

ST GEORGE'S ASCOT

SAMPLE PAPER
FOR ENTRY TO FIRST YEAR

ENGLISH: PAPER 1

TIME: 30 Minutes

Please read the following passage and answer the questions which follow it. (Remember that a *fenland* is a marshy area.) Some questions require only a one-word answer; others require full sentences. Check the number of marks available to see whether or not a long or a short answer is needed. In each case, please write as carefully and as neatly as you can. Good luck!

The fenland was as flat as the sea. The woman walking on the low bank turned to look behind her at a line of distant trees on the horizon. The heat of the day was intense, but she shuddered.

There was a man with her, a little way ahead. He raised his arms and drank in the air. "Marvellous!" he said.

She turned to look in the other direction. The flat land reached away into the sea itself, turning into sleek mud before, far away, the glazed sea lay over it.

"Marvellous!" said the man again.

The grass was coarse where they walked, but beyond the bank it lay in lush green clots, smoothed and limp where the tide had left them. And then the mud gently humped like the backs of seals. Except in one place. Something jutted, rounded but ungainly.

"What's that?" she said.

He looked where she pointed. "Don't know," he said. "Stump or something."

"Tom!" It was almost a cry. It made his head jerk round towards her. "It's a body!"

He laughed and held her hand. "It's not big enough."

"But it is! Can't you see?"

"No, no, no." He comforted her, but she would not be convinced. "All right, I'll prove it," he said, and he began to take off his shoes.

"You can't go out there, Tom. It's dangerous. Please don't."

But he was barefoot, slithering down the bank. The brown mud squeezed up between his toes and engulfed his white feet. "It's deep," he said, and bent to roll up his trouser legs.

The woman on the bank bit the knuckles of one clenched fist but said nothing.

He stood up and began to walk. The mud was cold and hugged his feet, reluctant to let him move. It got deeper and he wanted to turn back, but pride made him go on.

The stump was almost black. It lay at an angle, only partly above the mud, and dark weed clung to it like sparse hair. Like hair. But it was still too small for a body.

The mud was up to his knees and he was moving unsteadily. The last few yards were going to be difficult.

“Don’t touch it!” Her voice from behind him was as thin as the wind through the grass. Without turning round, he waved to reassure her.

Suddenly his raised hand was clenched as though he was fighting to keep his balance. She could not see his face. The corners of his mouth were pulled back in a snarl; his eyes stared, white-rimmed. For the stump was moving, turning like a black finger to point at him. Slowly, slowly, and his feet were trapped.

From *The House on the Brink* by John Gordon

1. What is the weather like in the story? 1 mark
2. What is the name of the man in the story? 1 mark
3. a) Are the man and woman near to or far away from the sea? 1 mark
b) Write down the sentence in the text which gives us the answer to 3a). 2 marks
4. Of what are the “lush green clots” made? 1 mark
5. Why is the woman upset by what they see in the mud? 1 mark
6. Why does the man wade through the mud? 2 marks
7. Write down the sentence which gives a good indication of how deep the mud is. 2 marks
8. Explain: “pride made him go on”. 3 marks
9. Give two reasons why you think the man is suddenly afraid. 2 marks
10. What can we learn of the character of both persons? 4 marks

TOTAL: 20 marks