

**MID PROGRAMME ENTRIES 2016**

**Year 4**

**ENGLISH**

Time allowed 1 hour and 15 minutes

**Instructions**

- Answer all the questions on the exam paper.
- Write your answers in the space provided.
- Read the instructions carefully.
- Answer each question as clearly and as neatly as possible.
- Total marks: 50

*Good Luck*

**Comprehension: (25 marks)**

Read the following passage entitled 'Learning the English' from *Unpolished Gem* by Alice Pung, an Australian of Chinese-Cambodian origin.

**Learning the English**

The quieter I became at school the louder my mother became at home. She was loud because she could not read or speak the secret talk we knew. She could not read because she had been **housebound** for two decades. And now, over the dinner table, she would watch as my father and his children littered their language with English terms, until every second word was in the foreign tongue. We hardly noticed the food, which she had prepared for us, so **engrossed** were we **in our babble**. She sat there staring at us, trying to make sense of these aliens at her table.

'Migrants don't **assimilate**,' I was told by classmates in politics class. 'They all come here and stick together, and don't bother to learn the language'. But I remembered when my mother bundled all four of us into the car after school. '*Agheare*,' she told me. 'Look at the map. Find this place for me. Your father gave me the address. I am going to learn the English. I am going to learn it now, no matter what.' We did not even change out of our uniforms, there was no time. My mother decided that if she knew the English, all her problems would be solved, she would be able to do anything in this new country. Most of all, she would be able to enter the world of her children's minds.

We pulled up in front of a community centre and were met by a kind woman with a lilting British accent, hair like a soft grey felt hat on her head, grey flannel scarf and kind grey eyes. She looked like an old wise possum and she invited us all into the centre for coffee before our discussion. My mother's heart melted. We all sat around a table strewn with newspapers and books.

'So it says here that your mother is forty,' said the woman **incredulously**.

Until then, I didn't even know my mother's age. I asked her and she nodded.

‘Unbelievable! She looks twenty!’ I repeated this to my mother. She signed up for the class straightaway.

My mother asked us to speak to her in English. I did so, slowly and carefully. I asked her questions: ‘How are you? How was your day?’ But because these were questions, Chinese children never asked their parents, even if she had enough words to answer me, she would not have known how. ‘Stop asking me crazy, pointless questions,’ she said, ‘and let me learn something useful!’

‘All right, Ma. What do you want to learn? What do you want to talk about?’

‘You tell me! You’re the teacher now!’ She looked at me as if I had all the answers and was keeping them from her from some **perverse whim**, as if I had them hidden in the inside pocket of my **blazer**.

The **migrants** in her class were all at different levels, and my mother could not understand the worksheets. She dumped all her notebooks and worksheets on the floor of her room.

‘Well, this stuff might be too hard,’ I said, **discreetly** shoving the piles of paper under her bed. ‘Why don’t you start from the very beginning?’ I picked up my five-year-old sister’s school reader. ‘Pat is...a...cat’, my mother read. ‘He is a black and white cat.’ Her fingers, **gnarled** as just-dug-up ginseng, pointed at each word. She could read the whole book through not once, not twice, but three times. She sighed a big sigh. ‘Ah, it’s no use. No use! It is all useless, I don’t understand a thing.’

‘But Ma, you just read the whole book through three times.’

‘No, I didn’t!’

‘Yes, you did!’

She turned to the middle pages and pointed. ‘I don’t know what it says. I just **memorised** the whole thing when you first read it out to me. Don’t teach me anymore. Go off and study.’

*Agheare*: The writer’s Chinese name.

Answer the following questions in **full sentences**, unless instructed to do otherwise:

1. Why did the writer's mother feel that her family had become 'aliens at her table'?

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(1 mark)

2. Explain the feelings of the mother at the dinner table. Use a quote to support your point.

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(2 marks)

3. How does she react to the community centre teacher? Why?

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(2 marks)

4. Why do you think that the questions the writer asks her mother are inappropriate? Use a quote to support your answer.

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(2 marks)

5. Explain the feelings of the writer's mother when the writer tried to teach her 'the English'. Use a quote to support your answer.

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(2 marks)

6. Identify a simile in paragraph 3 and explain its effect:

Simile: \_\_\_\_\_

Effect:

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(2 marks)

7. Identify a simile in paragraph 11 and explain its effect:

Simile: \_\_\_\_\_

Effect:

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(2 marks)

8. Quote an example of visual imagery as used in the passage and comment on its effect.

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

Effect:

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(2 marks)



9. Explain the meaning of the following words as used in the passage (they have been highlighted in the text):

- Housebound \_\_\_\_\_
- Engrossed in babble \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Assimilate \_\_\_\_\_
- Incredulously \_\_\_\_\_
- Perverse whim \_\_\_\_\_
- Blazer \_\_\_\_\_
- Migrants \_\_\_\_\_
- Discreetly \_\_\_\_\_
- Gnarled \_\_\_\_\_
- Memorised \_\_\_\_\_

(10 marks)



**Writing task: ( 25 marks)**

Choose **one** of the following titles and aim to **write approximately 2 sides**.

**Descriptive**

1. Describe the scene at a children's birthday party.

You should use:

- The senses
- Imagery (simile, metaphor, personification...)
- Descriptive and varied vocabulary
- Paragraphs
- Accurate spelling, expression and grammar

**Narrative**

2. Write a narrative which contains the following phrase, exactly as it appears. You may include it at the beginning, end, or within your story.

*As he looked at himself I the mirror, he got the shock of a lifetime- the face staring back at him was not his own.*

- Write your narrative in the third person
- Include feelings
- Develop your narrative with a structured plot, leading towards a suitable ending
- Use descriptive language techniques
- Use accurate spelling, expression and grammar





