



Independent Schools
Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 11+

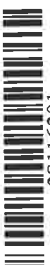
ENGLISH

PAPER 1: READING

Monday 18 January 2016

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 and punctuation.



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Read the passage below and answer all the questions opposite.

This is the start of a book about the dragon-killer, St George. A dragon is a huge winged mythical beast which breathes out fire.

When St George, mounted upon his great war-horse, rode towards the dragon, the Princess Cleodolinda closed her eyes. Then she opened them again; because she felt that she simply must have one more look at this knight before he was turned into a cinder. She wanted to remember his face. The fact that she, probably, would be chewed by the dragon two minutes later seemed merely to make it more important that she should get that face fixed quite clearly in her mind. She was a brave girl, or she would not have been there at all. Well, when she opened her eyes she saw a most surprising thing.

St George had dismounted and was strolling – yes, *strolling* – towards the dragon, with nothing but a long thin dagger in his hand. The brute was watching him in a slightly puzzled fashion, and little wisps of acrid smoke curled upwards from its nostrils as it waited. St George drew nearer, and suddenly the dragon opened its enormous jaws. At that, the Princess shut her eyes very tightly indeed. She heard a slight scuffling noise and a thud. And then, to her joy and amazement, she heard the knight say,

‘It is all right, my pretty. Open your eyes. The beast is dead.’

She looked, and there was St George smiling at her from the other side of the prone monster. She wanted to cry: ‘Oh! thank Heaven! thank Heaven!’, but she knew that princesses must not be emotional. So all that she did say, gravely, was:

‘You have no right, sir, to call me your “pretty” just because you have killed a dragon.’

At that St George laughed (it made her think, somehow, of the sun sparkling on a running brook) and he cried:

‘Then I will call you “my pretty” just because you *are* pretty, and because I hope you will be mine.’

And he jumped over the dragon, and cut her bonds with his dagger, and then kneeled and kissed her hand. And when he looked up, and she, bending forward, looked down into his upturned face, the gravity left her lips, and her smile made him think, somehow, of stars in an evening sky when the wind blows away dark mists. And then they both forgot all about the dragon.

But after they were married – (what! didn’t you know that they were married three days later? Someone must have told you the story all wrong.) – after they were married, the Princess remembered, and she said:

‘Tell me, St George, how *did* you manage to kill that dragon?’

Her father, the King of Silene (the Princess had invited them both to her private boudoir to taste a strange new beverage called ‘tea’), echoed her question.

‘Come, tell us,’ he said. ‘There is nobody here but we three, and modesty, you know, can be overdone.’

St George laughed. ‘The truest modesty, sire,’ he said, ‘would be for me to tell you precisely how it happened; for I fear that you will think less highly of me when you learn how easy was the deed. You see – ’ He paused for a moment. ‘But perhaps,’ he went on, ‘it would be simpler if I told you the story from the beginning.’

The Princess clapped her hands. ‘Yes, please do so,’ she cried. ‘I simply love stories, especially when they are true. But first, will you not each have another cup of my “tea”?’

The passage is from *An Experiment with St George* by J.W. Dunne, published by Faber, 1939.

1. Why does the Princess Cleodolinda open her eyes again (lines 2–4)? (2)

2. Write down a word or phrase from line 8 which shows that St George is not afraid of the dragon.
Explain your choice. (2)

3. (a) Why do you think the dragon is 'slightly puzzled' (lines 9–10)? (2)
(b) The dragon is referred to by other names in the passage.
Write down two of them. (2)

4. Does the Princess think that St George will kill the dragon?
Write down a short quotation to support your answer. (2)

5. What does 'gravely' mean in line 17? (1)

6. '...princesses must not be emotional' (line 17).
How do you think princesses were expected to behave in those days?
Write in as much detail as you can, using information from the passage to guide you. (5)

7. St George's laugh (lines 19–20) is described as 'sun sparkling on a running brook' and the Princess's smile (lines 25–26) as 'stars in an evening sky when the wind blows away dark mists'.
What do these two descriptions add to the story? (6)

8. Is St George modest about having killed the dragon?
Answer as thoughtfully as you can. (3)

(Total marks: 25)