



GCSE

150/05

**ENGLISH
HIGHER TIER
PAPER 1**

A.M. TUESDAY, 2 June 2009

2 hours

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer **all** questions in Section A and **both** questions in Section B.

Write your answers in the separate answer book provided.

You are advised to spend your time as follows:

Section A – about 55 minutes

Section B

Q. B1 – about 25 minutes

Q. B2 – about 40 minutes

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Section A (Reading): 40 marks

Section B (Writing): 40 marks

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

SECTION A: 40 marks

*Read carefully the short story below. Then answer **all** the questions which follow it.*

This extract is about a young boy called Bertie who lives in Edinburgh. Irene is his mother.

‘Hurry up now, Bertie,’ said Irene. ‘It’s almost ten o’clock, and if we don’t get there in time you may not get your audition. Now, you wouldn’t want that, would you?’

Bertie sighed. To miss the audition was exactly what he would want, but he realised that it was fruitless to protest. Once his mother had seen a notice about the Edinburgh Teenage Orchestra, she had immediately put his name down for an audition.

‘Do you realise how exciting this is?’ she said to Bertie. ‘This orchestra is planning to do a concert in Paris in a couple of weeks. Wouldn’t you just love that?’

Bertie frowned. The name of the orchestra suggested that it was for teenagers and he was barely six. ‘Couldn’t I just audition in seven years’ time?’ he asked his mother. ‘I’ll be a teenager then.’

‘If you’re worried about being the youngest one there,’ said Irene reassuringly, ‘then you shouldn’t! The fact that it’s called the Edinburgh Teenage Orchestra is neither here nor there. The word teenage is just to indicate what standard is required.’

‘But I’m not a teenager,’ protested Bertie helplessly. ‘They’ll all be teenagers. I promise you. I’ll be the only one in dungarees.’

‘There may well be others in dungarees,’ said Irene. ‘And anyway, once you’re sitting down behind your music stand, nobody will notice what you’re wearing.’

Bertie was silent. It was no use; he would be forced to go, just as she had forced him to go to yoga and to all the rest of it. There was no use protesting. If he was unable to persuade his mother not to subject him to the humiliation of being the youngest member, by far, of an orchestra, then he would have to find some other means to ensure he did not get in.

He thought for a moment and then realised that there was an obvious solution. Irene saw Bertie’s face break into a broad grin. He must have realised, she thought, what fun it would be to go to Paris. ‘Why are you smiling?’ she asked. ‘Thinking of Paris? We’ll have such fun in Paris.’ Bertie, who had been smiling over the prospect of escape, now became grave. We? Had his mother said *we’ll* have such fun in Paris?

His voice was tiny when he asked the question. ‘Are you coming too, Mummy? Are you coming to Paris, too?’

Irene laughed. ‘But of course, Bertie. Remember you’re only six. Mummy will come to look after you.’

‘But the teenagers won’t have their mothers with them. I’ll be the only one.’

And it would be worse, he thought. The humiliation would be doubled by the fact that Irene was visibly pregnant. This would mean the other boys would know what she had been doing. It was just too embarrassing. The journey to Queen’s Hall passed mostly in silence, at least on Bertie’s part, although Irene had various bits of advice for him.

‘Don’t feel nervous,’ she said. ‘Remind yourself that there are not only strangers there. I’ll be there too. Keep that in mind.’

Bertie reeled under the fresh blow. He had been hoping that his mother would wait outside. Now she was coming in! That would make his plan much more difficult to put into effect.

The Queen’s Hall was thronged with a large crowd of ambitious parents and children. Irene cast her eye about the room like a combatant assessing the field before joining the fray. Bertie observed her determined expression with dismay.

‘You can sit here, Bertie,’ she said. ‘I shall go and get some coffee. But I won’t get you a cup. We don’t want you rushing off to the little boys’ room in the middle of the audition, do we?’ Bertie felt his heart stop with embarrassment. It was bad enough for his mother to say such things in any circumstances, but for her to say it here, in the middle of the Queen’s Hall, with the eyes of the world upon him, was horror itself. His face burning red, he looked about him quickly. A girl at a neighbouring table had clearly heard, and was giggling. On the other side of the table was a boy who had also heard and was now staring at him.

The boy, who looked barely thirteen, turned to face Bertie. ‘Is that your mother?’ he asked.

Bertie shook his head. ‘No,’ he said. ‘No, she’s nothing to do with me.’

‘Who is she then?’ asked the boy.

‘She’s just someone I met on the bus,’ he said. ‘I talked to her and she followed me in.’

The boy looked surprised. ‘You have to be careful about talking to strangers.’

Bertie nodded. ‘I know,’ he said. He racked his brains for a credible story and then continued, ‘She’s just been let out of an asylum, you see. She had nobody to talk to her. So I did.’

‘Do you think she’s dangerous?’ asked the boy.

‘Not really,’ said Bertie. ‘But she’s very strange. She’s pretending to be my mother. It’s really sad.’

‘Look out, here she comes. I’m off. See you.’

60 Bertie looked at the ground in despair. ‘Mummy,’ he said. ‘Please take me home. That’s all I’m asking you.’

Irene said, ‘I’ll take you home after the audition. And that’s a promise.’

65 There were at least one hundred young musicians assembled for the audition. They ranged from thirteen to eighteen, although there were one or two nineteen-year-olds and Bertie, of course, who was six. To his horror, Bertie found that his mother insisted on sitting next to him. Bertie sank down in his seat, trying to persuade himself that not only was she not there, but that neither was he.

At a signal from the woman who was helping the conductor, a small group of musicians made their way to the front. ‘You get up now, Bertie,’ said Irene.

70 Bertie did nothing. His mother was giving him no alternative. He did not want to put his plan into effect but she really left him no choice.

‘Come on,’ said Irene, pulling Bertie up by the straps of his dungarees. ‘I’ll come with you.’

‘Please, Mummy,’ pleaded Bertie. ‘Please...’ Virtually frogmarched to the front, Bertie approached the conductor.

‘Tenor saxophone,’ said Irene, pushing Bertie forward. ‘Bertie Pollock.’

75 The conductor exchanged a glance with the woman beside him, who was smiling. Irene shot the woman a warning glance. ‘He’s a bit young, isn’t he?’ ventured the woman. ‘This is the Edinburgh Teenage Orchestra, after all.’

80 Irene’s eyes flashed. ‘That, if I may say so, is a somewhat unhelpful remark,’ she said coldly. ‘Do you really want to stifle talent by discriminating against younger musicians?’ The conductor looked at the woman, as if seeking moral support. She shrugged.

‘Oh, very well then,’ said the conductor wearily. ‘Just play us this piece.’

85 Bertie looked at the music. It was not at all difficult. It would be easy to play that piece. But no, he would now have to put his plan into operation. He would not play what was before him. Instead, he would play something quite different, something defiant. That would surely lead to his rejection. He closed his eyes and was soon into a fine rendition of ‘As Time Goes By’ from *Casablanca*. A fine rendition, perhaps, but a disobedient one, and one which would be bound to annoy the conductor. When he came to the end of the piece, he glanced quickly at his mother. She would be angry with him, he knew, but it would be better to face her anger than to be forced into a teenage orchestra. The conductor was silent for a moment. Then, rising to his feet, he clapped his hands together.

90 ‘Brilliant!’ he exclaimed loudly. ‘What a brilliant performance, young man! You’re in!’

Alexander McCall Smith

A1. Look at lines 1-16.

What are your impressions of Bertie and Irene and the relationship between them in these lines?

[10]

You must refer to the text to support your answer.

A2. Look at lines 17-38.

What is Bertie thinking and feeling in this part of the story?

[10]

You should track through the text carefully.

A3. Look at lines 39-61.

Bertie is really suffering in these lines. How does the writer show his suffering?

Look at:

- what happens;
- the writer’s choice of words and phrases.

[10]

A4. Look at lines 62-91.

What happens in these lines? How do you react to what happens?

[10]

SECTION B: 40 marks

Answer Question B1 and Question B2.

In this section you will be assessed for your writing skills, including the presentation of your work.

Take special care with handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

A guide to the amount you should write is given for each question.

- B1.** It is the first day of the new school year at a school or college. Describe the scene at the beginning of the day. [20]

You should write about a page in your answer book.

Remember that this is a test of your ability to write descriptively.

- B2.** Choose **one** of the following titles for your writing. [20]

The quality of your writing is more important than its length. You should write about two pages in your answer book.

Either, (a) A Knock on the Door.

Or, (b) Write about a time when you went on a school trip.

Or, (c) Continue the following:

“There’s no argument about it,” snapped Mum. “We’re going and that’s final.”

Or, (d) Write about a time when you had to stay with a relative.

Or, (e) Write a story which ends with the following:

I hadn’t wanted to go but this had made it all worthwhile.