

YEAR 9 ENGLISH ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

Part 1: Reading Passage and Answer Sheet

Taken from “Hard Times” by Charles Dickens

Time allowed 40 minutes

Read the following extract and answer the questions in the Answer booklet.

“HARD TIMES” by Charles Dickens. *This part of the story is set in a Victorian School, where the teacher, Mr Gradgrind, is examining a class to see how much they know.*

MURDERING THE INNOCENTS

‘Girl number twenty,’ said Mr Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, ‘I don’t know that girl. Who is that girl?’

Sissy Jupe, sir,’ explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtsying.

‘Sissy is not a name,’ said Mr Gradgrind. ‘Don’t call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.’

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‘It’s father as calls me Sissy, sir,’ returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey.

‘Then he has no business to do it,’ said Mr Gradgrind. ‘Tell him he mustn’t. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?’

‘He belongs to the circus, if you please, sir. He rides the horses.’

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Mr Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

‘We don’t want to know anything about that, here. You mustn’t tell us about that, here. Your father breaks horses, don’t he?’

‘If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.’

'You mustn't tell us about the ring, here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse.'

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

'Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!' said Mr Gradgrind. 'Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.' 20

The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the room, irradiated Sissy. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes hardly appeared to be eyes, and his skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white. 25

'Bitzer,' said Thomas Gradgrind. 'Your definition of a horse.' 30

'Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.' Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

'Now girl number twenty,' said Mr Gradgrind. 'You know what a horse is.' 35

She curtseyed again, and would have blushed deeper, if she could have blushed deeper than she had blushed all this time. Bitzer, after rapidly blinking at Mr Gradgrind with both eyes at once, and so catching the light upon his quivering eyelashes that they looked like the antennae of busy insects, put his knuckles to his freckled forehead, and sat down again. 40

Another gentleman now stepped forth. He was a government officer.

'Very well,' said this gentleman, briskly smiling, and folding his arms. 'That's a horse. Now, let me ask you, girls and boys, Would you paper a room with representations of horses?'

After a pause, one half of the children cried in chorus, 'Yes, sir!' Upon which the other half, seeing in the gentleman's face that Yes was wrong, cried out in chorus, 'No, sir!' — as the custom is, in these examinations. 45

'Of course, No. Why wouldn't you?'

A pause.

'I'll explain to you, then,' said the gentleman, 'why you wouldn't paper a room with representations of horses. Do you ever see horses walking up and down the sides of rooms in reality — in fact? Do you?' 50

'Yes, sir!' from one half. 'No, sir!' from the other.

'Of course no,' said the gentleman, with an indignant look at the wrong half. 'Why,

then, you are not to see anywhere, what you don't see in fact; you are not to have anywhere, what you don't have in fact. What is called Taste, is only another name for Fact.' Thomas Gradgrind nodded his approval.

'This is a new principle, a discovery, a great discovery,' said the gentleman.

Read the extract and answer the questions below. If you do not have the answer to a question, move to the next one and try to continue. Answer all questions in full sentences, except for no. 4, where short answers are sufficient.

1. Why does Mr Gradgrind call Sissy Jupe 'Girl number twenty' (line 1)?

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..... (2 marks)

2. Why does Mr Gradgrind object to the name 'Sissy' (lines 4 – 9) ?

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3. Sissy says that her father works in a circus. In your own words, describe how Mr Gradgrind reacts to this (lines 11 - 15).

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4. What do the following words mean **as they are used in the text?**

a) objectionable (line 11) ('Calling' means 'job')

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b) ring (line 14)

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c) irradiated (line 24)

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(3 marks)

5. Re-read lines 24 – 29. In your own words, describe 3 things about the way Bitzer looks.

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(3 marks)

6. 'Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals.' (lines 19-20).

Which one word in this speech tells us what Mr Gradgrind thinks is most important in life? Give a reason for your answer.

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(2 marks)

7. Re-read lines 30 – 34. What do you notice about the way Bitzer describes the horse. Why do you think Mr Gradgrind likes this description?

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8. What do you think is meant by the phrase in brackets '(and much more)' in line 34?

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9. Find the simile in lines 36 - 39. What does it suggest about Bitzer's character?

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10. In your own words, explain why the Second Gentleman says people shouldn't choose wallpaper printed with pictures of horses to decorate a room.

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11. Re-read lines 41 – 47. What do you think is the job of the ‘government officer’?

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..... (1 mark)

12. What do you think of the character of Mr Gradgrind? Would you like him to be your teacher? Explain your answer.

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..... (4 marks)

13. Charles Dickens, the author of this passage, wrote many of his books as a protest against things he saw as unfair or cruel. What do you think he was protesting about in this passage? Give reasons for your answer, quoting from the passage where appropriate.

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..... (4 marks)

Total possible marks: 30/50

LANGUAGE QUESTIONS

1. Re-read lines 1 – 5 and write down an example of:

- a. A verb
- b. An adverb
- c. A noun
- d. A proper noun
- e. An imperative

(5 marks)

2. Re-read lines 22 – 25 and list the conjunctions [connectives]

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(5 marks)

3. Re-write the following sentence putting in the proper punctuation.

it was a horrible classroom with dark windows and black shutters and the teacher shouted billy you are late again if you are late tomorrow i will be cross no sir said billy

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(5 marks)

4. Re-read lines 42 – 44. Rewrite this and change the **direct speech** into **indirect speech**.

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..... (5 marks)

Total possible marks: 20/50

END OF PAPER