

# **The English School**

## **Mid-Entry Examination 2018**

English – *Year 4*

Time Allowed: **1hour 15minutes**

### **General Instructions:**

1. Answer all the questions asked
2. Use your own words unless otherwise stated
3. Write neatly
4. Check your work carefully at the end

### **Marks Allocated:**

Section A: Comprehension (20 marks)

Section B: Directed Writing (10 marks)

Section C: Composition (20 marks)

***Good Luck!***

## Reading Comprehension

Read the following extract from a novel titled "Cat's Eyes" by Margaret Atwood. It is based around the 1950s.

It is about a painter called Elaine Risley (the narrator), who returns to Toronto to find herself overwhelmed by her past. This is one of her childhood memories involving her older brother, Stephen and her friend, Cordelia.

"Stephen says time is not a line," I say. Cordelia rolls her eyes, as I knew she would.

"So?" she says. This answer pleases both of us. It puts the nature of time in its place, and also Stephen, who calls us "the teenagers," as if he himself is not one.

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Cordelia and I are riding on the streetcar, going downtown as we do on winter Saturdays. The streetcar is **muggy** with twice breathed air and the smell of wool. Cordelia sits with **nonchalance**, nudging me with her elbow now and then, staring blankly at the other people with her grey-green eyes, opaque and glinting as metal. She can outstare anyone, and I am almost as good. We're impervious, we scintillate, we are  
10 thirteen.

We wear long wool coats with tie belts, the collars turned up to look like those of movie stars, and rubber boots with the tops folded down and men's work socks inside. In our pockets are stuffed the kerchiefs our mothers make us wear but that we take off as soon as we're out of their sight. We scorn head-coverings.  
15 Our mouths are tough, crayon-red, shiny as nails. We think we are friends.

On the streetcars there are always old ladies, or we think of them as old. They're of various kinds. Some are respectably dressed, in tailored Harris tweed coats and matching gloves and tidy no-nonsense hats with small brisk feathers **jauntily** at one side. Others are poorer and foreign-looking and have dark shawls  
20 wound over their heads and around their shoulders. Others are bulgy, dumpy, with clamped self-righteous mouths, their arms **festooned** with shopping bags; these we associate with sales, with bargain basements. Cordelia can tell cheap cloth at a glance. "Gabardine," she says. "Ticky-tack."

Then there are the ones who have not resigned themselves, who still try for an effect of glamour. There aren't many of these, but they stand out. They wear scarlet outfits or purple ones, and dangly earrings,  
25 and hats that look like stage props. Their slips show at the bottoms of their skirts, slips of unusual suggestive colours. Anything other than white is suggestive. They have hair dyed straw-blonde or baby-blue, or, even more startling against their papery skins, a lusterless old-fur-coat black. Their lipstick mouths are too big around their mouths, their rouge blotchy, their eyes drawn screw-jiggy around their  
30 real eyes. These are the ones most likely to talk to themselves. There's one who says "mutton, mutton," over and over again like a song, another who pokes at our legs with her umbrella and says "bare naked."

This is the kind we like best. They have a certain gaiety to them, a power of invention, they don't care  
35 what people think. They have escaped, though what it is they've escaped from isn't clear to us. We think that their bizarre costumes, their verbal tics, are chosen, and that when the time comes we also will be free to choose.

"That's what I'm going to be like," says Cordelia. "Only I'm going to have a yappy Pekinese, and chase kids off my lawn. I'm going to have a shepherd's crook."

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"I'm going to have a pet iguana," I say, "and wear nothing but cerise." It's a word I have recently learned.

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Now I think, what if they just couldn't see what they looked like? Maybe it was as simple as that: eye problems. I'm having that trouble myself now: too close to the mirror and I'm a blur, too far back and I can't see the details. Who knows what faces I'm making, what kind of modern art I'm drawing onto myself? Even when I've got the distance adjusted, I vary. I am **transitional**; some days I look like a worn-out thirty-five, others like a sprightly fifty. So much depends on the light, and the way you squint.

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I eat in pink restaurants, which are better for the skin. Yellow ones turn you yellow. I actually spend time thinking about this. Vanity is becoming a nuisance; I can see why women give it up, eventually. But I'm not ready for that yet.

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Lately I've caught myself humming out loud, or walking along the street with my mouth slightly open drooling a little. Only a little; but it may be the thin edge of the wedge, the crack in the wall that will open, later, onto what? What vistas of shining eccentricity, or madness?

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There is no one I would ever tell this to, except Cordelia. But which Cordelia? The one I have conjured up, the one with the roll-top boots and the turned-up collar, or the one before, or the one after? There is never only one, of anyone.

**Section A: Comprehension**

**(20 marks)**

1. a) What tense is the passage written in?

\_\_\_\_\_

(1 mark)

b) How does this tense make the reader feel?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(2 marks)

2. Describe the atmosphere in the streetcar using your own words.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(2 marks)

3. a) Re-read the paragraph that begins, 'We wear long wool coats...'. Find and quote one word from the passage that shows the girls don't like the kerchiefs their mothers make them wear.

\_\_\_\_\_

(1 mark)

b) Find and quote one simile from this paragraph and explain its effect.

Quote \_\_\_\_\_

(1 mark)

Effect \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(2 marks)

4. The writer describes three different types of old women on the streetcar. Describe these three types using your own words as far as possible.

Type 1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(1 mark)

Type 2

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(1 mark)

Type 3

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(1 mark)

5. Match the following words from the passage with their meaning as they are used in the text. The words have been highlighted for you.

muggy  
nonchalance  
jauntily  
festooned  
transitional

detachment  
humid  
hung  
temporary  
cheerfully

(5 marks)

6. Explain your understanding of the following quote from the end of the passage:

‘There is never only one, of anyone’

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(3 marks)





## Section C: Composition

(20 marks)

Choose **ONE** of the following tasks and write approximately 300-350 words.

EITHER

Narrative

1. Write a story in which the main character is forced think about a mistake in their past.

You should:

- develop a realistic plot
- use a variety of narrative techniques
- use language for effect.

OR

Descriptive

2. Describe a journey on a crowded bus.

You should:

- use the senses
- use imagery
- provide detail for your reader
- make sure you do NOT write a story.







- *This is the end of the examination* -