

STANDARD GRADE

CLOSE READING BOOKLET

QUESTIONS 2008 - 2003

Compare and Contrast

2008

She was one of those children possessed by a desire to have the world just so. Whereas her big sister's room was a stew of unclosed books, unfolded clothes, unmade bed, unemptied ashtrays, Briony's was a shrine to her controlling demon: the model farm spread across a deep window ledge consisted of the usual animals, but all facing one way—towards their owner—as if about to break into song, and even the farmyard hens were neatly corralled. In fact, Briony's was the only tidy upstairs room in the house. Her straight-backed dolls in their many-roomed mansion appeared to be under strict instructions not to touch the walls; the various thumbsized figures to be found standing about her dressing table—cowboys, deep-sea divers, humanoid mice—suggested by their even ranks and spacing a citizen army awaiting orders.

10. In paragraph 5, the writer develops a **contrast** between Briony and her big sister.

In your own words, state what the contrast is.

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2007

Inside was bright as a tube train, and the effect was brutal. I'd expected not utter darkness, but perhaps a dullish red. Rob was carrying a torch but this light revealed every crack, every joint and fissure in the ancient stonework. At once a man's voice said, "Sorry, I'll switch it off," but the moment was lost and, anyway, I'd been forewarned. As he sold me the ticket, Alan had told me that surveyors were inside the cairn, with all their equipment. "A bit of a problem", was how he'd put it. And here they were. We entered the tomb and, in that fierce white light, it was like that moment which can occur in midlife, when you look at your mother and realise with a shock that she is old.

19. Why do you think the writer includes the **comparison** of looking at her mother at the end of Paragraph 19?

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2006

While runner-up Buddiga sat quietly, hands in pockets and with the stern spelling equivalent of a poker face, his rival, 14-year-old David Tidmarsh from South Bend, Indiana, was running on nervous energy, fidgeting constantly and squinting into the distance as he worked out the correct spelling of the championship word. He would be champion if he could successfully spell "autochthonous" (meaning indigenous). "Could you use it in a sentence please?" he asked, as his voice rose an octave and he struggled to control his breathing.

11. **In your own words**, explain fully the differing reactions of David Tidmarsh and Askay Buddiga in Paragraph 12.

- i) **Buddiga:** **2 1 0**
ii) **Tidmarsh:** **2 1 0**

2005

To leave the enormous sprawling dust-blown city of gridlock and gritty buildings in the sleeper to Aswan was bliss. It was quarter to eight on a chilly night. I sat down in my inexpensive First Class compartment, listened to the departure whistles, and soon we were rolling through Cairo. Within minutes we were at Gizeh – the ruins overwhelmed by the traffic and the bright lights, the tenements and the bazaar; and in less than half an hour we were in open country, little settlements of square mud-block houses, fluorescent lights reflected in the canal beside the track, the blackness of the countryside at night, a mosque with a lighted minaret, now and then a solitary car or truck, and on one remote road about twenty men in white robes going home after prayers. In Cairo they would have been unremarkable, just part of the mob; here they looked magical, their robes seeming much whiter on the nighttime road, their procession much spookier for its orderliness, like a troop of sorcerers.

9. In your own words, give **two** contrasts the writer notices on his journey from Cairo to the Egyptian countryside.

- i)
ii) **2 1 0**

2004

When Pelagia entered the kitchen she stopped singing abruptly, and was seized with consternation. There was a stranger seated at the kitchen table, a most horrible and wild stranger who looked worse than the brigands of childhood tales. The man was quite motionless except for a rhythmic fluttering and trembling of his hands. His head was utterly concealed beneath a cascade of matted hair that seemed to have no form or colour. In places it stuck out in twisted corkscrews, and in others it lay in congealed pads like felt; it was the hair of a hermit demented by solitude. Beneath it Pelagia could see nothing but an enormous and disorderly beard surmounted by two tiny bright eyes that would not look at her. There was a nose in there, stripped of its skin, reddened and flaked, and glimpses of a darkened, streaked and grimy flesh.

3. **In your own words** what contrasting image does the writer give of the movements of the man? **2 1 0**

2004

The stranger wore the unidentifiable and ragged remains of a shirt and trousers, and a kind of overcoat cut out of animal skins that had been tacked together with thongs of sinew. Pelagia saw, beneath the table, that in place of shoes his feet were bound with bandages that were both caked with old, congealed blood, and the bright stains of fresh. He was breathing heavily, and the smell was inconceivably foul; it was the reek of rotting flesh, of festering wounds, of ancient perspiration, and of fear. She looked at the hands that were clasped together in the effort to prevent their quivering, and was overcome both with fright and pity. What was she to do?

8(a). **In your own words** what **two** conflicting emotions did Pelagia feel when she looked at the man? **2 1 0**

2003

Surely this ridiculous bird, fat, flightless and vulnerable, had simply been caught and eaten to extinction? Too weak or stupid to defend itself, too trusting of humans, the dodo had met its inevitable end. In a Darwinian world the dodo has come down to us as the prime example of how poorly designed and hapless creatures just won't stay in the race. Sad but inevitable sums up the extinction of the dodo. Until now. According to ornithologist Julian Hume, the fat, comical appearance of the bird is grossly exaggerated. Julian has travelled to Mauritius to investigate what the bird was really like and how it lived. It is here that the only two skeletons of the bird exist which have proved just how misinterpreted the dodo has been. "Now we have the skeleton of the dodos, we can tell so much more about the bird and how it may have appeared in life," says Julian. "It had a long, sinuous neck, quite an upright stance, and probably stood about two and a half feet tall. This is very different from the picture that's come down to us from those early drawings.

The dodo wasn't a fat, squat creature; it was lean and upright. Indeed, the earliest images, drawn from life, show a scrawny bird, its hooked bill making its appearance quite aggressive. The later you go, the fatter and sillier it becomes. There are many other mysteries to solve. Why was it flightless? Why did it live on Mauritius and nowhere else? How did it get there? Finding out takes us right back to the 17th century.

14. Give details of two obvious contrasts between the imagined appearance and the real appearance of the dodo.

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

Context

2008

No context questions in 2008 paper!

2007

The building nowadays known as Maes Howe is a Neolithic chambered cairn, a tomb where, 5000 years ago, they interred the bones of the dead. In its long, long existence it has been more forgotten about than known, but in our era it is open to the public, with tickets and guides and explanatory booklets. It stands, a mere grassy hump in a field, in the central plain of Mainland Orkney. There is a startling collection of other Neolithic sites nearby.

1. Give the meaning of “interred” and show how the context helped you to arrive at that meaning.

Meaning:

Context:

2 1 0

To reach Maes Howe I took the road that passes over a thin isthmus between two lochs. On the west side is a huge brooding stone circle, the Ring of Brodgar. On the east, like three elegant women conversing at a cocktail party, are the Standing Stones of Stenness. The purpose of these may be mysterious, but a short seven miles away is the Neolithic village called Skara Brae. There is preserved a huddle of roofless huts, dug half underground into midden and sand dune. There, you can marvel at the domestic normality, that late Stone Age people had beds and cupboards and neighbours and beads. You can feel both their presence, their day-to-day lives, and their utter absence. It’s a good place to go. It re-calibrates your sense of time.

3. “a thin isthmus”. Tick the box beside the best definition of “isthmus”.

area of land

strip of land with water on each side

stretch of moorland

bridge connecting two islands

2 0

2006

No context questions in 2006 paper!

2005

No context questions in 2005 paper!

2004

No context questions in 2004 paper!

2003

When the London dodo died, the animal was stuffed and sold to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Taxidermy not being what it is today, over the next few decades the dodo slowly rotted until it was thrown out in 1755. All, that is, except the moth-eaten head and one leg.

16. Explain how the context helps you to understand the meaning of “taxidermy” in paragraph 10.

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Expressions

2008

Briony was hardly to know it then, but this was the project's highest point of fulfilment. Nothing came near it for satisfaction, all else was dreams and frustration. There were moments in the summer dusk after her light was out, burrowing in the delicious gloom of her canopy bed, when she made her heart thud with luminous, yearning fantasies, little playlets in themselves, every one of which featured Leon. In one, his big, good-natured face buckled in grief as Arabella sank in loneliness and despair. In another, there he was, cocktail in hand at some fashionable city bar, overheard boasting to a group of friends: Yes, my younger sister, Briony Tallis the writer, you must surely have heard of her. In a third he punched the air in exultation as the final curtain fell, although there was no curtain, there was no possibility of a curtain. Her play was not for her cousins, it was for her brother, to celebrate his return, provoke his admiration and guide him away from his careless succession of girlfriends, towards the right form of wife, the one who would persuade him to return to the countryside, the one who would sweetly request Briony's services as a bridesmaid.

8. How does Briony want her brother, Leon, to **feel** about her writing?

Quote an expression from the passage to support your answer.

2 1 0

2007

No expression questions in 2007 paper!

2006

The bee is televised live and makes for oddly gripping television. The merciless nature of the competition, where a single misplaced consonant or forgotten vowel ejects a speller from the contest, gives proceedings a kind of high-wire drama as the spellers fret their way through the rounds, each more difficult than the last. It might seem an unlikely ratings success, but it certainly beats the world wood-chopping championships.

8(c). Write down an expression used later in the passage which contains a similar idea to "... crossing a minefield".

2 0

2005

Kings, queens, princes, heads of state, and generals have arrived and departed here. One of Naguib Mahfouz's earliest heroes, the ultra-nationalist anti-British rabble rouser, Saad Zaghlul, escaped an assassination attempt at Cairo station in his return from one of his numerous exiles, in 1924. Given Egypt's history of dramatic arrivals and departures the railway station figures as a focal point and a scene of many riotous send-offs and welcomes.

6. Quote **two expressions** from Paragraph 2 which help to convey the idea of Cairo Station's dramatic history.

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

2004

When Pelagia entered the kitchen she stopped singing abruptly, and was seized with consternation. There was a stranger seated at the kitchen table, a most horrible and wild stranger who looked worse than the brigands of childhood tales. The man was quite motionless except for a rhythmic fluttering and trembling of his hands. His head was utterly concealed beneath a cascade of matted hair that seemed to have no form or colour. In places it stuck out in twisted corkscrews, and in others it lay in congealed pads like felt; it was the hair of a hermit demented by solitude. Beneath it Pelagia could see nothing but an enormous and disorderly beard surmounted by two tiny bright eyes that would not look at her. There was a nose in there, stripped of its skin, reddened and flaked, and glimpses of a darkened, streaked and grimy flesh.

2. Quote the expression which sums up Pelagia's impression of the stranger. **2 0**

2003

Julian Hume believes the bird rooted at ground level, foraging fruits from palm trees and using its tough bill to break open and eat snail shells. It built its nest on the forest floor into which it laid a single egg, possibly only every other year.

19. Quote two expressions which suggest that Julian Hume's knowledge of the dodo is theoretical

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

Finding Evidence

2008

Mrs Tallis read the seven pages of *The Trials of Arabella* in her bedroom, at her dressing table, with the author's arm around her shoulder the whole while. Briony studied her mother's face for every trace of shifting emotion, and Emily Tallis obliged with looks of alarm, snickers of glee and, at the end, grateful smiles and wise, affirming nods. She took her daughter in her arms, onto her lap, and said that the play was "stupendous", and agreed instantly, murmuring into the girl's ear, that this word could be quoted on the poster which was to be on an easel in the entrance hall by the ticket booth.

6. Give **two** ways in which the writer emphasises the closeness between Briony and her mother.

- i)
- ii)

210

A taste for the miniature was one aspect of an orderly spirit. Another was a passion for secrets: in a prized varnished cabinet, a secret drawer was opened by pushing against the grain of a cleverly turned dovetail joint, and here she kept a diary locked by a clasp, and a notebook written in a code of her own invention. In a toy safe opened by six secret numbers she stored letters and postcards. An old tin petty cash box was hidden under a removable floorboard beneath her bed. In the box were treasures that dated back four years, to her ninth birthday when she began collecting: a mutant double acorn, fool's gold, a rain-making spell bought at a funfair, a squirrel's skull as light as a leaf.

12. "Another was a passion for secrets:"

By referring to the passage, show how the writer continues this idea in the rest of the paragraph.

210

At the age of eleven she wrote her first story—a foolish affair, imitative of half a dozen folk tales and lacking, she realised later, that vital knowingness about the ways of the world which compels a reader's respect. But this first clumsy attempt showed her that the imagination itself was a source of secrets: once she had begun a story, no one could be told. Pretending in words was too tentative, too vulnerable, too embarrassing to let anyone know. Even writing out the *she saids*, the *and thens*, made her wince, and she felt foolish, appearing to know about the emotions of an imaginary being. Self-exposure was inevitable the moment she described a character's weakness; the reader was bound to speculate that she was describing herself. What other authority could she have? Only when a story was finished could she feel immune, and ready to punch holes in the margins, bind the chapters with

pieces of string, paint or draw the cover, and take the finished work to show to her mother, or her father, when he was home.

17. **Quote one** word from Paragraph 7 showing that Briony was no longer vulnerable when the story was finished. **2**

2007

Alan, an Englishman in Historic Scotland tartan trousers, led me into a little shop to issue a ticket. The shop was housed in an old water mill, some distance from the tomb, and sold guidebooks and fridge magnets and tea towels. From the window you could see over the main road to the tomb.

9. Give **three** pieces of evidence which suggest that Maes Howe is just like any other tourist attraction.

i)

ii)

iii)

2 1 0

The surveyors were doing a project that involved laser-scanning, photogrammetry, and pulse-radar inspection. They were working inside the tomb, and had been for days. A huge implement, I couldn't tell if it was a torch or a camera, lay on a schoolroom chair. There was a telephone in one of the grave-cells. There were two surveyors. One was folded, foetus-like, into the little cell in the back wall. I could see only his legs. He grunted as he shifted position.

20. What evidence is there that the surveyors are doing a **thorough** job inside Maes Howe? **2 1 0**

2006

Askay Buddiga had prepared thoroughly for this moment. The 13-year-old from Colorado Springs knew what was required of him. After all, his brother had won the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee just two years earlier, and now he was here at the final. Perhaps the pressure of family expectation got to him for a moment. Perhaps he panicked.

1(b). Give **three** reasons why Askay might have expected to do well.

i)

ii)

iii)

2 1 0

2005

Rameses I Station, usually called Cairo Railway Station, is a century old, like the railway system itself, which stretches from Alexandria on the shores of the Mediterranean, to Aswan on the Upper Nile, at the northern edge of Lake Nasser – the border of Sudan on the south side. The design of the station is of interest, and it has been said that it represents the epitome of nineteenth-century Egyptian architects' desire to combine classical and Islamic building styles, in response to Khedive Ismail's plan to create a "European Cairo" – Moorish meets modern.

3. Quote **one** word from Paragraph 1 which clearly indicates that the station is everything which nineteenth-century Egyptian architects believed in. **20**

To leave the enormous sprawling dust-blown city of gridlock and gritty buildings in the sleeper to Aswan was bliss. It was quarter to eight on a chilly night. I sat down in my inexpensive First Class compartment, listened to the departure whistles, and soon we were rolling through Cairo. Within minutes we were at Gizeh – the ruins overwhelmed by the traffic and the bright lights, the tenements and the bazaar; and in less than half an hour we were in open country, little settlements of square mud-block houses, fluorescent lights reflected in the canal beside the track, the blackness of the countryside at night, a mosque with a lighted minaret, now and then a solitary car or truck, and on one remote road about twenty men in white robes going home after prayers. In Cairo they would have been unremarkable, just part of the mob; here they looked magical, their robes seeming much whiter on the nighttime road, their procession much spookier for its orderliness, like a troop of sorcerers.

8. Quote **one** word from Paragraph 5 which sums up the writer's feelings on leaving Cairo. **20**

2004

When Pelagia entered the kitchen she stopped singing abruptly, and was seized with consternation. There was a stranger seated at the kitchen table, a most horrible and wild stranger who looked worse than the brigands of childhood tales. The man was quite motionless except for a rhythmic fluttering and trembling of his hands. His head was utterly concealed beneath a cascade of matted hair that seemed to have no form or colour. In places it stuck out in twisted corkscrews, and in others it lay in congealed pads like felt; it was the hair of a hermit demented by solitude. Beneath it Pelagia could see nothing but an enormous and disorderly beard surmounted by two tiny bright eyes that would not look at her. There was a nose in there, stripped of its skin, reddened and flaked, and glimpses of a darkened, streaked and grimy flesh.

1. Quote **two** words used by the writer to convey the suddenness of Pelagia's reactions as she entered the kitchen.

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

Psipsina entered the room and sniffed the air, her whiskers twitching as she sampled the strong and unfamiliar smells. She ran across the floor in her fluid manner, and leapt up onto the table. She approached the neolithic man and burrowed in the remains of a pocket, emerging triumphantly with a small cube of white cheese that she demolished with evident satisfaction. She returned to the pocket and found only a broken cigarette, which she discarded.

14. Quote **two** words from Paragraph 11 which suggest that Psipsina was unhappy with her second visit to the man's pocket. **2 1 0**

2003

DODO. The very word conjures up an image – fat, stupid, ridiculous. Somehow we feel we know this bird. But one thing we all know is that it's dead. As dead as...er...the dodo. It's all in the name. It has that sort of childish, sing-song feel to it. Endearing because it sounds so daft. And yet the dodo is more than a cheap laugh: the dodo is an icon. It's a creature of legend, a myth like the Phoenix or the Griffin. But it's a myth that really existed. A living creature so bizarre it didn't need the human imagination to think it up – and an enigma from virtually the first moment human beings laid eyes on it a little more than 500 years ago.

4. Which two words does the write use to emphasise the strangeness of the dodo?

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

Surely this ridiculous bird, fat, flightless and vulnerable, had simply been caught and eaten to extinction? Too weak or stupid to defend itself, too trusting of humans, the dodo had met its inevitable end. In a Darwinian world the dodo has come down to us as the prime example of how poorly designed and hapless creatures just won't stay in the race. Sad but inevitable sums up the extinction of the dodo. Until now. According to ornithologist Julian Hume, the fat, comical appearance of the bird is grossly exaggerated. Julian has travelled to Mauritius to investigate what the bird was really like and how it lived. It is here that the only two skeletons of the bird exist which have proved just how misinterpreted the dodo has been. "Now we have the skeleton of the dodos, we can tell so much more about the bird and how it may have appeared in life," says Julian. "It had a long, sinuous neck, quite an upright stance, and probably stood about two and a half feet tall. This is very different from the picture that's come down to us from those early drawings.

13. Which one word in paragraph 8 sums up the writer's sympathetic attitude to the dodo? **2 0**

Dutch archaeologist Pieter Floore has spent several seasons excavating the rubbish dumps left by the Mauritanian Dutch colonists at Fort Hendrink, their main base. If they hunted the dodo to extinction, Floore reckoned he would be able to find evidence in the form of dodo bones among the household rubbish the Dutch threw out.

Yet despite several years of digging, he has not found a single dodo bone. In fact, there is no evidence whatsoever that the Dutch ever hunted and ate the dodo on any scale that would lead to its extinction.

Combining evidence from the skeleton and other written accounts, Julian Hume has also demonstrated that the dodo was not only quite hard to catch, but was also terrible to eat. Being flightless, it had no breast muscles and hence no breast meat. Its fat bottom was meaty but so greasy that accounts reveal that it "cloyed and nauseated the stomach" – hence the original name "walghvogel" or "nauseating fowl".

20. What two pieces of evidence helped prove that the Dutch did not hunt the dodo to extinction?

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

In Your Own Words

2008

At some moments chilling, at others desperately sad, the play told a tale of the heart whose message, conveyed in a rhyming prologue, was that love which did not build a foundation on good sense was doomed. The reckless passion of the heroine, Arabella, for a wicked foreign count is punished by ill fortune when she contracts cholera during an impetuous dash towards a seaside town with her intended. Deserted by him and nearly everybody else, bed-bound in an attic, she discovers in herself a sense of humour. Fortune presents her a second chance in the form of an impoverished doctor—in fact, a prince in disguise who has elected to work among the needy. Healed by him, Arabella chooses wisely this time, and is rewarded by reconciliation with her family and a wedding with the medical prince on “a windy sunlit day in spring”.

3. Briony’s play is a story with a message.

In your own words, explain what the message is.

2 1 0

Her play was not for her cousins, it was for her brother, to celebrate his return, provoke his admiration and guide him away from his careless succession of girlfriends, towards the right form of wife, the one who would persuade him to return to the countryside, the one who would sweetly request Briony’s services as a bridesmaid.

9. Look closely at the **final sentence** of Paragraph 4 (above).

In your own words, give **two** reasons why Briony has written the play for her brother.

i)

ii)

2 1 0

At the age of eleven she wrote her first story—a foolish affair, imitative of half a dozen folk tales and lacking, she realised later, that vital knowingness about the ways of the world which compels a reader’s respect. But this first clumsy attempt showed her that the imagination itself was a source of secrets: once she had begun a story, no one could be told. Pretending in words was too tentative, too vulnerable, too embarrassing to let anyone know. Even writing out the *she saids*, the *and thens*, made her wince, and she felt foolish, appearing to know about the emotions of an imaginary being. Self-exposure was inevitable the moment she described a character’s weakness; the reader was bound to speculate that she was describing herself. What other authority could she have? Only when a story was finished could

she feel immune, and ready to punch holes in the margins, bind the chapters with pieces of string, paint or draw the cover, and take the finished work to show to her mother, or her father, when he was home.

15. Briony wrote her first story when she was eleven.

In your own words, give **two** reasons why she later disliked this story.

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

16. Explain **in your own words** why Briony was concerned about describing a character's weakness.

2 1 0

2007

To reach Maes Howe I took the road that passes over a thin isthmus between two lochs. On the west side is a huge brooding stone circle, the Ring of Brodgar. On the east, like three elegant women conversing at a cocktail party, are the Standing Stones of Stenness. The purpose of these may be mysterious, but a short seven miles away is the Neolithic village called Skara Brae. There is preserved a huddle of roofless huts, dug half underground into midden and sand dune. There, you can marvel at the domestic normality, that late Stone Age people had beds and cupboards and neighbours and beads. You can feel both their presence, their day-to-day lives, and their utter absence. It's a good place to go. It re-calibrates your sense of time.

5. **In your own words**, explain what the writer finds to "marvel at" in the village of Skara Brae.

2 1 0

"Tell you what," he said. "I'll give you a ticket so you can come back tomorrow, if you like, but I can't give you one for the actual solstice, Saturday. We start selling them at two-thirty on the actual solstice. It's first come, first served."

10. **In your own words**, give **two** reasons why the writer cannot buy a ticket in advance for the solstice.

2 1 0

You enter into the inner chamber of the tomb by a low passageway more than 25 feet long. It's more of a journey than a gateway. You don't have to crawl on hands and knees, but neither can you walk upright. The stone roof bears down on your spine; a single enormous slab of stone forms the wall you brush with your left shoulder. You must walk in that stooped position just a moment too long, so when

you're admitted to the cairn two sensations come at once: you're glad to stand, and the other is a sudden appreciation of stone. You are admitted into a solemn place.

13. **In your own words**, describe **two** sensations which might be felt by someone entering the cairn. **2 1 0**

You are standing in a high, dim stone vault. There is a thick soundlessness, like a recording studio, or a strongroom. A moment ago, you were in the middle of a field, with the wind and curlews calling. That world has been taken away, and the world you have entered into is not like a cave, but a place of artifice, of skill. Yes, that's it, what you notice when you stand and look around is cool, dry, applied skill. Across five thousand years you can still feel their self-assurance.

14. What does a visitor notice and feel about the builders of Maes Howe? **Answer in your own words.** **2 1 0**

2006

Askay Buddiga had prepared thoroughly for this moment. The 13-year-old from Colorado Springs knew what was required of him. After all, his brother had won the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee just two years earlier, and now he was here at the final. Perhaps the pressure of family expectation got to him for a moment. Perhaps he panicked.

3. **In your own words**, what might have been the reasons for Askay's fainting? **2 1 0**

With yellow numbered ID placards hung around their necks, the contestants looked as if they had been summoned to take part in a police line-up. One by one the youngsters stepped up to the microphone to hear and spell their words. Although they operated on a two-minute time limit, they could ask for alternative pronunciations, the definition and derivation of a word and ask for it to be used in a sentence. A contestant might be asked to spell such words as "widdershins", "hauberk", "putrescible", "gallimaufry" and "salicylate".

7. In your own words, explain what four things each contestant could ask for to help them with the spelling of a word. **2 0**

On the other hand, spellers leave on a high note and neither they nor their audience are likely to be humbled and saddened by the sight of an ageing champion dragging his weary body into the ring for one final ignominious battle against fresher faced opponents.

13. "Former winners are not eligible to enter." (Paragraph 13)

In your own words, explain how the writer illustrates the advantages of this rule in paragraph 14. **2 1 0**

2005

Rameses I Station, usually called Cairo Railway Station, is a century old, like the railway system itself, which stretches from Alexandria on the shores of the Mediterranean, to Aswan on the Upper Nile, at the northern edge of Lake Nasser – the border of Sudan on the south side. The design of the station is of interest, and it has been said that it represents the epitome of nineteenth-century Egyptian architects' desire to combine classical and Islamic building styles, in response to Khedive Ismail's plan to create a "European Cairo" – Moorish meets modern.

1. In your own words, what do Rameses I Station and the railway system have in common? **2 0**

The best story about Cairo Railway Station, told to me by a man who witnessed it unfold, does not concern a luminary but rather a person delayed in the third class ticket queue. When this fussed and furious man at last got to a window he expressed his exasperation to the clerk, saying, "Do you know who I am?"

7. In your own words, explain what is surprising about the best story the writer has heard about Cairo Railway Station. **2 0**

I had woken now and then as the train had slowed at crossings, or at the larger stations. There were sometimes flaring lights, barking dogs, otherwise the silence and the darkness of the Nile Valley, and a great emptiness: the vast and starry sky of the Egyptian desert, and that road south that ran alongside the train, the only road south, *the road to Johannesburg*.

12. In your own words, how had the writer spent the overnight journey? **2 1 0**

Date palms in clusters, orange trees, low boxy houses, donkey carts piled high with tomatoes, the occasional camel, the men in white gowns and skullcaps, the boys walking to the fields carrying farm implements, and the wide slow river and the flat bright land shimmering under the blue sky. This was the new Egypt but it was also old Egypt. For I had seen many of these images in the Cairo Museum – the adzes and mattocks the boys carried I had seen looking much the same, and the same heavy browed bullocks I had seen hammered in gold or carved in stone I saw browsing by the river; the same dogs with upright tails and big ears, the same narrow cats, and had I seen a snake or a croc they would have had counterparts in gold on a chariot or else mummified and mouldering in a museum case.

15. "This was new Egypt but it was also old Egypt," (Paragraph 10)

In your own words, explain fully why it was possible for the writer to say this. **2 1 0**

2004

For a reason that she did not understand, Pelagia was more repelled by this admission than his filth. Had she betrothed herself to an illiterate, without even knowing it? For the sake of something to say she asked, "Couldn't someone else have written for you? I thought you were dead. I thought you... couldn't love me."

20. **In your own words** explain fully how Pelagia felt when Mandras confessed he could not write. **2 1 0**

2003

Round in shape with a plume of tail feathers, the bird stood about three feet high, the size of an overstuffed turkey or swan. Its wings were small and useless, its head surrounded by a hood of fine feathers giving it the appearance of a monk's cowl. Yet most distinctive of all was its unfeasible-looking bill. It was huge and bulbous, possessing a businesslike hook at the end.

8. In your own words, what does the writer's use of the expression "unfeasible-looking" tell you about the dodo's bill? **2 1 0**

Dodomania was born. Soon Dutch artists were copying the first drawings of the bird and including them in the fantastical "menagerie" paintings that were all the rage. Several birds were captured and brought back to Europe. One found its way to London, where it was displayed for the benefit of paying customers. But around the time Charles II had been returned to the throne of England in 1660, the dodo had gone forever. What happened to the dodo? Finding out has not been easy. Following its disappearance, all anyone had to go on were sketches and paintings. All the living specimens that had been brought back to Europe were long dead. There were no skeletons of the bird in museums. Rapidly, the trail of the dodo began to go cold.

10. What example of Dodomania does the write give? Answer in your own words. **2 1 0**

Surely this ridiculous bird, fat, flightless and vulnerable, had simply been caught and eaten to extinction? Too weak or stupid to defend itself, too trusting of humans, the dodo had met its inevitable end. In a Darwinian world the dodo has come down to

us as the prime example of how poorly designed and hapless creatures just won't stay in the race. Sad but inevitable sums up the extinction of the dodo. Until now. According to ornithologist Julian Hume, the fat, comical appearance of the bird is grossly exaggerated. Julian has travelled to Mauritius to investigate what the bird was really like and how it lived. It is here that the only two skeletons of the bird exist which have proved just how misinterpreted the dodo has been. "Now we have the skeleton of the dodos, we can tell so much more about the bird and how it may have appeared in life," says Julian. "It had a long, sinuous neck, quite an upright stance, and probably stood about two and a half feet tall. This is very different from the picture that's come down to us from those early drawings.

12. Explain in your own words why the dodo is a good example of the theories of the "Darwinian world". **20**

For more than a century scientists had assumed that the dodo's ancestors must have reached Mauritius from Africa – because it is the nearest continental land mass. In fact, Dr Shapiro has proved the dodo was south-east Asian. Its closest ancestor spent millions of years island-hopping from somewhere in the region of Burma or Indonesia until it finally arrived on Mauritius. There it stayed and, unthreatened by predators, gave up the ability to fly, massively increased in size and became the creature that the Dutch finally ran into in 1598.

17. Explain fully, in your own words, why the scientists "assumed" that the dodo reached Mauritius from Africa. **210**

Pigs, like dodos, are ground-rooting animals. They are easy to farm – simply release them into the forest and they will take care of themselves. As they did so they proved fatal to the dodo, disturbing ancient mating and nesting behaviour, eating the dodo's eggs, and voraciously competing for food. In Mauritius's unique island habitat, perfectly balanced for more than 10 million years, something as apparently benign as the introduction of the pig proved fatal for the dodo.

21. In your own words, explain fully why the introduction of pigs proved "fatal" for the dodo. **210**

Sentence Structure and Word Choice

2008

The play—for which Briony had designed the posters, programmes and tickets, constructed the sales booth out of a folding screen tipped on its side, and lined the collection box in red crêpe paper—was written by her in a two-day tempest of composition, causing her to miss a breakfast and a lunch. When the preparations were complete, she had nothing to do but contemplate her finished draft and wait for the appearance of her cousins from the distant north. There would be time for only one day of rehearsal before her brother, Leon, arrived.

2. In paragraph 1, the writer shows how committed Briony has been to this task. Explain how **sentence structure** and **word choice** indicate Briony’s high level of commitment.

(a) **Sentence structure:** **2 1 0**

(b) **Word choice:** **2 1 0**

Mrs Tallis read the seven pages of *The Trials of Arabella* in her bedroom, at her dressing table, with the author’s arm around her shoulder the whole while. Briony studied her mother’s face for every trace of shifting emotion, and Emily Tallis obliged with looks of alarm, snickers of glee and, at the end, grateful smiles and wise, affirming nods. She took her daughter in her arms, onto her lap, and said that the play was “stupendous”, and agreed instantly, murmuring into the girl’s ear, that this word could be quoted on the poster which was to be on an easel in the entrance hall by the ticket booth.

5. “. . . and Emily Tallis obliged . . .”

What does the word “**obliged**” suggest about Emily’s reaction to the play?

2 0

Briony was hardly to know it then, but this was the project’s highest point of fulfilment. Nothing came near it for satisfaction, all else was dreams and frustration. There were moments in the summer dusk after her light was out, burrowing in the delicious gloom of her canopy bed, when she made her heart thud with luminous, yearning fantasies, little playlets in themselves, every one of which featured Leon. In one, his big, good-natured face buckled in grief as Arabella sank in loneliness and despair. In another, there he was, cocktail in hand at some fashionable city bar, overheard boasting to a group of friends: Yes, my younger sister, Briony Tallis the writer, you must surely have heard of her. In a third he punched the air in exultation as the final curtain fell, although there was no curtain, there was no possibility of a

curtain. Her play was not for her cousins, it was for her brother, to celebrate his return, provoke his admiration and guide him away from his careless succession of girlfriends, towards the right form of wife, the one who would persuade him to return to the countryside, the one who would sweetly request Briony's services as a bridesmaid.

7. We are told that Briony's imagination took over "after her light was out".

By referring closely to the passage, explain how the writer's word choice indicates the intensity of Briony's fantasies. **2 1 0**

She was one of those children possessed by a desire to have the world just so. Whereas her big sister's room was a stew of unclosed books, unfolded clothes, unmade bed, unemptied ashtrays, Briony's was a shrine to her controlling demon: the model farm spread across a deep window ledge consisted of the usual animals, but all facing one way—towards their owner—as if about to break into song, and even the farmyard hens were neatly corralled. In fact, Briony's was the only tidy upstairs room in the house. Her straight-backed dolls in their many-roomed mansion appeared to be under strict instructions not to touch the walls; the various thumbsized figures to be found standing about her dressing table—cowboys, deep-sea divers, humanoid mice—suggested by their even ranks and spacing a citizen army awaiting orders.

10(b). By referring to sentence structure and word choice, explain how this contrast (between Briony and her sister, in paragraph 5) is developed. You should refer to both characters in both parts of your answer.

i) **2 1 0**
ii) **2 1 0**

She was one of those children possessed by a desire to have the world just so. Whereas her big sister's room was a stew of unclosed books, unfolded clothes, unmade bed, unemptied ashtrays, Briony's was a shrine to her controlling demon: the model farm spread across a deep window ledge consisted of the usual animals, but all facing one way—towards their owner—as if about to break into song, and even the farmyard hens were neatly corralled. In fact, Briony's was the only tidy upstairs room in the house. Her straight-backed dolls in their many-roomed mansion appeared to be under strict instructions not to touch the walls; the various thumbsized figures to be found standing about her dressing table—cowboys, deep-sea divers, humanoid mice—suggested by their even ranks and spacing a citizen army awaiting orders.

11. Explain the function of the **dashes** in the expression "— towards their owner—". **2 1 0**

A taste for the miniature was one aspect of an orderly spirit. Another was a passion for secrets: in a prized varnished cabinet, a secret drawer was opened by pushing against the grain of a cleverly turned dovetail joint, and here she kept a diary locked by a clasp, and a notebook written in a code of her own invention. In a toy safe opened by six secret numbers she stored letters and postcards. An old tin petty cash box was hidden under a removable floorboard beneath her bed. In the box were treasures that dated back four years, to her ninth birthday when she began collecting: a mutant double acorn, fool's gold, a rain-making spell bought at a funfair, a squirrel's skull as light as a leaf.

13. Explain why a **colon** is used in the expression "when she began collecting:"

2 1 0

2007

Two men were standing at the car park at Maes Howe. The taller, older man was wearing a white shirt and improbable tartan trousers. As I stepped out of the car, he shook his head sadly. The younger man was dressed for outdoors, somewhat like a traffic warden, with a woollen hat pulled down to his eyes and a navy-blue coat. For a moment we all looked at each other. The taller man spoke first.

7. Why do you think the writer uses "improbable" to describe the older man's tartan trousers?

2 1 0

The young guide, Rob, was waiting outside. A workman's van hurtled past, then we crossed the road, entered through a wicket gate and followed a path across the field. We were walking toward the tomb by an indirect route that respected the wide ditch around the site. Sheep were grazing the field, and a heron was standing with its aristocratic back to us. There was a breeze, and the shivery call of a curlew descending. On all sides there are low hills, holding the plain between them. To the south, the skyline is dominated by two much bigger, more distant hills, a peak and a plateau. Though you wouldn't know it from here, they belong to another island, to Hoy. Above these dark hills, in horizontal bars, were the offending clouds.

11. Comment on the writer's use of word choice **and** sentence structure in her description of the clouds in the final sentence of Paragraph 14.

(a) Word choice:

(b) Sentence structure:

2 1 0

The walls are of red sandstone, dressed into long rectangles, with a tall sentry-like buttress in each corner to support the corbelled roof. The passage to the outside world is at the base of one wall. Set waist-high into the other three are square openings into cells which disappear into the thickness of the walls. That's where they laid the dead, once the bones had been cleaned of flesh by weather and birds. The stone blocks which would once have sealed these graves lie on the gravel floor. And the point is, the ancients who built this tomb lined it up precisely: the long passageway faces exactly the setting midwinter sun. Consequently, for the few days around the winter solstice a beam of the setting sun shines along the passage, and onto the tomb's back wall. In recent years, people have crept along the passageway at midwinter to witness this. Some, apparently, find it overwhelming.

17. What does the use of the word "apparently" tell you about the writer's attitude to the idea that some people find the experience in the tomb "overwhelming"?

20

2006

Whatever the reason, when pronouncer Dr Jacques Bailly announced that the teenager's word in the sixth round of the competition was "alopecoid", Buddiga suddenly collapsed. The 1,000-strong audience gathered at the Hyatt hotel in downtown Washington DC was stunned. He had fainted.

2. "He had fainted."

How does the writer signal the dramatic nature of this event to the reader?

2

10

Outside the Hyatt hotel a ragbag collection of protestors from the Simplified Spelling Society waving placards proclaiming "I'm thru with through" and "50,000,000 illiterates can't be wrong" pressed leaflets arguing for an overhaul of spelling upon dubious and somewhat nonplussed contestants.

16. What does the writer's use of the words "ragbag collection" to describe the protestors suggest about his attitude towards them?

20

2005

Rameses I Station, usually called Cairo Railway Station, is a century old, like the railway system itself, which stretches from Alexandria on the shores of the Mediterranean, to Aswan on the Upper Nile, at the northern edge of Lake Nasser – the border of Sudan on the south side. The design of the station is of interest, and it has been said that it represents the epitome of nineteenth-century Egyptian architects' desire to combine classical and Islamic building styles, in response to Khedive Ismail's plan to create a "European Cairo" – Moorish meets modern.

2. Why, in your opinion, does the writer use a long opening sentence?

20

Kings, queens, princes, heads of state, and generals have arrived and departed here. One of Naguib Mahfouz's earliest heroes, the ultra-nationalist anti-British rabble rouser, Saad Zaghlul, escaped an assassination attempt at Cairo station in his return from one of his numerous exiles, in 1924. Given Egypt's history of dramatic arrivals and departures the railway station figures as a focal point and a scene of many riotous send-offs and welcomes.

5. How do the structure and word choice of the opening sentence of Paragraph 2 help to convey the importance of Cairo Station?

2

10

Some of those cap and gowned men were seated in groups eating pieces of bread loaves the same shape I had seen in the museum removed intact, solid and stale, from ancient tombs; the same fava beans that had been disinterred from crypts were being gobbled up from wagons of men selling *foul*, the stewed beans that are still an Egyptian staple. The same-shaped ewers and pitchers and bowls I had seen as old artefacts were visible here in the hands of women faffing around at the kitchen doors of their huts

16. Explain what is unusual about the word choice in the final sentence of paragraph 11.

210

2004

The stranger wore the unidentifiable and ragged remains of a shirt and trousers, and a kind of overcoat cut out of animal skins that had been tacked together with thongs of sinew. Pelagia saw, beneath the table, that in place of shoes his feet were bound with bandages that were both caked with old, congealed blood, and the bright stains of fresh. He was breathing heavily, and the smell was inconceivably foul; it was the reek of rotting flesh, of festering wounds, of ancient perspiration, and of fear. She looked at the hands that were clasped together in the effort to prevent their quivering, and was overcome both with fright and pity. What was she to do?

7. "it was the reek of rotting flesh . . . fear."

Explain fully how the writer emphasises the smell from the stranger

(i) through sentence structure. 2
10

(ii) through word choice. 210

"You can come back tomorrow," said Pelagia, appalled by this gibbering apparition, and completely at a loss.

10. Why is "gibbering" (Paragraph 5) an appropriate word to describe the stranger at this point? 210

Pelagia was astounded. Psipsina was afraid of strangers, and how did this ghastly ruin know her name? Who could have told him? She wiped her hands on her apron for the lack of any sense of what to think or do, and said, "Mandras?"

The man turned his face towards her and said, "Don't touch me, Pelagia. I've got lice. I didn't know what to do, and I came here first. All the time I knew I had to get here first, that's all, and I'm tired. Do you have any coffee?"

16. "Pelagia was astounded."

How does the sentence structure in the rest of this paragraph develop Pelagia's sense of astonishment? 2
10

2003

DODO. The very word conjures up an image – fat, stupid, ridiculous. Somehow we feel we know this bird. But one thing we all know is that it's dead. As dead as...er...the dodo. It's all in the name. It has that sort of childish, sing-song feel to it. Endearing because it sounds so daft. And yet the dodo is more than a cheap laugh: the dodo is an icon. It's a creature of legend, a myth like the Phoenix or the Griffin. But it's a myth that really existed. A living creature so bizarre it didn't need the human imagination to think it up – and an enigma from virtually the first moment human beings laid eyes on it a little more than 500 years ago.

1. Explain why the writer opens the passage with the single word "DODO". **2 1 0**

The dodo wasn't a fat, squat creature; it was lean and upright. Indeed, the earliest images, drawn from life, show a scrawny bird, its hooked bill making its appearance quite aggressive. The later you go, the fatter and sillier it becomes. There are many other mysteries to solve. Why was it flightless? Why did it live on Mauritius and nowhere else? How did it get there? Finding out takes us right back to the 17th century.

15. Why does the writer use a series of questions in Paragraph 9? **2 1 0**

Techniques

2008

At some moments chilling, at others desperately sad, the play told a tale of the heart whose message, conveyed in a rhyming prologue, was that love which did not build a foundation on good sense was doomed. The reckless passion of the heroine, Arabella, for a wicked foreign count is punished by ill fortune when she contracts cholera during an impetuous dash towards a seaside town with her intended.

Deserted by him and nearly everybody else, bed-bound in an attic, she discovers in herself a sense of humour. Fortune presents her a second chance in the form of an impoverished doctor—in fact, a prince in disguise who has elected to work among the

needy. Healed by him, Arabella chooses wisely this time, and is rewarded by reconciliation with her family and a wedding with the medical prince on “a windy sunlit day in spring”.

4. Read the writer’s description of Briony’s play in Paragraph 2, beginning: “The reckless passion of the heroine . . .”

(a) What seems to be the writer’s attitude to Briony’s play?

2 1 0

(b) Quote **one** detail from the description and explain how it conveys this attitude.

2 1 0

2007

To reach Maes Howe I took the road that passes over a thin isthmus between two lochs. On the west side is a huge brooding stone circle, the Ring of Brodgar. On the east, like three elegant women conversing at a cocktail party, are the Standing Stones of Stenness. The purpose of these may be mysterious, but a short seven miles away is the Neolithic village called Skara Brae. There is preserved a huddle of roofless huts, dug half underground into midden and sand dune. There, you can marvel at the domestic normality, that late Stone Age people had beds and cupboards and neighbours and beads. You can feel both their presence, their day-to-day lives, and their utter absence. It’s a good place to go. It re-calibrates your sense of time.

4. Identify the figure of speech used by the writer to describe the Standing Stones of Stenness. What does it suggest about the stones?

2 1 0

You enter into the inner chamber of the tomb by a low passageway more than 25 feet long. It's more of a journey than a gateway. You don't have to crawl on hands and knees, but neither can you walk upright. The stone roof bears down on your spine; a single enormous slab of stone forms the wall you brush with your left shoulder. You must walk in that stooped position just a moment too long, so when you're admitted to the cairn two sensations come at once: you're glad to stand, and the other is a sudden appreciation of stone. You are admitted into a solemn place.

You are standing in a high, dim stone vault. There is a thick soundlessness, like a recording studio, or a strongroom. A moment ago, you were in the middle of a field, with the wind and curlews calling. That world has been taken away, and the world you have entered into is not like a cave, but a place of artifice, of skill. Yes, that's it, what you notice when you stand and look around is cool, dry, applied skill. Across five thousand years you can still feel their self-assurance.

15. (a) What style does the writer adopt in Paragraphs 15 and 16? **2 0**

(b) Support your answer with **two** pieces of evidence. **2 1 0**

2006

But within 30 seconds he was back on his feet – calmly spelling a-l-o-p-e-c-o-i-d to much applause. Buddiga recovered sufficiently to go on to the final rounds of the competition.

4. "a-l-o-p-e-c-o-i-d" (Paragraph 3)

Why does the writer separate the letters in this word with dashes?

2 0

But the competition really got going when the field was whittled down to the final two dozen spellers on day three. By then, then, contestants were beginning to struggle as they tiptoed, letter by letter, through their words as though they were crossing a minefield.

8(a). "as though they were crossing a minefield"

Identify the figure of speech the writer is using here.

2 0

Spellbound featured one boy, Neil, whose father hired specialist tutors to coach his son in words derived from French and German. Despite such dedication, Neil didn't win.

But the proclivities of such contestants and their parents in no way represent the general participant. "It's not just the geeks and the nerds. These are normal kids," says Ohio's Beth Richards, whose daughter, Bailey, was making her second appearance in the finals. "This is the Superbowl of words."

10. How does the first sentence of Paragraph 11 act as a link between Paragraphs 10 and 11? **210**

He appeared close to hyperventilating as he started slowly then rattled through the word, confident that, after three days of ruthless competition, the grand prize was his. Blinking in amazement, he appeared overwhelmed, burying his face in his hands as his mother rushed the stage to embrace him. "It's kind of sad I won't be able to be in more spelling bees," says Tidmarsh. The tears welled in his eyes as he contemplated the awful void that lay ahead. Unlike boxers or basketball stars there's no second coming or return from retirement available to champion spellers. Former spellers are not eligible to enter.

12(b). "... the awful void that lay ahead."

What tone is the writer adopting in the expression? **20**

2005

To leave the enormous sprawling dust-blown city of gridlock and gritty buildings in the sleeper to Aswan was bliss. It was quarter to eight on a chilly night. I sat down in my inexpensive First Class compartment, listened to the departure whistles, and soon we were rolling through Cairo. Within minutes we were at Gizeh – the ruins overwhelmed by the traffic and the bright lights, the tenements and the bazaar; and in less than half an hour we were in open country, little settlements of square mud-block houses, fluorescent lights reflected in the canal beside the track, the blackness of the countryside at night, a mosque with a lighted minaret, now and then a solitary car or truck, and on one remote road about twenty men in white robes going home after prayers. In Cairo they would have been unremarkable, just part of the mob; here they looked magical, their robes seeming much whiter on the nighttime road, their procession much spookier for its orderliness, like a troop of sorcerers.

10. "like a troop of sorcerers" (Paragraph 5).

Explain the effectiveness of this simile.

210

I had woken now and then as the train had slowed at crossings, or at the larger stations. There were sometimes flaring lights, barking dogs, otherwise the silence and the darkness of the Nile Valley, and a great emptiness: the vast and starry sky of the Egyptian desert, and that road south that ran alongside the train, the only road south, *the road to Johannesburg*.

In the bright early morning I saw a sign saying, *Kom-Ombo – 8km*, indicating the direction to its lovely temple with a dual dedication, to Horus, the hawk-headed god, and Sobek, the croc-skulled deity. Another sign said, *Abu Simbel Macaroni*, and depicted its glutinous product in a red bowl.

13. Explain the different use of the italics in:

(a) "*the road to Johannesburg*" (Paragraph 8). **2 0**

(b) "*Kom-Ombo - 8 km*" (Paragraph 9). **2 0**

The Nile was near, about 300 yards from bank to bank, slowly moving and light brown, showing clouds on its surface, with green fields on either side, some with marked-out plots and others divided into date plantations, hawks drifting over them on the wind currents, and in the river feluccas with sails – impossible to see these sails and not think of gulls' wings. And then, as though indicating we were approaching a popular place, there was a succession of cemeteries, great long slopes of sun-baked graves, and the grave markers, small rectangles set into the stony ground, with raised edges, like a whole hillside of truckle beds where the dead people lay. Beyond the next hill was Aswan.

19(a). What effect does the writer create in the final sentence of the passage? **2 0**

(b). How does the writer create this effect? **2 0**

2004

"And the ice screams. It shrieks. And voices call to you out of it. And you look into it and you see people. They beckon and wave, and they mock, and you shoot into the ice but they don't shut up, and then the ice squeaks. It squeaks all night, all night."

12. **Identify** any **two techniques** used by the writer in Paragraph 7 which help to convey the man's sense of panic and distress. **2 1 0**

2003

The fateful encounter now unfolded. The crew quickly came across a large bird, apparently flightless. Then, unable to evade its captors, it was quickly seized by the sailors. It was like nothing they had ever set eyes on.

Round in shape with a plume of tail feathers, the bird stood about three feet high, the size of an overstuffed turkey or swan. Its wings were small and useless, its head surrounded by a hood of fine feathers giving it the appearance of a monk's cowl. Yet most distinctive of all was its unfeasible-looking bill. It was huge and bulbous, possessing a businesslike hook at the end.

7. "It was like nothing they had ever set eyes on."

What is the function of this sentence?

20

But why did the bird come to be called the dodo? It has been argued that the name reflects the bird's nonsensical appearance. Or that it sounds like the noise the bird may have made. In fact, the name dodo didn't stick until other names had been tried – "Kermis" after a Dutch annual fair, then "walghvogel" which means "nauseating fowl". The name "dodo" came when the Dutch finally saw its comical side.

9. Explain the writer's use of a question at the beginning of Paragraph 6.

210

Understanding

2008

The play—for which Briony had designed the posters, programmes and tickets, constructed the sales booth out of a folding screen tipped on its side, and lined the collection box in red crêpe paper—was written by her in a two-day tempest of composition, causing her to miss a breakfast and a lunch. When the preparations were complete, she had nothing to do but contemplate her finished draft and wait for the appearance of her cousins from the distant north. There would be time for only one day of rehearsal before her brother, Leon, arrived.

1. What task has Briony been involved in?

20

A taste for the miniature was one aspect of an orderly spirit. Another was a passion for secrets: in a prized varnished cabinet, a secret drawer was opened by pushing against the grain of a cleverly turned dovetail joint, and here she kept a diary locked by a clasp, and a notebook written in a code of her own invention. In a toy safe opened by six secret numbers she stored letters and postcards. An old tin petty cash box was hidden under a removable floorboard beneath her bed. In the box were treasures that dated back four years, to her ninth birthday when she began

collecting: a mutant double acorn, fool's gold, a rain-making spell bought at a funfair, a squirrel's skull as light as a leaf.

14. What do the items in Briony's collection suggest about her as a person? **20**

2007

To reach Maes Howe I took the road that passes over a thin isthmus between two lochs. On the west side is a huge brooding stone circle, the Ring of Brodgar. On the east, like three elegant women conversing at a cocktail party, are the Standing Stones of Stenness. The purpose of these may be mysterious, but a short seven miles away is the Neolithic village called Skara Brae. There is preserved a huddle of roofless huts, dug half underground into midden and sand dune. There, you can marvel at the domestic normality, that late Stone Age people had beds and cupboards and neighbours and beads. You can feel both their presence, their day-to-day lives, and their utter absence. It's a good place to go. It re-calibrates your sense of time.

6. What do you think the writer means when she says Skara Brae "re-calibrates your sense of time"? **210**

Two men were standing at the car park at Maes Howe. The taller, older man was wearing a white shirt and improbable tartan trousers. As I stepped out of the car, he shook his head sadly. The younger man was dressed for outdoors, somewhat like a traffic warden, with a woollen hat pulled down to his eyes and a navy-blue coat. For a moment we all looked at each other. The taller man spoke first.

"Not looking good, I'm afraid."

The timing was right, the sun was setting, but . . .

"Cloud," said the tall man.

"Can't be helped," I replied.

"Will you go in, anyway? You can't always tell, you just need a moment when the cloud breaks . . ."

8. Why does the man shake his head sadly as the writer steps out of her car? **20**

You enter into the inner chamber of the tomb by a low passageway more than 25 feet long. It's more of a journey than a gateway. You don't have to crawl on hands and knees, but neither can you walk upright. The stone roof bears down on your spine; a single enormous slab of stone forms the wall you brush with your left shoulder. You must walk in that stooped position just a moment too long, so when

you're admitted to the cairn two sensations come at once: you're glad to stand, and the other is a sudden appreciation of stone. You are admitted into a solemn place.

12. In what way is entry to the inner chamber "more of a journey than a gateway"?

20

The walls are of red sandstone, dressed into long rectangles, with a tall sentry-like buttress in each corner to support the corbelled roof. The passage to the outside world is at the base of one wall. Set waist-high into the other three are square openings into cells which disappear into the thickness of the walls. That's where they laid the dead, once the bones had been cleaned of flesh by weather and birds. The stone blocks which would once have sealed these graves lie on the gravel floor. And the point is, the ancients who built this tomb lined it up precisely: the long passageway faces exactly the setting midwinter sun. Consequently, for the few days around the winter solstice a beam of the setting sun shines along the passage, and onto the tomb's back wall. In recent years, people have crept along the passageway at midwinter to witness this. Some, apparently, find it overwhelming.

16. Why did the builders of Maes Howe position it as they did?

20

Inside was bright as a tube train, and the effect was brutal. I'd expected not utter darkness, but perhaps a dullish red. Rob was carrying a torch but this light revealed every crack, every joint and fissure in the ancient stonework. At once a man's voice said, "Sorry, I'll switch it off," but the moment was lost and, anyway, I'd been forewarned. As he sold me the ticket, Alan had told me that surveyors were inside the cairn, with all their equipment. "A bit of a problem", was how he'd put it. And here they were. We entered the tomb and, in that fierce white light, it was like that moment which can occur in midlife, when you look at your mother and realise with a shock that she is old.

18. Why was the inside of the tomb "as bright as a tube train"?

210

2006

Askay Buddiga had prepared thoroughly for this moment. The 13-year-old from Colorado Springs knew what was required of him. After all, his brother had won the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee just two years earlier, and now he was here at the final. Perhaps the pressure of family expectation got to him for a moment. Perhaps he panicked.

1. In what sort of a contest is Askay Buddiga taking part?

20

Though it might seem arcane in the age of computer spellcheck programs, more than nine million American children took part in spelling contests this year, with the top 265 progressing to Washington for the grand finals last week.

5. "Though it might seem arcane . . ." (Paragraph 4)

Explain in your own words why spelling contests might seem "arcane" or strange.

210

With yellow numbered ID placards hung around their necks, the contestants looked as if they had been summoned to take part in a police line-up. One by one the youngsters stepped up to the microphone to hear and spell their words. Although they operated on a two-minute time limit, they could ask for alternative pronunciations, the definition and derivation of a word and ask for it to be used in a sentence. A contestant might be asked to spell such words as "widdershins", "hauberk", "putrescible", "gallimaufry" and "salicylate".

6. ". . . contestants looked as if they had been summoned to take part in a police line-up."

What does this description suggest about how the contestants may have been feeling?

20

Some parents are tempted to take their child's preparation for the bee to extraordinary, obsessive lengths. It's a perennial cliché of American sportswriting but there's more than a hint of truth in the old phrase that in the land of the free, only winners are remembered.

9. "Some parents are tempted to take their child's preparation for the bee to extraordinary, obsessive lengths."

Give a reason why some parents are prepared to behave in this way.

20

He appeared close to hyperventilating as he started slowly then rattled through the word, confident that, after three days of ruthless competition, the grand prize was his. Blinking in amazement, he appeared overwhelmed, burying his face in his hands as his mother rushed the stage to embrace him. "It's kind of sad I won't be able to be in more spelling bees," says Tidmarsh. The tears welled in his eyes as he contemplated the awful void that lay ahead. Unlike boxers or basketball stars there's no second coming or return from retirement available to champion spellers. Former spellers are not eligible to enter.

12(a). ". . . the awful void that lay ahead."

What is the "awful void" that lies ahead of Tidmarsh?

20

2005

I went into the corridor and opened the train window to see the robed men better, and there I was joined by Walter Frakes from St Louis, an enormous man with a long, mild face, and a smooth bag-like chin, who found his compartment small, “but what’s the use of fussing?” He was travelling with his wife, Marylou, and another couple, the Norrisses, Lenny and Marge, also from St Louis. They too were heading to Aswan to meet a boat and take a river cruise.

“And if I don’t get a decent bed on that ship I’m going to be a wreck,” Walter Frakes said. He as a very gentle man in spite of his size, which I took to be close to 300 pounds; and he was kindly and generally uncomplaining. All he said in the morning was: “Didn’t get a wink of sleep. Tried to. Woke up every time the train stopped. Must have stopped a hundred times. Durn.”

11. The writer describes Walter Frakes as kindly and generally uncomplaining. How does he illustrate this in Paragraphs 6 and 7?

Date palms in clusters, orange trees, low boxy houses, donkey carts piled high with tomatoes, the occasional camel, the men in white gowns and skullcaps, the boys walking to the fields carrying farm implements, and the wide slow river and the flat bright land shimmering under the blue sky. This was the new Egypt but it was also old Egypt. For I had seen many of these images in the Cairo Museum – the adzes and mattocks the boys carried I had seen looking much the same, and the same heavy browed bullocks I had seen hammered in gold or carved in stone I saw browsing by the river; the same dogs with upright tails and big ears, the same narrow cats, and had I seen a snake or a croc they would have had counterparts in gold on a chariot or else mummified and mouldering in a museum case.

14. What kind of impression does the writer create in the opening sentence of paragraph 10?

210

The Nile was near, about 300 yards from bank to bank, slowly moving and light brown, showing clouds on its surface, with green fields on either side, some with marked-out plots and others divided into date plantations, hawks drifting over them on the wind currents, and in the river feluccas with sails – impossible to see these sails and not think of gulls’ wings. And then, as though indicating we were approaching a popular place, there was a succession of cemeteries, great long slopes of sun-baked graves, and the grave markers, small rectangles set into the stony ground, with raised edges, like a whole hillside of truckle beds where the dead people lay. Beyond the next hill was Aswan.

18. Why might the sails on the boats make the writer think of gulls’ wings? Give **two**

reasons.

- i)
- ii)

2 1 0

2004

When Pelagia entered the kitchen she stopped singing abruptly, and was seized with consternation. There was a stranger seated at the kitchen table, a most horrible and wild stranger who looked worse than the brigands of childhood tales. The man was quite motionless except for a rhythmic fluttering and trembling of his hands. His head was utterly concealed beneath a cascade of matted hair that seemed to have no form or colour. In places it stuck out in twisted corkscrews, and in others it lay in congealed pads like felt; it was the hair of a hermit demented by solitude. Beneath it Pelagia could see nothing but an enormous and disorderly beard surmounted by two tiny bright eyes that would not look at her. There was a nose in there, stripped of its skin, reddened and flaked, and glimpses of a darkened, streaked and grimy flesh.

4. What **two** ideas are suggested by the expression “a hermit demented by solitude”?

2 1 0

The stranger wore the unidentifiable and ragged remains of a shirt and trousers, and a kind of overcoat cut out of animal skins that had been tacked together with thongs of sinew. Pelagia saw, beneath the table, that in place of shoes his feet were bound with bandages that were both caked with old, congealed blood, and the bright stains of fresh. He was breathing heavily, and the smell was inconceivably foul; it was the reek of rotting flesh, of festering wounds, of ancient perspiration, and of fear. She looked at the hands that were clasped together in the effort to prevent their quivering, and was overcome both with fright and pity. What was she to do?

6. “congealed blood, and the bright stains of fresh.”

What does this description tell you about the wounds to the man’s feet?

2 1 0

“My father’s out,” she said. “He should be back tomorrow.”

“Ice,” said the stranger, as though he had not heard her, “I’ll never be warm again.” His voice cracked and she realised his shoulders were heaving. “Oh, the ice,” he repeated. He held his hands before his face. He wrapped his fingers together, and his whole body seemed to be fighting to suppress a succession of spasms.

“You can come back tomorrow,” said Pelagia, appalled by this gibbering apparition, and completely at a loss.

9. “My father’s out,” she said. “He should be back tomorrow.”
What does Pelagia hope to achieve by making this statement?

2 0

“No crampons, you see. The snow is whipped away by the wind, and the ice is in ridges, sharper than knives, and when you fall you are cut. Look at my hands.” He held them up to her, palms outwards in the gesture that would normally be an insult, and she saw the horrendous cross-tracking of hard white scars that had obliterated every natural line, scored away the pads and calluses, and left seeping cracks across the joints. There were no nails and no trace of cuticles.

11. What **two** features of the ice disturbed the man most?

2 1 0

Her perplexity was growing into acute anxiety as she wondered what on earth she was supposed to do on her own with a mad vagrant ranting in her kitchen. She thought of leaving him there and running out to fetch help; but was paralysed by the thought of what he might do or steal in her absence. “Please leave,” she pleaded. “My father will be back tomorrow, and he can... see to your feet.”

13. What are the options that Pelagia is considering in Paragraph 9?

2 1 0

2003

DODO. The very word conjures up an image – fat, stupid, ridiculous. Somehow we feel we know this bird. But one thing we all know is that it’s dead. As dead as...er...the dodo. It’s all in the name. It has that sort of childish, sing-song feel to it. Endearing because it sounds so daft. And yet the dodo is more than a cheap laugh: the dodo is an icon. It’s a creature of legend, a myth like the Phoenix or the Griffin. But it’s a myth that really existed. A living creature so bizarre it didn’t need the human imagination to think it up – and an enigma from virtually the first moment human beings laid eyes on it a little more than 500 years ago.

2. According to the writer why is the name of the dodo both familiar and memorable?

2 1 0

3. Explain fully what is unusual about the expression “But it’s a myth that really existed”.

2 1 0

Three hundred and fifty years later, Lewis Carroll famously caricatured the bird in *Alice in Wonderland*. He portrayed it as a pompous Victorian gentleman, complete with walking cane. With this, the dodo's journey from "real" to "surreal" was complete

5. "Lewis Carroll famously caricatured the bird"

Explain fully how the rest of Paragraph 2 develops this idea.

2 1 0

Dodomania was born. Soon Dutch artists were copying the first drawings of the bird and including them in the fantastical "menagerie" paintings that were all the rage. Several birds were captured and brought back to Europe. One found its way to London, where it was displayed for the benefit of paying customers. But around the time Charles II had been returned to the throne of England in 1660, the dodo had gone forever. What happened to the dodo? Finding out has not been easy. Following its disappearance, all anyone had to go on were sketches and paintings. All the living specimens that had been brought back to Europe were long dead. There were no skeletons of the bird in museums. Rapidly, the trail of the dodo began to go cold.

11. "Rapidly, the trail of the dodo began to go cold."

Why do you think the writer chooses to use this expression?

2 0

For more than a century scientists had assumed that the dodo's ancestors must have reached Mauritius from Africa – because it is the nearest continental land mass. In fact, Dr Shapiro has proved the dodo was south-east Asian. Its closest ancestor spent millions of years island-hopping from somewhere in the region of Burma or Indonesia until it finally arrived on Mauritius. There it stayed and, unthreatened by predators, gave up the ability to fly, massively increased in size and became the creature that the Dutch finally ran into in 1598.

18. Explain fully why you think the writer chooses to use the expression "island-hopping".

2 1 0

Pigs, like dodos, are ground-rooting animals. They are easy to farm – simply release them into the forest and they will take care of themselves. As they did so they proved fatal to the dodo, disturbing ancient mating and nesting behaviour, eating the dodo's eggs, and voraciously competing for food. In Mauritius's unique island habitat, perfectly balanced for more than 10 million years, something as apparently benign as the introduction of the pig proved fatal for the dodo.

22. What does the writer's use of the expression "apparently benign" tell you about the introduction of the pigs?

2 1 0