



MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL  
DEPARTMENT *of* ENGLISH

## **13+ Entrance Exam: English**

### **Sample Paper**

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

#### Instructions

- Write your name clearly on the top of each sheet of paper
- You must start Section B on a new sheet of paper
- Answer ALL questions in Section A and ONE question in Section B

#### Information

- There are 25 marks available for Section A and 25 marks for Section B
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers

#### Advice

- You are advised to spend 45 minutes on Section A and 45 minutes on Section B

## Section A: Comprehension

*Read the passage that follows. It is by Charles Dickens from Hard Times. Answer all the questions that follow. All questions except Question 1 should be answered in full sentences. Use your own words as far as possible. In this extract Dickens is describing the industrial town of Coketown.*

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got  
5 uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another,  
10 inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it  
15 was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a  
20 religious persuasion built a chapel there — as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done — they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamented examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public  
25 inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild  
30 school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

## QUESTIONS:

- 1) Give another word or phrase with the same meaning as the following words, underlined in the passage:
  - a) Monotonously (line 7)
  - b) Counterpart (line 12)
  - c) Pious (line 21)(3 marks)
- 2) With careful referencing of the text, explain how Dickens uses metaphors and similes in the first paragraph to create a grim impression of Coketown. (5 marks)
- 3) What do you learn about the inhabitants of Coketown from the first paragraph? Answer with close reference to the text. (4 marks)
- 4) Comment on the way that the institutional buildings, such as the jail and the infirmary, have been presented in the final paragraph. (5 marks)
- 5) With careful referencing of the text and varied observations of literary technique, explain how Dickens makes the town seem so oppressive and unpleasant. (5 marks)
- 6) Reread the last sentence of the extract. Why do you think that Dickens ends with the phrase “world without end, Amen” and what is the effect of this on the reader? (3 marks)

Total for this section = 25 marks

**PLEASE TURN OVER FOR SECTION B...**

## **Section B: Composition**

**Start this section on a new sheet of paper.**

Plan your writing carefully before you start and make sure that you give attention to sentence construction, paragraphs, grammar and punctuation during the course of your work. In addition, we are particularly keen to read an engaging and entertaining piece of descriptive work.

**Please answer ONE of the following questions:**

1. Imagine you are one of the inhabitants of Coketown, the industrial town Dickens describes in the passage above. Write a diary entry about a day in your life, imagining what you might see and do; the people you might speak to; and your feelings about your hometown.
2. Write about a town you know in any way you wish.
3. Copy out this sentence and continue the story: “On a dim and foggy day, the coach rolled into Coketown.”

Total for this section = 25 marks

**END OF TEST**