

Language Paper 1 – Practice Exam Paper

Source A

This is a horror story set in the past, about some children and their relationship with a rather unusual toy.

- 1 Nobody knew where the toy had come from - which great-grandparent or distant aunt had owned it before it was given to the nursery¹. It was a box, carved and painted in gold and red. It was undoubtedly attractive and, or so the grown-ups maintained, quite valuable – perhaps even an antique. The latch, unfortunately, was rusted shut, and the
- 5 key had been lost so the Jack² could not be released from his box. Still, it was a
- 6 remarkable box, heavy and carved and gilt.
- 7 The children did not play with it. It sat at the bottom of the old wooden toy box, which was the same size and age as a pirate's treasure-chest, or so the children thought. The Jack-in-the-box was buried beneath dolls and trains, clowns and paper stars and old
- 10 conjuring tricks, and crippled marionettes³ with their strings irrevocably⁴ tangled, with dressing up clothes (here the tatters of a long-ago wedding dress, there a black silk hat, crusted with age and time) and costume jewellery, broken hoops and tops and
- 13 hobbyhorses. Under them all was the Jack's box.
- The children did not play with it. They whispered among themselves, alone in the attic
- 15 nursery. On grey days when the wind howled about the house and rain rattled the slates and pattered down the eaves they told each other stories about Jack, although they had never seen him. One claimed that Jack was an evil wizard, placed in the box as punishment for crimes too awful to describe; another maintained that he had been placed in the box as guardian to prevent the bad things inside it from coming out. They
- 20 would not even touch the box, if they could help it, although when, as happened from time to time, an adult would comment on the absence of that sweet old Jack-in-the-box, and retrieve it from the chest, and place it in a position of honour on the mantelpiece, then the children would pluck up their courage and, later, hide it away once more in the darkness.
- 25 The children did not play with the Jack-in-the-box. And when they grew up and left the great house, the attic nursery was closed up and almost forgotten.
- 26 Almost, but not entirely. For each of the children, separately, remembered walking alone in the moon's blue light, on his or her own bare feet, up to the nursery. It was almost like sleepwalking, feet soundless on the wood of the stairs, on the threadbare nursery
- 30 carpet. Remembered opening the treasure chest, pawing through the dolls and the clothes and pulling out the box.
- And then the child would touch the catch, and the lid would open, slow as a sunset, and the music would begin to play, and Jack came out. Not with a pop and a bounce: but deliberately, intently, he would rise from the box and motion to the child to come closer,
- 35 closer, and smile.
- And there in the moonlight, he told them each things they could never quite remember, things they were never able entirely to forget.
- The oldest boy died in the Great War. The youngest, after their parents died, inherited the house, although it was taken from him when he was found in the cellar one night
- 40 with cloths and paraffin and matches, trying to burn the great house to the ground. They took him to the madhouse, and perhaps he is there still.
- The other children, who had once been girls and now were women, declined, each and every one, to return to the house in which they had grown up; and the windows of the house were boarded up; and the doors were all locked with the huge iron keys.
- 45 Years have passed and the girls are old women, and owls and bats have made their homes in the old attic nursery, rats build their nests among the forgotten toys. The creatures gaze uncuriously at the faded prints on the wall, and stain the remnants of the carpet with their droppings.
- And deep within the box within the box, Jack waits and smiles, holding his secrets. He is
- 50 waiting for the children. He can wait forever.

Glossary:

nursery¹ – a room in a house where young children were looked after and cared for

Jack² – a children's toy in which a clown like figure springs up from a box when the lid opens

marionettes³ - puppets

irrevocably⁴ - forever

Section A: Reading

Answer **all** questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

0 1

Read again the first part of the Source from **lines 1 to 6**.

List **four** things about the Jack-in-the-box from this part of the Source.

[4 marks]

0 2

Look in detail at this extract from **lines 7 to 13** of the Source:

The children did not play with it. It sat at the bottom of the old wooden toy box, which was the same size and age as a pirate's treasure-chest, or so the children thought. The Jack-in-the-box was buried beneath dolls and trains, clowns and paper stars and old conjuring tricks, and crippled marionettes³ with their strings irrevocably⁴ tangled, with dressing up clothes (here the tatters of a long-ago wedding dress, there a black silk hat, crusted with age and time) and costume jewellery, broken hoops and tops and hobbyhorses. Under them all was the Jack's box.

How does the writer use language here to describe the toy box and its contents?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

0 3

You now need to think about the **whole** of the Source.

The text is a complete short story.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the Source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

0 4

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the Source from **line 26 to the end**.

A student said, 'This part of the story where we learn about Jack and how he controlled the children is scary.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of Jack and how he controlled the children
- evaluate how the writer makes Jack and what he does seem scary
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

0 5

Your school is running a creative writing competition and you decide to enter.

Either:

Describe an old-fashioned room as suggested by this picture:



Or:

Write a story about a toy that comes to life.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)
[40 marks]