



English Sample Paper 2

1 hour

Section A - Reading
Spend 35 minutes on this section

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions which follow.

As a child the writer lived with his mother, named Jenny, and Alexander his brother, on an isolated hilltop sheep farm. In this passage he describes a dramatic snow storm.

Blizzard!

(1) Every winter Jenny listened to weather forecasts with dread, equally concerned for us and for the animals. She had developed a winter routine; at the first threatening forecast she stocked up supplies, moved the sheep to fields sheltered from the expected direction of the wind, and waited. We knew she dreaded the snow, but Alexander and I looked forward to it; she was in control, what did we have to fear?

(2) One memorable morning the flakes fell, sometimes fast, sometimes slowly, sidelong slipping through colder air, careless, unhurried, as if the weather was shifting from foot to foot, waiting. As Jenny walked back up the hill it began to fall heavily; now there was nothing warm anywhere in the world, except her sheep in their coats. 'Good girls, sensible sheep, you stay there. You'll be warm under that hedge ...'

(3) That evening Jenny turned away from the radio and towards the supper she was making, frowning. The forecast was not good. We ate, played and built one of our great fires. We filled the grate with branches over crumpled newspaper and twigs, lit it, and basked in the heat of a roaring fire, which sent sparks popping and swirling up the chimney and flung ruddy light into the cold sitting room. We perched as close to it as we could, until our clothes were almost too hot to touch and our clammy backs felt feverish, as though they too were glowing red. The crackling branches spat sparks on to the rug, and we stamped them out, barely noticing the little black holes that remained. When the blaze had burned down to its embers we went to bed and the next day the storm arrived.

(4) As Alexander and I retreated to the living room, arming ourselves with toy guns, Jenny set out to feed the sheep.

(5) Snow was already drifting in the lanes, forming waves against every wall, hedge and bank. The world was changing shape. The cold soon drained the strength out of Jenny's arms and legs, but she did what she could, dragging out bales of hay. The wind spun armfuls of hay away into the white, swirling it off like so much dust. She made it as far as the Lower Meadows, ducking lower and lower under the blizzard. Peering about her she realised she was nearly lost, in a field she knew well. She turned back. Icicles were forming in her hair where it escaped from under her hat. She staggered on, going slower as the freezing air plucked the strength out of her.

(6) We looked up from our game as she came in, pursued by a gust of snowflakes. 'Look!' she cried. 'Look, children, I've got icicles in my hair!'

'Wow!'

'I think I nearly died in the First Meadow ...'

(7) The storm came on all that day. It attacked the house like a legion of furious, freezing ghosts: licking under the doors with white wet tongues; pouring down the chimney; coming up through the drains. Finally the windows froze, inside and out, and the world beyond them disappeared.

(8) The fire hissed and twisted in the grate, battling the draughts and flakes in the chimney, and my brother and I went back to playing with our toys and messing around with the dog. There was a fizz in us which did not just come from being inside all day: it was a rare feeling, gleeful and nervy, to be safe but not fully secure from the danger outside. Jenny quietly prayed that the electricity would not fail. We had supper and went to bed as usual. While we slept, Jenny lay in bed, listening to the wind. She wondered what we would find outside the next day.

(9) She awoke puzzled. All was perfect silence.

(10) Jenny tried to let the dog out, but the back door was frozen shut. The windows had thick white curtains drawn across them from outside, so when I went to open the front door I had no idea of what might be there. The door often stuck, as it did now, so I put my back into it and heaved on the handle. It opened. Before me was a vertical white wall, containing a perfect imprint of the doorknob. We stared at the snow wall. It was as though a great polar beast had died in the yard and was now lying slumped against the house. It was ludicrous, somehow. We laughed as if it were a practical joke.

(11) 'Buried alive!' exclaimed Jenny. Alexander and I exchanged thrilled glances. The blizzard had swallowed us.

Questions

1. Look at paragraph 1. **How does Jenny prepare for winter on the farm?** Find two examples.

(a) _____ (1)

(b) _____ (1)

2. Look again at paragraph 1. **How do the children's feelings about snow differ from Jenny's feelings?**

_____ (2)

3. Look at the first sentence of paragraph 2. Find a **verb** used by the writer to describe the snow. Then find an **adverb** used to describe the snow.

Verb _____ (1)

Adverb _____ (1)

4. Look again at paragraph 3 ('That evening – the next day the storm arrived'). Give **three** words or phrases that the writer uses to describe **the sounds made by the fire**.

(a) _____ (1)

(b) _____ (1)

(c) _____ (1)

5. Look again at paragraph 5. In your own words, **what do we learn about the character of Jenny here?**

_____ (2)

6. Find an example of **personification** used to describe the storm in paragraph 7.

_____ (1)

7. **What do the following underlined words from the passage mean?**

(a) 'basked' (paragraph 3) _____ (1)

(b) 'clammy' (paragraph 3) _____ (1)

(c) 'embers' (paragraph 3) _____ (1)

(d) 'retreated' (paragraph 4) _____ (1)

Section B – Writing
Spend 25 minutes on this section

Spend 5 minutes planning your essay. We must see evidence of you planning your paragraphs and organising your ideas into these paragraphs. Then spend about 20 minutes completing your essay.

Think about:

- how to start your story,
- how to keep it interesting
- how to conclude it.

Write about one of the following tasks:

EITHER:

Imagine that you and your family have been caught in a storm. Describe the power of the storm and the feeling and emotions of you and your family during this event.

OR:

While out playing with your friends, you discover an abandoned house in a snow-covered forest. Describe what happens when you decide to explore further...

Total marks for Section B: 20 marks