

PPTC

Post Primary Transfer Consortium

Sample English

FAMILIARISATION BOOKLET

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY.
SAMPLE NOT TO BE USED.**

Introduction

In this booklet there are some stories. There are passages from different types of book. We hope you will find them interesting and informative. You will be asked some questions on the passages themselves and on using books in general.

As you work through the booklet refer to the Glossary and Contents pages whenever you wish.

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Sample Practice Test

Read this passage through to yourself.

The Dog from Outer Space

1. Alix McCartney, visiting her grandmother for what promised to be a dreary weekend, stepped out of number 23 Market Lane into the silent, sunny early-morning village street. She reflected as she walked to the telephone box that it was absolutely not fair that she had no mobile. All her friends had one. She was going to ask her
5. mother to fetch her home at once. Two days in this dead place was too much to bear.

“You’ll have a great time,” her mother had said. “There’s a dog show, and some sort of fancy dress barbecue.”

“Ugh,” Alix had replied.

10. The street was so empty, it was as if a passing space ship had stopped off and whisked all the people away. As if to prove it, an apparition appeared that, Alix decided, could only prove the presence of Aliens. It was a small green dog, somewhat dishevelled, running very fast down the centre of the road. Wonder of wonders. Something had actually happened. The dog ran round the corner into
15. Main Street. Alix followed it as far as the telephone box, but then lost sight of it. There was, of course, no sign of a space ship, or of the dog’s other-worldly owner. Still, just to have seen the animal was something.

- Alix went indoors. Unaccountably, she had decided to go to the barbecue after all. It might not be so bad, if the music was alright... or if Charlie Gubb were there. In
20. any case, a village with green dogs was not, perhaps, such an indescribably boring place.

Answer these questions about the passage. Mark the letter for the answer on your answer sheet.

1

For how long was Alix staying with her grandmother?

- A for the summer holidays
- B for the Christmas holidays
- C for a half term break
- D for two days
- E for an afternoon

2

Why did Alix want to go home?

- A She did not get on with her grandmother.
- B She had started having strange visions.
- C She was very bored.
- D She had no mobile phone.
- E She was missing her mother.

3

Which is the closest meaning to 'dishevelled'? (line 13)

- A cross
- B terrified
- C fluffy
- D ruffled
- E bad-tempered

The above questions will have answers supplied and explanations as to why the answer is correct before the pupils continue.

In this passage there are some mistakes in the use of **capital letters** and **punctuation**. On each numbered line there is either **one** mistake or **no** mistake. Find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark its letter on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, choose option N on your answer sheet.

Punctuation Exercise

4 We hunted around for the simplest yummiest cake to tempt all you
cooks out there –

A B C D

5 and we think wev'e found it. This cake is actually made with a secret ingredient.

A B C D

Pupils will have one further practice question.

In this passage there are some **spelling** mistakes. On each numbered line there is either **one** mistake or **no** mistake. Find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark the letter for it on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, choose option N on your answer sheet.

Spelling Exercise

7 Kuldeep was thrilled with the bike, and absolutely determined to cycle to
secondary school.

A B C D

8 "That's an excelent idea," Dad had said, "and I'll give my approval
on one condition."

A B C D

Pupils will have two further practice questions.



Sample Main Test

Read this passage through, then answer the questions on the following pages. If there are any words you don't understand, you may find them in the Glossary on page 14.

The Story of King Midas

A legend of ancient Greece

1. This story is thousands of years old. It tells of a time when, according to legend, gods and goddesses walked the Earth, and the strangest enchantments were everyday events. In those days, the land contained many small kingdoms, each with its own king. One such king was Midas.
5. On a particular summer's day, King Midas was present at a music competition. The contest was to be judged by Tmolus, a river god, and there were two contestants: a young man named Marsyas, and a very powerful god named Apollo.

Marsyas was first to play. Now, although Marsyas was an ordinary young man, he possessed an extraordinary, magical flute. The music it made was so sweet that all
10. who heard it were instantly bewitched. When the flute fell finally silent, King Midas let out a long, wistful sigh. "Perfect!" he breathed.

Tmolus said nothing. He was too wise to rush to judgement, particularly when the second contestant was a powerful god, who was known for his quick temper. He turned and looked expectantly at Apollo.

15. Apollo's chosen instrument was the lute. He began to play, and his touch was so delicate that the clouds themselves were drawn down from the sky.

When the piece was finished, Tmolus pondered deeply. There was little to choose between the two competitors. Marsyas' playing had touched more hearts, it was true, but that was not the point. Had Marsyas played ten times better than his rival,
20. he could not be judged the winner. For Apollo would be angry if he did not win, and Apollo's wrath meant danger.

At last, Tmolus delivered his verdict: "I declare Apollo the winner!"

Without thinking, King Midas cried: “That’s ridiculous! Marsyas played better, everyone could hear that! Anyone who thinks otherwise must have asses’ ears!”

25. Apollo glared at the king. “Indeed,” was all he said.

The next morning, King Midas was awoken by a strange itching in the region of his scalp. Scratching his head, he rose to look in the mirror. What he saw made his eyes grow wide in horror. His ears were long and pointed, and covered in coarse, grey hair. There could be no doubt about it, they were asses’ ears and they looked,

30. above all, absurd. What could the king do?

“Everyone will laugh at me,” he almost wept, as he paced the room in despair, “and that must never be. A king who is ridiculous cannot command respect, and then – who knows? – the people may rise up and rebel! My ears must remain a secret.”

At last, he came up with a plan. “I know,” he said to himself, “I’ll find a cap large

35. enough to conceal the ears, and that cap will stay firmly on my head from dawn till dusk.”

The plan worked well. The king’s subjects were duly impressed and caps became instantly fashionable.

Please answer these questions. Look at the passage again if you need to.
You should choose the **best** answer and mark its letter on your answer sheet.

1

Which one of these is true?

- A Midas and Apollo were the competitors; Tmolus was the judge.
- B Tmolus and Apollo were the competitors; Midas was the judge.
- C Marsyas and Apollo were the competitors; Midas was the judge.
- D Apollo and Marsyas were the competitors; Tmolus was the judge.
- E Marsyas and Midas were the competitors; Apollo was the judge.

2

What was unusual about Marsyas?

- A He was a god.
- B He was friendly with the gods.
- C He had magical powers.
- D He owned a magical object.
- E He was a talented musician.

3

Which is closest in meaning to 'wistful'? (line 11)

- A dreamy
- B whistling
- C loud
- D happy
- E meaningful

Pupils will have 13 further questions.

In this passage there are some mistakes in the use of **punctuation** or **capital letters**. On each numbered line there is either **one** mistake or **no** mistake. Find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark its letter on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, choose option N on your answer sheet.

Game Over

Emma had come face to face with the final enemy in her video game, which she was determined to complete.

17 Nearer and nearer crept the ghastly thing. The single eye in the middle of it's
A B C D

18 green, scaly forehead did not blink but flickered – up down and
A B C
from side to side – as
D

19 the huge body lumbered forward. Emmas heart was in her mouth
A B C
as she summoned
D

Pupils will have six further questions.

Read this passage through, then answer the questions on the next pages. If there are any words you don't understand, you may find them in the Glossary on page 14.

A Track across the Ocean

The world of John Harrison

1. John Harrison was born in Yorkshire in 1693, the son of a carpenter. Hard-working and determined, he taught himself, when still young, to make fine clocks. Harrison lived in a world that was yet to see railways and steam engines, and where ships relied on sails to carry them across the oceans.
5. Among the many dangers facing these ships was that they frequently missed their way and, as a result, were often wrecked on shoals of rocks. This was because, although sailors had known for centuries how to work out their 'latitude' (how far north or south they were), they had no reliable way of knowing their 'longitude' (their position in terms of east and west). As a result, countless lives and thousands, if not millions, of pounds were being lost.

Harrison's great achievement was to solve the problem of how to calculate a ship's position in terms of longitude.

The prize

- By 1714, Parliament decided that the problem was so urgent that it would offer a
15. prize of £20,000 to anyone who could 'discover longitude'. It was a huge amount – the equivalent of making the winner as rich as a modern millionaire. A Board of Longitude was set up to distribute the prize money and to help inventors who had promising ideas.

Stars versus clocks

20. Scientists of the time believed there might be two ways of working out longitude. One way was from the position of the Sun and the stars in the sky, the other was by using a clock. The problem with this simple theory was that it depended on building a clock more accurate than had ever been made. Although many believed this was impossible, John Harrison was sure that such a clock could be made, and that he
25. was the man to make it. In 1728, he went to London, where he built his first marine clock, now known as H-1.

In 1760, over thirty years after his first attempt, he finished a fourth clock, H-4. It was of an entirely new design, resembling a large watch. It weighed about 1.5 kg and was only 13 cm across.

30. In November 1761, by which time Harrison was approaching 70 years of age, his son William boarded the Royal Navy's *HMS Deptford*, to test H-4 on a voyage to Jamaica. When they reached Jamaica, H-4 was only five seconds slow. The watch – and the system of navigation – had been proved to work almost perfectly.

Astonishingly, the Board members remained unconvinced. They demanded more

35. clocks and more tests, and would pay out only half the prize money.

King George III steps in

Harrison was now nearly 80 years old. Heartbroken and angry, he appealed to the King, George III. In 1773, after nearly 60 years of work, John Harrison was finally awarded the prize.

Please answer these questions. Look at the passage again if you need to.
You should choose the **best** answer and mark its letter on your answer sheet.

26

When did John Harrison learn to make clocks?

- A when trains were invented
- B when ships ran on time
- C when he was a young man
- D when he was in his eighties
- E when he was short of money

27

Sailors could not calculate a ship's longitude. Why was this a problem?

- A They could not work out where they were.
- B They were in a difficult position.
- C The ship could not run on time.
- D They did not know how far north they were.
- E It was inaccurate.

28

What does 'reliable' (line 8) mean?

- A responsible
- B traditional
- C scientific
- D dependable
- E punctual

Pupils will then have 13 further questions.

In this passage there are some **spelling** mistakes. On each numbered line there is either **one** mistake or **no** mistake. Find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark the letter for it on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, choose option N on your answer sheet.

Out of the Darkness

42 Kuli stared, blinking, at the magnificent colours of the parrot's fethers – orange,
A B C D

43 blue-green, scarlet – as they glowed in the sunlight. There in the depths of the
A B C D

44 rain-forest, the shade of the canopy had been delightfully cool and comfortable.
A B C D

Pupils will have six further questions.

Glossary

lute a stringed instrument – something like a guitar

Bibliography

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Krump, Sam *Out of the Darkness*, GL, 2009
Lewis, Jan *Game Over*, GL, 2009
Mitchell, Alison *A Track across the Ocean*, GL, 2009

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