

**PPTC**

Post Primary Transfer Consortium

# Sample English

FAMILIARISATION BOOKLET

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SAMPLE NOT TO BE USED.**



# Introduction

*In this booklet there are some stories. There are passages from different types of book. We hope you will find them interesting and informative. You will be asked some questions on the passages themselves and on using books in general.*

*As you work through the booklet refer to the Glossary and Contents pages whenever you wish.*

## Contents

	Page
Practice Test	4
The Story of King Midas	6
Out of the Darkness	8
Shadows in the Snow	9
Game Over	11
A Track across the Ocean	12
General Section	14
Glossary	15
Bibliography	15
Index	15

# Sample Practice Test

*Read this passage through to yourself.*

## The Dog from Outer Space

1. Alix McCartney, visiting her grandmother for what promised to be a dreary weekend, stepped out of number 23, Market Lane, into the silent, sunny early-morning village street. She reflected as she walked to the telephone box that it was absolutely not fair that she had no mobile. All her friends had one. She was going to ask her mother to fetch her home at once. Two days in this dead place was too much to bear. 'You'll have a great time,' her mother had said. 'There's a dog show, and some sort of fancy dress barbecue.' 'Ugh,' Alix had replied.

- The street was so empty, it was as if a passing space ship had stopped off and whisked all the people away. As if to prove it, an apparition appeared that, Alix decided, could only
10. prove the presence of Aliens. It was a small green dog, somewhat dishevelled, running very fast down the centre of the road. Wonder of wonders. Something had actually happened. The dog ran round the corner into Main Street. Alix followed it as far as the telephone box, but then lost sight of it. There was, of course, no sign of a space ship, or of the dog's other-worldly owner. Still, just to have seen the animal was something.
  15. Alix went indoors. Unaccountably, she had decided to go to the barbecue after all. It might not be so bad, if the music was alright... or if Charlie Gubb were there. In any case, a village with green dogs was not, perhaps, such an indescribably boring place.

*Answer these questions about the passage. Mark the letter for the answer on your answer sheet.*

1

**For how long was Alix staying with her grandmother?**

- A. for the summer holidays
- B. for the Christmas holidays
- C. for a half term break
- D. for two days

2

**Why did Alix want to go home?**

- A. She did not get on with her grandmother.
- B. She had started having strange visions.
- C. She was very bored.
- D. She had no mobile phone.

Please go on to the next page >>>

3

Which is the closest meaning to 'dishevelled'? (line 10)

- A. cross
- B. terrified
- C. fluffy
- D. ruffled

The above questions will have answers supplied and explanations as to why the answer is correct before the children continue.

In this passage there are some spelling mistakes. On each numbered line there is either one mistake or no mistake. Find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark the letter for it on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, choose option N on your answer sheet.

## Setting Out

4

Kuldeep was thrilled with the bike, and absolutely determined to cycle to secondary school.

5

'That's an excelent idea,' Dad had said, 'and I'll give my approval on one condition.

Children will have two further practice questions.

In this passage there are some mistakes in the use of capital letters and punctuation. On each numbered line there is either one mistake or no mistake. Find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark its letter on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, choose option N on your answer sheet.

## Death by Chocolate Cake

8

We hunted around for the simplest yummiest cake to tempt all you cooks out there –

9

and we think wev'e found it. This cake is actually made with a secret ingredient.

Children will have one further practice question.

End of Practice Test.

Please do not turn over until you are told to do so



# Sample Main Test

*Read this passage through, then answer the questions on the following pages. If there are any words you don't understand, you may find them in the Glossary on page 15.*

## The Story of King Midas

### *A legend of ancient Greece*

1. This story is thousands of years old. It tells of a time when, according to legend, gods and goddesses walked the Earth, and the strangest enchantments were everyday events. In those days, the land contained many small kingdoms, each with its own king. One such king was Midas.
5. On a particular summer's day, King Midas was present at a music competition. The contest was to be judged by Tmolus, a river god, and there were two contestants: a young man named Marsyas, and a very powerful god named Apollo.

Marsyas was first to play. Now, although Marsyas was an ordinary young man, he possessed an extraordinary, magical flute. The music it made was so sweet that all who

10. heard it were instantly bewitched. When the flute fell finally silent, King Midas let out a long, wistful sigh. 'Perfect!' he breathed.

Tmolus said nothing. He was too wise to rush to judgement, particularly when the second contestant was a powerful god, who was known for his quick temper. He turned and looked expectantly at Apollo.

15. Apollo's chosen instrument was the lute. He began to play, and his touch was so delicate that the clouds themselves were drawn down from the sky.

When the piece was finished, Tmolus pondered deeply. There was little to choose between the two competitors. Marsyas' playing had touched more hearts, it was true, but that was not the point. Had Marsyas played ten times better than his rival, he could not be judged

20. the winner. For Apollo would be angry if he did not win, and Apollo's wrath meant danger.

At last, Tmolus delivered his verdict: 'I declare Apollo the winner!'

Without thinking, King Midas cried: 'That's ridiculous! Marsyas played better, everyone could hear that! Anyone who thinks otherwise must have asses' ears!'

Apollo glared at the king. 'Indeed,' was all he said.

Please go on to the next page >>>

25. The next morning, King Midas was awoken by a strange itching in the region of his scalp. Scratching his head, he rose to look in the mirror. What he saw made his eyes grow wide in horror. His ears were long and pointed, and covered in coarse, grey hair. There could be no doubt about it, they were asses' ears and they looked, above all, absurd. What could the king do?
30. 'Everyone will laugh at me,' he almost wept, as he paced the room in despair, 'and that must never be. A king who is ridiculous cannot command respect, and then – who knows? – the people may rise up and rebel! My ears must remain a secret.'

At last, he came up with a plan. 'I know,' he said to himself, 'I'll find a cap large enough to conceal the ears, and that cap will stay firmly on my head from dawn till dusk.'

35. The plan worked well. The king's subjects were duly impressed and caps became instantly fashionable.

*Please answer these questions. Look at the passage again if you need to.  
You should choose the best answer and mark its letter on your answer sheet.*

1

**Which one of these is true?**

- A. Midas and Apollo were the competitors; Tmolus was the judge.
- B. Tmolus and Apollo were the competitors; Midas was the judge.
- C. Marsyas and Apollo were the competitors; Midas was the judge.
- D. Apollo and Marsyas were the competitors; Tmolus was the judge.

2

**What was unusual about Marsyas?**

- A. He was a god.
- B. He was friendly with the gods.
- C. He had magical powers.
- D. He owned a magical object.

3

**Which is closest in meaning to 'wistful'? (line 11)**

- A. dreamy
- B. whistling
- C. loud
- D. happy

**Children will have seven further questions.**

Please go on to the next page >>>

In this passage there are some spelling mistakes. On each numbered line there is either one mistake or no mistake. Find the group of words with the mistake in it and mark the letter for it on your answer sheet. If there is no mistake, choose option N on your answer sheet.

## Out of the Darkness

11

Kuli stared, blinking, at the magnificent colours of the parrot's fethers – orange,

A

B

C

D

12

blue-green, scarlet – as they glowed in the sunlight. There in the depths of the

A

B

C

D

13

rain-forest, the shade of the canopy had been delightfully cool and comfortable.

A

B

C

D

Children will have seven further questions.

Please go on to the next page >>>



*Read this passage through, then answer the questions on the next pages. If there are any words you don't understand, you may find them in the Glossary on page 15.*

## Shadows in the Snow

### *'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?'*

1. Wolf.  
The very name sends a shiver down the spine.

Wolves are fearsome and savage, dangerous and dark. They fill our folklore. In children's stories the wolf blew down the little pigs' houses and swallowed Red Riding Hood's

5. grandmother whole. In Norse mythology, a wolf tore off the hand of the god Tyr. There is a legend that the wolf is the devil in disguise, and that some men become murderous werewolves when the moon is full.

#### **Dogs and wolves**

Poor wolves. They have done little to deserve their reputation. In biological terms, they are

10. little more than large dogs, such close relations that they can easily breed with them.

All our domestic dogs are descended from wolves. Even the tiniest Yorkie can claim kinship with the largest, wildest wolf that roams the northern wilderness.

Some time, more than 15,000 years ago, a few wolves were domesticated and, over centuries of breeding, turned into Man's Best Friend. Without wolves, we would have no

15. guide dogs or sheepdogs, no hounds or retrievers, and no doggy family pets.

#### **Size and shape**

Wolves are usually larger than dogs. The shaggy, grey, thick-furred northern animals weigh around 25 – 50 kg, the males being slightly larger than the females. The smaller buff-coloured wolves of Asia and the Middle East weigh around 18kg. The biggest recorded

20. wolf, found in Alaska, was 80kg.

Their bodies are narrower than dogs', and their legs longer – all in all, they are more athletic, and more intelligent, too. But they cannot be kept as pets. They are pack animals, unhappy away from other wolves. They can be destructive, hard to train, and need enormous areas over which to roam.

25. Today, the wolf's admirers are making a case for re-introducing these magnificent creatures to the Scottish Highlands. But the wolf has been so feared over the centuries that there seems little chance that it will ever have enough supporters to bring it back to Britain. Our wild open spaces will probably never again be home to these extraordinary creatures.

Please go on to the next page >>>

*Please answer these questions. Look at the passage again if you need to.  
You should choose the best answer and mark its letter on your answer sheet.*

21

**The main point made in the first paragraph is that**

- A. Wolves are dangerous.
- B. Literature tells us that the wolf is dangerous.
- C. There are lots of wolves in children's stories.
- D. Stories about wolves are very old.

22

**What does the writer emphasize in the second paragraph?**

- A. the close relationship between dogs and wolves
- B. that wolves are much larger than dogs
- C. the close relationship between dog and man
- D. the usefulness of the dog to man

23

**The text describes the wolf as 'fearsome' (line 3)**

**What does this mean?**

- A. Wolves are rarely seen.
- B. Wolves are easily frightened.
- C. Wolves are frightening.
- D. Wolves are wicked.

**Children will have 11 further questions.**

Please go on to the next page >>>



*Read this passage through, then answer the questions on the next pages. If there are any words you don't understand, you may find them in the Glossary on page 15.*

## A Track across the Ocean

### *The world of John Harrison*

1. John Harrison was born in Yorkshire in 1693, the son of a carpenter. Hard-working and determined, he taught himself, when still young, to make fine clocks. Harrison lived in a world that was yet to see railways and steam engines, and where ships relied on sails to carry them across the oceans.
5. Among the many dangers facing these ships was that they frequently missed their way and, as a result, were often wrecked on shoals of rocks. This was because, although sailors had known for centuries how to work out their 'latitude' (how far north or south they were), they had no reliable way of knowing their 'longitude' (their position in terms of east and west). As a result, countless lives and thousands, if not millions, of pounds were
10. being lost.

Harrison's great achievement was to solve the problem of how to calculate a ship's position in terms of longitude.

#### **The prize**

- By 1714, Parliament decided that the problem was so urgent that it would offer a prize of
15. £20,000 to anyone who could 'discover longitude'. It was a huge amount – the equivalent of making the winner as rich as a modern millionaire. A Board of Longitude was set up to distribute the prize money and to help inventors who had promising ideas.

#### **Stars versus clocks**

- Scientists of the time believed there might be two ways of working out longitude. One
20. way was from the position of the Sun and the stars in the sky, the other was by using a clock. The problem with this simple theory was that it depended on building a clock more accurate than had ever been made. Although many believed this was impossible, John Harrison was sure that such a clock could be made, and that he was the man to make it. In 1728, he went to London, where he built his first marine clock, now known as H-1.
  25. In 1760, over thirty years after his first attempt, he finished a fourth clock, H-4. It was of an entirely new design, resembling a large watch. It weighed about 1.5 kg and was only 13 cm across.

Please go on to the next page >>>

In November 1761, by which time Harrison was approaching 70 years of age, his son William boarded the Royal Navy's H.M.S Deptford, to test H-4 on a voyage to Jamaica.

30. When they reached Jamaica, H-4 was only five seconds slow. The watch – and the system of navigation – had been proved to work almost perfectly.

Astonishingly, the Board members remained unconvinced. They demanded more clocks and more tests, and would pay out only half the prize money.

### **King George III steps in**

35. Harrison was now nearly 80 years old. Heartbroken and angry, he appealed to the King, George III. In 1773, after nearly 60 years of work, John Harrison was finally awarded the prize.

*Please answer these questions. Look at the passage again if you need to.*

*You should choose the **best** answer and mark its letter on your answer sheet.*

43

**When did John Harrison learn to make clocks?**

- A. when trains were invented
- B. when ships ran on time
- C. when he was a young man
- D. when he was in his eighties

44

**Sailors could not calculate a ship's longitude. Why was this a problem?**

- A. They could not work out where they were.
- B. They were in a difficult position.
- C. The ship could not run on time.
- D. They did not know how far north they were.

45

**What does 'reliable' (line 8) mean?**

- A. responsible
- B. traditional
- C. scientific
- D. dependable

**Children will then have 10 further questions.**

Please go on to the next page >>>

## General Section

*To answer these questions, you have to think about the passages you have read. Look back if you need to, and look at the Index and Glossary on page 15.*

56

**What can you use an index for?**

- A. referring the reader to particular parts of the book
- B. referring the reader to other books on the same subject
- C. explaining unusual or specialized words
- D. listing the difficult words in the stories

57

**Who is the author of the passage about King Midas?**

- A. Tmolus
- B. Nora Yaki
- C. Matt Jones
- D. John Harrison

**Children will then have three further questions.**

END OF TEST

# Glossary

**lute** a stringed instrument – something like a guitar

# Bibliography

Jones, Matt	<i>Story of King Midas</i> , GL, 2009
Krump, Sam	<i>Out of the Darkness</i> , GL, 2009
Lewis, Jan	<i>Game Over</i> , GL, 2009
Mitchell, Alison	<i>A Track across the Ocean</i> , GL, 2009
Yaki, Nora	<i>Shadows in the Snow</i> , GL, 2009

# Index

Apollo,	6
Harrison, John,	12
Marsyas,	6
Tmolus,	6
wolf,	9

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