



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

THE CHALLENGE 2024

ENGLISH

Wednesday 1 May 2024

You have TWO HOURS for this paper.

- The paper is divided into Sections A, B, C and D.
- You should spend about 10 minutes on Section A, 40 minutes on Section B, 40 minutes on Section C and 30 minutes on Section D.
- Write in full sentences, unless instructed otherwise by a specific question. The quality of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will be considered throughout the paper.
- Spend any remaining time at the end of the test checking your work carefully.
- Please write in black or blue ink. Answer all questions in the answer sheet provided – do not answer in the exam paper.

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SECTION A – 10 minutes – 15 marks

1.

a. Write out the short paragraph below, adding punctuation so that it is grammatically accurate and makes sense. The first capital letter and last full stop have been done for you.

Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning even science the strict measurer is obliged to start with a make-believe unit his less accurate grandmother poetry has always been understood to start in the middle but on reflection it appears that her movement is not very different from his since science too reckons backwards as well as forwards divides his unit into billions and with his clock-finger at nought really sets off in the middle of things.

From: Daniel Deronda, *George Eliot* (1876)

[10]

Consider the word ‘imagination’. Complete each task by repositioning ‘imagination’, writing in full, grammatical sentences.

- b. Make it the first word of a sentence.**
- c. Make it the object of a sentence.**
- d. Make it the last word of a sentence.**
- e. Make it the last item in a list of three.**
- f. Use it at the beginning of two successive clauses.**

[5]

SECTION B – 40 minutes – 30 marks

Read the following poem carefully and then answer the questions which follow in full sentences.

‘Relativity’ by Sarah Howe (2015)

When we wake up brushed by panic in the dark

our pupils grope for the shape of things we know.
Photons¹ loosed from slits like greyhounds at the track

reveal light’s doubleness in their cast shadows
that stripe a dimmed lab’s wall – particles no more –

and with a wave bid all certainties goodbye.
For what’s sure in a universe that dopplers

away like a siren’s² midnight cry? They say
a flash seen from on and off a hurtling train

will explain why time dilates like a perfect
afternoon; predicts black holes where parallel lines

will meet, whose stark horizon even starlight,
bent in its tracks, can’t resist. If we can think

this far, might not our eyes adjust to the dark?

¹ Light travels in tiny packages of energy called photons.

² A number of women or winged creatures whose singing lured unwary sailors on to rocks.

Warm-up questions

2. Explain the meaning of the phrase 'photons loosed from slits like greyhounds at the track' [2]
3. Explain the meaning of the phrase 'time dilates like a perfect/afternoon' [2]
4. 'If we can see this far, might not our eyes adjust to the dark?' – what is Howe suggesting? [2]
5. Why is the form of this poem fitting for the subject matter? [2]

Language analysis

6. How does Sarah Howe use language and structure to portray 'the unknown'? [15]

Evaluation

7. Sarah Howe - a professor of English Literature who described physics as 'never her strong suit' at school - believes that 'the imaginative terrain of poets and scientists might overlap'.
What do you think she means by this? [7]

SECTION C – 40 minutes – 25 marks

This extract is taken from Shakespeare's 'King Lear' (c. 1605)

In this extract, Gloucester – an egotistical, indiscreet noble – has discovered that someone is plotting to kill him. Edmund is his son.

Read the section below and answer the questions that follow.

GLOUCESTER

- These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend³
no good to us... We have seen the best of our time:
machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all
[5] ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our
graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall
lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the
noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his
offence, honesty! 'Tis strange.

Exit

EDMUND

- This is the excellent foppery⁴ of the world, that,
[10] when we are sick in fortune,--often the surfeit⁵
of our own behavior,--we make guilty of our
disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as
if we were villains by necessity; fools by
heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and
[15] treachers, by spherical predominance⁶; drunkards,
liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of
planetary influence; and all that we are evil in,
by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion
of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish⁷
[20] disposition to the charge of a star!

³ Warning that something bad is about to happen

⁴ Foolishness

⁵ Excess

⁶ Movement of the planets

⁷ In the Renaissance, goats were seen as sexually promiscuous animals.

Warm-up questions

8. Explain what Gloucester means by 'these late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us' [2]
9. Explain the meaning of 'enforced obedience of planetary influence' [2]
10. What does Edmund think is the 'excellent foppery of the world'? [2]

Evaluation

11. What is Edmund's opinion of Gloucester and which quotations give you that impression? [4]

Language analysis

12. How does Shakespeare convey Edmund's exasperation between lines 9-20? You must make close reference to the text. [15]

SECTION D – 30 minutes – 30 marks

Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

From: *The Upper World* – *Femi Fadugba* (2022)

No one has ever seen where the Upper World starts and ends, assuming it ends at all. The only thing scarier than the thought of you going up there alone, is the tragedy of you not knowing it exists. And the little I know, my child, I will tell you.

Firstly, you have to speak it to see it.

Language influences what we see. In Greek, for instance, there is no such word as 'blue'. Either something is ghalzio (a lighter shade of blue) or ble (a darker shade of blue). Any Greek settling on this cloudy island will swiftly find their colour vocabulary cut in half; two vibrant colours tucked into a single English word, 'blue'.

But, as one curious study showed, Greeks who abandon their mother tongue also stop being able to distinguish between ghalzio-and-ble-coloured objects. They literally see half of what they used to – because of language.

Just like shades of blue, time itself is relative. It passes at one pace here and a slower pace over there, all depending on where you are and what you understand.

Lastly, to find the Upper World, you must look through your WINDOW.

Our brothers and sisters in the East say that each snap of your finger contains 65 unique moments. Using pen and paper, physicists today can prove that the number is even greater. Now imagine the vast multiplicity of moments contained in one breath. One smile. One dream. How does the mind continually hold the near-infinite granules spanning an entire lifetime?

It can't.

To ensure our survival, Nature decided long ago to restrict our view of time to a single moment: a solitary and ever-changing canvas onto which the immediate concerns of shelter, sustenance and procreation could be projected. The Now. Our view of the past was therefore regulated to a fuzzy blur and the existential distraction of the future blacked out completely. And yet our ability to tap into chronosthesia (mental time travel) was not destroyed. Only unplugged. Locked inside a crevice of our minds called the WINDOW.

The WINDOW is a memory from the past or the future. A memory unique to each individual, often so severe or traumatic that our minds force us to forget it. Due to the WINDOW being the lens through which we perceive true time, it is common to hear people claim that time 'slowed down' or even 'completely stopped' in these buried memories. It has been suggested that an acute or repeated concussion can temporarily 'yank' open one's WINDOW. But all we know for sure is that the only safe path to the Upper World is through an Elder guiding you to your WINDOW, once you possess the language to see what's on the other side,

In a few months you will leave your world and be born into ours, my child. You will be told that what you see with your physical eyes is final, and that men like me who claim otherwise are fools. But know that just beyond the tug of our chains and the warmth of this cave, a clearer, more terrifying world awaits us.

13. Define the following words, as used in the context given here:

- a. Granules
- b. Multiplicity
- c. Sustenance
- d. Crevice

[4]

Write a piece responding to one of the prompts given below.

You will be assessed on your ability to write imaginatively, with a range of expression, shaping overall structure effectively. Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical accuracy are assessed in this piece. Take time to plan before you begin

EITHER

14. Write a short story which takes 'The Upper World' as its title. [25]

OR

15. Describe being guided to a 'window' of greater understanding. [25]

OR

16. Write about a moment where time stood still. [25]