

**The Halifax Grammar Schools  
Admissions Test: English**

---

There are 2 sections to the English Test

30 minutes on each section.

**Section A**

Name: .....

Candidate Number: .....

## Section A Reading (30 minutes)

You should spend 30 minutes on this section. There are 20 marks available. Read the material provided and answer the questions.

---

*This is the story of Standish Treadwell, who lives in an alternative world ruled by a ruthless government. Standish has dyslexia – a condition that can make reading and writing difficult despite normal intelligence.*

*This is the opening to the novel, where we find out that his best friend, Hector, has disappeared.*

### One

I'm wondering what if.

What if the football hadn't gone over the wall.

What if Hector had never gone looking for it.

What if he hadn't kept the dark secret to himself.

What if . . .

Then I suppose I would be telling myself another story.

You see, the what ifs are as boundless as the stars.

### Two

Miss Connolly, our old teacher, always said start your story at the beginning. Make it a clean window for us to see through. Though I don't really think that's what she meant. No one, not even Miss Connolly, dares write about what we see through that smeared glass. Best not to look out. If you have to, then best to keep quiet. I would never be so daft as to write this down, not on paper ...

Even if I could, I couldn't.

You see, I can't spell my own name.

Standish Treadwell.

Can't read, can't write,

Standish Treadwell isn't bright.

Miss Connolly was the only teacher ever to say that what makes Standish stand apart is that he is an original. Hector smiled when I told him that. He said he personally had clocked that one straightaway.

"There are train-track thinkers, then there's you, Standish, a breeze in the park of imagination."

### **Three**

I wasn't listening to the lesson when the note arrived from the headmaster's office. Because me and Hector were in the city across the water, in another country where the buildings don't stop rising until they pin the clouds to the sky. Where the sun shines in Technicolor. Life at the end of a rainbow. I don't care what they tell us, I've seen it on the TV. They sing in the streets — they even sing in the rain, sing while dancing round a lamppost.

This is the dark ages. We don't sing.

But this was the best daydream I'd had since Hector and his family vanished. Mostly I tried not to think about Hector. Instead I liked to concentrate on imagining myself on our planet, the one Hector and I had invented. Juniper. It was better than being worried sick about what had happened to him. Except



this was one of the best daydreams I'd had for a long time. It felt as if Hector was near me again. We were driving round in one of those huge, ice-cream-coloured Cadillacs. I could almost smell the leather. Bright blue, sky blue, leather seats blue. Hector in the back. Me with my arm resting on the chrome of the wound-down window, my hand on the wheel, driving us home for Coca-Colas in a shiny kitchen with a checked tablecloth and a garden that looks as if the grass was Hoovered.

That's when I became vaguely aware of Mr. Gunnell saying my name.

"Standish Treadwell. You are wanted in the headmaster's office."

I should have seen that coming. Mr. Gunnell's cane made my eyes smart, hit me so hard on the back of my hand that it left a calling card. Two thin, red weals. Mr. Gunnell wasn't tall but his muscles were made out of old army tanks with well-oiled army-tank arms. He wore a toupee that had a life of its own, battling to stay stuck on the top of his sweaty, shiny head. His other features didn't do him any favours. He had a small, dark, snot-mark moustache that went down to his mouth. He smiled only when using his cane — that smile curdled the corner of his mouth so that his dried-up leech of a tongue stuck out. Thinking about it, I am not sure the word smile is right. Maybe it just twisted that way when he applied his mind to his favourite sport, hurting you. He wasn't that worried where the cane landed as long as it hit flesh, made you jump.

## Glossary

Cadillac – an American car from the 1950s

Answer all questions in this section using the extract.

Please write your answers in the space provided.

- 1 Re-read this chapter. List four things that you find out here about Standish Treadwell.

Miss Connolly, our old teacher, always said start your story at the beginning. Make it a clean window for us to see through. Though I don't really think that's what she meant. No one, not even Miss Connolly, dares write about what we see through that smeared glass. Best not to look out. If you have to, then best to keep quiet. I would never be so daft as to write this down, not on paper. .

Even if I could, I couldn't.

You see, I can't spell my own name.

Standish Treadwell.

Can't read, can't write,

Standish Treadwell isn't bright.

Miss Connolly was the only teacher ever to say that what makes Standish stand apart is that he is an original. Hector smiled when I told him that. He said he personally had clocked that one straightaway.

"There are train-track thinkers, then there's you, Standish, a breeze in the park of imagination."

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(4 marks)

2 Look in detail at each example below. Explain the effects of the writer's language. You do not have to name the technique. Make sure that you try to say something about why the writer has used these words.

- a) 'start your story at the beginning. Make it a clean window for us to see through.'

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

- b) 'the buildings don't stop rising until they pin the clouds to the sky'

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

- c) 'his muscles were made out of old army tanks'

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

- d) 'that smile curdled the corner of his mouth so that his dried-up leech of a tongue stuck out.'

.....

.....

.....

.....

(2 marks)

- 3 Think about the order in which each of these events happens in the text. List these in the correct order.

a) Standish daydreams about driving in a Cadillac.	b) Standish was hit by the teacher.
c) The football went over the wall.	d) A note arrives from the headmaster's office.

1) ..... write a), b), c) or d)

2) ..... write a), b), c) or d)

3) ..... write a), b), c) or d)

4) ..... write a), b), c) or d)

(4 marks)

**PLEASE TURN OVER**



- 4 You now need to think about the whole of the source. Select three to five examples showing how the writer structures the text to engage the reader.

You **may** want to write about:

- The opening and the effect of it.
- Changes in place/time and the effect of this.
- The order in which we are given information and the effect of this
- The use of chapters and the effect of this
- The ending and the effect of it

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(4 marks)



**The Halifax Grammar Schools  
Admissions Test: English**

---

There are 2 sections to the English Test

30 minutes on each section.

**Section B**

Name: .....

Candidate Number: .....

### Section B Writing (30 minutes)

**You should spend 30 minutes on this section. There are 20 marks available in Section B.**

**14 marks are for organisation and content; 6 marks are for spelling, punctuation and grammar.**

Choose **one** question. Remember to use paragraphs.

**Either:**

- a) Write a description of a person you either like or dislike.

**Or:**

- b) Write the opening to a story set in the future.

(20 marks)

Title: .....

[illegible]

**Maggot Moon**

**Section A : Reading**

**Mark Scheme**

1.

**Indicative content; students may include any four of these:**

can't read

can't write

he thinks he isn't bright

his old teacher was Miss Connolly

he thinks it is best not to look out of the window / keep quiet if you have to look out

he can't spell his name.

**Or any other valid responses that you are able to verify by checking the Source. Do not accept comments that do not relate to Standish.**

(4 marks)

2.

**NB no mark on any section for saying language makes them interested / frightened ; no mark for rewording the quote**

a) 'start your story at the beginning. Make it a clean window for us to see through.' ( 2 marks )

Mark	Skills descriptors	Content descriptors  Comments might include:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear understanding of language</li><li>• Analyses the effects of writer's choice of language</li></ul>	The metaphor/reference of the start of a story being like a clean window works because it reminds us that the reader needs to be able to see clearly what is going on in the plot/story, as though they are looking through a clean, rather than a smudgy/dirty window at something happening outside. Like looking into a different world.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shows some understanding of language</li><li>• Attempts to comment on the writer's choice of language</li></ul>	Some comment on : The story should be clear like a clean window is clear. The teacher is commanding 'start'
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No comment on language</li></ul>	Windows and stories are clear/clean

b) 'the buildings don't stop rising until they pin the clouds to the sky' ( 2 marks )

Mark	Skills descriptors	Content descriptors Comments might include:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear understanding of language</li> <li>• Analyses the effects of writer's choice of language</li> </ul>	The buildings seem threatening and the word 'pin' seems menacing as if the clouds can't escape. Suggests pain / unstoppable power.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows some understanding of language</li> <li>• Attempts to comment on the writer's choice of language</li> </ul>	The buildings are high /tall / are growing/overwhelming/threatening
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comment on language</li> </ul>	The buildings are rising

c) 'his muscles were made out of old army tanks' ( 2 marks )

Mark	Skills descriptors	Content descriptors Comments might include:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear understanding of language</li> <li>• Analyses the effects of writer's choice of language</li> </ul>	The writer uses the metaphor of / references to war and weapons, when he compares the teacher's muscles to army tanks, suggesting that they are both strong and sturdy but also used to defend or even attack. There is an idea that they are both solid and protected ( tank/ teacher )and that he is therefore unable to defend himself as a student. Old also implies tough here, as though he too is old and has fought and survived many battles / has been battered.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows some understanding of language</li> <li>• Attempts to comment on the writer's choice of language</li> </ul>	Some comment on : He sounds like his muscles are strong and tough like a tank, aggressive.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comment on language</li> </ul>	The teacher had muscles and a tank is strong

d) 'that smile curdled the corner of his mouth so that his dried-up leech of a tongue stuck out' ( 2 marks )

Mark	Skills descriptors	Content descriptors Comments might include:
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear understanding of language</li> <li>• Analyses the effects of writer's choice of language</li> </ul>	Although he is shown to be smiling, the metaphor of 'curdled' suggests that his mouth is like milk that is off or curdled and tastes foul, as though he is smiling at something unpleasant. The writer also adds the metaphor of a 'dried up leech' tongue, which reminds us of blood sucking insects that need more blood, as though he is thirsty for the pain and suffering that he is about to inflict and enjoy.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows some understanding of language</li> <li>• Attempts to comment on the writer's choice of language</li> </ul>	Some comment on : His smile does not sound pleasant as 'curdled' means off milk and a leech is an unpleasant insect, also suggesting that he is horrible.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comment on language</li> </ul>	He sticks his tongue out and smiles



### 3. Correct sequence and place :

C / A / D / B

4 You now need to think about the whole of the source. Select three to five examples showing how the writer structures the text to engage the reader.

Mark	Skills descriptors	Content descriptors
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judicious selection of examples – at least three features discussed.</li> <li>• Analyse the effect of structural features</li> </ul>	<p>Could consider the following ( 3 to 5 examples needed ):</p> <p>- <b>The opening and the effect of it</b> – personal voice that connects us to the narrator immediately ‘I’m’; series of events that seem random but connected ‘What if....’; a sense of potential danger in the secret ‘dark’; connection to the reader ‘you’, unusual line breaks/structure of lines that suggest an unusual narrator and approach; a sense of storytelling and therefore cause /effect ‘ another story’</p> <p>- <b>Changes in place / time and the effect of this</b> – we begin in no set time or place( just thoughts in his head ) however, the wall and the football seem very everyday objects of this time/ current childhood; we hear about his past teacher in comparison to his current teacher, which highlights how much worse he sounds ‘Miss Connelly was the only teacher..’ and ‘small, dark, snot-mark moustache’; the flashback into a happier lesson/time at school shows us it wasn’t always like this/this bad; the day dream of Standish with Hector shows us how he longs for a better place, one where there is more fun ‘Where the sun shines in Technicolor’ and is ridiculously perfect ‘as if the grass was Hoovered’ ; the lesson that he is in sounds the total opposite of this and the contrast in place ( real/imagined ) reinforces how awful the situation is.</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selects two features.</li> <li>• Clearly explains the effects of them.</li> <li>• 3 features identified but not explained</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies one feature</li> <li>• Explains this feature</li> <li>• 2 features identified but not explained</li> </ul>	<p>- <b>The order in which we are given information and the effect of this</b>- we are told that Hector went over that wall before we are told that he disappeared – suggesting that the two may be connected, but without making it clear to the reader. The information that we are given seems to get more negative as we read on, showing us the truth of this terrible society; it no longer feels real by the end with ‘Croca Cola’ and ‘Mr. Gunnell's cane made my eyes smart, hit me so hard on the back of my hand that it left a calling card’ – violence that is no longer allowed in school.</p>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies one or more feature with no explanation</li> </ul>	<p>- <b>The use of chapters / headings and the effect of this</b></p> <p>The writer separates the internal thoughts and feelings of the character in the different chapters - ‘I’m wondering what if’ moves from his thoughts about the wall/the football/the situation in chapter 1 to ‘Thinking about it, I am not sure the word smile is right’ where we see his thoughts on is immediate situation. The chapters are short and fragmented, moving between an unreal dream and a real nightmare. They reflect the way the character’s thoughts flit around, in the way he can’t concentrate in lessons. Contrast between different teachers in chapter 2 and 3.</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comment on structure</li> </ul>	<p>- <b>The ending and the effect of it</b></p> <p>Although the ending is predictable ( we know he is in trouble ), it is still shocking to see how the teacher treats the student</p> <p>‘when he applied his mind to his favourite sport, hurting you’, reminding us that for all his day dreams, Standish lives in an unfair and unjust world of adults as bullies. We see that if the teachers behave like this, there is little hope that the world in which this is set will be a fair and just place. It is a disturbing ending to the extract, leaving little room for hope, let alone for the return of his friend Hector.</p>