



OUNDLE

School

2015 Non Common Entrance Examination

Third and Fourth Form Entry

English

Time Allowed: 1 hour

- Please answer on lined paper
- Clearly mark your name at the top of each sheet of paper used
- Dictionaries are not allowed

Section A

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions below. Please note that some questions carry more marks than others. You should spend 35 minutes on this section.

On the first morning of the new school year, Miss Delia Pratt began the session by ignoring the collection of miserable little souls that made up her fourth-grade class. As they wandered in from the playground, she cracked open the newest issue of *True Detective* magazine and flipped directly to the exploits of Detective Nick Cabot, whom she followed faithfully every month. To the bumbling students in slickers¹ and rain boots clotting the doorway, Delia raised an absent hand – the same way a cow might swat a cloud of flies circling her flank – but her full attention was paid to Cabot, who was clipping at the heels of the notorious jewel thief he had been trailing all summer. A flash of the badge, a click of the handcuffs, and the classroom dissolved; Delia’s mind became broad and dense, the corners rounded and dulled to a blissful stupor. Her body took on the slogging consistency of pudding, allowing her head to wobble forward and her chin to sink down into the exposed chasm of her cleavage.

The students stared in horror as their teacher’s eyelids flitted closed and the brass clasp holding her blond updo² slid along the back of her neck. A single whimper rose up from the doorway. Beads of rainwater rolled down the hem of the children’s slickers, drip-drip-dripping onto the floor in monotonous rhythm. Lungs paused, afraid to breathe. Two students with compulsive tendencies³ checked and rechecked the name on the front door; upon confirming and reconfirming they were in the correct classroom, one proceeded to tap his fingers against the wall, five taps per finger, while the other mentally sang through a comforting, continuous loop of ‘Dixie’. Among the more generous children, Miss Pratt seemed, at worst, curious and unhelpful – but to the majority she was sinister and cold and her profile, if viewed at the correct angle under certain light, was not unlike that of a witch.

‘Maybe she had a heart attack,’ one of the children whispered. The offhand comment lightened the communal mood; more than a few spines tingled at the possibility of a dead teacher and class being cancelled for the entire year.

‘I think she’s still breathing,’ another said. ‘Go poke her with a ruler.’

‘You do it.’

‘Uh-uh.’

As the children debated their course of action, the sun elbowed its way into the classroom, cutting a diagonal swath from the back window to the chalkboard at the front of the room. There was cruelty in the timing of the sun’s sudden, unobstructed appearance – from nearly the moment school let out in June to that very September morning, the sky had been a constant smear of gray and wet.

As the sky broke for the first time in months, Miss Pratt’s classroom became saturated in a teasing gold. The abrupt change in brightness roused Delia from her semi-coma; as she blinked in the glare and collected her oozing posture, her mind resumed its three dimensions. The room returned to her,

¹ Slickers: rain coat

² Updo: hairstyle in which hair is pinned up

³ Compulsive tendencies: uncontrollable or obsessive habits

bringing with it insipid paper leaves taped around the doorway and the aspirin smell of chalk dust. A dark mood was fermenting inside Delia. She took one last, longing look at Detective Cabot and slapped the magazine shut.

45

'Sit down,' she ordered.

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In the doorway, the children jerked to attention. They scattered and thinned out along the wall of coat hooks, abandoning their rain boots and lunch bags along with any hope of school being cancelled. Movement brought a fleeting sense of relief, though as soon as they chose their seats and settled behind the rows of wobbly desks, relief gave way to an oppressive dread. The entire school year stretched out before them long and endless, paved by a woman whose temperament was as inhospitable as the Cedar Hole climate.

(Extract from *The Greatest Man in Cedar Hole* by Stephanie Doyon)

1. At the opening of the extract, how are the fourth-graders described? (1 mark)
2. Why do you think Delia is so interested in the fictional detective Nick Cabot? (2 marks)
3. How does the author use contrast in the first paragraph? (3 marks)
4. Look at lines 11-20. Using quotations, explain how the author creates tension. (4 marks)
5. Explain in your own words, the different ways in which the children react to Delia 4 marks)
6. Look at lines 21-35. Give an example of personification and explain the effect it creates. (2 marks)
7. What does the author say happened during the summer holidays? (1 mark)
8. How does the author convey the character of Miss Delia Pratt to the reader? Use quotations and explain your answer fully. (5 marks)

Please turn over for Section B

Section B

Choose **one** of the following. Marks will be awarded for the accuracy and sophistication of your expression as well as your ideas. You should spend 25 minutes on this section.

- Imagine you are Miss Delia Pratt, describe the first day of school from her perspective.
- Describe your ideal summer holiday – be as detailed as possible to encourage the reader to imagine exactly what you are describing.
- Write about meeting someone for the first time. This could be loosely based on someone you know or someone in your imagination. Think carefully about what you want the reader to think of him or her.

(20 marks)

Check your work carefully