

Eton College King's Scholarship Examination 2010

ENGLISH

(One and a half hours)

You are advised to spend ten minutes reading the poetry extracts, and then about twenty minutes on Question 1, and about thirty minutes on each of the Questions 2 and 3. Attempt all questions.

The following extracts are from two longer poems; *Windsor Forest* (1713) by Alexander Pope and *The Prelude* (1805) by William Wordsworth. Both extracts describe countryside sports: in Pope's poem he describes pheasant shooting, beagling, more shooting, fishing and hunting, and in Wordsworth's poem he tells of trapping woodcock in snares and hunting for birds' eggs. Read the two poems slowly and carefully and then answer all the questions that follow.

from WINDSOR FOREST

See! from the Brake¹ the whirring Pheasant springs, 1
 And mounts exulting on triumphant Wings;
 Short is his Joy! he feels the fiery Wound,
 Flutters in Blood, and panting beats the Ground.
 Ah! what avail his glossie, varying Dyes,
 His Purple Crest, and Scarlet-circled Eyes,
 The vivid Green his shining Plumes unfold;
 His painted Wings, and Breast that flames with Gold?
 Nor yet, when moist *Arcturus* clouds the sky,²
 The Woods and Fields their pleasing Toils deny. 10
 To Plains with well-breath'd Beagles we repair,
 And trace the Mazes of the circling Hare.
 (Beasts, urg'd by us, their Fellow Beasts pursue,
 And learn of Man each other to undo.)
 With slaught'ring Guns th'unweary'd Fowler roves,
 When Frosts have whiten'd all the naked Groves;
 Where Doves in Flocks the leafless Trees o'ershade,
 And lonely Woodcocks haunt the watry Glade.
 He lifts the Tube and levels with his Eye;
 Straight a short Thunder breaks the frozen Sky. 20
 Oft as in Airy Rings they skim the Heath
 The clam'rous Lapwings feel the Leaden Death:
 Oft as the mounting Larks their Notes prepare,
 They fall, and leave their little Lives in Air.
 In genial Spring, beneath the quiv'ring Shade
 Where cooling Vapours breathe along the Mead,
 The patient Fisher takes his silent Stand
 Intent, his Angle trembling in his Hand;
 With Looks unmov'd, he hopes the Scaly Breed,
 And eyes the dancing Cork and bending Reed. 30
 Our plenteous Streams a various Race supply;
 The bright-ey'd Perch with Fins of *Tyrian* Dye,
 The silver Eel, in shining Volumes roll'd,
 The yellow Carp, in Scales bedrop'd with Gold,
 Swift Trouts, diversify'd with Crimson Stains,
 And Pykes, the Tyrants of the watry Plains.

¹ 'Brake' = thicket

² 'When moist *Arcturus* clouds the skies' = in winter

Now *Cancer* glows with *Phoebus'* fiery Car;³
The Youth rush eager to the Sylvan War;
Swarm o'er the Lawns, the Forest Walks surround,
Rowze the fleet Hart, and cheer the opening Hound. 40
Th'impatient Courser⁴ pants in ev'ry Vein,
And pawing, seems to beat the distant Plain,
Hills, Vales, and Floods appear already crost,
And ere he starts, a thousand Steps are lost.
See! the bold Youth strain up the threatening Steep,
Rush thro' the Tickets, down the Vallies sweep,
Hang o'er their Coursers Heads with eager Speed,
And Earth rolls back beneath the flying Steed.

Alexander Pope (1713)

³ 'Now *Cancer* glows with *Phoebus'* fiery Car' = in summer

⁴ 'Courser' = horse

from THE PRELUDE

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up 1
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear,
Much favoured in my birthplace, and no less
In that beloved vale to which erelong
I was transplanted. Well I call to mind –
'Twas at an early age, ere I had seen
Nine summers – when upon the mountain slope
The frost and breath of frosty wind had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
To wander half the night among the cliffs 10
And the smooth hollows where the woodcocks ran
Along the open turf. In thought and wish
That time, my shoulder all with springes⁵ hung,
I was a fell destroyer. On the heights
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
My anxious visitation, hurrying on,
Still hurrying, hurrying onward. Moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head; I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That was among them. Sometimes it befell 20
In these night-wanderings, that a strong desire
O'er powered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toils
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less in springtime, when on southern banks
The shining sun had from her knot of leaves 30
Decoyed the primrose flower, and when the vales
And woods were warm, was I a plunderer then
In the high places, on the lonesome peaks,
Where'er among the mountains and the winds
The mother-bird had built her lodge. Though mean
My object and inglorious, yet the end
Was not ignoble. Oh, when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost, as it seemed, 40
Suspended by the blast which blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time
While perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ears; the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth, and with what motion moved the clouds!

William Wordsworth (1805)

⁵ 'Springes' = snares or traps

1. Paraphrase (write in your own words in modern prose)
 - a) *Windsor Forest* lines 1-8 inclusive [15]
 - b) *The Prelude* lines 29 – 37 ('Nor less not ignoble') [15]

2. As you can see, the two extracts of poetry were written nearly one hundred years apart. Describe how they differ in their style and in the treatment of their subject matter.

(You might like to consider aspects such as verse form, rhyme scheme, vocabulary, syntax, punctuation, imagery, simile and metaphor, as well as the poets' attitudes towards the activities described.) [30]

3. Write a vivid account, set either in the present or in the past, of an adventurous and enjoyable afternoon of recreation in either the countryside or the town. Credit will be given for a lively use of language and for the creation of a vivid atmosphere and a personal sense of excitement. [40]

[End of paper]