

**12+ English**  
**Entrance Examination**  
**2025**



**Time Allowed: 1 hour**

***READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST***

Your answers to this examination should be **written on lined paper**.

Make sure that **your name** is on ***all*** the pieces of paper you use.

This examination consists of:

- **Section A:** A reading passage with comprehension questions;
- **Section B:** A creative writing section.

You must complete **both** Section A and Section B

## **Section A: Comprehension (30 marks)**

*This passage is extracted and adapted from the novel Smith by Leon Garfield. In this extract Smith, a twelve-year-old urchin boy, is being chased by two men who want to get back a precious document that Smith has stolen.*

**Read the following passage carefully; then answer the questions that follow.**

1 Two men — one short, the other tall — who might have been dressed in brown (the street was too dark to be sure), saw Smith hurry violently out of the Red Lion Tavern. They'd been in a doorway nearby. Deep in shadows. They did not think they'd been observed. After a few seconds, they set off together in the wake of the hurrying boy. They followed him for about five minutes along the nearly empty Saffron Hill. Then they lost him. He vanished into the gloomy air. Half a minute later, he was seen — unexpectedly — on their left, at the corner of Cross Street, hurrying like a mad thing. They nodded and set off again.

8 This time, they kept him in sight for nearly ten minutes; then he vanished near Cony Court. They waited awhile, listening, for the narrow streets and alleys hereabouts were very quiet, and even a rat's scuttle would have been heard. Now they entered the shadowy confines of the court — were about three yards within it — when the boy was seen again, now darting desperately back towards Cross Street, his alarmed eyes glittering in the light of some late merchant's window.

13 Back went the two followers, their shoulders hunched — for the dismal night was growing bitterer by the minute — and their feet kissing the cobbles with a grim, urgent passion. They did not let him out of their sight for more than an instant. Portpool Lane — Hatton Garden — Chart Street — back into Saffron Hill, then Holborn Hill — Union Court — Hatton Garden again — and so to Cross Street — Saffron Hill — Cox's Court . . . An intricate necklace of flight was being threaded as the three hurrying figures shifted through and round the lanes, courts, and alleys that lay, ragged and near deserted, under a gnawed rind of the moon.

20 Sometimes there was not above five yards between them; and still they'd lose him for a few seconds — oddly, unaccountably, like he'd gone up in a puff of black smoke... Till there he'd be again, come suddenly from some dark passageway of which nothing had been seen till then.

23 There seemed to be many dozens of these crevices in the black, lumpy substance of the frowning houses — but, sooner or later, there'd be one whose end would be sewn up tight as a sock: a fatal passage from which there'd be no panting scuttle of escape.

26 The boy had left the Red Lion Tavern at half after six by St. Paul's. At a quarter to nine o'clock, the followers leaned up against a wall in Hatton Garden.

28 Breathed one: "Fer God's sake, I can't go another step. Me heart'll burst, I swear it!"

Came a low reply, much charged with pain and phlegm: "All right! We'll go back, some'ow, to the Red Lion. We'll wait there . . . God rot the crafty little perisher!"

31 With painful steps they limped away, so wind-broken by two and a quarter hours of unceasing pursuit that they seemed scarce able to drag their own meagre shadows down the cold street.

## Section A: Comprehension Questions (Total: 20 marks)

1. Re-read **lines 1-8**, identify three words and phrases that show the men are trying not to be seen? *You may answer in bullet points.* **3 marks**
2. In **lines 8-20**, explain how the author creates a **desperate chase**. *You should use quotations to support your ideas.* **5 marks**
3. Using the **whole passage**, and brief quotations in your answer, *explore* how the writer creates anticipation and fear.  
You may want to consider:
  - Key vocabulary used by the author
  - Paragraph and sentence length or punctuation used by the author

**12 marks**

## Section B: Writing Task (Total: 30 marks)

This task will be assessed for content, organisation and accuracy. Marks will be awarded for thoughtful, mature and imaginative description. Writing should be clearly organised in paragraphs with a variety of attractive vocabulary and sentence structures, as well as accurate spelling and punctuation.

1. ***'The menacing bulk of the old church tower was framed against the lightness of the sky.'***

Use the above sentence to begin a descriptive piece of writing about an old town.