

***English paper in the style of CSSE:
The Consortium of Selective Schools in
Essex***

Suggested time: One hour

Designed specifically to prepare students for the CSSE grammar school exam, this multi-part paper will be useful practice for a wide range of grammar and independent schools. It contains questions to test the following skills: multiple-choice and written comprehension on a challenging text; grammar; verbal reasoning; creative and informative writing.

Whether you choose to use the suggested time limit should depend on whether your exams are coming up soon. If not, it can be more useful to work slowly and thoughtfully.

The following passage is from *Dombey and Son* by Charles Dickens

1 The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole
2 neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were
3 knocked down; streets broken through and stopped; deep pits and trenches dug in the ground;
4 enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up; buildings that were undermined and shaking,
5 propped by great beams of wood. Here, a chaos of carts, overthrown and jumbled together, lay
6 topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep unnatural hill; there, confused treasures of iron soaked and
7 rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led
8 nowhere; thoroughfares that were wholly impassable; Babel towers of chimneys, wanting half
9 their height; temporary wooden houses and enclosures, in the most unlikely situations; carcasses
10 of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding,
11 and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing.
12 There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness, wildly mingled out
13 of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in the water,
14 and unintelligible as any dream. Hot springs and fiery eruptions, the usual attendants upon
15 earthquakes, lent their contributions of confusion to the scene. Boiling water hissed and heaved
16 within dilapidated walls; whence, also, the glare and roar of flames came issuing forth; and
17 mounds of ashes blocked up rights of way, and wholly changed the law and custom of the
18 neighbourhood.

19 In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress; and, from the very
20 core of all this dire disorder, trailed smoothly away, upon its mighty course of civilisation and
21 improvement.

22 But as yet, the neighbourhood was shy to own the Railroad. One or two bold speculators
23 had projected streets; and one had built a little, but had stopped among the mud and ashes to
24 consider farther of it. A brand-new Tavern, redolent of fresh mortar and size, and fronting
25 nothing at all, had taken for its sign The Railway Arms; but that might be rash enterprise—and
26 then it hoped to sell drink to the workmen. So, the Excavators' House of Call had sprung up
27 from a beer-shop; and the old-established Ham and Beef Shop had become the Railway Eating
28 House, with a roast leg of pork daily, through interested motives of a similar immediate and
29 popular description. Lodging-house keepers were favourable in like manner; and for the like
30 reasons were not to be trusted. The general belief was very slow. There were frowzy fields, and
31 cow-houses, and dunghills, and dustheaps, and ditches, and gardens, and summer-houses, and

32 carpet-beating grounds, at the very door of the Railway. Little tumuli of oyster shells in the
 33 oyster season, and of lobster shells in the lobster season, and of broken crockery and faded
 34 cabbage leaves in all seasons, encroached upon its high places. Posts, and rails, and old cautions
 35 to trespassers, and backs of mean houses, and patches of wretched vegetation, stared it out of
 36 countenance. Nothing was the better for it, or thought of being so. If the miserable waste ground
 37 lying near it could have laughed, it would have laughed it to scorn, like many of the miserable
 38 neighbours.

39 Staggs's Gardens was uncommonly incredulous. It was a little row of houses, with little
 40 squalid patches of ground before them, fenced off with old doors, barrel staves, scraps of
 41 tarpaulin, and dead bushes; with bottomless tin kettles and exhausted iron fenders, thrust into
 42 the gaps. Here, the Staggs's Gardeners trained scarlet beans, kept fowls and rabbits, erected
 43 rotten summer-houses (one was an old boat), dried clothes, and smoked pipes. Some were of
 44 opinion that Staggs's Gardens derived its name from a deceased capitalist, one Mr Staggs, who
 45 had built it for his delectation. Others, who had a natural taste for the country, held that it dated
 46 from those rural times when the antlered herd, under the familiar denomination of Staggses,
 47 had resorted to its shady precincts. Be this as it may, Staggs's Gardens was regarded by its
 48 population as a sacred grove not to be withered by Railroads; and so confident were they
 49 generally of its long outliving any such ridiculous inventions, that the master chimney-sweeper
 50 at the corner, who was understood to take the lead in the local politics of the Gardens, had
 51 publicly declared that on the occasion of the Railroad opening, if ever it did open, two of his
 52 boys should ascend the flues of his dwelling, with instructions to hail the failure with derisive
 53 cheers from the chimney-pots.

54 To this unhallowed spot, the very name of which had hitherto been carefully concealed
 55 from Mr Dombey by his sister, was little Paul now borne by Fate and Richards.

SECTION ONE (Spend about 30 minutes on this section)

1. What is the 'earthquake' referred to in line 1? Tick **one** box. (1)
- A A general sense of confusion.
- B A natural disaster where vibrations of the earth cause damage.
- C The construction of a new railway line.
2. Which features are mentioned in lines 5 to 18? Tick **three** boxes. (3)
- A Streets that nobody could walk down.
- B Chimneys which should have been half as high as they were.
- C Dead, old cattle.
- D Explosions of flame.
- E Jumbled-up pieces of abandoned metal.

3. Based on lines 19-21, which of the following statements are true? Tick **two** boxes. (2)

A Passenger trains run smoothly through the chaos.

B The author is sceptical about railway construction and writes with irony.

C The author believes that railways make most things better.

D The mess created by the railway isn't too serious.

E The railway is a powerful force for change.

4. 'The neighbourhood was shy to own the railroad' (line 22).

What does this mean? Tick **one** box. (1)

A Local residents found it embarrassing that they were rich enough to afford a railway for themselves.

B Local residents were slow to take the railway seriously.

C Local residents were too shy to tell people that the railway existed.

5. (a) Write down an example of alliteration from line 20. Quote **exactly two** words. (1)

.....

(b) Explain why this particular alliteration is effective. (2)

.....

.....

.....

6. Which of the following statements about Staggs's Gardens are **not** supported by the information in lines 39-53? Tick **three** boxes. (3)

- A Staggs's Gardens looked unlike almost any other street.
- B The front gardens of the houses were square.
- C The gardens were fenced off with whatever objects the owners could find.
- D Some people believed that Staggs's Gardens had been built for the enjoyment of a wealthy man, now dead, and that it had taken his name.
- E In the opinion of some people, Staggs's Gardens was named after the deer which had once sheltered on the spot.
- F The residents believed that they would live longer than the railway.

7. Re-read the following sentence from lines 34-36:

'Posts, and rails, and old cautions to trespassers, and backs of mean houses, and patches of wretched vegetation, stared it out of countenance.'

Which of the following statements about the sentence are **correct**? Tick **three** boxes. (3)

- A 'Cautions' is a verb.
- B The sentence contains nine nouns.
- C The sentence contains three adjectives.
- D The sentence is a simile.
- E The sentence contains one verb.
- F The first eight words in the sentence are monosyllabic.

8. Which of the following best describe the reaction of the residents to the railway in lines 39-53? Tick **three** boxes. (3)

- | | | |
|----------|---------------|--------------------------|
| A | Disbelief | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C | Frustration | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D | Creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E | Understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F | Scorn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G | Mastery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| H | Ridicule | <input type="checkbox"/> |

9. Select the word **from the passage** which most closely matches each word or phrase in the left-hand column. Pay attention to the right-hand column, which tells you where you **must** find each correct word. (12)

		Word from passage	Look in lines
A	ripped	.....	1-3
B	streets	.....	7-11
C	three-footed stands	.....	7-14
D	towering	.....	12-14
E	decayed	.....	15-18
F	from where	.....	15-18
G	terrible	.....	19-21
H	planned	.....	22-24
I	careless	.....	24-26
J	scruffy	.....	30-34
K	piles	.....	32-34
L	trespassed	.....	32-34

10. Using your own words as far as possible, explain what the ‘chimney-sweeper’ had ‘publicly declared’. Write in complete sentences. (4)

.....

.....

.....

11. Which of the sentences below are grammatically correct? Tick **five** boxes. (5)

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A | I live next to Bens house. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | Its tail needed grooming. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C | Who’s going to tick this box? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D | It’s tail needed grooming. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E | I live a long way from Bens’ house. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F | Please tidy your room. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G | You think you’re funny, don’t you? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| H | They eat they’re breakfast. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I | Whose going to the shops after dinner? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| J | They’re going over there to their car. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

[SECTION TOTAL: 40 MARKS]

SECTION THREE: CONTINUOUS WRITING (Spend about 20 minutes on this section)

1. Write five or six sentences describing the room you are sitting in. Make your writing as vivid and interesting as possible.

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2. Write clear instructions for changing a lightbulb. Make your writing as precise as possible. Use five or six sentences.

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[SECTION TOTAL: 15 MARKS]

Solutions

SECTION ONE

Before I go through each question, it might be useful to set out some ‘ground rules’ for multiple choice. Almost everybody tries to get away with ignoring some of them, before learning their lesson the hard way.

RULE 1 Read the passage thoroughly before answering any questions.

As you will see from **Question 1** below, where option **B** might seem tempting if you haven’t read the rest of the text, it is easy to make mistakes if you don’t understand each question in the context of the whole passage.

RULE 2 Re-read the relevant part of the passage before answering each question.

Never rely on memory. Some multiple-choice answers will look right based on an overall understanding of the text, but are clearly wrong when you re-read the relevant sentence or paragraph in detail.

RULE 3 Always cross out answers which are clearly wrong, before deciding which one is best.

Otherwise, you keep re-reading solutions which you already know cannot be right. This stops you weighing up the more likely answers properly, and also wastes time.

RULE 4 Always tick next to the answer boxes until you have decided on your final answer – and then tick inside.

This is a simple way to avoid making decisions that you will later come to regret! Don’t forget to tick inside the boxes in the end, though.

A Note on Marking

For multiple-choice questions, award one mark per correct box ticked. **If the student ticks more than the correct number of boxes, they lose ALL the marks for that question.**

1.	What is the ‘earthquake’ referred to in line 1? Tick one box.	(1)
A	A general sense of confusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	A natural disaster where vibrations of the earth cause damage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	The construction of a new railway line.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

From reading the rest of the passage, you may have realised that this is not to do with a *literal* earthquake: **B** can be eliminated.

This section does describe *the construction of a new railway line* (**A**). However, it also presents a great deal of *confusion* (**C**). Both these answers may seem possible.

Nonetheless, paragraph 1 focuses on the physical effects of the ‘earthquake’, which leaves ‘traces ... on every side’.

Of course, the correct answer is the railway: **C**.

2.	Which features are mentioned in lines 5 to 18? Tick three boxes.	(3)
A	Streets that nobody could walk down.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B	Chimneys which should have been half as high as they were.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Dead, old cattle.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Explosions of flame.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
E	Jumbled-up pieces of abandoned metal.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A: ‘Thoroughfares that were wholly impassable’ (line 8).

B: ‘Chimneys, wanting half their height’ (lines 8-9) means that they are *missing* (‘wanting’) half of their height – in other words, the opposite of **B**. If you didn’t know what ‘wanting’ meant here, you could have considered that this section is all about damaged and destroyed things: not things which are larger than they should be!

C: You might be confused by the word ‘carcasses’ (line 9), but ‘tenements’ are a type of building: a fact which you might be able to guess from the rest of the sentence, which is all about *man-made structures* which have been ruined. The word ‘carcasses’ here is a **metaphor**: *a word used as part of a description, meaning something which is not literally true*.

D: ‘Fiery eruptions’ (line 14).

E: ‘Confused treasures of iron’ (line 6).

3. Based on lines 19-21, which of the following statements are true? Tick **two** boxes. (2)
- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A | Passenger trains run smoothly through the chaos. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | The author is sceptical about railway construction and writes with irony. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| C | The author believes that railways make most things better. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D | The mess created by the railway isn't too serious. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E | The railway is a powerful force for change. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

This is a tricky question, because many (if not all) of the options are quite tempting. It is a good example of why you should always start by **eliminating**: looking for reasons why answers **cannot be correct**.

A cannot be correct, despite the word 'smoothly' in line 20, because the railway is 'unfinished and unopened' (line 19). **D** is obviously untrue, because line 20 refers to 'dire disorder'.

Crossing out **A** and **D**, we're left with three options. two of which we must tick:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A | Passenger trains run smoothly through the chaos. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | The author is sceptical about railway construction and writes with irony. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C | The author believes that railways make most things better. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D | The mess created by the railway isn't too serious. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E | The railway is a powerful force for change. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

When Dickens describes the railway's 'mighty course', he is obviously telling the truth about how powerfully it changes the things around it – at least by destroying them! Therefore, **E** is clearly correct.

We are left with a choice between **B** and **C** for our second tick:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| B | The author is sceptical about railway construction and writes with irony. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C | The author believes that railways make most things better. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Either of these statements *could* be true, based only on lines 19-21. However, it would seem strange to say that railways *make most things better* while talking about the 'dire disorder' (line 20) they create. Furthermore, a glance at the previous paragraph reminds us that this 'dire disorder' is in fact a key theme of the passage, which describes the chaos and destruction created by the railway.

In the light of this, it is evident that when the author writes about the railway's 'course of civilisation and improvement', he is being **ironic** (using **irony**): saying something untrue, to make the reader think the opposite. At least from the point of view of the local residents, the new railway is a destructive force which throws their lives into turmoil.

Therefore, **B** is true.

-
- 4.** ‘The neighbourhood was shy to own the railroad’ (line 22).
 What does this mean? Tick **one** box. (1)
- A** Local residents found it embarrassing that they were rich enough to afford a railway for themselves.
- B** Local residents were slow to take the railway seriously.
- C** Local residents were too shy to tell people that the railway existed.

A cannot be true, because it is clear from the passage (especially line 39 onwards) that the local residents are not rich. C doesn’t seem relevant, because there is nothing in the passage about discussing (or choosing not to discuss) the railway with outsiders.

On the other hand, **B** makes sense: most people don’t *take the railway seriously*, and remain ‘incredulous’ (line 39). Even those people who had start to build some new houses because of the railway (line 23) give up before finishing.

-
- 5.** (a) Write down an example of alliteration from line 20. Quote **exactly two** words. (1)
‘dire disorder’

Alliteration means **repeated consonant sounds** in words which are next to each other or closely connected.

‘Course of civilisation’ looks like alliteration, but it isn’t: one of the ‘c’ consonants is hard, like a ‘k’, and the other is soft, like an ‘s’.

‘Core’ and ‘course’ are probably too far apart to count as an example of alliteration; likewise with ‘smoothly’ and ‘civilisation’. It is possible that these answers would still get the mark in an exam of this sort (because the sounds do alliterate), but it is unlikely.

On the other hand, ‘dire disorder’ is clearly a correct answer.

- (b) Explain why this particular alliteration is effective. (2)
- The hard consonants of ‘dire disorder’ are violent, as though the railway has punched a hole through the neighbourhood.*

This answer follows the simplest technique for explaining a sound effect (such as alliteration) in a comprehension test:

- **What emotion is suggested by the sound?** *It sounds violent.*
- **What literal/physical idea is suggested by the sound?** *It sounds like a hole being bashed through something.*

If you memorise this method, it is likely to win you an extra mark or two in a written comprehension exam.

This answer is also worth two marks:

The hard consonants of 'dire disorder' are rough, contrasting with the calmness of 'trailed smoothly away'.

I like this answer less than the last one, because I want to know *why* there is this contrast: what does it have to do with the things being described?

Nonetheless, the second example makes two relevant points (it is 'rough', and it 'contrasts' with another phrase), and therefore gets the marks.

As a final point: **make sure that everything you write is to do with the alliteration itself** – in other words, the sound of the words and how this relates to their meaning and the atmosphere of the passage. For instance, it wouldn't be great to say that 'dire gives a sense of how badly the railway affects the inhabitants', because here you are talking about the words' meaning rather than their sound.

6. Which of the following statements about Staggs's Gardens are **not** supported by the information in lines 39-53? Tick **three** boxes. (3)
- A Staggs's Gardens looked unlike almost any other street.
- B The front gardens of the houses were square.
- C The gardens were fenced off with whatever objects the owners could find.
- D Some people believed that Staggs's Gardens had been built for the enjoyment of a wealthy man, now dead, and that it had taken his name.
- E In the opinion of some people, Staggs's Gardens was named after the deer which had once sheltered on the spot.
- F The residents believed that they would live longer than the railway.

There are some tricky things here.

The first thing is to read the question very carefully! You are looking for things which are **not** true – or at least, not supported by the evidence. By now you will be used to looking for answers to eliminate/cross out: for one thing, it is usually easier to show that something isn't true than that it is. This question is just an extension of that.

A: Don't be tricked by the word 'uncommonly' in line 39, which refers to how people *behave* in Staggs's Gardens – not how the street *looks*. There is no evidence in this passage that the street looks *unlike almost any other street*: we aren't told this, and we aren't given information about other streets which might allow us to draw our own conclusions.

B: 'Squalid' (line 40) means 'messy' or 'dirty' ... not 'square'.

F: Line 49 says that the residents were confident that *Staggs's Gardens* would outlive 'any such ridiculous inventions': the street, not the residents!

Of course, if you weren't sure about some of these (**B**, for instance, requires you to know a difficult word), you could have worked backwards by crossing out the true answers: **C**, **D** and **E**.

7. Re-read the following sentence from lines 34-36:

'Posts, and rails, and old cautions to trespassers, and backs of mean houses, and patches of wretched vegetation, stared it out of countenance.'

Which of the following statements about the sentence are **correct**? Tick **three** boxes.

(3)

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A | 'Cautions' is a verb. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | The sentence contains nine nouns. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| C | The sentence contains three adjectives. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| D | The sentence is a simile. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E | The sentence contains one verb. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| F | The first eight words in the sentence are monosyllabic. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

A: 'Cautions' **can be** a **verb** (an action word): for example, 'the policeman cautions the driver'. Here, however, it is a **noun**. The 'cautions to trespassers' are notices, warning what will happen to people who walk on private land.

B: The **nouns** (words which describe a thing, even if the thing is **abstract**, such as 'anger') are 'posts', 'rails', 'cautions', 'trespassers', 'backs', 'houses', 'patches', 'vegetation' and 'countenance'. 'Countenance' may not be obvious, but 'out of' will always come before a noun ('she walked out of the house'; 'I ignored you out of jealousy').

C: The **adjectives** (words which describe a noun) are 'old', 'mean' and 'wretched'.

D: A **simile** compares a thing to something it isn't (usually using the word 'like'), so that you can imagine it better: for example, 'Stephanie stamped like an elephant'. (The sentence in the question is an example of **personification**, because various objects are said to 'stare' like people.)

E: 'Stared' is a **verb**.

F: '**Monosyllabic**' means *only containing one syllable*. '*Mono-*' means 'one': perhaps you have come across words such as 'monotonous', 'monorail' and 'monologue' (and maybe even 'monopoly!'). 'Cautions' has two syllables and 'trespassers' has three.

8. Which of the following words best describe the reaction of the residents to the railway in lines 39-53? Tick **three** boxes. (3)

A	Disbelief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B	Anger	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Frustration	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	Scorn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
G	Mastery	<input type="checkbox"/>
H	Ridicule	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A: ‘Incredulous’ (line 39) means ‘unbelieving’. The residents of Staggs’s Gardens don’t believe that the railway will ever open.

D: The residents are creative, for example in how they fence their gardens, but this is not a reaction to the railway.

E: Although the word ‘understood’ appears in line 50, it is not a reaction to the railway. It refers to residents’ understanding of the ‘master chimney-sweeper’s’ role.

F/H: There’s lots of evidence for reactions which overlap scorn and ridicule. For example, the railway is a ‘ridiculous invention’, and the chimney sweep will send his boys to mock it with ‘derisive cheers’.

G: The chimney sweep is a ‘master’, but the railway is irrelevant to this.

9. Select the word **from the passage** which most closely matches each word or phrase in the left-hand column. Pay attention to the right-hand column, which tells you where you **must** find each correct word. (12)

		Word from passage	Look in lines
A	ripped	<i>rent</i>	1-3
B	streets	<i>thoroughfares</i>	7-11
C	three-footed stands	<i>tripods</i>	7-14
D	towering	<i>aspiring</i>	12-14
E	decayed	<i>dilapidated</i>	15-18
F	from where	<i>whence</i>	15-18
G	terrible	<i>dire</i>	19-21
H	planned	<i>projected</i>	22-24
I	careless	<i>rash</i>	24-26
J	scruffy	<i>frowzy</i>	30-34
K	piles	<i>tumuli</i>	32-34
L	trespassed	<i>encroached</i>	32-34

If you're not sure what some words mean, **it still pays to have a guess.**

For example, you might not have known that 'rent' means *ripped*. However, 'rent' (used as a verb) is likely to be the only unfamiliar word in lines 1-3, in which case it is your only option.

Also, be alert to words which you do know, but which might also mean something else. 'Aspiring' (line 13) might be an example of this.

10. Using your own words as far as possible, explain what the 'chimney-sweeper' had 'publicly declared'. Write in complete sentences. (4)

When the railway first started running, if that ever happened, he would send two children to climb to the top of his house and loudly mock the passing trains.

One mark is for **using complete sentences** or a complete sentence. Other English mistakes can be forgiven so long as they aren't extreme.

The other three marks are for saying that:

- The chimney sweep will send children climbing to the roof of his house / up the chimney;
- they will mock the trains/railway;
- this will happen when the railway opens/first runs.

If parts of the answer substantially **re-use non-essential words from the passage**, the answer should lose marks. How many marks would depend on how much of the answer is affected.

11.	Which of the sentences below are grammatically correct? Tick five boxes.	(5)
A	I live next to Bens house.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Its tail needed grooming.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C	Who's going to tick this box?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D	It's tail needed grooming.	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	I live a long way from Bens' house.	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	Please tidy your room.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
G	You think you're funny, don't you?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
H	They eat they're breakfast.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I	Whose going to the shops after dinner?	<input type="checkbox"/>
J	They're going over there to their car.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A, E: The **apostrophe of possession** goes **immediately after the person/thing which is the owner** in the phrase. For instance, if Ben possesses a house, the apostrophe goes after the 'n' of 'Ben': it is *Ben's house*. If two Bens possess a house together, the apostrophe goes after the 's' of 'Bens': it is *the Bens' house*. Both **A** and **E** are incorrect.

B, D, F, H, J: **Possessive pronouns do not take apostrophes** (except for *one's*). For example, we write *my* or *mine*; not *my's*. For the same reason, 'belonging to them' is written *their* (no apostrophe), we write *whose* without an apostrophe, and 'belonging to it' is written *its* ...

C, G, I, J: ... But if we are shorten 'who is', 'it is', 'you are' or 'they are', we use *who's*, *it's*, *you're* and *they're* (**apostrophes of contraction**).

SECTION TWO: APPLIED REASONING

1.	BROADD	EMKMENT	_B_ _A_ _N_	(1)
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For one thing, a word ending ‘dd’ is not normal in English, so it is likely that the missing letters go in between. Similarly, ‘mk’ is not a normal letter combination, so it’s likely that the letters are missing between these consonants.

Either way, we are led to the word ‘ban’: BROADBAND, EMBANKMENT.

2.	FRILY	BING	_E_ _N_ _D_	(1)
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‘Frily’ could be broken in a number of places. ‘Bing’, on the other hand, ends with an ‘ing’, which means that the missing word is likely to be before or after the ‘b’ (although there are a few other possibilities such as ‘BINDING’). Words such as BOILING and BENDING come to mind – and of course, END also works in FRIENDLY.

3.	LARD	ATE	_R_	(1)
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The only letter which can be taken from ‘lard’, leaving a real word, is ‘r’ (LAD). Therefore, ‘R’ must be the answer.

Of course, it is important to check; and ‘r’ joins ‘ate’ to make RATE.

4.	TABLET	ANGLE	_T_	(1)
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As with **Question 3**, the only letter which can leave the first word is the final ‘t’, and this joins the second word to make ‘TANGLE’.

5 Read the following information carefully:

Charlie is one of my friends. One of my friends likes to drink tea.

Based **only** on this information, which one of the following statements is definitely true? Tick **one** box. (1)

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A | Charlie likes to drink tea. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | Charlie is a boy. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C | I know somebody who likes to drink tea. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| D | I do not have two friends who like to drink tea. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The information looks like a **syllogism** (*Roger is a lion. All lions eat meat. Therefore, Roger eats meat.*).

However, this similarity is misleading, because the ‘one of my friends’ in the first sentence is not necessarily the same as the ‘one of my friends’ in the second sentence: they may well be different people.

In fact, there is **very little connection between the sentences**, which do not form a real syllogism. Therefore, **A** is not supported by the information.

B is just a guess. Some girls called Charlotte also shorten their name to ‘Charlie’.

D is unsupported by the information: it says that ‘one of’ my friends likes tea, but **not** that only one likes it.

C, however, is fully supported by the second sentence, because *one of my friends* is by definition *somebody I know*. Charlie, sadly, is irrelevant here!

SECTION THREE: CONTINUOUS WRITING

1. Write five or six sentences describing the room you are sitting in. Make your writing as vivid and interesting as possible.

A light aroma of last night's supper floats in the air and blends with the morning smell of coffee. I feel the rucks and bulges of the tablecloth around my elbows. The dishwasher flickers mockingly, reminding me of the full load I've yet to deal with. A dirty plate hovers in jaunty equilibrium at the top of its pile, clacking quietly to itself when the door closes. Despite all this squalor, the morning sun is reaching over the hilltop and down through my window: it tells me to feel at home.

In a real exam, you would answer this question by describing the examination room. However, I think it's more useful to practise describing the room you are actually sitting in than imagining a different one. For me, as you can see, it's the kitchen.

It's difficult to be certain what is intended by the instruction to write 'five or six sentences'. Will you be penalised if you write three or four longer sentences?

In my view, this is unlikely, so long as the sentences are correct and the length is appropriate to what you are describing. However, **it is always safest to do exactly what the question asks**. For this reason, my example uses five sentences. Besides, using more, shorter sentences often leads to clearer and more effective writing than using fewer, longer ones.

The most important thing I've tried to do here is **use a wide range of senses**. This is my number one piece of advice for any descriptive writing, and especially for a short piece like this: it almost guarantees that you will write creatively. In the example I refer to smell, touch, sight and sound. Only taste is missing.

I use **varied vocabulary**. Some examples include 'aroma', 'rucks and bulges', 'jaunty equilibrium' and 'clacking'. Try to find room for at least three interesting, imaginative words in your answer.

I use a lot of **personification**, to create a sense that the world around me is full of energy: the plate is 'jaunty', the dishwasher is 'mocking', and the morning sun 'is reaching over the hilltop'.

Some other techniques here include **alliteration** ('fish floats') and **onomatopoeia** ('clacking').

Finally, notice that I've included **a tiny hint of narrative**: the description begins with a sense of frustration at the dirt and the jobs still to do, but ends with optimism and a feeling of belonging.

The two creative pieces are marked together in CSSE exams, so see below for advice about this.

2. Write clear instructions for changing a lightbulb. Make your writing as precise as possible. Use five or six sentences.

Position a step ladder directly below the light fitting. Have the replacement bulb ready, within easy reach. Before you do anything else, turn off the electricity for the apartment or building: DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP. Next, standing securely on the ladder, unscrew the old bulb by twisting it anticlockwise, and place it somewhere where it will not roll onto the floor. Screw in the replacement bulb until it is firmly secured, but not jammed into place. Now you can turn the electricity back on.

The emphasis here is on **writing clearly**, showing that you can create a set of instructions where **each task leads naturally to the next one**: a guide which you could really follow.

Notice the word ‘precise’ in the instructions. The examiner wants to see that you have found **the right word for each job**. For instance, you twist the bulb ‘anticlockwise’ – not from right to left, for example (this would be confusing, because the bottom of an object moves from left to right when you turn it anticlockwise). Similarly, notice the careful description of how tightly to leave the bulb.

Keep moving through the instructions: you don’t have much space to work with. However, **attention to detail** (such as having the replacement bulb ready) will please the examiner.

This is the sort of question where anything which gets in the way of clarity will lose marks, but it is also quite an easy task to do well. If you don’t know exactly how to change a lightbulb, just explain the procedure clearly, as you imagine it in your own mind. The exam is testing your skill with English, not DIY!

See Next Page for Section Three marking guidance

How to Mark Section Three

I need to be a little cautious here, because I do not have access to an official CSSE mark scheme for this section. However, CSSE do say this:

This will be marked as one piece of work and the candidate will be assessed on accuracy, spelling, punctuation, the quality of writing and originality.

Based on this information, my suggested mark scheme follows.

Once you have decided on a level, move to the top of that level if it contains hints of the level above (or, for Level 1, if it displays all the level characteristics convincingly). Move to the bottom of the level if it contains hints of the level below.

This mark scheme is not rigid. For instance, if a poor answer is nevertheless written in perfect English, you may choose to award it a few more marks than the table suggests.

Level 1 14-15 marks	The writing is appropriate to the task, and does not seem in any significant way childish. There is evidence of a rich vocabulary, and language is used imaginatively (Question 1) and precisely (Question 2). Techniques are used to create depth of description and to add clarity, as appropriate. It is possible to imagine the scene vividly in Question 1 and one could follow the instructions easily in Question 2. If the student has made mistakes in Question 2 simply through not having some appropriate factual knowledge of how to change a lightbulb, do not penalise this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are few mistakes in the English, and these can mostly be explained by the writer's ambition. For example, some adventurous words contain spelling mistakes or a sophisticated sentence has an incorrect comma.
Level 2 10-13 marks	There are many elements of Level 1, but these are inconsistently demonstrated: either within each answer, or between the two (one of the answers is noticeably worse than the other).
Level 3 7-9 marks	There are some good moments, but the work could be described as childish. The writer has still made a reasonable effort to answer the questions appropriately, but it has only been partially successful. Vocabulary is limited or inappropriate. The answer to Question 1 isn't very descriptive, and the answer to Question 2 would be hard to follow as a set of instructions for the given task. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this level, there are likely to be a significant number of mistakes, and punctuation will probably be inconsistent.
Level 4 4-6 marks	This is a very poor answer, but some marks are given for occasional successful elements.
Level 5 1-3 marks	Some work has been attempted, but there is almost nothing to be said for it.
Level 6 0 marks	The task has not been attempted, or the answers bear no relation whatsoever to the questions, or they have been written entirely in a language other than English.

END
