conditions.

If you are preparing for Tonbridge's Sixth Form entrance, consider looking at specimen papers for **AQA or Edexcel A Level English Language** to see the kinds of analytical and discursive skills expected at this level. Review GCSE analytical writing if you need to strengthen your ability to construct coherent, well-evidenced arguments quickly and concisely.

Key terms

Inference, Paraphrase, Synonym, Formal register, Academic tone, Discursive writing, Argumentative essay, Thesis statement, Topic sentence, Ecological adaptation, Climate change mitigation, Synthesis, Conciseness, Word-count discipline, True/False/Not Given

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Sample Paper for entrance into Year 12

English Literature

Time allowed : 45 minutes

Total Marks : 30

Read the passage and answer the question which follows.

Dictionaries may **NOT** be used.

Read the following passage, and answer the question which follows.

You should spend up to 15 minutes reading and annotating the passage in order to prepare your response, and 30 minutes composing your answer.

The following passage is taken from Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens. Young Oliver has been taken out of the workhouse, the local parish forced-labour repository for orphans, and apprenticed to an undertaker. He has been left on his own in the coffin workshop.

Oliver, being left to himself in the undertaker's shop, set the lamp down on a workman's bench, and gazed timidly about him with a feeling of awe and dread, which many people a good deal older than he will be at no loss to understand. An unfinished coffin on black tressels, which stood in the middle of the shop, looked so gloomy and death-like that a cold tremble came over him, every time his eyes wandered in the direction of the dismal object: from which he almost expected to see some frightful form slowly rear its head, to drive him mad with terror. Against the wall were ranged, in regular array, a long row of elm boards cut in the same shape: looking in the dim light, like high-shouldered ghosts with their hands in their breeches pockets. Coffin-plates, elm-chips, bright-headed nails, and shreds of black cloth, lay scattered on the floor; and the wall behind the counter was ornamented with a lively representation of two mutes in very stiff neckcloths, on duty at a large private door, with a hearse drawn by four black steeds, approaching in the distance. The shop was close and hot. The atmosphere seemed tainted with the smell of coffins. The recess beneath the counter in which his flock mattress was thrust, looked like a grave.

Nor were these the only dismal feelings which depressed Oliver. He was alone in a strange place; and we all know how chilled and desolate the best of us will sometimes feel in such a situation. The boy had no friends to care for, or to care for him. The regret of no recent separation was fresh in his mind; the absence of no loved and well-remembered face sank heavily into his heart. But his heart was heavy, notwithstanding; and he wished, as he crept into his narrow bed, that that were his coffin, and that he could be lain in a calm and lasting sleep in the churchyard ground, with the tall grass waving gently above his head, and the sound of the old deep bell to soothe him in his sleep.

Oliver was awakened in the morning, by a loud kicking at the outside of the shop-door: which, before he could huddle on his clothes, was repeated, in an angry and impetuous manner, about twenty-five times. When he began to undo the chain, the legs desisted, and a voice began.

'Open the door, will yer?' cried the voice which belonged to the legs which had kicked at the door.

'I will, directly, sir,' replied Oliver: undoing the chain, and turning the key.

'I suppose yer the new boy, ain't yer?' said the voice through the key-hole.

'Yes, sir,' replied Oliver.

'How old are yer?' inquired the voice.

'Ten, sir,' replied Oliver.

'Then I'll whop yer when I get in,' said the voice; 'you just see if I don't, that's all, my work'us brat!' and having made this obliging promise, the voice began to whistle.

Oliver had been too often subjected to the process to which the very expressive monosyllable just recorded bears reference, to entertain the smallest doubt that the owner of the voice, whoever he might be, would redeem his pledge, most honourably. He drew back the bolts with a trembling hand, and opened the door.

For a second or two, Oliver glanced up the street, and down the street, and over the way: impressed with the belief that the unknown, who had addressed him through the key-hole, had walked a few paces off, to warm himself; for nobody did he see but a big charity-boy, sitting on a post in front of the house, eating a slice of bread and butter: which he cut into wedges, the size of his mouth, with a clasp-knife, and then consumed with great dexterity.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said Oliver at length: seeing that no other visitor made his appearance; 'did you knock?'

'I kicked,' replied the charity-boy.

'Did you want a coffin, sir?' inquired Oliver, innocently.

At this, the charity-boy looked monstrous fierce; and said that Oliver would want one before long, if he cut jokes with his superiors in that way.

'Yer don't know who I am, I suppose, Work'us?' said the charity-boy, in continuation: descending from the top of the post, meanwhile, with edifying gravity.

'No, sir,' rejoined Oliver.

'I'm Mister Noah Claypole,' said the charity-boy, 'and you're under me. Take down the shutters, yer idle young ruffian!' With this, Mr. Claypole administered a kick to Oliver, and entered the shop with a dignified air, which did him great credit. It is difficult for a large-headed, small-eyed youth, of lumbering make and heavy countenance, to look dignified under any circumstances; but it is more especially so, when superadded to these personal attractions are a red nose and yellow smalls.

Oliver, having taken down the shutters, and broken a pane of glass in his effort to stagger away beneath the weight of the first one to a small court at the side of the house in which they were kept during the day, was graciously assisted by Noah: who having consoled him with the assurance that 'he'd catch it,' condescended to help him. Mr. Sowerberry came down soon after. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Sowerberry appeared. Oliver having 'caught it,' in fulfilment of Noah's prediction, followed that young gentleman down the stairs to breakfast.

Answer the following question

What effects does the writer achieve in this passage through his language?

(30 marks)

In your answer you should consider:

- *The choice of words by the author*
- *The use of imagery and visual description in the passage*
- *The tone the writer employs*
- *The use of ironic humour*
- *The presentation of character*
- *The attitude towards the subject matter and characters that the writer encourages in the reader.*

END OF PAPER

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Paper Notes: 16+ English Sample Paper (16+ 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 **Sixth Form entrance sample paper** published by **Tonbridge School** for candidates applying to enter **Year 12** to study **English Literature**. The paper comprises a single extended essay question based on a prose extract from **Charles Dickens's Oliver Twist**, testing close reading, analysis of language techniques, and the ability to evaluate authorial methods and effects. Candidates have **45 minutes** in total, with **15 minutes recommended** for annotation and preparation and **30 minutes** for composing the essay response.

The question asks students to examine what effects Dickens achieves through his language choices, requiring detailed analysis of word choice, imagery, tone, ironic humour, characterisation, and the reader's encouraged attitude. The paper awards **30 marks** for a single response, making it an intensive test of analytical writing and literary interpretation at a sophisticated level. The passage itself depicts Oliver's first night in the undertaker's shop and his encounter with the bullying charity-boy Noah Claypole, providing rich material for exploring Dickensian social critique, Gothic atmosphere, and narrative voice.

This paper is designed for able students who already have a strong grounding in GCSE-level close reading and who can sustain a mature, well-structured critical argument under timed conditions. The prohibition on dictionaries and the expectation of textual annotation within the time limit both signal the advanced demands of Sixth Form English Literature study.

How this paper is organised

The paper consists of a **single extended essay question** worth the full **30 marks**, based on an extract of approximately 800 words from **Oliver Twist**. Candidates are explicitly advised to spend **up to 15 minutes reading and annotating** the passage, followed by **30 minutes composing their answer**, making efficient time management an essential skill. The passage is introduced with brief contextual information explaining Oliver's situation, and the question itself is followed by a bullet-point list of **six assessment focuses** to guide the response: word choice, imagery and visual description, tone, ironic humour, character presentation, and the attitude the writer encourages in the reader.

The structure is deliberately open-ended, requiring students to organise their own analytical argument rather than respond to a series of shorter questions. There are no marks allocated to individual bullet points; candidates must integrate multiple strands of analysis into a coherent essay. The time constraint of **45 minutes total** makes this a challenging test of both literary insight and exam technique, where the ability to identify the most significant features quickly and structure a response efficiently is as important as the depth of textual understanding.

This format is typical of advanced literature entrance exams, where schools seek candidates who can write fluently and critically about unseen texts, demonstrating readiness for the independent analytical work required at A Level and beyond.

Topics covered

- Close reading and textual analysis of 19th-century prose fiction, focusing on a Dickensian social realist novel
- Analysis of authorial word choice and diction, including semantic fields, connotation, and register
- Interpretation of imagery and visual description, particularly Gothic and oppressive atmospheres
- Identification and evaluation of narrative tone, including shifts between sympathy, irony, and social critique
- Recognition and analysis of ironic humour, especially Dickens's satirical presentation of character and class
- Examination of characterisation techniques, including direct description, dialogue, dialect, and free indirect discourse
- Understanding how writers shape reader attitudes and responses through narrative voice and perspective
- Constructing a coherent analytical essay under timed conditions, integrating multiple assessment strands
- Annotation and active reading strategies for preparing a response to an unseen literary extract

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise annotating unseen prose extracts in 15 minutes, marking language patterns, imagery clusters, tonal shifts, and character presentation techniques. Speed and selectivity are crucial.
- Revise key Dickensian techniques such as social satire, free indirect discourse, caricature, and the use of Gothic or melodramatic imagery to highlight social injustice.
- Read widely in 19th-century fiction so that Dickens's style, vocabulary, and narrative methods feel familiar rather than alien under exam pressure.
- Learn to structure an analytical essay quickly: a clear thesis in your opening, integrated evidence and analysis in body paragraphs, and a concise evaluative conclusion.
- Familiarise yourself with the six bullet-point focuses in the question so you can plan which to prioritise and how to weave them together rather than treating them as a checklist.
- Time yourself writing full 30-minute essays to build stamina and learn how much detail you can realistically include within the constraint.
- Practise identifying irony and tone in Dickens: look for moments where the narrator's voice distances itself from characters or undercuts their pretensions with deadpan description.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Narrating or paraphrasing the passage content instead of analysing language and technique. The examiner already knows what happens; focus on how Dickens achieves his effects.
- Writing six separate mini-essays, one for each bullet point, rather than integrating the focuses into a unified argument about the passage's overall effects.
- Identifying techniques (such as simile, metaphor, or dialect) without explaining their effect or linking them to Dickens's broader purposes in characterising Oliver or critiquing social structures.
- Running out of time because too long was spent on annotation or on perfecting an introduction. Thirty minutes for writing is non-negotiable, so manage your preparation phase strictly.
- Overlooking Dickens's use of irony, especially in the narrator's treatment of Noah Claypole's 'dignified air' and the euphemistic language around Oliver's beatings ('catch it', 'whop!').
- Treating the passage in isolation rather than recognising it as part of a 19th-century novel with conventions of social realism, melodrama, and moral didacticism that shape the language choices.

Exam technique

Begin by reading the passage once for overall understanding, then re-read with your pencil in hand, annotating directly onto the text. Mark repeated words, striking images, shifts in tone, contrasts between Oliver and Noah, and moments of authorial irony. In your 15-minute preparation, jot down a brief plan identifying two or three major effects Dickens achieves (for example, creating sympathy for Oliver, satirising class pretension in Noah, building Gothic atmosphere) and noting which textual details support each point. This planning time is an investment that will make your essay more focused and coherent.

When you start writing, open with a clear thesis that captures the passage's dominant effects, then develop your argument through well-structured paragraphs, each focused on a specific aspect of Dickens's language. Integrate short, precise quotations frequently, and always follow them with analysis that explains the technique and its effect. Do not list the six bullet points as separate sections; instead, weave them together organically. For instance, a paragraph on imagery might also address tone and word choice if those elements work together in the same descriptive passage.

In the final five minutes, aim to write a brief conclusion that sums up Dickens's overall achievement in the passage and the attitude he encourages in the reader (sympathy for the vulnerable child, scorn for petty cruelty and class snobbery). If time is very short, a single evaluative sentence is better than none. Above all, keep writing steadily and stay focused on the question: what effects does the language achieve, and how does it achieve them?

What to revise alongside this paper

To prepare fully for this style of paper, revise other 19th-century novelists whose work employs social critique and distinctive narrative voices, such as **Charlotte Brontë** (especially *Jane Eyre* for Gothic atmosphere and first-person sympathy) and **George Eliot** (for omniscient irony and moral commentary). Study the conventions of **Victorian realism** and the ways authors used fiction to expose social injustice, child labour, and class hypocrisy. Practise close reading of prose extracts from a range of periods, not just the 19th century, to build confidence in identifying narrative technique, tone, and authorial purpose quickly.

Work on your essay-writing skills more broadly by practising timed analytical responses to unseen poetry and drama as well as prose. The ability to construct a coherent argument, integrate evidence smoothly, and write under pressure is transferable across all literary forms. Finally, if you are serious about Sixth Form English Literature, read at least one complete Dickens novel (*Oliver Twist* itself, or *Great Expectations*, or *Hard Times*) so that you understand his recurring concerns and stylistic habits in depth.

Consider looking at critical essays or study guides that discuss Dickens's use of **pathos**, **caricature**, and **narrative intrusion**, as these concepts will help you articulate the effects you observe in the passage with greater precision and confidence.

Key terms

Imagery, Tone, Irony, Characterisation, Free indirect discourse, Dialect, Register, Gothic, Satire, Narrative voice, Semantic field, Connotation, Sympathy, Social realism, Caricature

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Sample Paper for Entrance into Year 12

Government and Politics

Time allowed: 45 minutes

Total Marks: 40

Answer TWO questions on the lined paper provided

Answer two questions on the lined paper provided

You are advised to spend 5 minutes reading through the questions and to plan your answers carefully before you start writing them.

- 1) Would you rather live in a democracy or a dictatorship? Explain your answer. (20)
- 2) Why are civil liberties important? Explain your answer. (20)
- 3) “America is too powerful in international politics.” Discuss. (20)
- 4) Is the media too influential in politics? Explain your answer. (20)
- 5) What could be done to get people more involved in politics ? (20)
- 6) What is the difference between ‘Left Wing’ and ‘Right Wing’ political ideas? (20)
- 7) What is the most likely outcome of the next UK general election? Explain your answer. (20)
- 8) If you were elected as the leader of your country, what would you change? (20)

END OF PAPER

Paper Notes: 16+ English Sample Paper (16+ 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 entrance paper** for **Tonbridge School** in **Government and Politics**, designed for students applying to enter **Year 12** (sixth form). The paper tests political awareness, analytical thinking, and the ability to construct reasoned arguments on contemporary and theoretical issues. Candidates have **45 minutes** to answer **two questions** from a choice of **eight**, with each question worth **20 marks**, for a total of **40 marks**.

The questions cover a broad range of political topics including democratic systems, civil liberties, international relations, media influence, political engagement, ideological differences, electoral prediction, and policy priorities. Each requires extended written responses that demonstrate knowledge of political concepts, critical evaluation, and the ability to justify opinions with evidence and reasoning.

This paper is aimed at students aged 16 or above who are seeking entry to study A-level Government and Politics. It assesses whether applicants have sufficient interest in current affairs, the ability to think critically about political issues, and the communication skills needed for sixth form study. No prior formal study of politics is assumed, but candidates should show awareness of contemporary political debates and be able to express their views coherently.

How this paper is organised

The paper consists of **eight essay questions**, from which candidates must select and answer **two**. Each question is worth **20 marks**, and the total examination time is **45 minutes**. Candidates are advised to spend approximately **five minutes** reading through all questions and planning their answers, leaving roughly **20 minutes** per essay response.

All questions are open-ended and require extended written answers. There are no multiple-choice sections, no source materials provided, and no structured sub-questions. Every question carries equal weighting, so candidates should choose the two topics they feel most confident discussing in depth.

The questions are presented in a straightforward list format without thematic grouping. Topics range from theoretical (democracy versus dictatorship, left wing versus right wing ideologies) to applied (predicting election outcomes, proposing policy changes).

This structure rewards candidates who can demonstrate breadth of political awareness and depth of analytical thinking across different aspects of the subject.

Topics covered

- Democratic systems versus dictatorships: comparative analysis of political regimes, personal freedoms, and quality of governance
- Civil liberties and human rights: importance of individual freedoms, protections against state power, and examples of key civil liberties
- American power in international politics: US foreign policy, military influence, economic dominance, and debates about global hegemony
- Media influence on politics: role of news organisations, social media, bias, agenda-setting, and the relationship between press and politicians
- Political participation and engagement: voter turnout, apathy, methods to increase involvement, and barriers to participation
- Left wing and right wing ideologies: core principles, economic policies, social values, and differences between socialist and conservative perspectives
- UK general elections: electoral system, opinion polling, swing voters, party strategies, and political forecasting
- Policy priorities and leadership: identifying pressing national issues, proposing reforms, and justifying political decisions

How to use this paper for revision

- Read quality newspapers regularly (both online and print) to build awareness of current political debates, elections, and policy controversies in the UK and internationally.
- Watch or listen to political interviews and debates (such as BBC Question Time, Today programme, or parliamentary debates) to understand how arguments are constructed and challenged.
- Revise the basic definitions of key political terms (democracy, dictatorship, civil liberties, left wing, right wing) so you can use them accurately and confidently in your answers.
- Practise structuring essay answers with a clear introduction, several developed paragraphs each making a distinct point, and a conclusion that directly addresses the question.
- Think about real-world examples to support your arguments: specific countries, leaders, policies, or events make your answers more persuasive than abstract theory alone.
- Consider multiple perspectives on controversial questions. Even if you have a strong opinion, acknowledge counter-arguments to demonstrate balanced thinking.
- Time yourself when practising. With only 20 minutes per essay, you need to write concisely and prioritise your strongest points rather than trying to cover everything.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Writing too much on the first question and running out of time for the second. Both essays carry equal marks, so allocate your time equally between them.
- Making assertions without justification. Saying 'America is too powerful' or 'the media is too influential' without explaining why or providing examples will not earn high marks.
- Ignoring the instruction to 'explain your answer' or 'discuss'. These command words require development and reasoning, not just stating an opinion.
- Choosing questions based on what sounds easiest rather than what you genuinely know about. A simple-sounding question still requires detailed political knowledge to answer well.
- Writing in an overly informal style or using social media language. This is an academic entrance exam, so maintain a formal, analytical tone throughout.
- Confusing related political terms (such as liberalism and civil liberties, or democracy and democratic socialism). Precision matters, especially at A-level standard.

Exam technique

Begin by reading all eight questions carefully during the five-minute planning period. Identify the two questions where you have the most to say and can provide specific examples or evidence. Jot down a quick plan for each essay: three or four key points you want to make, with examples or reasoning for each.

Structure each answer clearly. Start with a brief introduction that directly addresses the question and signals your overall position or approach. Then develop three or four distinct paragraphs, each making a separate point supported by explanation, evidence, or examples. Finish with a short conclusion that directly answers the question posed. Aim for approximately 250 to 300 words per essay, though quality of argument matters more than length.

Manage your time strictly. If you have 40 minutes for writing after planning, spend no more than 20 minutes on each essay. If you are running short on time, move to your second essay even if the first feels incomplete. An incomplete answer on one question and a strong answer on the other will score better than one polished essay and nothing on the second question. Write legibly and leave space to add points if time allows at the end.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students should familiarise themselves with **core political ideologies** including liberalism, conservatism, socialism, and their key thinkers and principles.

Understanding the **UK political system** is essential: the structure of Parliament, the role of the Prime Minister, how elections work, and the functions of political parties.

Knowledge of the **US political system** (Congress, presidency, separation of powers) will help when discussing American power.

Broader themes worth revising include **constitutional issues** (such as the rule of law, separation of powers, and checks and balances), **rights and freedoms** (including the European Convention on Human Rights and debates about privacy versus security), and **international organisations** (United Nations, NATO, European Union). Reading about recent UK elections, referendums, and policy debates will provide concrete examples.

For progression, consider exploring **political philosophy** (Locke, Mill, Marx), **comparative politics** (how different countries organise their governments), and **contemporary political challenges** such as populism, climate policy, or digital governance. These will form the foundation of A-level Government and Politics study.

Key terms

Democracy, Dictatorship, Civil liberties, Human rights, Left wing, Right wing, Socialism, Conservatism, International relations, Foreign policy, Media influence, Political participation, Voter engagement, General election, Public policy

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TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

Sample Paper for entrance into Year 12

Mandarin

Time allowed : 45 minutes

Total Marks : 30

Answer ALL of the questions

Section 1 Reading comprehension

You are advised to spend 15 minutes on this section.

Section 2: Writing

You are advised to spend 30 minutes on this section.

Answer the question in **Chinese**.

You should write about 100 characters.

Section 1 : Reading Comprehension

You are advised to spend 15 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage about Li Na, and answer the questions in English.

李娜(Li Na) 是中国最有名的网球运动员，也是中国网球运动历史上最成功的人。

李娜一九八二年在武汉出生，他的父亲是一个羽毛球运动员。但是在李娜十四岁的时候，他不幸因为重病，离开了这个世界。

李娜六岁的时候开始学打羽毛球，两年后，她发现自己更喜欢打网球，就开始了她的网球生活。一九九七年，十七岁的李娜成了中国网球国家队的队员。

二零一一年，李娜在法国网球公开赛上打败了所有的对手，赢得了冠军，成为历史上第一个赢得大满贯比赛的中国人。二零一四年，她又在澳大利亚网球公开赛上赢得冠军。

李娜在中国越来越受欢迎，不仅因为她网球打得好，而且她很喜欢开玩笑。现在，中国一共有 一千五百万人打网球。

1. What does the 1st paragraph say about Li Na as a tennis player?

_____ (2)

2. When was Li Na born?

_____ (1)

3. What happened when she was 14 years old?

_____ (1)

4. What is the sport she took at first? Why did she change sport later?

_____ (2)

5. What did she achieve when she was 17?

_____ (1)

6. What happened in 2011?

_____ (2)

7. Except for sport talent, what else makes Li Na popular?

_____ (1)

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Paper Notes: 16+ English Sample Paper (16+ 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 entrance paper for **Mandarin** at **Sixth Form entry (Year 12)**. It is designed for candidates aged 16+ who wish to continue studying Mandarin at A-level and provides a realistic preview of the school's expectations for incoming students. The paper is divided into two sections: a reading comprehension passage in Chinese with questions answered in English, and a creative writing task in Chinese.

The reading passage is about **Li Na**, the famous Chinese tennis player, covering her early life, career milestones, and cultural impact. The writing section offers three topic choices, all requiring around **100 Chinese characters** of continuous prose. This format tests both receptive skills (reading and understanding authentic Chinese text) and productive skills (writing coherent sentences in Chinese script).

The paper is suitable for students who have studied Mandarin to GCSE or IGCSE level and are considering it as an A-level subject. The **45-minute** time limit and **30 marks** total make it a concise but focused assessment of foundational language skills at this transitional stage.

How this paper is organised

The paper is structured into two distinct sections with clear time guidance. **Section 1: Reading Comprehension** allocates 15 minutes and presents a single Chinese passage of approximately 150 characters about Li Na's life and tennis career. Seven questions follow, worth a total of **10 marks**, with individual questions weighted from 1 to 2 marks. All answers must be written in English, testing comprehension rather than productive Chinese skills.

Section 2: Writing allocates 30 minutes and offers three essay prompts: My Chinese Friend, School Life in China, and Learning Mandarin. Candidates must choose one topic and write approximately **100 Chinese characters**. This section is worth **20 marks**, reflecting the greater challenge of producing accurate, coherent Chinese text under timed conditions.

The paper layout is clear, with ample space provided for the written response in Section 2. The total mark allocation reflects the weighting towards productive writing skills, which are typically more challenging at this level than comprehension.

Topics covered

- Reading comprehension of an authentic Chinese biography text with narrative structure and temporal markers
- Understanding key biographical details: dates, places, occupations, and family relationships expressed in Chinese
- Inference and interpretation of implicit information from Chinese text (e.g. personal qualities, cultural context)
- Recognition and translation of complex sentence structures including 不仅...而且 (not only... but also) constructions
- Vocabulary related to sports, careers, achievements, and personal character in Chinese
- Extended writing in Chinese on personal or cultural topics with appropriate tone and register
- Accurate use of Chinese characters to express ideas clearly within a constrained word count
- Choosing and developing a topic independently, demonstrating range of vocabulary and grammatical structures
- Cultural knowledge of contemporary China (sport, education, friendship) to support authentic writing
- Time management across reading and writing tasks of differing cognitive demand

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise reading biographical texts in Chinese, paying attention to how dates, ages, and sequences of events are expressed using phrases like 一九八二年 and 在...的时候.
- Build a bank of topic-specific vocabulary for common Sixth Form writing themes such as friendship, school life, and language learning, including useful connectives and time expressions.
- Time yourself on 100-character writing tasks to develop a sense of how much content fits within that limit without needing to count repeatedly.
- Read the comprehension questions first, then the passage, so you know what information to focus on and can annotate key details as you read.
- For the writing section, spend five minutes planning your structure and key points in English or pinyin before you begin writing in characters.
- Revise how to express opinions, reasons, and personal experiences in Chinese, as all three essay topics invite first-person narrative or reflection.
- Familiarise yourself with common question words and grammatical patterns in comprehension questions (e.g. 'what happened', 'why did she', 'except for') to decode what is being asked.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Misinterpreting temporal markers in Chinese (e.g. confusing 在...的时候 'when' with 两年后 'two years later') and giving answers that are chronologically inaccurate.
- Writing answers in Chinese instead of English for Section 1, despite clear instructions, which wastes time and risks losing marks.
- Exceeding the 100-character limit significantly in Section 2, either by writing far too much or far too little, both of which suggest poor planning or misunderstanding of the task.
- Using pinyin or a mix of pinyin and characters in the writing section, which is typically not acceptable at this level and will lose marks.
- Choosing a writing topic impulsively without considering vocabulary range, then struggling halfway through because the necessary characters are unfamiliar.
- Ignoring the mark allocation in Section 1 (some questions are worth 1 mark, others 2) and writing equally long answers for all, wasting time on low-value questions.

Exam technique

Start by skimming the entire paper to understand the structure and mark distribution. In Section 1, read the seven questions carefully before tackling the passage, underlining key question words so you know what specific information to extract. As you read the Li Na text, annotate dates, ages, and key events in the margin to make it easier to locate details when answering. For two-mark questions, provide two distinct pieces of information or a developed point, not just a one-word answer.

For Section 2, spend the first five minutes deciding your topic and sketching a brief plan. Choose the essay prompt for which you have the richest vocabulary and clearest ideas, not necessarily the one that sounds most interesting. Outline three or four key points you want to make, then begin writing in Chinese. Aim for clear, simple sentences that you are confident are grammatically correct, rather than attempting complex structures that might contain errors.

Keep an eye on the clock: you should finish Section 1 within 15 minutes to give yourself the full 30 minutes for writing. If you finish Section 2 early, use any remaining time to check your characters for accuracy (especially common errors like stroke order or component confusion) and to ensure your writing flows logically. Do not leave any question unanswered in Section 1, even if you are unsure; an educated guess based on context is better than a blank.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students preparing for this paper should consolidate their understanding of **Chinese temporal expressions**, including how to state years, ages, and the passage of time using structures like 一九八二年 and 两年后. Revising how to describe people's lives, occupations, and achievements will support both comprehension and writing tasks. Practising short biographies of famous Chinese figures (athletes, artists, historical personalities) will build familiarity with this text type.

Beyond this paper, broaden your ability to write on personal and cultural topics by practising all three essay prompts under timed conditions. Work on expressing opinions and reasons using conjunctions such as 因为, 所以, and 虽然...但是. Develop a core bank of 200 to 300 high-frequency characters that appear across multiple topics, focusing on verbs, adjectives, and useful nouns.

To progress further, explore more complex grammatical structures such as the 把 construction, resultative complements, and modal verbs (e.g. 应该, 可以, 会). Reading graded readers or short news articles in Chinese will help build speed and confidence in comprehension, while regular timed writing practice will improve fluency and accuracy in character production.

Key terms

Biography, Temporal markers, Connectives (不仅...而且), Character count, Tone and register, Inference, Narrative structure, First-person writing, Authentic text, Vocabulary range, Pinyin, Grammatical accuracy, Cultural context, Extended writing, Comprehension

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