



The English School Entrance Examination 2025

Near-Native English

Time allowed: 1hr 15mins

General Instructions:

1. Answer one question in Part A, and all questions in Part B and C.
2. Read the instructions carefully before answering.
3. Do not spend too much of your time on questions you find difficult as you must finish the paper.
4. Write neatly and in black ink.
5. Check your work carefully at the end.
6. Use your own words unless otherwise stated.
7. No questions concerning the content of the paper are allowed.

Time Guidance (including checking time):

Section A: Composition (35 marks), 30 minutes

Section B: Comprehension and Usage (50 marks), 30 minutes

Section C: Directed Writing (15 marks), 15 minutes

Total marks: 100

The paper consists of 16 Pages

Good Luck!

Section A: Composition

(35 marks)

Choose **ONE** of the following questions and write about **220-250 words**.

Advice: Try not to use more than 30 minutes for this section.

Remember the importance of:

- Planning your response
- Vocabulary, expression and written accuracy
- Structure, punctuation and paragraphing

EITHER:

1. Write a **narrative** with the title '**The Magical Discovery**'.

Make sure you include:

- a character who discovers she has a new talent
- the initial difficulties she faces while trying to master her talent
- the positive effect this talent has on her life and those around her.



OR

2. **Describe** a walk through a forest.

Make sure you include:

- the setting, the season, the time of day and the reason for the walk
- sights, sounds, and smells of the forest
- how the experience makes you feel.



OR

3. Develop your views on the following topic:

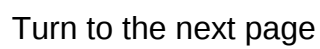
"The Value of Kindness in Our Lives"

Make sure to include:

- a moment when you showed kindness or were treated kindly and how it made you feel
- at least two reasons why it is important to be kind to others
- what could change in the world if everyone showed more kindness.

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Section B: Comprehension

(50 marks)

Read the following extract carefully and answer ALL the questions that follow.

I write this sitting in the kitchen sink. That is, my feet are in it; the rest of me is on the draining board, which I have padded with our dog's blanket and the tea cosy. I can't say that I am really comfortable, and there is a depressing smell of antiseptic soap, but this is the only part of the kitchen where there is any daylight left. And I have found that sitting in a place where you have never sat before can be inspiring. I wrote my very best poem while sitting on the hen house. Though even that isn't a very good poem. I have decided my poetry is so bad that I mustn't write any more of it.

Drips from the roof are plopping into the water bucket by the back door. The view through the windows above the sink is extremely gloomy. Beyond the damp garden in the courtyard are the ruined walls on the edge of the moat. Beyond the moat, the muddy ploughed fields stretch to the heavy sky. I tell myself that all the rain we have had lately is good for nature, and that at any moment spring will rush to us. I try to see leaves on the trees and the courtyard filled with sunlight. Unfortunately, the more my mind's eye sees green and gold, the more drained of all colour does the sunset seem.

It is comforting to look away from the windows and towards the kitchen fire, near which my sister Rose is ironing though she obviously can't see properly, and it will be a pity if she scalds her only nightgown. (I have two, but one is minus its behind.) Rose looks particularly attractive by firelight because she is a pinkish person; her skin has a pink glow and her hair is pinkish gold, very light and feathery. Although I am rather used to her I know she is a beauty. She is nearly twenty-one and very angry with life. I am seventeen, look younger, feel older. I am no beauty but have a neatish face.

I have just remarked to Rose that our situation is really rather lovely: two girls in this strange and lonely house. She replied that she saw nothing romantic about being shut up in a crumbling ruin surrounded by a sea of mud. I must admit that our home is an unreasonable place to live in. Yet I love it. The house itself was built in the time of Charles II, but it was grafted on to a fourteenth century castle that had been damaged by Cromwell. The whole of our east wall was part of the castle; there are two round towers in it. The gatehouse is unbroken and a stretch of the old walls at their full height joins it to the house. And Belmotte Tower, all that remains of an even older castle, still stands on its hill close by. But I won't attempt to describe our peculiar home fully until I can see more time ahead of me than I do now.

I am writing this journal partly to practise my newly learnt speed writing and partly to teach myself how to write a novel. I intend to capture all our characters and put in conversations. It ought to be good for my style to dash along without much thought, as up to now my stories have been very stiff and awkward. The only time father

40 pleased me by reading one of them, he said I combined majesty with a desperate effort to be funny. He told me to relax and let the words flow out of me.

I wish I knew of a way to make words flow out of father. Years and years ago, he wrote a very unusual book called Jacob Wrestling, a mixture of fiction, philosophy and poetry. It had a great success, particularly in America, where he made a lot of money by lecturing on it, and he seemed likely to become a very important writer
45 indeed. But he stopped writing. Mother believed this was due to something that happened when I was about five.

1. Identify which statements below are true **(T)** and which are false **(F)**.

The narrator feels inspired by sitting in unusual places.	
The house was built in the 14 th century and modified during Charles II's time.	
The view through the windows is bright and cheerful.	
Rose has dark hair and pale skin.	
The narrator is twenty-one years old.	
The house has two round towers and a gatehouse.	
The narrator wrote her best poem while sitting on the hen house.	

(7 marks)

2. a) Is the story told from the narrator's point of view?

(1 mark)

b) How does this make the reader feel?

(2 marks)

3. Why does the narrator sit in the kitchen sink at the beginning of the extract? Give **two** reasons.

(2 marks)

4. Provide **three** words from lines 9-16 which suggest the place the narrator is sitting is not very pleasant.

(3 marks)

5. Provide antonym for these words.

Word from passage	Antonym
Comfortable (line 3)	
Muddy (line 12)	
Success (line 43)	

(3 marks)

5. **Using your own words**, describe the view through the windows above the sink. Provide **two** details.

(2 marks)

6. What does the narrator imagine in order to feel better about the weather? Provide **two** details.

(2 marks)

7. **Using your own words**, describe how the narrator feels about her sister Rose?

(2 marks)

8. Give **two** reasons why Rose might be unhappy.

(2 marks)

9. **Using your own words**, explain why the narrator describes their home as an 'unreasonable place to live in'.

(3 marks)

10. Describe the narrator's father by circling the **two** most accurate characteristics from the options below.

A	He wrote a famous book but stopped writing.
B	He is cheerful and optimistic.
C	He mixes fiction, philosophy and poetry.
D	He has written many successful books.
E	He prefers physical work.

(2 marks)

11. How can we tell that something serious happened when the narrator was five years old? Why might this have happened?

(2 marks)

12. **Using your own words**, explain what the writer means by each of the words underlined. The words have been underlined in the passage for you:

a) '...there is a depressing smell of antiseptic soap' (line 3)

b) '...plopping into the water bucket...' (line 9)

c) '...is extremely gloomy.' (line 10)

d) '...she scalds her only nightgown' (line 19)

e) 'crumbling ruin' (line 27)

(6 marks)

13. Underline **two** nouns in the following sentence:

'I write this sitting in the kitchen sink.'

(2 marks)

14. Underline the **three** adjectives in this sentence:

'I can't say that I am really comfortable, and there is a depressing smell of antiseptic soap.'

(3 marks)

15. Underline the **two** prepositions in this sentence:

'Beyond the moat, the boggy ploughed fields stretch to the leaden sky.'

(2 marks)

16. Read the paragraph below which has **four** spelling errors in it. Underline them and correct the errors below.

The narrator's home, thogh crumbling and old, had a certian charm that was hard to ignore. The old walls and towers told stories of a past time, and the moat added an air of mystrey. Despite the damp and gloom, the narrator found confort in the familiar surroundings. Rose, with her pinkish glow, was a constant reminder of the warmth and love that filled the house, even in the darkest of times.

Incorrect Spelling	Correct Spelling
e.g. thogh	though

(4 marks)

Section C: Directed Writing

(15 marks)

Imagine you are Rose.

Write a diary entry describing your feelings about your current situation and your relationship with your family.

- Describe your feelings about living in the old, crumbling house.
- Express your thoughts about your sister and her writing.

There are **10 marks** for the ideas in your answer and **5 marks** available for your accuracy and style of writing.

Write around **120 words**.

Dear Diary,

Today, as I stood by the kitchen fire ironing my nightgown, I couldn't help but think about the strange and lonely life we have in this old house.

Additional sheet (notes)

This is the End of the Examination