



**SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION**

**ENGLISH**

**2010**

Time 1½ hours

**Name:** .....

**School:** .....

**Instructions:**

**Please read these instructions carefully.**

**Answer ALL questions and leave yourself ten minutes for checking through. Poor handwriting and presentation will be penalised. Answers to be written on separate sheets provided – please ensure that you write your name and school on each sheet.**

Read the following poem and answer the questions opposite:

## **Egypt**

Descending towards Cairo, an arid  
plain is like a twisted mirror, its haze  
the diffused image of the sun. Egypt  
is straw to the sun's flame, its monuments  
are slipping into the floodwaters like beasts  
come to drink from the dry interior. 5

Cranes, absurd as science fiction creatures, stand  
where slaves once tore their muscles so that kings  
might lie entombed in cool, musk smelling darkness,  
mummified, perfect as butterfly specimens: 10  
the more advanced a civilisation,  
the subtler the refinement of vanity.

The same old Egypt holds its sun-wearied earth  
together with transfusions from the Nile,  
the dammed-up waters a bank of the country's blood. 15  
The concrete lifts its pharaoh head above  
the people in Cairo, compelling submission  
to the hours of work. The sky is a scrap of iron.

A scholar hurries to a museum,  
a tourist points his zoom lens at flies  
sticking to a cluster of dates in a bazaar. 20  
Second-hand vision records Egypt, myths  
endure. The same old Egypt contracts like  
a dried fig in the heat of the jet's ascent.

## Questions.

Please answer in full sentences and justify fully your answers.

1. What is the situation of the poet at the start of this poem?  
(1 Mark)
2. Why might the cranes be described as absurd?  
(2 Marks)
3. What might the poet be referring to in lines 8-10?  
(1 Mark)
4. Put into your own words the comment made in lines 11-12.  
(3 Marks)
5. a) Explain the image that the poet uses in lines 13-14.  
(3 Marks)  
b) How is the metaphor developed in line 15?  
(3 Marks)
6. Comment on the aptness of the expression 'its pharaoh head'.  
(3 Marks)
7. What do you think might be meant by 'The sky is a scrap of iron'.  
(2 Marks)
8. How is the poem concluded in the last line?  
(3 Marks)
9. Illustrate and explain how the poet uses similes to enrich the listener's or reader's mental picture of Egypt.  
(5 Marks)
10. Outline the impression of Egypt that you have gained from this poem.  
(4 Marks)

**Total 30 Marks**

## **Section B – Writing**

**You will be marked on the quality and accuracy of your writing.**

**Choose from one of the following essay choices:**

- Think of an interesting place you have been (perhaps on holiday) and write a descriptive passage aimed at someone who has never been there.
- Some people love to travel while others prefer the comforts of home. Write an article for a school magazine arguing either for or against the notion that “Travel broadens the mind”.
- After reading the poem “Egypt”, imagine that you have been tasked with writing an article for a local newspaper encouraging people to visit the country (you may include any information or ideas that you know already).
- Write a story of your choice which begins with:

“As s/he stepped from the boat and surveyed the scene, s/he knew that the task would be impossible...”

**Total 25 Marks**