



Independent Schools
Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 11+

ENGLISH

PAPER 1: READING

Monday 6 November 2017

Please read this information before the examination starts.

- You have 5 minutes for reading the passage and questions.
- After that, you may start writing your answers when you are ready to do so. You have 40 minutes for writing.
- Answer all the questions, using full sentences.
- Use your best handwriting and take care with spelling, grammar and punctuation.



Read the passage below and answer the questions opposite.

A girl called Sophie is one of a small group which has travelled on a horse-pulled sleigh to a frozen lake in one of the wildest and most remote areas of Russia.

And now it was Sophie's turn to skate. They were all looking at her. Sophie took another breath of the dream-laden forest air. It felt as if she had very little choice. She must either try to skate or look foolish.

5 She stood up and felt her legs tense as she tried to balance on the narrow blades. But she could stand, just, if she took tiny steps. The trick was to keep moving, like when riding a bicycle.

'I'll just take two more steps,' Sophie thought, 'then one more...' She knew she must fall, surely, the next step, or the next?

10 Then, in one delicious second, Sophie understood what she was meant to do. She pushed rather harder with her right leg and transferred her weight, and felt the skate glide on the ice. Then she transferred her weight and pushed with the left. She had the sensation of feeling free and weightless, of flying and spiralling, of not knowing where she ended and the snow and the forest and the frozen lake began.

15 'I'm a snowflake!' she laughed, putting back her head and opening her mouth to taste the snow on her tongue.

And then she fell. Flat on her back.

But it was so funny. She saw the daytime stars, the branches of the birch trees which seemed to pin them there, and felt she could have burst with happiness.

20 A light mist rolled along the base of the trees. Except mist didn't move like that. Mist wasn't as dense as that. It didn't assume the shape of... the shape of...

The white wolf crept forward, quiet as snowfall. His eyes looked red against the white of the snow. This was a real, white wolf, not the old grey wolf of the fairy tale. With a wave of panic, Sophie realised that this animal was wild and would not be hemmed in by a mere story. He was entirely his own master. Sophie couldn't move, couldn't speak. She felt, as
25 keenly as an electric shock, that the wolf saw, felt, experienced the woods in a completely different way from her. He could see deep into the night. He could feel the quality of the snow with his paw, understanding how long winter would be by the depth of the ice crust. He could smell the horse's sweat, hear the pulses of every one of them and know who
30 would be the slowest runner, the weakest prey. But he didn't just take in this information; it seemed to be looking right at her. She felt drawn to him, but the fear would not leave her.

It was the horse fretting and stamping that gave her a voice.

'Wolf!' she cried. 'In the woods!'

35 Why weren't they running? Why were Ivan and the princess just staring at her like that? She struggled to sit up, looked again into the trees. There was nothing there.

1. (a) Why does Sophie feel she has to try to skate at the start of the passage? (1)
(b) In what way does Sophie think that skating is like riding a bicycle? (1)
2. Does Sophie enjoy skating?
Write down three brief pieces of evidence for your answer. (3)
3. Why does Sophie compare herself to a snowflake (line 14)? (3)
4. Does Sophie mind falling over?
Give reasons for your answer. (2)
5. Write down two of Sophie's reasons for thinking that the 'light mist' (line 19) is no such thing. (2)
6. (a) 'quiet as snowfall' (line 21)
What does this simile suggest about the wolf? (2)
(b) 'as keenly as an electric shock' (lines 24-25)
What does this simile suggest about what Sophie is feeling? (2)
7. Sophie is aware of the wolf's keen senses.
Use your own words to explain what she feels the wolf can do. (4)
8. Does Sophie imagine the wolf or is the wolf real?
Use evidence from the whole passage to support your opinions. (5)

(Total marks: 25)

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