International Section
Selection Exam
2019

Year 10 Entry Exam
Time allowed: 2 Hours

No dictionaries allowed

Name: _________________________
Class: _________________________
Date: _________________________
Part 1: Reading Comprehension (10 marks)

Read Documents A and B, then answer the questions.

**Document A**

I was ten, and away at boarding school in deepest Wiltshire. I was far from home and I didn’t want to be. It was a diet of Latin and stew and rugby and detentions and cross-country runs and chilblains¹ and marks and squeaky beds and semolina² pudding. And then there was Basher Beaumont who terrorised and tormented me, so that I lived every waking moment of my life in dread of him.

I was homesick after a letter from my mother. Basher Beaumont had cornered me in the bootroom and smeared black shoe-polish in my hair. I had done badly in a spelling test, and Mr Carter had stood me in the corner with a book on my head all through the lesson – his favourite torture. I was more miserable than I had ever been before. I picked at the plaster in the wall, and determined there and then that I would run away.

I took off the next Sunday afternoon. With any luck I wouldn’t be missed till supper, and by that time I’d be home, home and free. I climbed the fence at the bottom of the school park, behind the trees where I couldn’t be seen. Then I ran for it. I ran as if bloodhounds were after me, not stopping till I was through Innocents Breach and out onto the road beyond. I had my escape all planned. I would walk to the station – it was only five miles or so – and catch the train to London. Then I’d take the underground home. I’d just walk in and tell them that I was never, ever going back.

There wasn’t much traffic, but all the same I turned up the collar of my raincoat so that no one could catch a glimpse of my uniform. It was beginning to rain now, those heavy hard drops that mean there’s more of the same on the way. I crossed the road.

It stretched away into the distance, continuous as far as the eye could see, except for a massive arched gateway. That was when I heard a car slowing down behind me. I did not think twice. I pushed open the iron gate, darted through, and flattened myself behind the stone pillar. I watched the car until it disappeared round the bend.

To be caught would mean a caning, four strokes, maybe six, across the back of the knees. Worse, I would be back at school, back to detentions, back to Basher Beaumont. To go along the road was dangerous, too dangerous. I would try to cut across country to the station. It would be longer that way, but far safer.

Adapted from Michael Morpugo, *The Butterfly Lion*, (1996)

1. chilblains: *engelures*
2. semolina: *semoule*
Document B

I was sent to Merrywood Elementary when I was six and I thought it was a complete waste of time. What was the point of school when I could learn all I needed to at the docks? I wouldn't have bothered to go back the following day if my mother hadn't dragged me to the front gates, deposited me and returned at four o'clock that afternoon to take me home.

I didn't realize Mum had other plans for my future, which didn't include joining Uncle Stan in the shipyard.

Once Mum had dropped me off each morning, I would hang around in the yard until she was out of sight, then slope off to the docks. I made sure I was always back at the school gates when she returned to pick me up in the afternoon. On the way home, I would tell her everything I'd done at school that day. I was good at making up stories, but it wasn't long before she discovered that was all they were: stories.

One or two other boys from my school also used to hang around the docks, but I kept my distance from them. They were older and bigger, and used to thump⁴ me if I got in their way. I also had to keep an eye out for Mr Haskins, the chief ganger⁵, because if he ever found me loitering⁶, to use his favourite word, he would send me off with a kick up the backside and the threat: 'If I see you loiterin' round here again, my lad, I'll report you to the headmaster.'

Occasionally Haskins decided he'd seen me once too often and I'd be reported to the headmaster, who would leather me before sending me back to my classroom. My form master, Mr Holcombe, never let on if I didn't show up for his class, but then he was a bit soft. Whenever my mum found out I'd been playing truant, she couldn't hide her anger and would stop my halfpenny-a-week pocket money. But despite the occasional punch from an older boy, regular leatherings from the headmaster and the loss of my pocket money, I still couldn't resist the draw of the docks.


1. thump: hit
2. chief ganger: *contremaître*
3. loitering: hanging around
Questions:

• Answer the questions in the correct order.

• When using quotations to justify an answer be sure to copy the segment directly from the text and write the line number in brackets (l. ...) after the quotation.

Document A

1. Explain in a few words who the narrator is and why he says “I was far from home” (line 1).

2. Who are the other three characters mentioned? What is their relationship to the narrator?

3. In what country does the scene take place? Justify with one element from the text.

4. Focus on lines 1 to 11. Write TRUE or FALSE for each of the statements below and justify your answer with a quotation from the text.

   a) The narrator is at the school of his choice.
   b) The school is very strict and traditional.
   c) The narrator gets along with the other boarders.
   d) The narrator misses his mother.
   e) The narrator has been humiliated by one of his teachers.

5. What does the narrator decide to do? Why does he make this decision?

6. Focus on lines 10 to 28. Choose the two adjectives that best correspond to the narrator’s state of mind and justify each adjective with one quotation from the text.

   Strong-willed --- serene --- panicked --- guilty

7. Explain in your own words what would happen to the narrator if his plan failed.
Document B

8. Briefly describe the narrator (age, school level ...)

9. Identify two characters from ...
   a) the narrator's family
   b) the narrator's school
   c) the docks

10. What does the narrator think of his time at school? Explain and justify your answer with two elements from the text.

11. Why does he say “I was good at making up stories” (line 11)? Explain in your own words. (20 words approx.)

12. The following statements are true. Justify them with elements from the text.
   a) The narrator is beaten at the docks and at school. Give 2 elements (1 element for the docks and 1 element for school).
   b) The treatment the narrator receives at the docks and at school has no impact on his behaviour. Give 1 element.

Documents A and B

13. Explain how the motivation for escaping school is different for each child in the two texts. (50 words approx.)

Part 2: Composition (10 marks)

Answer 1 of the 3 questions (150 – 200 words)

1. Document A: Imagine you are the narrator. Write a letter to your mother about the working and living conditions at the boarding school in which you complain and express your feelings.

2. Document A: Imagine you are the narrator and you have managed to get back home. Write the dialogue you have with your mother.

3. To what extent is schooling necessary to succeed in life?