



Independent Schools
Examinations Board

COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AT 13+

ENGLISH

LEVEL 2

PAPER 1

Monday 22 January 2018

Please read this information before the examination starts.

- You have 1 hour 15 minutes which includes reading and note-making time.
- The paper is divided into two sections.
- Answer **all** the questions in Section A and **one** question from Section B.
- Remember to write **Level 2** at the top of your answer page.
- Vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation are important and will be taken into account.



SECTION A: LITERARY PROSE

Read the passage below from *Touching the Void*, by Joe Simpson, and then answer all the questions opposite, using complete sentences.

The marks at the end of each question are a guide as to how much you should write in your answers.

In this extract, the mountaineer Joe Simpson has fallen down a deep crevasse¹ and injured himself. He describes his climb out to safety.

I wondered whether I had been deluding myself with the idea that I could possibly reach the sun above. It was a long way, and steep. A slight breeze ran through the crevasse¹ and I felt it on my cheek, a chill, deathly brush from somewhere deep below me. The light in the chamber was a strange mix of blue-grey shadows and dancing reflections from
5 the ice walls surrounding me. Rocks embedded in the walls stood out starkly in the wet, translucent ice. I rested at the base, absorbing the feel of the crevasse. For all its hushed cold menace, there was a feeling of sacredness about the chamber, with its magnificent vaulted crystal ceiling, its gleaming walls encrusted with a myriad of fallen stones, shadows facing into darkness beyond the great gateway formed by the ice bridge which
10 hid the silent vault beyond. But I couldn't stop the menace playing on my mind, as if this thing had waited for a victim with the impersonal patience of the centuries. It had me now, and without the sunbeam I might have sat there numbed and defeated by its implacable stillness. I shivered. The air was well below freezing. A puff of wind outside sprinkled powder through the hole in the roof, and I watched fascinated as it drifted in the sunlight. It
15 was time to climb.

After two and a half hours the slope had steepened considerably and I had to be especially careful when I hopped. There was a critical moment when all my weight was on my ice-axes driven into the loose snow and the angle forced me to balance my movements precisely. I had nearly fallen on two occasions. Once I had missed the good step and
20 had slithered into the smaller step below, with my knee twisting beneath my weight. I had struggled to remain standing, fighting off the nausea and faintness. The second time I had hopped successfully but too explosively and had lost balance. Again, I felt things move and grind in my knee as I swung violently forward into the snow to stop the fall. It was odd to curse and sob and hear the sounds repeated in the chamber below. More peculiar was the
25 feeling of acute embarrassment at complaining like that. There was no one to hear, but the looming empty chamber behind me made me feel inhibited as if it were some disapproving silent witness to my weakness.

It took another two and a half hours to reach a point ten feet below the hole in the roof. The glare from the sun was blinding, and when I looked down the chamber had
30 disappeared into inky darkness. I hefted my leg into the new step I had dug and prepared to make another hop.

If anyone had seen me emerge from the crevasse they would have laughed. My head popped up and I stared gopher-like at the scene outside. I kept hold of the axe planted in the wall of the crevasse and stood on one leg, swiveling round to take in the most
35 stupendous view I had ever seen. The ring of mountains surrounding the glacier was so spectacular that I hardly recognized what I was seeing. The familiar peaks had taken on a beauty I had never noticed before. I could see ice fields and delicately fluted ridges, and

40 a dark sea of moraines² curled out of sight from the snout of the glacier. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and the sun glared from its azure emptiness with ferocious heat. I stood silent and stunned, unable to accept that I was at last free again. My senses had been so battered that I had forgotten what to expect at this moment of escape.

¹ crevasse = a large, deep crack in the ice

² moraines = ridges of rock on the side of the glacier

1. Re-read lines 1–2.

Why will it be difficult for the mountaineer to get out of the crevasse? (2)

2. Using information from the first paragraph (lines 1–15), explain the different feelings the mountaineer has about the 'chamber' (line 4) into which he has fallen.

Use quotations to support your answer. (6)

3. Re-read paragraph 2 (lines 16–27).

In your own words, explain the difficulties the mountaineer faces as he climbs up the crevasse. (4)

4. Re-read paragraph 4 (lines 32–41).

(a) What are the mountaineer's feelings when he emerges from the crevasse? (3)

(b) How does he use language to show these feelings? (6)

5. Explain what you have learnt about the character of the mountaineer from the passage. (4)

TURN OVER FOR SECTION B

(Total marks for this section: 25)

SECTION B: WRITING TASK

Write on any ONE of the following topics.

Each one is worth 25 marks.

Credit will be given for good spelling, accurate punctuation and appropriate presentation as well as for a range of effective vocabulary.

1. Write a letter to your government arguing either for or against money being spent on space exploration.

2. 'All school children should learn a musical instrument.'
Argue for or against this statement in a speech to be given to your school council.

3. If you could travel to any country which you have not been to already, where would you go and why?
Write an article on this subject for your school magazine.

4. **EITHER**

(a) Write about a character in a book who is out of the ordinary.
Explain what it is about him or her that you find interesting.

OR

(b) Write about a book which has helped you to understand better one of the problems facing the world.
How has it helped you to develop your understanding of this problem?

(Total marks: 50)