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Dulwich College

YEAR 9 ENTRANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP
EXAMINATION

SAMPLE PAPER

English

1 HOUR 15 MINUTES

Candidates should answer ALL questions. Start each question on a new sheet of paper.

SECTION ONE

This section consists of a comprehension passage. Answer in your own words as far as possible. Begin your answers to Section Two on a new piece of paper.

In this passage from his autobiography, Oskar Kokoschka describes his feelings as he is shot by Russian soldiers in the First World War.

With Austrian Cavalry on the Eastern Front, August 1915

There was something stirring at the edge of the forest. Dismount! Lead horses! Our line was joined by volunteers, and **we beat forward into the bushes as if we were going to shoot pheasant**. The enemy was withdrawing deeper into the forest, firing sporadically. So we had to mount again, which was always the worst part, for since **conscription** had been introduced the **requisitioned** horses were as gun-shy as the reservists who had been called up were wretched horsemen. After all, most of them were used to sitting only on an office chair. In the forest suddenly we were met by a hail of bullets so near and so thick that one seemed to see each bullet flitting past; it was like a startled swarm of wasps. Charge! Now the great day had come, the day for which I too had been longing. I still had enough presence of mind to urge my mount forward and to one side, out of the throng of other horses that had now gone wild, as if chased by ghosts, the congestion being made worse by more coming up from the rear and galloping over fallen men and beasts. I wanted to settle this thing on my own and to look the enemy straight in the face. A hero's death – fair enough! But I had no wish to be trampled to death like a worm. The Russians had lured us into a trap. I had actually set eyes on the Russian machine-gun before I felt a dull blow on my head.

The sun and the moon were both shining at once and my head ached like mad. What on earth was I to do with this scent of flowers? Some flower – I couldn't remember its name however I racked my brains. And all that yelling round me and the moaning of the wounded, which seemed to fill the whole forest – that must have been what brought me round. Good lord, they must be in agony! Then I became absorbed by the fact that I couldn't control the cavalry boot with the leg in it, which was moving about too far away, although it belonged to me. I recognized the boot by the spur. Over on the grass there were two captains in Russian uniform dancing a ballet, running up and kissing each other on the cheeks like two young girls. That would have been against regulations in our army. I had a tiny round hole in my head. My horse, lying on top of me, had lashed out one last time before dying, and that had brought me to my senses. I tried to say something, but my mouth was stiff with blood, which was beginning to congeal. The shadows all round me were growing huger and huger and I wanted to ask how it was that the sun and the moon were both shining at the same time. I wanted to point at the sky, but my arm wouldn't move. Perhaps I lay there unconscious for several days.

NOTES

we beat forward into the bushes as if we were going to shoot pheasant: on a pheasant shoot, beaters go before the hunting party, beating the bushes with sticks in order to make the pheasant fly up so they can be shot

conscription: compulsory military service (as opposed to volunteers and professional soldiers)

requisitioned: taken for use by the army

1. 'We beat forward into the bushes as if we were going to shoot pheasant' (lines 2-3). Why does this suggest that the author thinks that this engagement with the enemy will be enjoyable and not particularly dangerous? (2 marks)
2. Explain the meaning of 'sporadically' (line 4). (2 marks)
3. How do the Russians lure the Austrians into a trap? (2 marks)
4. Give two reasons why the author regards mounting the horses as 'the worst part' of the operation (lines 5-7). (2 marks)
5. Explain why the reservists were poor horsemen (lines 7-8). (2 marks)
6. What is compared to a startled swarm of wasps? (line 9) (2 marks)
7. The cavalry charge becomes confused and congested. Explain why. (2 marks)
8. Why does the author regain consciousness? (2 marks)
9. Why do you think the Russian officers are dancing? (lines 25-26) (2 marks)
10. Re-read the final paragraph. How does the author show that his head wound has left him dazed and confused? (7 marks)

BEGIN A NEW PIECE OF PAPER FOR SECTION TWO

SECTION TWO

Choose ONE of the following titles and write as interestingly as you can on any idea stimulated by it. Pay careful attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar.

1. The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there.
2. Ash on an old man's sleeve.
3. The Prince of Darkness is a Gentleman.
4. I prefer Winter to Spring.
5. I should only have to do the subjects I like at school.
6. The door and what is behind it.

25 marks