

MID PROGRAMME ENTRIES 2017

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





Comprehension (25 marks)

This passage has been taken from 'The Siege' by Helen Dunmore. The novel is set in Leningrad, (which is now called St. Petersburg) just before and during the siege of Leningrad, September 1941 when Hitler and his forces surrounded the city at the start of the most dangerous, desperate winter in its history.

June 1941

It is half past ten in the evening, but the light of day still glows through the lime leaves. They are so green that they look like an **hallucination** of the summer everyone had almost given up expecting. When you touch them, they are fresh and tender. It's like touching a baby's skin.

Such a late spring, murky and doubtful, clinging to winter's skirts. But this is how it happens here in Leningrad. Under the trees around the Admiralty, lakes of spongy ice turned grey. There was **slush** everywhere, and a raw, dirty wind off the Neva. There was a frost, a thaw, another frost.

Month after month ice-fishermen **crouched** by the holes they'd drilled in the ice sitting out the winter, heads hunched into shoulders. And then, just when it seemed as if summer would forget about Leningrad this year, everything changed. Ice broke loose from the compacted mass around the Strelka. Seagulls preened on the floes as the current swept them under bridges, and down the widening Neva to the sea. The river ran full and fast, with a fresh wind tossing up waves so bright they stung your eyes. Everything that was rigid was crumbling, breaking away, floating.



People leaned on the parapets of the Dvortsovy bridge, watching the ice-floes rock as they passed under the arch. Their winter world was being destroyed. They wanted spring, of course they wanted it, more than anything. They longed for sun with every pore of their skin.

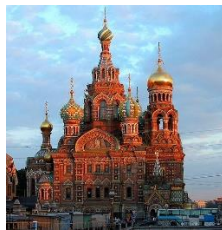
But spring hurts. If spring can come, if things can be different, how can you bear what your existence has been?

These are hard times. You can't trust anyone, not even yourself. Frightened men and women **scuttling** in the dusty wind.

Peter's great buildings hang over them, crushingly magnificent. In times like these the roads are too wide. How long it takes to fight your way across Peter's squares, and how **visible** you become. Yes, you're a target, and you don't know who's watching. So many disappearances, so much fear. Black vans cruise the streets. You listen for the note of their engines, and your heart pumps until it chokes you as the van slows. But it passes this time, and halts at the doorway to another courtyard, where you don't live. You hear the van doors clang and the sweat of relief soaks you, shamefully. Some other poor bastard is in that van this time.

Spring stripped everything bare. It showed the grey and weary skin of everyone over thirty. It lit up lips set in suffering, with wrinkles pulling sharply at the corners of the mouth.

But the lime trees' branches were spiked by the glitter of sunlight and birdsong. The birds had no doubts at all. They sang out loudly and certainly into the still-frozen world. They knew that winter was on the move.



Now it's June, and night is as brief as the brush of a wing, only an hour of yellow stars in a sky that never darkens beyond deep, tender blue.

No one sleeps. Crowds **surge** out of cafes and wander the streets, not caring where they go as long as they can lift their faces and drink the light. It's been dark for so many months.

These are the nights that seal each generation of Leningraders to their city. These nights are their baptism. The summer light will flood every grain of Leningrad stone, as it floods every cell of their own bodies. At three o'clock in the morning, in full sun, they'll find themselves in some backstreet of little wooden houses, miles from anywhere. There'll be a cat licking its paws in a doorway, a lime tree with electric-green leaves hanging over a high wooden fence, and an old woman slowly making her way down the street with a little bunch of jasmine pinned to her jacket.

However old you are, you can't stay indoors on a night like this. It stirs again, the promise and **recklessness** of white nights. Peter's icy, blood-sodden marshes bear up the city like a swan. The swan's wings are still folded, but they are trembling in the summer light, stirring, and getting ready to fly. Darkness scarcely touches them.

The wind breathes softly. Water laps under the midnight bridges. And suddenly you know that there's no greater possible happiness than to be here, even when you're so old you're beyond

walking. You lean out of your apartment window, with stiff joints and fading strength, over the city that will outlive you.



But Anna is not in Leningrad tonight. She's out in the country, at the dacha, alone with her father and Kolya. She doesn't belong in the crowds of students celebrating the end of their examinations. She doesn't share the jokes any more, or know which books everyone's reading. Hers is a daylight city of trams packed with overworked mothers, racing from work to food queue to kitchen and back again.

The white nights rouse up too many **longings**. Anna has a duty to crush them. She has five-year-old Kolya, her job at the nursery, and her responsibilities. It's no good letting herself dream of student life. She'll never have long days in a studio, mind and body trained on the movement of hand across paper. It's no good remembering what it was like to be seventeen, only six years ago, with graduation from school a year ahead of her, and a crowd of friends round the table at the Europe, packed together, laughing and talking so loudly that you could hardly hear what anyone said. The words didn't matter. The noise of happiness was what mattered, and the warmth of someone else's arm pressed against yours. There was a smell of sunburnt skin, coffee, cigarettes and marigolds.



A dacha



Russia in 1941

Answer the following questions in **full sentences** and in **your own words**

1. Find an example of visual imagery in paragraph 1 and explain its effect:

Example:

(1 mark)

Effect:

(2 marks)

2. Write two sentences explaining the difference between winter and spring in Leningrad:

Winter: _____

Spring: _____

(2 marks)

3. Find an example of personification in the passage and explain its effect:

Example:

(1 mark)

Effect:

(2 marks)



4. What do people do, according to the passage, when winter ends in Leningrad?

(1 mark)

5. Find an example of a simile in the passage and explain its effect:

Example:

(1 mark)

Effect:

(2 marks)

6. Explain in your own words what you understand by 'white nights'.

(1 mark)

7. Write two ways in which Anna is different from the celebrating students:

(2 marks)

8. What does Anna remember about when she was 17? Give one example.

(1 mark)

9. What will Anna never have?

(1 mark)

10. Explain the meaning of the following words as they have been used in the passage. They are in **bold** in the passage.

- **Hallucination** _____
- **Slush** _____
- **Crouched** _____
- **Scuttling** _____
- **Visible** _____
- **Surge** _____
- **Recklessness** _____
- **Longings** _____

(8 marks)



Composition (25 marks)

Write about 250-300 words on **one** of the following:

Descriptive:

Describe the discovery of a secret hideaway. It could be an overgrown garden, an abandoned house or a deserted cove.

- Use a wide range of descriptive language-adjectives, adverbs, imagery.
- Refer to the senses for detail (e.g. sounds/sights/smells).

Narrative:

‘Sam watched as the man slowly walked towards him in Central Park...’. Use this sentence to begin your narrative.

- Use your imagination to develop an original story.
- Use narrative techniques to develop the story.
- Use a wide reange of vocabulary and sentence types.
- Develop your narrative towards a suitable ending.

Title:
