

REGIONAL OLYMPIAD IN ENGLISH

2012

Group Two

Part Two

READING COMPREHENSION

Section One

Directions: Read the text below. Then read the questions that follow it and choose the best answer to each question – **A, B** or **C**. Mark your answers on the **ANSWER SHEET**.

For a few weeks every spring, the chestnut blazes with white candles. The flames are so bright you have to shade your eyes when you look at them. Then they flicker and die, and their blooms drip to the earth like wax – until they catch light again next spring. A miracle of nature, people say. But the chestnut tree’s candles didn’t come naturally.

It happened like this.

Once upon a time all was darkness. Then Zeus threw his hat in the ring, and there was light for half the day. All the creatures of the earth were delighted. But soon they wanted more. Why should the sun disappear each dusk? Light our nights for us as well, they begged Zeus.

Zeus was having none of it. A god can only take so much. If they wanted their nights lit up, they must sort it out themselves.

Hamm and Hermione volunteered to help. Both had been born with a special gift – winged arms and feet. It was said their mothers were mated with swans. Whatever the truth, the two children became friends and, as they grew up, would often soar above the earth together for a laugh. Now it was time to spread their wings in earnest.

It was Hermione who dreamed up the plan. Out in the sky there were millions of stars. All it needed was to bring one down to earth, or as near to earth as people could stand, so that it hovered there, like a paper lantern, lighting up the night.

“But how will we do it?” Hamm said.

“You’ll take one side and I’ll take the other and we’ll pull.”

“Will we be strong enough?”

“Of course. There’s only air in our way. *It’ll be a doddle.*”

“But even if we succeed, what’s to stop the star drifting off again?”

“We’ll tie it to a giant tree trunk.”

They set off the next day for the nearest star, but when they got there it proved too hot to handle – so hot their wings were scorched and they had to wait till the feathers grew back. Things looked hopeless. Was every star as fiery as the sun? Then they came upon a star they hadn’t noticed before. It was perfect: small, cool, phosphorescent, and light as an eggshell. When they pulled, it came with them, easy as pie.

“Take care,” Hermione said. “It’s terribly fragile.”

She was right. No other star in the cosmos was as delicate. As they carried it, little fragments broke off and slipped away into the night, shining back at them like glow-worms.

Hamm and Hermione headed downwards, back to the earth. Strong though they were, and light though the star was, the journey was exhausting. Sometimes they pushed from behind, with their hands or shoulders; sometimes they rowed, using their free arms like oars;

sometimes they swam on their backs, kicking their legs, with the star like a giant beach ball above them.

Slowly the earth rose into sight below.

Though friends, Hamm and Hermione didn't always see eye to eye. As they neared the end of their journey, they began to argue.

"Let's get this over with," Hamm said, pulling so hard that a large slice of star was cut off. "We are going too slowly."

"If we go any faster, it will break," Hermione said.

"I want to get home. I'm tired and hungry."

"Just be patient."

Hamm tried to be patient, he really did. But he was young and impetuous and as the earth swam closer – so close that he could make out rivers, forests and plains, clear as a football pitch under floodlights – he couldn't help rushing. Hermione did her best to restrain him. But he was racing ahead now, the star twisting and bulging as he humped it like a coal sack over his shoulders.

"Slow down, we are close enough," Hermione said. It was where they'd planned to stop: there were mountains not far below. All it needed was for one of them to fly down and fetch a rope while the other held the star steady. Then they'd tie it to a giant tree and their mission would be done.

"Stop!" Hermione cried. But Hamm had his back to her, not looking where he was going. The star creaked and groaned like a ship on a raging sea.

"Stop, stop!" she shouted, seeing a peak right below them. But it was too late. There was the gentlest of taps as they brushed the snow-capped summit, then a rumble from within the star, and cracks spreading across its crust, and a terrific explosion, like the shattering of an icicle. The lightshow that followed was spectacular, as zillions of star-chunks drifted out into the night like fire balloons. And when they faded, darkness returned to earth.

Every star fragment was lost, except one, which caught in Hermione's hair. It might have stayed there forever, like a halo, but in her confusion she flew into the branches of a chestnut tree. And though she came to no harm, the star halo fell off and broke into tiny pieces.

Each piece became a candle and lodged in the branches of the chestnut tree, where the flames burn brightly to this day. The candles begin as sticky buds in spring, and in autumn they become empty shells. But for a few glorious weeks in May they blaze like the star Hamm and Hermione so nearly brought back to earth.

1. Every spring the chestnut tree

- A. is dazzlingly bright.
- B. is engulfed by flames.
- C. is decorated with toys and candles.

2. Zeus suggested that if the inhabitants of Earth wanted more light they had to

- A. ask him for it.
- B. deal with it on their own.
- C. get themselves sorted out.

3. What is NOT true about Hamm and Hermione?

- A. They were both specially gifted.
- B. They enjoyed flying together.
- C. They looked like their swan mothers.

4. **Hermione planned to lighten up the night by**
 - A. carrying a star down to the earth.
 - B. making paper lanterns.
 - C. tying some stars to a big tree trunk.

5. **In context, “It’ll be a doddle” most probably means that it will be**
 - A. very difficult.
 - B. very easy.
 - C. great fun.

6. **Hamm and Hermione’s journey back to Earth can be described as**
 - A. long and tiring.
 - B. pleasant but exhausting.
 - C. monotonous and boring.

7. **Hamm and Hermione**
 - A. never quarrelled about anything.
 - B. didn’t always agree with each other.
 - C. had an unstable relationship.

8. **While going down to Earth Hamm and Hermione argued about**
 - A. how fast they should move.
 - B. how delicate the star was.
 - C. where they should carry the star.

9. **Compared to Hamm, Hermione was**
 - A. more irritable.
 - B. more sensitive.
 - C. more self-possessed.

10. **The star shattered because**
 - A. both Hamm and Hermione were careless.
 - B. Hamm and Hermione hit a mountain peak.
 - C. a strong wind made Hamm and Hermione drop it.

Section Two

Directions: Choose the most suitable heading from the list A – F for each paragraph of the text 1 - 5. There is one extra heading which you do not need to use. Mark your answers on the **ANSWER SHEET**.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Shaking off drowsiness | D. Ancient wisdom |
| B. A way to self-knowledge | E. Our college years |
| C. Feeling worthwhile | F. A means of stress relief |

Why a Healthy Body Means a Healthy Mind

1. _____

Since time immemorial, great civilizations have discovered and utilised the link between physical fitness and clarity of being. In the ancient civilizations of India, Greece and Rome physical fitness was given the highest importance. “*Healthy body, healthy mind*” is in fact derived from the old Latin saying “*mens sana in corpore sano*”. This connection works on multiple levels and being aware of each aspect can really motivate you to have a fitness regime as an integral part of your practice of self-improvement.

2. _____

During the daytime all the annoyances and troubles of the day slowly build up in our nervous system, turning us into the human equivalent of a pressure cooker! But when we do some physical exercise, all that stored up energy suddenly finds a channel through which it can operate. So when you finish, not only do you have that feel-good physical factor, but also an enhanced sense of mental clarity.

3. _____

Often (especially if we have slept too much) we arise with a feeling of lethargy and sluggishness which can reduce our effectiveness during the day. That’s why a run first thing in the morning works wonders in shaking off that half-asleep feeling. In fact, next time you get up and are tempted to go back to bed for a little while, try doing some exercise instead – you’ll be surprised how alert you feel in the end, and you will wonder where all that tiredness you had in the morning went!

4. _____

In our college years, we have days that just seemed to slip by without us really being able to put our mark on them, and we go to bed with a feeling of disappointment and not being able to accomplish something meaningful during the day. However, if we start running early in the morning, things change. We could meditate as soon as we get up, and then go out for a run and watch the sunrise. This means that when we sit down for our breakfast, it is not even nine o’clock and already two things are accomplished. And when two things are done, it is then much easier to do a third, and then a fourth. In other words, it gives you positive feelings and boosts your energy for the rest of the day.

5. _____

We all know that deep inside us there is boundless inner potential waiting to be fulfilled. One way which many people tap into this infinite potential is through sports. Through sports, we gain access to a sense of joy and fulfillment that comes from transcending our own finite capacities. In a way, aiming to better your capacities through sports has a lot of similarities to meditation. As we near the limit of our capacity, we find that it is in fact our mind and its negative thoughts which often stand in the way of our going beyond. And so to really transcend ourselves, we also have to go beyond the mind, just like meditation – and when we do, we can get some very insightful meditative experiences. If we do some long distance running, for example, challenging ourselves through participating in marathons and other long distance events, it can give us some profound inner insights into the deeper part of our own nature.

Section Five: SENTENCE TRANSFORMATION

Directions: Complete the second sentence so that it is as close as possible in meaning to the first one. Write your answers on the **ANSWER SHEET**.

1. She was so impressed by Canada that she wanted to live there permanently.
Canada made

2. The car’s making a funny noise. There must be something wrong with it.
The car’s making a funny noise. It sounds as

3. I prefer having boiled potatoes to chips.
I’d rather

4. The last time I drove in Sofia was five years ago.
I have **five years.**

5. Paul tried to make Ann tell him the secret.
Paul insisted

Part Four

WRITING

Directions: Write a composition of about 180 – 200 words on **one** of the following topics. Write your composition on the **ANSWER SHEET**.

- 1. Write a story ending with the following sentence: *It had been a difficult day for me, but it all turned out well in the end.*
- 2. Write about a celebrity who is a positive or negative role model. Describe him/her and explain why he/she sets a good/ bad example.

МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ОБРАЗОВАНИЕТО, МЛАДЕЖТА И НАУКАТА

REGIONAL OLYMPIAD IN ENGLISH

2012

Group Two

ANSWER SHEET

**Part One
Dictation**

Part Two

READING COMPREHENSION

Section One

- 1. A B C
- 2. A B C
- 3. A B C
- 4. A B C
- 5. A B C

- 6. A B C
- 7. A B C
- 8. A B C
- 9. A B C
- 10. A B C

Section Two

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Part Three

USE OF ENGLISH

Section One: *Cloze Test*

The text

- 1. A B C
- 2. A B C
- 3. A B C
- 4. A B C
- 5. A B C

- 6. A B C
- 7. A B C
- 8. A B C
- 9. A B C
- 10. A B C

- 11. A B C
- 12. A B C
- 13. A B C
- 14. A B C
- 15. A B C

The sentences

- 16. A B C
- 17. A B C
- 18. A B C
- 19. A B C
- 20. A B C

- 21. A B C
- 22. A B C
- 23. A B C
- 24. A B C
- 25. A B C

Section Two: *Error Identification*

- 1. A B C
- 2. A B C
- 3. A B C
- 4. A B C
- 5. A B C

Section Three: *Sentence Completion*

- 1. A B C
- 2. A B C
- 3. A B C
- 4. A B C
- 5. A B C

Section Four: *Text Completion with Prepositions*

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

Section Five: *Sentence Transformation*

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Part Four

WRITING

Topic 1 / Topic 2 (Please underline to indicate your choice.)