



WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

**Winchester College Entrance and Election Examination in English
Specimen Paper (for examination from 2021)**

90 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

Answer TWO questions:

**EITHER Section A (Prose) OR Section B (Poetry)
AND Section C Creative/Persuasive Writing.**

Total marks available: 70.

Each section is worth 30 marks. You will also be marked out of 10 for the quality of your spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Read all questions carefully.

You may make notes around and/or underline the texts.

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on each question.

Section A: Prose

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

From *Out of Africa*: Karen Blixen (1937)

This is the opening of the memoir. The author describes her farm and the surrounding landscape.

I HAD a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills¹. The Equator runs across these highlands, a hundred miles to the North, and the farm lay at an altitude of over six thousand feet. In the daytime you felt that you had got high up, near to the sun, but the early mornings and evenings were limpid and restful, and the nights were cold.

The geographical position, and the height of the land combined to create a landscape that had not its like in all the world. There was no fat on it and no luxuriance anywhere; it was Africa distilled up through six thousand feet, like the strong and refined essence of a continent. The colours were dry and burnt, like the colours in pottery. The trees had a light delicate foliage, the structure of which was different from that of the trees in Europe; it did not grow in bows or cupolas², but in horizontal layers, and the formation gave to the tall solitary trees a likeness to the palms, or a heroic and romantic air like full-rigged ships with their sails furled, and to the edge of a wood a strange appearance as if the whole wood were faintly vibrating. Upon the grass of the great plains the crooked bare old thorn-trees were scattered, and the grass was spiced like thyme and bog-myrtle; in some places the scent was so strong, that it smarted in the nostrils. All the flowers that you found on the plains, or upon the creepers and liana in the native forest, were diminutive like flowers of the downs,—only just in the beginning of the long rains a number of big, massive heavy-scented lilies sprang out on the plains. The views were immensely wide. Everything that you saw made for greatness and freedom, and unequalled nobility.

The chief feature of the landscape, and of your life in it, was the air. Looking back on a sojourn in the African highlands, you are struck by your feeling of having lived for a time up in the air. The sky was rarely more than pale blue or violet, with a profusion of mighty, weightless, ever-changing clouds towering up and sailing on it, but it has a blue vigour in it, and at a short distance it painted the ranges of hills and the woods a fresh deep blue. In the middle of the day the air was alive over the land, like a flame burning; it scintillated, waved and shone like running water, mirrored and doubled all objects, and created great Fata Morgana³. Up in this high air you breathed easily, drawing in a vital assurance and lightness of heart. In the highlands you woke up in the morning and thought: Here I am, where I ought to be.

The Mountain of Ngong stretches in a long ridge from North to South, and is crowned with four noble peaks like immovable darker blue waves against the sky. It rises eight thousand feet above the Sea, and to the East two thousand feet above the surrounding country; but to the West the drop is deeper and more precipitous,—the hills fall vertically down towards the Great Rift Valley⁴.

The wind in the highlands blows steadily from the North-North-East. It is the same wind that, down at the coasts of Africa and Arabia, they name the Monsoon, the East Wind, which was King Solomon's favourite horse. Up here it is felt as just the resistance of the air, as the Earth throws herself forward into space. The wind runs straight against the Ngong Hills, and the slopes of the hills would be the ideal place for setting up a glider, that would be lifted upwards by the currents, over the mountain top. The clouds, which were travelling with the wind, struck the side of the hill and hung round it, or were caught on the summit and broke into rain. But those that took a higher

¹ Ngong Hills = area in southern Kenya

² Cupolas = small domed roof

³ Fata Morgana = a mirage

⁴ Great Rift Valley = series of geographic trenches extending through Eastern Africa

course and sailed clear of the reef, dissolved to the West of it, over the burning desert of the Rift Valley. Many times I have from my house followed these mighty processions advancing, and have wondered to see their proud floating masses, as soon as they had got over the hills, vanish in the blue air and be gone.

The hills from the farm changed their character many times in the course of the day, and sometimes looked quite close, and at other times very far away. In the evening, when it was getting dark, it would first look, as you gazed at them, as if in the sky a thin silver line was drawn all along the silhouette of the dark mountain; then, as night fell, the four peaks seemed to be flattened and smoothed out, as if the mountain was stretching and spreading itself.

1. At what altitude did the farm lie? [1]
2. What was the most important feature of the landscape? [1]
3. What do the following words mean in the context of their appearance in the extract:
 - a) Sojourn [2]
 - b) Scintillated [2]
 - c) Immovable [2]
 - d) Advancing [2]
4. Blixen describes the trees using the simile 'like full-rigged ships with their sails furled'. What is the effect of this? [3]
5. Find another simile that Blixen uses to describe the landscape [2]
6. Blixen describes the air as 'chief feature of the landscape'. Why do you think she says this and what atmosphere does it create? Use evidence to support your answer. [5]
7. Using quotations from the extract and analysing Blixen's use of language for effect, discuss how she creates a vivid picture of the African landscape. Try not to use quotations you have already used in your answer to question 6. [10]

Section B: Poetry

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow.

‘To the River Itchen’: William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850)

Itchin! when I behold thy banks again,
Thy crumbling margin, and thy silver breast,
On which the self-same tints still seem to rest,
Why feels my heart a shivering sense of pain!
Is it, that many a summer's day has past
Since, in life's morn, I carolled on thy side!
Is it, that oft since then my heart has sighed,
As Youth, and Hope's delusive gleams, flew fast!
Is it, that those who gathered on thy shore,
Companions of my youth, now meet no more!
Whate'er the cause, upon thy banks I bend,
Sorrowing; yet feel such solace at my heart,
As at the meeting of some long-lost friend,
From whom, in happier hours, we wept to part.

Note: the River Itchen runs beside Winchester College, where William Lisle Bowles was a pupil between 1776 and 1781.

1. What do the following words mean in the context of their appearance in the poem?
 - a) Behold [2]
 - b) Breast [2]
 - c) Carolled [2]
 - d) Delusive [2]
2. Give a line of the poem in which Bowles describes his sadness [2]
3. What is Bowles referring to when he says ‘the self-same tints still seem to rest’? [3]
4. Comment on the effect of Bowles’s use of rhyme in the poem [5]
5. Using quotations from the poem and analysing the effects of language and other poetic devices, explain the significance of the River Itchen for Bowles [12]

Section C: Creative/Persuasive Writing

Answer ONE question from this section.

Either

1. Look at the photograph below of an ancient Greek drinking cup housed in the Winchester College Treasury. Read the information in the paragraph underneath.



This drinking cup was made in Athens around 520 BC. It would have been made from clay on a potter's wheel and then painted before it was fired in a kiln. The cup was originally used at the symposium – a drinking party for upper-class Athenian men. It was excavated in the early 19th century from a tomb in Italy, and passed through various collections and auction houses before a housemaster at Winchester bought it. He gave it to the college museum at the beginning of the 20th century.

Using the photograph and paragraph above as a starting point, write a story, **from this drinking cup's perspective**, about an experience it has had in its lifetime so far. [30]

OR

2. You have been invited to address President Trump about climate change. Write a speech in which you persuade him that we all need to take more care of the environment. [30]