



Aldenham School

11+ Sample Paper

Subject: English

Time allowed: 60 mins

Instructions:

1. Use the lined paper provided for your answers.
2. You should spend about 30 minutes on Section A and 30 minutes on Section B.

Mark: _____ / 40 %: _____

English Comprehension

Molly Weir was a Glasgow-born journalist and actress. The passage comes from her autobiography, *Shoes were for Sunday*, in which she describes her childhood in the Springburn area of the city shortly after the First World War (1914–1918).

Rescue by tram

Up until 1962, public transport in the city of Glasgow was largely provided by trams which were powered from overhead wires and ran on tramlines laid in the middle of the roads. Here, Molly Weir remembers some incidents involving tram in her childhood

One of the most dramatic stories told to me by my mother was of an accident to me in babyhood, when a tram was pressed into the rescue operation. I was about nine months old at the time and my mother had stood me up on the sink-ledge by the window while she cleared up the bathing things before putting me to bed.

The china bath, washed and dried, was beside me on the draining board, and when I turned round at the sound of my father's key in the door, my foot went through one handle, and I crashed to the floor. The bath broke into a dozen pieces, and an edge cut through the bridge of my nose like a knife. My mother used to shudder as she described the blood as 'spurting up like a well' but my father, quick as lightning, seized the two cut edges of my skin between his fingers, and asked my mother to throw a shawl round me, and before she knew what was happening had dashed down two flights of stairs. He leaped on to the driver's platform of a passing tram.

'Don't stop till you get to the Royal Infirmary,' he ordered. The driver was so impressed with his urgency that he did exactly that, and all the passengers were carried willy-nilly to the doors of the **infirmary**. To me the most impressive part of the story was that the tram wasn't even going near the infirmary on its route. It should have turned at right angles at the points long before then. I was astounded that a tram should have been used in this way as an ambulance for me, and that the driver had dared vary the route from that marked on the destination board.

It was maybe this thrilling piece of family history which started my love affair with trams. When I was a little girl I only had the penny for the homeward tram journey, when my legs were tired after the long walk into the town for special messages. It would have been impossibly **extravagant** to ride both ways. That luxury was only indulged in when travelling with Grannie, and the journey to town then seemed so different from the top deck of the tram, the landmarks so swiftly passed compared with my usual walking pace.

When a halfpenny was laid on the tramlines it became a pretended penny after the tram had thundered over it and flattened it out most satisfactorily. To achieve this, we flirted under the wheels of the trams quite fearlessly, for we were so familiar with the sight of them rocketing past our windows we saw little danger. I never knew any child to be injured by a tram. We were as **surefooted** as mountain deer, and the drivers were quick to spot a faltering childish stumble on the rare occasion this happened, and to apply the brakes in good time. They'd all played on the tramlines themselves when children, and our games didn't make them turn a hair. If a child was occasionally scooped up in the 'cow-catcher' – a metal shovel arrangement worked by the driver to remove any obstacle in his path – well, that was all right. Wasn't that what the cow-catcher was there for? And it would be a good lesson for the youngster for the future.

Section A: Comprehension

Spend 30 minutes on this section.

All questions should be answered in full sentences. Try to include as many details as you can

- 1) How old was Molly Weir the narrator in this story when the accident happened. (1 mark)
- 2) What were the two things that Molly's father did immediately afterwards? (2 marks)
- 3) Write a brief summary of the accident as described in the first two paragraphs, you should write around 30 words. (4 marks)
- 4) There are a number of similes in this passage.
 - a) Quote two examples
 - b) Take one of the similes you have chosen and explain the effectiveness of the comparison. (3 marks)
- 5) Using the text to help you, write in your own words the meaning of the following words (also **highlighted, bold and underlined** in the text) (3 marks)

a) **Infirmary**

b) **extravagant**

c) **surefooted**

6) *When I was a little girl I only had the penny for the homeward tram journey, when my legs were tired after the long walk into the town for special messages. It would have been impossibly extravagant to ride both ways.*

What does this suggest about Molly's upbringing? (2 marks)

7) *When a halfpenny was laid on the tramlines it became a pretended penny after the tram had thundered over it and flattened it out most satisfactorily. To achieve this, we flirted under the wheels of the trams quite fearlessly, for we were so familiar with the sight of them rocketing past our windows we saw little danger.*

Explain in your own words what the children used to do with their pennies? (2 marks)

8) In the passage what gives you the impression of both the excitement and possible dangers of the trams? (3 marks)

Total: 20 marks

Section B: Composition

Spend 30 minutes on this section.

Choose ONE of the following creative writing tasks. You should spend a few minutes planning your work, and leave time to proof read.

You should check that you have:

- Punctuated correctly
- Used different and interesting verbs, adverbs and adjectives
- Included a variety of sentence structures
- Varied the length of your sentences
- Organised your writing into paragraphs
- Checked spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Used descriptive techniques such as similes and metaphors

EITHER

Write a story which focuses on a dramatic and memorable event.

OR

Describe a journey on a bus or train through a busy city.

Total: 20 marks