James Allen's Girls' School 4-18

jags

11+ Entrance Examination sample paper
English

Candidate number……..

If you speak a language other than English at home (eg Spanish, Cantonese, Urdu)

please write the name of the language here:

……..

Time allowed: 1 hour

Answer both Sections A and B

Start Section B (Composition) on a NEW PIECE OF PAPER

Make sure your CANDIDATE NUMBER IS ON EVERY SHEET

You should spend no longer than 35 minutes on the Comprehension

You will be told when the 35 minutes are up

SECTION A: COMPREHENSION

Read the following passage carefully before you answer all the questions. Answer in full sentences and in your own words as far as possible.

It was early spring that year, a season of dangerous skies. I was of an age when I'd wake up before sunrise with nothing but fishing on my mind. Some mornings were so sweet and cold and clear — still a few stars, a soft thick mist rising up from the glassy water.

I could have the skiff out on the creek in nothing flat. She was a light wooden boat, and low to the water, built with all the skill and love in a local craftsman's hands. I painted her dark green every year, scraped her clean of barnacles to keep her floating like a feather. My granddaddy had built her, and she was my proudest possession.

It seemed a sin to turn on the engine in the quiet, with the rails (a kind of bird) still sleeping in the marsh grass, and the bullfrogs and other night creatures not up yet from winter. It was about as peaceful as any place on earth. I could be down at the bend in front of Bartons' dock just before the sun was up, slapping my fingers against my thighs to warm them. The creek meandered down there; the ghostly hulks of old skipjacks run aground showed where the shoreline had been other years. It always seemed sad those beautiful old boats would never part baywater again.

Just there the clouds would loom and menace, so cold and wet you could feel them hover. If I kept on, more like than not I'd have a right smart skiff full of icy water to push home.

It was just one such Saturday morning when it all began. Through my bedroom window the faintest tangerine glow marked where the sky met the water. Soon as I threw back my woollen blanket, old Obie's tail whumped the floor. I swear that dog loved fishing more than I did.

By the time I had shivered into my jeans and flannel shirt and warm jacket, Obie was stretching and making groaning noises in his throat, just dying to get out on the Bay. There was something very special and secret about being quiet in the kitchen before sunrise, with the whole rest of the house asleep above me. My feet knew every chair and table leg, every creaky floorboard; the palms of my hands knew just where each door hinge squeaked. Obie drew in his claws and puffed up the pads on his feet. Every other minute of the day that Labrador clattered around like a sackful of oyster shells.

A storm had come up the night before. Branches had been whipped and broken in the giant cedars all round the house, until somewhere near dawn, it went away as suddenly as it had come on. Limbs littered the winter-brown lawn down to the water, and the marsh grass lay flat at the edge of the creek. Those easterly spells slammed into the mouth of the Chesapeake Estuary with ferocity and trapped the high tide in the Bay and creeks like a giant stopper.

SECTION A | COMPREHENSION

After you have read the passage carefully, answer the following questions.
Write in complete sentences, using your own words as far as possible.
Spend no more than 30 minutes.

1) Look again at the second paragraph (lines 5-9).
In your own words as far as possible, describe the narrator's 'skiff'. [5 marks]

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2) Explain why the narrator felt that 'It seemed a sin to turn on the engine.' [line 10]
[2 marks]

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3) In lines 27 to 31, explain in your own words how you know that the narrator and her dog make sure that they are absolutely quiet in the kitchen. [4 marks]

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4) Give the meaning of the following words as they are used in the passage. No need for full sentences here, one or two words will do. [4 marks]

i) 'meandered' [line 14] _____

ii) 'hulks' [line 15] _____

iii) 'loom' [line 18] _____

iv) 'whumped' [line 23] _____

5) Using lines 33 to 38 (the last paragraph), describe the effects of the storm. Use your own words, but also pick out some of the words used by the writer and comment on them. [6 marks]

6) Explain what ideas or images are suggested by the following:

i) 'a season of dangerous skies' [line 1]

[2 marks]

ii) 'clattered around like a sackful of oyster shells' [line 31-2]

[2 marks]

[Total 25 marks]

SECTION B | COMPOSITION

Take a new sheet of paper.

Put your name and candidate number on the top.

Spend no more than 30 minutes on this task.

The passage you have just read in the comprehension is taken from the start of the first chapter of a book.

Continue writing the next part of the story, describing carefully the next part of your day.

Try to make your writing fit with what you have read so far.

Make sure that you write carefully, paying particular attention to your use of paragraphs, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

[Total 25 marks]