

## 8+ PAST PAPER PACK

# Westminster Cathedral Choir School 8+ English 2025

## Complete Past Paper Pack

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Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

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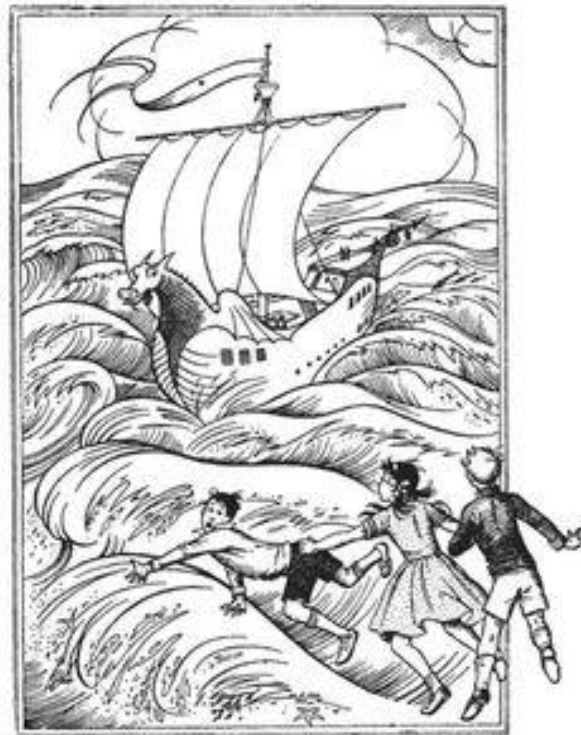
# WCCS

8+ Comprehension & Composition

## **SPECIMEN PAPER**

Time allowed: 1 hour 10 mins

Total marks: 50



Name.....

Current School.....

**SECTION A – COMPREHENSION (50 MINS) (35 marks)**

The following extract is from *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by C.S. Lewis. Read the extract **CAREFULLY** and then answer the questions in the spaces provided.

Edmund and Lucy, who are brother and sister, are staying with their cousin, Eustace, for the summer holiday. One afternoon, when the three children are playing, something strange happens to the picture of a ship hanging on the wall...

What they were seeing may be hard to believe when you read it in print, but it was almost as hard to believe when you saw it happening. The things in the picture were moving. It didn't look at all like a cinema either; the colours were too real and clean and out-of-doors for that. Down went the prow of the ship into the wave and up went a great shock of spray. And then up went the wave behind her, and her stern and her deck became visible for the first time, and then disappeared as the next wave came to meet her and her bows went up again. At the same moment an exercise book which had been lying beside Edmund on the bed flapped, rose and sailed through the air to the wall behind him, and Lucy felt all her hair whipping round her face as it does on a windy day. And this was a windy day; but the wind was blowing out of the picture towards them. And suddenly with the wind came the noises – the swishing of waves and the slap of water against the ship's sides and the creaking and the overall high steady roar of air and water. But it was the smell, the wild, briny smell, which really convinced Lucy that she was not dreaming.

“Stop it,” came Eustace's voice, squeaky with fright and bad temper. “It's some silly trick you two are playing. Stop it. I'll tell Auntie Alberta – Ow!”

The other two were much more accustomed to adventures, but, just exactly as Eustace Clarence said “Ow,” they both said “Ow” too. The reason was that a great cold, salt splash had broken right out of the frame and they were breathless from the smack of it, besides being wet through.

“I'll smash the rotten thing,” cried Eustace; and then several things happened at the same time.

***Read the passage again carefully, and then answer the questions that follow in full sentences.***

1. When the author says that the '*colours were too real and clean and out-of doors*' (line 4) to look like a cinema, what do you think he means? (3 marks)

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2. What is 'a great shock of spray'? (lines 5-6) (3 marks)

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3. What three things happen to the exercise book in the passage? (lines 9-10) (3 marks)

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4. In which direction is the wind blowing in this passage? (line 12) (2 marks)

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5. What noises are described in the passage? (lines 13-15) (4 marks)

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6. What convinces Lucy that she is not dreaming? (lines 15-17) (2 marks)

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7. How would you describe Eustace's behaviour and character in the passage?  
(lines 18-28) (8 marks)

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8. **Read the passage again.** Looking carefully at words and images, explain how the author makes the events seem real, vivid and exciting. (10 marks)

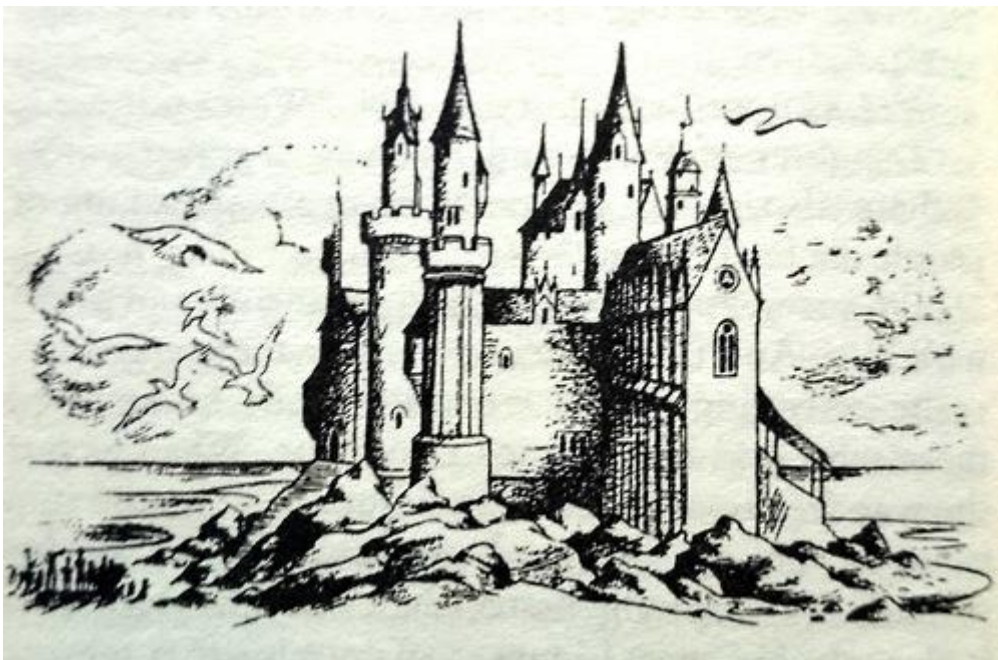
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**SECTION B – COMPOSITION (20 MINS) (15 marks)**

***Write a story entitled The Castle by the Sea***

- Use the picture below to help you.
- Use your five senses: what do you see, smell, touch, hear and taste?
- Write in paragraphs.
- Write in full sentences, using capital letters, commas, apostrophes, question marks and full stops.
- Don't write a long story; writing an interesting one – thinking carefully about the words you choose.



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# Paper Notes: 8+ English Specimen Paper (8+ English Specimen Paper (2025))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is the **Westminster Cathedral Choir School 8+ English specimen paper**, published in 2025, intended for children applying for **Year 4 entry**. The paper comprises two sections: **Section A**, a reading comprehension based on an extract from C.S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, and **Section B**, a creative writing task asking candidates to write a story entitled *The Castle by the Sea*.

The comprehension passage features the characters Edmund, Lucy, and Eustace experiencing a magical event when a painting of a ship on the wall comes to life. The questions test a range of skills, from straightforward retrieval and explanation to more sophisticated analysis of character and authorial technique. The final question, worth **10 marks**, asks students to explain how Lewis makes the events seem real, vivid, and exciting.

Section B gives candidates a picture prompt of a castle by the sea and asks them to craft a short, engaging story. The instructions emphasise using the five senses, writing in paragraphs, and paying attention to punctuation and vocabulary choice. The paper allocates **50 minutes to comprehension** and **20 minutes to composition**, totalling **70 minutes** and **50 marks** overall.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper is divided into two sections. **Section A (Comprehension)** carries **35 marks** and should be completed in 50 minutes. It consists of eight questions on a single prose extract of approximately 400 words. The questions increase in difficulty and mark value: early questions worth 2 to 4 marks focus on retrieval and explanation, while the final question is worth 10 marks and requires a sustained response analysing the author's use of language and imagery.

**Section B (Composition)** carries **15 marks** and allows 20 minutes. Candidates must write a story with a given title, supported by a line drawing. The instructions remind students to use sensory detail, write in paragraphs, and check their work. The paper's rubric emphasises quality over length, encouraging candidates to choose words carefully rather than write at length.

Answers are to be written in the spaces provided directly on the question paper. Each question indicates its line references and mark allocation clearly, and candidates are reminded to answer in full sentences throughout Section A.

## Topics covered

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- Reading comprehension of a classic children's fantasy novel extract (C.S. Lewis)
- Inference and interpretation of figurative and descriptive language
- Retrieval of explicit information from the text using line references
- Explanation of specific phrases and narrative events
- Character analysis and evaluation of behaviour and motivation
- Analysis of authorial technique: how language, imagery, and sensory detail create vivid and exciting scenes
- Creative story writing to a given title with a visual stimulus
- Use of sensory description (sight, smell, touch, hearing, taste) in narrative writing
- Paragraph structure, sentence construction, and punctuation (capital letters, commas, apostrophes, question marks, full stops)
- Vocabulary choice and narrative engagement in short-form composition

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Practise answering comprehension questions on extracts from classic children's literature, especially fantasy and adventure stories by authors like C.S. Lewis, Roald Dahl, and J.R.R. Tolkien.
- When asked to explain what the author means, always refer back to the text and use short quotations to support your answer.
- For character questions, think about what the character says, does, and how they react to events, then describe their personality traits using precise adjectives.
- In the final comprehension question worth 10 marks, plan to write at least four or five detailed points about language, imagery, and effect on the reader.
- For the creative writing task, spend a minute or two planning your story: decide on a beginning, middle, and end before you start writing.
- Use the picture prompt in Section B to inspire specific details (what the castle looks like, the weather, the sounds of waves), but don't simply describe the picture.
- Leave time at the end to read through your composition and check for spelling, punctuation, and missing words.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Writing answers in single words or incomplete sentences when the rubric clearly states 'answer in full sentences'.
- Copying out large chunks of the passage instead of explaining in your own words what a phrase or event means.
- Overlooking line references and answering the wrong part of the passage, especially in retrieval questions.
- In character questions, describing what happens to Eustace rather than analysing what his words and actions reveal about his personality.
- Spending too long on the early, low-mark questions and running out of time for the 10-mark extended response on authorial technique.
- In Section B, writing a very long story that is rushed and full of errors, rather than a shorter, polished piece with varied vocabulary and clear paragraphs.

## Exam technique

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Start with **Section A** and work through the comprehension questions in order, as they build in difficulty. The first four questions are worth 2 to 4 marks each and can be answered relatively quickly; aim to spend no more than 10 to 12 minutes on questions 1 to 5 combined. Question 6 is also brief. Question 7, on character, is worth **8 marks**, so allow at least 8 to 10 minutes to write a thoughtful, multi-point answer that refers to specific evidence from the passage.

The final question (question 8) carries **10 marks** and asks you to explain how the author makes the events vivid and exciting. You should aim to write a structured response covering at least four or five distinct points about language, imagery, sensory detail, and sentence structure. Budget 12 to 15 minutes for this answer. Underline or highlight key words and phrases in the passage that show Lewis's technique before you begin writing.

In **Section B**, use the first two or three minutes to plan your story. Jot down a quick beginning, middle, and end, and think of two or three sensory details you can weave in (the smell of salt, the cold stone of the castle, the crash of waves). Write clearly in paragraphs, and save two or three minutes at the end to proofread for spelling, punctuation, and sense.

## What to revise alongside this paper

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Alongside this paper, practise reading comprehension on other extracts from classic children's literature, especially fantasy and adventure novels. Books such as *The Lion*,

the Witch and the Wardrobe, The Hobbit, and The Borrowers all feature rich descriptive language and clear characterisation that mirror the style tested here.

For creative writing, work on short story composition using picture prompts or single-word titles. Focus on using the five senses to bring settings to life, varying sentence length for effect, and structuring stories with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Practise editing your own work to improve vocabulary and eliminate errors.

Grammar and punctuation revision is essential. Make sure you are confident using commas in lists and to separate clauses, apostrophes for contractions and possession, and capital letters for proper nouns and sentence openings. Revise how to write direct speech correctly, as this often appears in both comprehension answers and narrative writing.

## Key terms

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**Inference, Retrieval, Characterisation, Authorial technique, Figurative language, Sensory description, Imagery, Narrative voice, Paragraph structure, Punctuation (capital letters, full stops, commas, apostrophes, question marks), Vivid language, Fantasy fiction, C.S. Lewis, Story planning, Proofreading**

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# WCCS

8+ Comprehension & Composition

## **SPECIMEN PAPER 2**

Time allowed: 1 hour 10 mins

Total marks: 50



Name.....

Current School.....

**SECTION A – COMPREHENSION (50 MINS) (35 marks)**

The following extract is from *The Magician's Nephew* by C.S. Lewis. In the book, Digory and Polly, children who are next-door neighbours in London, are carried by magic to a strange new world. Read the extract **CAREFULLY** and then answer the questions in the spaces provided.

5 What they noticed first was the light. It wasn't like sunlight, and it wasn't like electric light, or lamps, or candles, or any other light they had ever seen. It was a dull, rather red light, not at all cheerful. It was steady and did not flicker. They were standing on a flat paved surface and buildings rose all around them. There was no roof overhead; they were in a sort of courtyard. The sky was extraordinarily dark – a blue that was almost black. When you had seen that sky you wondered that there should be any light at all.

10 "It's very funny weather here," said Digory. "I wonder if we've arrived just in time for a thunderstorm; or an eclipse."

"I don't like it," said Polly.

15 Both of them, without quite knowing why, were talking in whispers. And though there was no reason why they should still go on holding hands after their jump, they didn't let go.

20 The walls rose very high all round that courtyard. They had many great windows in them, windows without glass, through which you saw nothing but black darkness. Lower down there were great pillared arches, yawning blackly like the mouths of railway tunnels. It was rather cold.

25 The stone of which everything was built seemed to be red, but that might only be because of the curious light. It was obviously very old. Many of the flat stones that paved the courtyard had cracks across them. None of them fitted closely together and the sharp corners were all worn off. One of the arched doorways was half filled up with rubble. The two children kept on turning round and round to look at the different sides of the courtyard. One reason was that they were afraid of somebody – or something – looking out  
30 of those windows at them when their backs were turned.

***Read the passage again carefully, and then answer the questions that follow in full sentences.***

1. What do the children notice first in the strange new world in which they find themselves? (1 marks)

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2. When the author says *‘When you had seen that sky you wondered that there should be any light at all’* (lines 7-8) what do you think he means? (4 marks)

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3. What does Digory think may explain the weather? (lines 10-11) (4 marks)

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4. Read lines 15-18 again. Which two things suggest that the children are frightened? (4 marks)

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5. What can the children see through the windows? (lines 20-21) (2 marks)

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6. In lines 21-22 the great pillared arches are described as *yawning blackly like the mouths of railway tunnels*. In your own words, explain what this means. (4 marks)

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7. Read lines 24-28. How do we know that the stone of which everything was built is old? (lines 18-28) (4 marks)

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8. **Read the whole passage again.** Looking carefully at words and images, explain how the author makes the place seem mysterious and scary. (7 marks)

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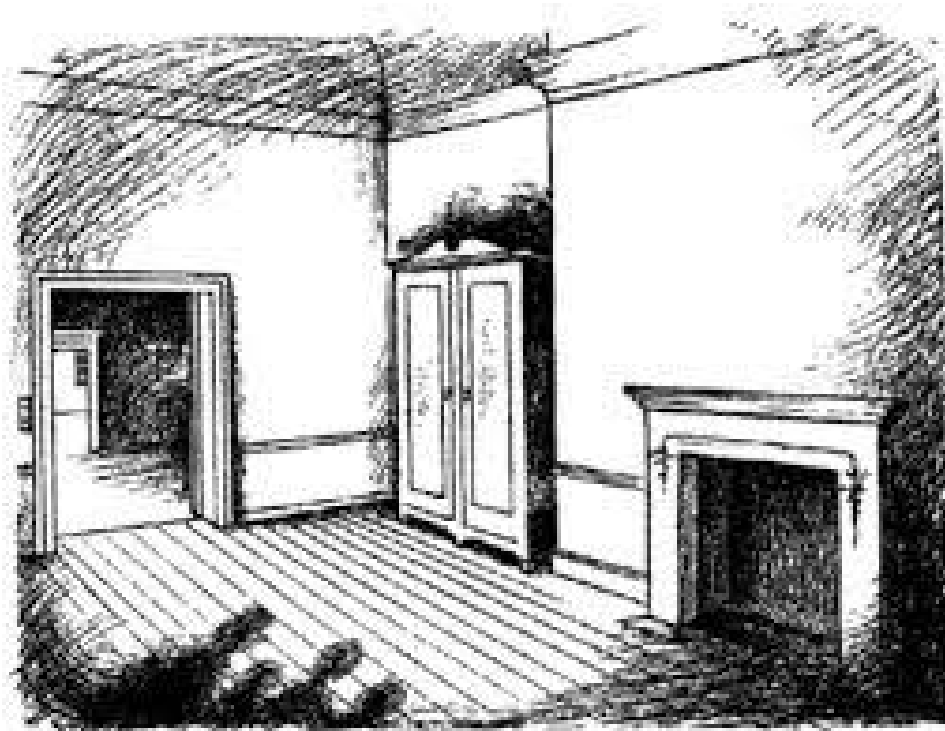
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**SECTION B – COMPOSITION (20 MINS) (20 marks)**

***Write a story entitled The magic world behind the wardrobe***

- Use the picture below to help you.
- Use your five senses: what do you see, smell, touch, hear and taste?
- Write in paragraphs.
- Write in full sentences, using capital letters, commas, apostrophes, question marks and full stops.
- Don't write a long story; writing an interesting one – thinking carefully about the words you choose.



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# Paper Notes: 8+ English Specimen Paper (8+ English Specimen Paper (2025))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is an **8+ entrance examination specimen paper** in English, published by **Westminster Cathedral Choir School** for candidates preparing for entry into Year 4. The paper is divided into two sections: a **50-minute comprehension section** worth 35 marks, and a **20-minute composition section** worth 20 marks, for a total of 50 marks and 1 hour 10 minutes of working time.

The comprehension passage is taken from **The Magician's Nephew** by C.S. Lewis, a fantasy novel in which two children, Digory and Polly, are transported by magic to a mysterious and decaying world. The questions test close reading, inference, language analysis, and the ability to explain the author's use of descriptive techniques to create atmosphere. Eight questions of varying difficulty guide candidates through literal recall, explanation of imagery, and a longer evaluative response about how Lewis builds tension and mystery.

This paper is tailored for 7- to 8-year-old children applying to Westminster Cathedral Choir School and sits at the upper end of Key Stage 1 into early Key Stage 2 literacy expectations. The choice of a classic children's fantasy text and the emphasis on imaginative writing in the composition task reflect the school's academic tradition and its interest in candidates who can engage thoughtfully with rich, literary language.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper opens with **Section A (Comprehension)**, worth 35 marks and to be completed in 50 minutes. Candidates read a single prose extract of approximately 30 lines and answer **eight questions** printed in the answer booklet. Marks allocated range from 1 mark for a simple retrieval question to 7 marks for the final evaluative question on language and atmosphere. Most questions award between 2 and 4 marks. Dotted lines are provided for written answers, and the rubric specifies that all answers must be written in full sentences.

**Section B (Composition)** follows, worth 20 marks and to be completed in 20 minutes. Candidates write a short story entitled *The magic world behind the wardrobe*, inspired by a line drawing of an empty room with an open wardrobe. The task prompt encourages use of the five senses and emphasises quality over length, with clear instructions on punctuation, paragraphing, and sentence structure.

The paper ends with a blank page. The overall allocation is roughly two-thirds of the marks and time to comprehension, one-third to creative writing, a balance typical of early independent school entrance assessments that value both analytical and imaginative skills.

## Topics covered

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- Reading comprehension of a classic children's fantasy prose extract from C.S. Lewis
- Close textual analysis: identifying what the children notice and why they are frightened
- Inference and deduction: interpreting the phrase 'you wondered that there should be any light at all'
- Explanation of simile: 'yawning blackly like the mouths of railway tunnels'
- Evidence of ageing and decay: describing worn stones, cracks, rubble, and disrepair
- Evaluative writing on the author's use of descriptive language, imagery, and atmosphere to create mystery and fear
- Creative narrative composition with a prescribed title and stimulus illustration
- Application of sensory detail: seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, tasting
- Paragraph structure and full-sentence writing under timed conditions
- Accurate use of punctuation: capital letters, commas, apostrophes, question marks, full stops

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Read the C.S. Lewis extract twice before attempting any questions, once for overall understanding and once to pick out descriptive detail and mood.
- Practise explaining imagery and similes in your own words without simply repeating the author's phrasing; examiners want to see you understand the comparison.
- For the final 7-mark question, aim for at least three clear points with evidence from the text, and use words like 'dark', 'old', 'whisper', 'afraid' to show you understand the atmosphere.
- In the composition section, spend the first two minutes planning a simple beginning, middle, and end so your story has structure.
- Use ambitious vocabulary and vary sentence length in your writing; a mix of short, punchy sentences and longer descriptive ones keeps the reader interested.
- Leave two minutes at the end of each section to read through your work and correct any spelling, punctuation, or missing words.
- Practise writing by hand under time pressure; 20 minutes goes quickly, so aim for quality and neatness rather than filling every line.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Copying phrases directly from the passage when asked to explain 'in your own words', which loses marks for lack of independent expression.
- Missing the second part of a two-part question (e.g. 'Which two things...') and only giving one answer, leaving marks on the table.
- Writing a composition that is too long and unfinished; better to write a shorter, complete story with a clear ending than to run out of time mid-sentence.
- Forgetting to use paragraphs in the creative writing task; the prompt explicitly asks for them, and no paragraphs will cost marks.
- Neglecting sensory detail in the composition; the instructions highlight the five senses, and ignoring this guidance misses an easy way to impress.
- In the inference question about the sky being 'almost black', giving a literal answer rather than explaining the contradiction between darkness and light.

## Exam technique

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Divide your time carefully. You have **50 minutes for eight comprehension questions**, so roughly six minutes per question, but the final 7-mark question deserves at least ten

minutes. Start with Question 1 to build confidence, then work through in order. If a question stumps you, leave space and return to it after attempting the rest.

In the composition section, **20 minutes is tight**. Use the first two minutes to jot down three or four ideas (perhaps a character's name, a magical object, a problem, and a resolution), then write steadily. Aim for two or three well-developed paragraphs rather than five scrappy ones. Keep an eye on the clock and reserve the final two minutes for proofreading; simple spelling and punctuation errors are easily fixed if you check.

Answer every question, even if you are unsure. In English comprehension, partial credit is often available for a sensible attempt. If asked to find 'two things', make sure you give two distinct points. For the evaluative question on language and atmosphere, structure your answer with clear points (e.g. 'The author uses dark colours...', 'The simile of railway tunnels...', 'The children's whispering shows...') and quote short phrases from the text to support each point. Quality of explanation matters more than length.

## **What to revise alongside this paper**

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To prepare fully for this paper, practise reading **classic children's literature** such as other works by C.S. Lewis (the Narnia series), Roald Dahl's novels, or extracts from E. Nesbit and Philippa Pearce. These texts share the rich descriptive style and imaginative settings that appear in 8+ comprehension papers. Work on identifying and explaining literary techniques like simile, metaphor, and personification, as these are tested explicitly.

For composition, explore story-writing exercises that require sensory description and a clear narrative arc. Practise planning and writing short stories (one or two sides of A4) in 20 minutes, using prompts similar to this paper's title. Focus on varied sentence openers, ambitious vocabulary, and careful punctuation. Revision of basic grammar (apostrophes for possession and contraction, correct comma placement) will pay dividends.

Broaden your reading to include poetry and non-fiction for variety, but keep returning to narrative prose extracts from established children's authors. Westminster Cathedral Choir School values literary engagement, so familiarity with well-crafted storytelling and an ability to discuss how writers create mood and character will serve candidates well.

## Key terms

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**Comprehension, Inference, Simile, Imagery, Atmosphere, Narrative voice, Descriptive language, Sensory detail, Paragraph structure, Punctuation (capital letters, full stops, commas, apostrophes, question marks), C.S. Lewis, The Magician's Nephew, Evaluative writing, Creative composition**

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# WCCS

8+ Punctuation

## **SPECIMEN PAPER**

Time allowed: 30 mins

Total marks: 30

Name.....

Current School.....

**PUNCTUATION (30 MINS)** (30 marks)

**Re-write the following passage adding capital letters, full stops, apostrophes, commas and question marks.**

**You should end up with ten sentences.**

what should he include in the picnic david threw in some sandwiches a bag of crisps two apples and a bottle of water would that be enough david and his friends were going to a concert in hyde park and they might be waiting around for a while before the bands performance perhaps he should take some more food and drink it was a hot sticky humid day he would certainly need a few hours water supply to keep him hydrated might he also need an umbrella the forecast was for showers in london david added another bottle of water two mars bars and a rainproof jacket to his bag called his friends mobile and headed off to the concert

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# Paper Notes: 8+ English Specimen Paper (8+ English Specimen Paper (2025))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is an **8+ Punctuation specimen paper** published by **Westminster Cathedral Choir School** in London for entry to Year 4. The paper is designed to assess candidates' ability to apply fundamental punctuation rules, capital letters, and sentence boundaries in continuous prose.

The entire **30-minute paper** consists of a single extended task worth **30 marks**. Candidates are presented with an unpunctuated passage of approximately 120 words about a boy preparing for a concert and must rewrite it correctly, dividing the text into exactly **ten sentences**. The passage requires the addition of capital letters, full stops, apostrophes, commas, and question marks.

This specimen paper is suitable for children in Year 3 preparing to sit the Westminster Cathedral Choir School 8+ entrance examination. The task tests core literacy skills expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and beginning of Key Stage 2, making it an excellent benchmark for schools and families wishing to understand the standard required for selective independent school entry at this level.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper has a straightforward, single-task structure. Candidates receive a continuous block of text with **no punctuation or capital letters**, running to approximately 120 words. The text tells a simple narrative about a character called David packing for a concert in Hyde Park.

Candidates must rewrite the passage on the printed lines provided, inserting all necessary punctuation and capitals to create **ten grammatically correct sentences**. The mark allocation is **30 marks in total**, and the time allowed is **30 minutes**, suggesting approximately three marks per sentence or one mark per minute of working time.

The answer lines span four pages, giving ample space for neat handwriting. The layout is clear, with generous spacing, reflecting the age of the candidates and the expectation that children will write slowly and carefully. There are no other sections or question types; the entire assessment focuses on punctuation accuracy and sentence construction.

## Topics covered

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- Capitalisation of proper nouns (David, Hyde Park, London, Mars)
- Sentence boundaries and full stops to separate complete statements
- Question marks to punctuate direct questions ('Would that be enough?', 'Might he also need an umbrella?')
- Commas in lists (separating items such as sandwiches, crisps, apples, water)
- Apostrophes for possession (the band's performance, friend's mobile)
- Commas to separate adjectives (hot, sticky, humid day)
- Capitalisation at the start of sentences
- Recognition of complete clauses and independent sentences within narrative prose
- Use of commas to mark off subordinate or additional information
- Punctuation of conversational or informal narrative style

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Practise rewriting unpunctuated passages from story books by removing the punctuation yourself and then putting it back in from memory.
- Focus on identifying where one complete thought ends and another begins; read the passage aloud to hear natural sentence breaks.
- Learn the rules for apostrophes of possession (e.g. the band's performance means the performance of the band).
- Revise how to punctuate lists, making sure commas separate each item and the final item follows 'and'.
- Familiarise yourself with proper nouns that always need capitals (people's names, place names, brand names like Mars).
- Count your sentences carefully as you write to make sure you end up with exactly ten, as specified in the rubric.
- Look out for direct questions in the passage and remember that these always require a question mark at the end.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Failing to count sentences and ending up with nine or eleven instead of the required ten, often by missing a natural break or splitting one sentence unnecessarily.
- Omitting the apostrophe in possessive forms such as 'the band's performance' or 'his friend's mobile', or placing it incorrectly.
- Forgetting to capitalise proper nouns like Hyde Park, London, Mars, or David, particularly mid-sentence when focus is on punctuation.
- Using a comma splice to join two independent clauses instead of a full stop or semicolon, particularly in longer compound sentences.
- Neglecting to use question marks for direct questions ('Would that be enough?'), instead treating them as statements.
- Overusing or underusing commas in lists, for example forgetting the comma before 'and' or scattering commas where they are not needed.

## Exam technique

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Begin by reading the entire passage through carefully to understand the story and identify natural sentence breaks. Look for capital letters at the start of proper nouns and sentence openers, and think about where full stops should fall. **Count your sentences** as you write to ensure you reach exactly ten.

Work methodically from the beginning to the end rather than jumping around. Write neatly and legibly on the lines provided, leaving space between words and punctuation marks. Check each sentence to confirm it expresses a complete thought and includes a subject and verb.

Save five minutes at the end to re-read your rewritten passage from start to finish. Check that every sentence begins with a capital letter, ends with the correct punctuation (full stop or question mark), and that all proper nouns are capitalised. Verify apostrophes are in the right place and that commas in lists are correctly used. With 30 minutes for 30 marks, you have one minute per mark, so pacing is generous if you stay calm and organised.

## What to revise alongside this paper

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Students preparing for this paper should revise the full range of **basic punctuation marks**, including exclamation marks and speech marks, even though they are not tested here. Understanding how to punctuate direct speech will consolidate knowledge of sentence boundaries and capitals.

Practise identifying **simple, compound, and complex sentences** to strengthen awareness of where clauses begin and end. Work on spotting subordinate clauses introduced by conjunctions (because, although, when) and understanding how they affect punctuation.

Broaden vocabulary and spelling skills alongside punctuation. Westminster Cathedral Choir School's 8+ entrance assessment is likely to include separate spelling and comprehension components, so integrating punctuation practice with wider literacy revision will build confidence and fluency across all areas of the English paper.

## Key terms

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**Capital letter, Full stop, Question mark, Apostrophe, Comma, Proper noun, Sentence boundary, Possessive apostrophe, List punctuation, Adjective series, Independent clause, Complete sentence, Sentence construction, Punctuation accuracy, Narrative prose**

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# WCCS

8+ Punctuation

Time allowed: 30 mins

Total marks: 30

Name.....

Current School.....

**PUNCTUATION (30 mins) (30 marks)**

**Re-write the following passage adding capital letters, full stops, apostrophes, exclamation marks, commas and question marks.**

**You should end up with ten sentences.**

what a lovely morning the sun was shining the birds were singing peters sister was away all morning and he was going to play with his best friend antonio what could possibly go wrong peter ran downstairs collected his belongings snatched his dads keys and ran out of the door how could it have started raining so suddenly he dived into his parents car and decided to eat his packed lunch while waiting for the rains steady pattering to stop he suddenly realised that he had no sandwiches but only some biscuits an apple two pieces of cheese and a can of coke in his bag what a disgusting breakfast just when he started to nibble the dry stale salty biscuits he heard a giggling from the boot it was his sisters familiar laugh

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# Paper Notes: 8+ English Specimen Paper (8+ English Specimen Paper (2025))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is **Westminster Cathedral Choir School's 8+ English Specimen Paper**, designed for children in Year 3 applying for entry into Year 4. The paper focuses exclusively on **punctuation skills**, testing a candidate's ability to correctly apply capital letters, full stops, apostrophes, exclamation marks, commas and question marks to an unpunctuated passage.

The format is straightforward: students are given a single continuous narrative text of approximately 150 words with no punctuation or capitals, and they must rewrite it correctly as **ten separate sentences**. The task requires careful reading to identify sentence boundaries, questions, exclamations and possessive forms. The story concerns a boy named Peter, his sister, and an unexpected turn of events involving rain and a hidden giggling presence.

This specimen paper is particularly suitable for younger 11-plus candidates beginning their preparation journey, or for any child in Years 3-4 who needs focused practice on punctuation conventions. The generous allocation of writing lines (four pages) allows plenty of space for neat handwriting and corrections, which is appropriate for this age group.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper consists of **a single extended task worth 30 marks**, to be completed in **30 minutes**. The rubric is clear and specific: candidates must add capital letters, full stops, apostrophes, exclamation marks, commas and question marks to the unpunctuated passage, and the result must comprise exactly ten sentences.

The passage itself is presented as a continuous block of around 150 words without any punctuation marks or capital letters. It tells a mini-narrative about Peter's morning plans, sudden rain, his makeshift breakfast in the car, and the surprise discovery of his sister in the boot. The story structure naturally lends itself to questions ("What could possibly go wrong?"), exclamations ("What a lovely morning!"), and possessive apostrophes ("Peter's sister", "his dad's keys").

Four full pages of dotted answer lines follow, giving candidates ample room to write out their corrected version with clear handwriting. The layout is uncluttered, with space at the top for the candidate's name and current school.

## Topics covered

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- Capital letters at the start of sentences and for proper nouns (Peter, Antonio)
- Full stops to mark sentence boundaries in continuous prose
- Apostrophes of possession (singular possessive forms such as "dad's keys", "Peter's sister", "sister's laugh")
- Question marks to punctuate direct and rhetorical questions
- Exclamation marks for sentences expressing strong emotion or surprise
- Commas in lists of three or more items (food items in the lunch bag)
- Commas to separate clauses and improve clarity in longer sentences
- Identifying sentence boundaries by recognising complete grammatical units of meaning
- Recognising and punctuating narrative prose with embedded questions and exclamations

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Read the entire passage aloud first to hear where natural pauses and sentence breaks occur, before picking up your pen.
- Count your sentences as you write them out to ensure you reach exactly ten, as specified in the rubric.
- Look carefully for proper nouns like Peter and Antonio, which always require capital letters regardless of their position in the sentence.
- Check every instance of "peters" or "dads" or "parents" to see whether it needs an apostrophe for possession or not.
- Identify rhetorical questions ("What could possibly go wrong?") and direct questions, both requiring question marks.
- Practise writing out lists with commas, remembering the rule for three or more items in a series.
- Leave time at the end to reread your corrected version and check you have used all six required punctuation types.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Forgetting the apostrophe in possessive forms, writing "peters sister" or "dads keys" instead of "Peter's sister" and "dad's keys".
- Putting a comma where a full stop is needed, creating run-on sentences that should be split into two or more separate sentences.
- Missing the question marks on "What could possibly go wrong?" or "How could it have started raining so suddenly?" and using full stops instead.
- Omitting commas in the list of food items ("biscuits, an apple, two pieces of cheese and a can of coke") or placing them incorrectly.
- Using an apostrophe incorrectly in "parents car" to write "parent's" when it should be "parents'" (plural possessive), though the singular "his dad's keys" earlier suggests one parent.
- Splitting the passage into more or fewer than ten sentences, failing to meet the specific structural requirement stated in the rubric.

## Exam technique

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Start by reading the entire unpunctuated passage carefully, perhaps twice, to understand the narrative flow and identify where sentences naturally begin and end. Since you must produce exactly **ten sentences**, it helps to mark lightly in pencil where you think each sentence break should fall before you begin writing out the final version.

Allocate your 30 minutes sensibly: spend the first 5 minutes reading and planning, around 20 minutes writing out your corrected passage neatly, and reserve the final 5 minutes for checking. Use this checking time to verify you have included all six types of punctuation mentioned in the rubric (capitals, full stops, apostrophes, exclamation marks, commas and question marks) and that your sentence count is correct.

Write clearly and legibly, as presentation matters at this level. If you make a small error, cross it out neatly with a single line rather than scribbling, then write the correction above or beside it. Examiners at 8-plus level expect tidy work that shows care and attention to detail.

## What to revise alongside this paper

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Before attempting this paper, ensure you are confident with the basic rules of **sentence construction**: every sentence must have a subject and a verb and express a complete thought. Younger students sometimes struggle to distinguish between sentences and phrases, so practising sentence identification exercises will help.

Once you have mastered this level of punctuation, move on to practising **direct speech punctuation**, including speech marks, commas before and after reporting clauses, and new paragraphs for new speakers. Apostrophes for contraction ("it's", "don't", "we're") are another natural next step, along with contrasting them clearly with possessive apostrophes.

Broader 8-plus English preparation should include short **creative writing tasks** and simple comprehension passages, as most schools set a mix of skills. Handwriting practice is particularly important at this age; neat, legible writing under timed conditions makes a strong impression and reduces the risk of misreading your own corrections.

## Key terms

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**Capital letter, Full stop, Apostrophe, Possessive apostrophe, Question mark, Exclamation mark, Comma, Sentence boundary, Proper noun, Clause, List punctuation, Run-on sentence, Rhetorical question, Punctuation mark**

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# WCCS

8+ Spelling

## **SPECIMEN PAPER**

Time allowed: 15 mins

Total marks: 20

Name.....

Current School.....

**SPELLING (15 MINS) (20 marks)**

**Re-write the following ten sentences, correcting any spelling mistakes you find.**

1. Jonathan said that he was too bizzy to compleat his homework.

.....

2. The norty boy pretended that he had flicked the rubber by acident.

.....

3. The oposite of strenth is weakness.

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4. It is too cold to ride my bicicle in Febuary.

.....

5. Look after your possessions or they will quickly disapear.

.....

6. The Police did not beleive that Carol could not remember her adress.

.....

7. Ireland is a very beautiful ireland: a truly speshal place.

.....

8. The British Library has a peculiar smell.

.....

9. Baby John did not apear to understand that the medicin was good for him.

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10. The mistakes in this sentance are actualy obvious.

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# Paper Notes: 8+ English Specimen Paper (8+ English Specimen Paper (2025))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is a **specimen spelling paper** designed by **Westminster Cathedral Choir School** for candidates sitting the **8+ entrance examination** (Year 4 entry). The paper focuses exclusively on spelling accuracy within the context of complete sentences, requiring students to identify and correct errors embedded in natural prose.

The task consists of **ten sentences**, each containing between one and three deliberate spelling mistakes. Students must rewrite every sentence with all errors corrected, demonstrating both recognition of misspelt words and recall of their correct forms. The errors range from common phonetic confusions (bizzy, compleat) to tricky irregular spellings (Febuary, beleive) and proper noun capitalisation (ireland appearing twice in one sentence, the second time incorrectly lowercase).

This paper is intended for children aged seven to eight who are preparing for competitive independent school entry. The vocabulary level is accessible but demanding, including words like possessions, peculiar, and medicine that extend beyond everyday writing. The format rewards careful proofreading and systematic checking rather than speed alone.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper is a single-section assessment worth **20 marks in total**, to be completed in **15 minutes**. Ten numbered sentences are presented in succession, each printed with deliberate spelling errors that candidates must identify and correct by rewriting the sentence in full on the dotted lines provided.

Each sentence varies in length and complexity. Some contain a single error (sentence 8 has none, serving as a trap for over-correction), while others contain two or three mistakes requiring correction. The mark allocation is not explicitly broken down per sentence in the rubric, though it is reasonable to infer that each error spotted and corrected earns one mark, given the total of 20 marks across ten sentences.

The paper opens with a header stating the school logo (WCCS), the paper title, time limit, and total marks. Spaces for the candidate's name and current school appear at the bottom of the first page. The layout is clean and uncluttered, with generous line spacing to accommodate handwritten corrections.

## Topics covered

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- Common phonetic misspellings: homophones and near-homophones such as 'bizzy' for busy, 'compleat' for complete
- Double-letter confusion: errors in words with doubled consonants (norty/naughty, acident/accident, possessions/possessions, disapear/disappear, beleive/believe, adress/address)
- Vowel substitution and omission: recognising incorrect vowel patterns in words like 'oposite' (opposite) and 'strenth' (strength)
- Irregular noun and month spellings: Febuary (February), bicicle (bicycle), medicin (medicine)
- Proper noun capitalisation: identifying that 'ireland' should be capitalised as Ireland in both instances within the same sentence
- Adverb formation: recognising the misspelling 'actualy' instead of actually
- Variant spellings and spelling conventions: distinguishing British English standard forms (speshal/special)
- Contextual proofreading: reading sentences for meaning to ensure corrections make grammatical and semantic sense
- Recognition of correctly spelled sentences: avoiding unnecessary 'corrections' where no error exists (sentence 8)

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Practise reading each sentence aloud slowly before writing it out. Your ear will often catch phonetic errors (bizzy, compleat) that your eye might skip over when reading silently.
- Learn common spelling rules for doubling consonants, especially in words ending in a single consonant after a single vowel (stop/stopped). This helps spot errors like 'acident' and 'disappear'.
- Revise months of the year, days of the week, and common proper nouns (countries, cities, institutions). These frequently trip up younger candidates because they rely on memory rather than phonetic spelling.
- Keep a spelling journal of words you have misspelt in practice papers. Group them by error type (double letters, silent letters, vowel mistakes) and review the list weekly.
- Check every sentence for proper nouns and ensure they start with a capital letter. In sentence 7, 'Ireland' appears twice and both must be capitalised, even mid-sentence.
- Time yourself strictly during practice. Fifteen minutes for ten sentences means roughly 90 seconds per sentence, so you cannot afford to dwell too long on any single word.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Rushing to rewrite sentences without first reading them fully, missing the second or third error in longer sentences like number 7 (Ireland/ireland/speshal).
- Over-correcting sentence 8, which is entirely correct. Students sometimes invent errors in 'peculiar' or 'Library', wasting time and losing marks for introducing mistakes.
- Confusing homophones or near-homophones under time pressure: writing 'to' instead of 'too' in sentence 1, or missing the difference between 'their' and contextually correct words.
- Misspelling words while correcting others. For instance, fixing 'bizzy' to 'busy' but then writing 'compleet' instead of 'complete', netting no overall improvement.
- Failing to capitalise proper nouns consistently. Sentence 7 contains 'ireland' appearing twice (once correctly as Ireland, once wrongly lowercase), and both instances must be fixed.
- Leaving out entire words or adding unnecessary ones when rewriting, which can introduce new grammatical errors even if the spelling is corrected.

## Exam technique

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Read through all ten sentences once before you begin writing. This initial scan helps you spot patterns in the types of errors (phonetic mistakes, double letters, proper nouns) and primes your brain for what to look for. It also ensures you do not miss sentence 8, which contains no errors and should be copied exactly as printed.

Allocate roughly **90 seconds per sentence**, but be flexible. Sentences with only one error (like sentence 3) can be handled more quickly, freeing up extra time for trickier items like sentence 7, which contains three mistakes including a repeated proper noun. Write neatly and legibly; if an examiner cannot read your corrected spelling, you will not receive the mark even if you knew the right answer.

Always rewrite the entire sentence rather than just correcting isolated words. This demonstrates full understanding and prevents ambiguity about which letters you have changed. If you finish early, reread every sentence you have written to check for accidental new errors introduced during transcription, and confirm that all proper nouns are capitalised and all word endings are complete.

## What to revise alongside this paper

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Extend your spelling revision by practising **common exception words** from the Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 curriculum, focusing on high-frequency words with irregular patterns (because, people, water, again). Many 8+ papers draw on the same core vocabulary lists used in primary school statutory assessments.

Work on **sentence construction and punctuation** alongside spelling. Being able to recognise grammatically correct sentences will help you avoid introducing new errors when rewriting, and will prepare you for the comprehension and creative writing components of the 8+ English entrance exam. Practise copying sentences accurately under timed conditions to build transcription speed and accuracy.

Investigate **word families and morphology** (roots, prefixes, suffixes). Understanding that 'appear' becomes 'disappear' with the prefix dis- and that 'actual' becomes 'actually' with the suffix -ly will reduce your reliance on rote memorisation and help you tackle unfamiliar words in future papers.

## Key terms

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**Phonetic spelling, Homophones, Double consonants, Silent letters, Proper nouns, Capitalisation, Vowel digraphs, Suffix, Prefix, Proofreading, Transcription, Standard spelling conventions, British English orthography, Irregular spellings, Adverb formation**

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# WCCS

8+ Spelling

## **SPECIMEN PAPER 2**

Time allowed: 15 mins

Total marks: 20

Name.....

Current School.....

**SPELLING (15 MINS) (20 marks)**

**Re-write the following ten sentences, correcting any spelling mistakes you find.**

1. Danny wanted to billed his own bisickle.

.....

2. You can't draw a sircle with strait line.

.....

3. My favorit food is potatos.

.....

4. You must desid which groop to join.

.....

5. To answer your queshtion, you must visit the libreey.

.....

6. Britain is an iland on erth.

.....

7. Occasionally the boy at the back of the class was norty.

.....

8. You can't find fresh froot in Feburay.

.....

9. Peter's lack of noledge was putting him under preshure.

.....

.....

10. This sentance woz the easiest.

.....

# Paper Notes: 8+ English Specimen Paper (8+ English Specimen Paper (2025))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

## Overview

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This is **Westminster Cathedral Choir School's 8+ Spelling Specimen Paper 2**, designed for candidates preparing for **Year 4 entry** at this prestigious London school. The paper consists of **ten sentences**, each containing deliberate spelling errors that students must identify and correct by rewriting the sentences in full. The test is timed at **15 minutes** and carries **20 marks**, making it a focused assessment of spelling accuracy under timed conditions.

The spelling errors range from common phonetic mistakes (such as 'bisickle' for bicycle and 'sircle' for circle) to more challenging words involving irregular patterns and silent letters ('libreey' for library, 'noledge' for knowledge). The vocabulary includes everyday words alongside more sophisticated terms such as 'occasionally' and 'pressure', reflecting the level expected of strong Year 3 pupils applying for cathedral choir school places.

This specimen paper gives families a clear indication of the spelling standards Westminster Cathedral Choir School expects at 8+ entry. It serves both as a diagnostic tool to identify gaps in a child's spelling knowledge and as a practice resource for developing accuracy and speed in correcting written errors.

## How this paper is organised

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The paper is straightforward in layout, presenting **ten numbered sentences** on a single page, each requiring full rewriting with corrected spellings. Students write their answers on dotted lines provided beneath each sentence. The header clearly states the **15-minute time limit** and **20-mark total**, suggesting an average of two marks per sentence and approximately 90 seconds per question.

There are no sub-sections or varying question types. The uniform format means children face a consistent task throughout: read, identify errors, and rewrite correctly. Some sentences contain **one spelling error** (sentence 3 has 'favorit' and 'potatos', so potentially two), whilst others such as sentence 9 may have two mistakes ('noledge' and 'preshure'), requiring careful attention.

The paper requires candidates to provide their name and current school at the top, standard information for entrance examination administration. The simplicity of the

structure places the emphasis entirely on spelling competence rather than comprehension or written composition.

## Topics covered

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- Correction of common phonetic spelling errors in everyday vocabulary (bicycle, circle, straight)
- Plural formation rules, particularly irregular plurals and words ending in 'o' (potatoes)
- Words with silent letters and unusual letter patterns (island, earth, naughty)
- Adverbs and words with suffix patterns, including double consonants (occasionally)
- Vocabulary involving 'qu' patterns and common library/academic words (question, library)
- Month names and calendar vocabulary (February)
- Abstract nouns with tricky phonetic patterns (knowledge, pressure)
- Homophones and words confused with phonetic spelling (was versus 'woz', sentence)
- Common verb forms and decision-related vocabulary (decide, group)
- Food and nutrition vocabulary (favourite, potatoes, fruit)

## How to use this paper for revision

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- Practise writing out the **statutory Year 3 and Year 4 spelling lists** from the National Curriculum, as many of these errors reflect words from those lists.
- Keep a personal spelling journal where you write out words you find difficult three times each, focusing on the tricky letter patterns.
- Use the **look, cover, write, check** method daily with ten words at a time, building up your visual memory of correct spellings.
- Read each sentence aloud slowly before writing your answer, as this helps you hear whether a word sounds wrong or looks unfamiliar.
- Pay special attention to **silent letters** (island, knowledge) and **double consonants** (occasionally) as these are frequent error points.
- Learn spelling rules for **plurals** (potato becomes potatoes, not potatos) and common prefixes and suffixes.
- Time yourself with similar sentences at home so that 90 seconds per question feels comfortable and you do not rush mistakes at the end.

## Common mistakes to avoid

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- Writing phonetically rather than learning the standard spelling, for example 'sircle' instead of circle or 'straite' instead of straight, which requires knowledge of vowel digraphs.
- Forgetting the **silent 's' in island** or the 'k' in knowledge, both of which are invisible in pronunciation but essential in written English.
- Adding 's' instead of 'es' to form plurals of words ending in 'o', such as writing 'potatos' rather than **potatoes**.
- Omitting the double consonant in **occasionally** or writing 'ocasionally' with only one 'c', a very common error even among older pupils.
- Confusing homophones or informal phonetic spellings like 'woz' for was, which reflects spoken dialect but is incorrect in standard written English.

## Exam technique

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Start by **reading each sentence carefully** before you begin writing, as some sentences contain more than one error and you need to spot all mistakes to gain full marks. Work steadily through the paper in order rather than jumping around, as the consistent format rewards a systematic approach and you are less likely to accidentally skip a question.

Allocate roughly **90 seconds per sentence**, which gives you 15 minutes total with no time for checking. Because of this tight timing, write your corrected sentence neatly the first time, avoiding the need to cross out and rewrite. If you are unsure about a spelling, write your best attempt and move on rather than stalling, as leaving a blank guarantees no marks whereas an educated guess might earn credit.

Pay close attention to **capital letters, full stops and apostrophes** as you rewrite, since the task requires you to produce a correctly written sentence, not just correct the misspelt word in isolation. If time permits in the final 30 seconds, glance back over your answers to check you have rewritten every sentence fully and have not left any dotted lines blank.

## What to revise alongside this paper

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Alongside spelling, students preparing for **8+ English entrance** at Westminster Cathedral Choir School should revise basic punctuation rules, including the correct use of capital letters, full stops, question marks and apostrophes for possession and contraction. Sentence construction and grammar fundamentals (such as subject-verb agreement and simple, compound and complex sentences) are often tested in other sections of 8+ papers.

Candidate families should also work on **reading comprehension** and creative writing tasks, as these typically form part of the wider English assessment for independent school entry. Vocabulary development through wide reading is essential: pupils who read regularly encounter correct spellings in context and absorb them more naturally.

To extend beyond this paper, practise **dictation exercises** where an adult reads sentences aloud and the child writes them down, as this mirrors real exam conditions. Spelling games, crosswords and word puzzles can make learning enjoyable whilst reinforcing the patterns and rules that underpin accurate spelling at this level.

## Key terms

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**Phonetic spelling, Silent letters, Vowel digraphs, Plural formation, Double consonants, Homophones, Suffix, Prefix, Standard English, Calendar vocabulary, Abstract nouns, Adverbs, Apostrophes, Statutory spelling lists**

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