



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Cambridge Lower Secondary Sample Test
For use with curriculum published in
September 2020

English Paper 2

Insert

Stage 7

Text for Section A

Extract from 'Riding Icarus' by Lily Hyde.

Birds whistled. Those were the ones with heads as grey and furry-looking as little mice. There was an endless shushing noise, as if the Dnieper River had slipped the chains of its bank in the night and lay sighing on the doorstep. The goats in their pen made sleepy bleating sounds. Faintly, from the car park above, came the banging and scraping of garage doors, the rattle of engines and the soft squishing of tyres in the sand. The trolleybus wires sang their thin, twanging song.

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That was what Masha woke up to every morning. She liked to lie listening before she opened her eyes; she had a running bet with herself to see if she could predict the weather from what it sounded like.

'Sunny,' she said. 'Cotton wool sky.'

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'Get yourself out of bed; the kasha's burning. You and your cotton wool,' said Granny, who had no intention of rewarding even correct weather predictions. Granny knew such things as instinctively as cows, or crows.

Masha sighed and opened her eyes. Kasha was buckwheat boiled with butter. Filling and cheap, but boring. Next to it on the table, though, Granny had laid out the remains of Masha's birthday cake. Feeling her stomach rumble, she hopped out of bed.

15

It was too hazy to be sunny. Less cotton wool than curdled milk. Thunderstorm weather. How do you work out the differences like that from sounds, Masha pondered, as she slipped out of the open door, which was covered with a curtain against mosquitoes, and into the morning air. Why do the trolleybus wires sing even when there's no wind, she wondered. She returned to her home: Icarus the trolleybus. Lots of buses that drove around had the name *ICARUS* written on their fronts, but there was only one trolleybus called Icarus. And only this one trolleybus was home to a little girl called Masha and her very old grandmother.

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Icarus had not gone anywhere for a long time. He was parked among meadows and allotments on the very edge of Kiev, by the Dnieper River. With no overhead electric wires to fix onto, the two long spring rods attached to the roof waved in the air like antennae, forever searching for a new source of power on which to drive away. There were no seats inside any more, and in their place were two cosy beds, two chairs and a table, and a little cooker which ran off a gas cylinder. A bookcase was tucked between two windows, and a broom handle strung from the ceiling made a rack for the two occupants to hang up their few clothes. The floor was covered with a strip of red carpet, and embroidered Ukrainian cloths were draped across the window. This mid-summer morning he was a cheerful, bright home with the birdsong pouring in through the open windows.

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Masha eyed her pile of birthday presents from yesterday as she ate breakfast. It was a very small pile. Nothing at all from her mother, even now she was ten, into double figures: a one as skinny as she was; a fat zero for a peephole onto the world. 'A good round number,' Granny had said approvingly, as if it were an achievement to reach ten.

35

Masha didn't want to think about her mother's missing present. She reached over and pulled a big glossy book out of the pile. It was an encyclopaedia of animals. Uncle Igor had given it to her, but she was sure it was not really from Igor at all, but from his wife, Anya. She knew this because she actually liked it – in contrast to Uncle Igor's second present, a hideous, pink frilly dress his daughter Anastasia had worn once or twice and then got tired of, or grown out of.

40

'Planning your travels?' Granny said, as Masha opened the book to look through the Galapagos, where you could ride on giant turtles; the African jungle, full of sleek, patterned snakes dripping from the trees. Then she got to Siberian tigers, and Granny sighed and turned away.

45

Looking at the picture made Masha ache faintly inside. But it was not a new ache; it was already four years old. Her father had grown up beyond Siberia in Kamchatka, thousands of kilometres away to the east, where the tigers live. He said everything there was twice as big as anywhere else.

50

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English Paper 2

Stage 7

1 hour 10 minutes

Name

Additional materials: Insert

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Write your answer to each question in the space provided.
- You should pay attention to punctuation, spelling and handwriting.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].
- Suggestions for how long to spend on each section are given in the booklet.

Section A: Reading

Spend 30 minutes on this section.

Read the text in the Insert, and answer questions 1–11.

1 Look at the first paragraph (lines 1–6).

(a) Why does the writer make the first paragraph a description of different sounds?

..... [1]

(b) The writer uses a number of literary features to describe the setting.
Complete the table below, describing the literary features the writer uses and giving an example from the text.

Literary technique	Example from text
personification	
.....	heads as grey and furry-looking as little mice
sibilance	

[3]

2 What is Granny's attitude towards Masha's weather prediction?

..... [1]

3 What does the writer mean by 'less cotton wool than curdled milk'?

..... [1]

4 Look at lines 17–23.

(a) The writer mostly uses long sentences here.
Why? Tick (✓) **two** boxes.

to build up descriptive detail

☐

to add emphasis to the description

☐

to create a slow, relaxing pace

☐

to explain why the action takes place

☐

to show a sequence of events

☐

[2]

(b) Why do you think Granny named their home *Icarus*?

..... [1]

5 Explain in your own words how the writer makes Icarus seem like a pleasant place to live.
Give **three** ways.

•

.....

•

.....

•

..... [3]

6 Do you think Masha's aunt knows Masha better than her uncle? Explain your answer and give evidence from the text to support your explanation.

Explanation:

Quotation: [2]

7 Explain why Granny sighs. Give **two** ideas.

- [2]
- [2]

8 Look at the last paragraph (lines 47–50).

(a) Why is a semi-colon (;) used?

..... [1]

(b) Give **one** subordinate clause.

..... [1]

(c) Masha has a slight ache.
Why?

..... [1]

9 The text is set in Ukraine, on the edge of Kiev, by the Dnieper River.
Give **two** other pieces of evidence from the text that tell you the text is set in Ukraine.

- [2]
- [2]

10 (a) Which of the following do you think best describes Masha's character? Tick (✓) **one** box.

irritable	☐
dreamy	☐
lonely	☐
worried	☐

[1]

(b) Which of the following do you think best describe Granny's character? Tick (✓) **one** box.

selfish	☐
practical	☐
emotional	☐
adventurous	☐

[1]

11 Look at the structure of this text.
Give **two** reasons why paragraphs are used in this text.

-
-

[2]

Section B: Writing

Spend 30 minutes on this section.

12 Write your own story about a holiday in a caravan somewhere unusual.

You could consider the following:

- the setting
- the characters
- the viewpoint
- how the story develops.

Space for your plan:

Write your story on the next page.

[25 marks]

