

Answer ALL Questions

SECTION A: Reading

You should spend about 40 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions which follow.

Christy Brown was born with cerebral palsy and was severely disabled. Here he describes the first time he was able to communicate with his family.

My Left Foot

I was now five, and still I showed no real sign of intelligence. I showed no apparent interest in things except with my toes – especially those of my left foot. I used to lie on my back all the time in the kitchen or, on bright warm days, out in the garden, surrounded by a family that loved me and hoped for me and that made me part of their own warmth and humanity. I was lonely, imprisoned in a world of my own, unable to communicate with others, cut off, separated from them as though a glass wall stood between my existence and theirs. I longed to run about and play with the rest, but I was unable to break loose from my bondage.

Then, suddenly, it happened! In a moment everything was changed, my future life moulded into a definite shape, my mother's faith in me rewarded and her secret fear changed into open triumph.

Inside, all the family were gathered round the big kitchen fire that lit up the little room with a warm glow and made giant shadows dance on the walls and ceiling.

In a corner Mona and Paddy were sitting huddled together. They were writing down little sums on to an old chipped slate, using a bright piece of yellow chalk. I was close to them, propped up by a few pillows against the wall, watching.

It was the chalk that attracted me so much. It was a long, slender stick of vivid yellow. I had never seen anything like it before and I was fascinated by it as much as if it had been a stick of gold.

Suddenly I wanted desperately to do what my sister was doing. Then – without thinking or knowing exactly what I was doing, I reached out and took the stick of chalk out of my sister's hand – with my left foot.

I held it tightly between my toes, and, acting on impulse, made a wild sort of scribble with it on the slate. Then I looked up and became aware that everyone had stopped talking and they were staring at me silently. Nobody stirred. Mona stared at me with great big eyes and open mouth. Across the open hearth, his face lit by flames, sat my father, leaning forwards, hands outspread on his knees, his shoulders tense. I felt the sweat break out on my forehead.

My mother came in from the pantry with a steaming pot in her hand. She stopped midway between the table and the fire, feeling the tension flowing through the room. She followed their stare and saw me, in the corner. Her eyes looked from my face down to my foot, with the chalk gripped between my toes. She put down the pot.



Then she crossed over to me and knelt down beside me, as she had done so many times before.

35 “I’ll show you what to do with it, Chris,” she said.

Taking another piece of chalk from Mona, she hesitated, then very deliberately drew, on the floor in front of me, the single letter ‘A’.

“Copy that,” she said, looking steadily at me. “Copy it, Christy.”

40 I tried again. I put out my foot and made a wild jerking stab with the chalk which produced a very crooked line and nothing more. Mother held the slate steady for me.

“Try again, Chris,” she whispered in my ear. “Again.”

I did. I stiffened my body and put my left foot out again, for the third time. I drew one side of the letter. I drew half the other side. Then I felt my mother’s hand on my shoulder. I tried once more. Out went my foot. I shook, I sweated and strained every muscle. My
45 hands were so tightly clenched that my fingernails bit into the flesh. I set my teeth so hard that I nearly pierced my lower lip. But – I drew it – the letter ‘A’. There it was on the floor before me. Shaky, with awkward, wobbly sides and a very uneven centre line. But it was the letter ‘A’. I looked up. I saw my mother’s face for a moment, tears on her cheeks. Then my father stooped down and hoisted me on to his shoulder.

50 I had done it! I had started – the thing that was to give my mind its chance of expressing itself. True, I couldn’t speak with my lips, but now I would speak through something more lasting than spoken words – written words.

That one letter, scrawled on the floor with a broken bit of yellow chalk gripped between my toes, was my road to a new world, my key to mental freedom.



SECTION B: Reading and Writing

You should spend about 40 minutes on this section.

Remind yourself of the passage *Explorers, or boys messing about?*, from the London Examinations Anthology, and then answer questions 4 and 5.

Explorers, or boys messing about? Either way, taxpayer gets rescue bill

Helicopter duo plucked from life-raft after Antarctic crash

Their last expedition ended in farce when the Russians threatened to send in military planes to intercept them as they tried to cross into Siberia via the icebound Bering Strait.

Yesterday a new adventure undertaken by British explorers Steve Brooks and Quentin Smith almost led to tragedy when their helicopter plunged into the sea off Antarctica.

- 5 The men were plucked from the icy waters by a Chilean naval ship after a nine-hour rescue which began when Mr Brooks contacted his wife, Jo Vestey, on his satellite phone asking for assistance. The rescue involved the Royal Navy, the RAF and British Coastguards.

- 10 Last night there was resentment in some quarters that the men's adventure had cost the taxpayers of Britain and Chile tens of thousands of pounds.

Experts questioned the wisdom of taking a small helicopter – the four-seater Robinson R44 has a single engine – into such a hostile environment.

- 15 There was also confusion about what exactly the men were trying to achieve. A website set up to promote the Bering Strait expedition claims the team were trying to fly from North to South Pole in their “trustworthy helicopter”.

But Ms Vestey claimed she did not know what the pair were up to, describing them as “boys messing around with a helicopter”.

- 20 The drama began at around 1am British time when Mr Brooks, 42, and 40-year-old Mr Smith, also known as Q, ditched into the sea 100 miles off Antarctica, about 36 miles off Smith Island, and scrambled into their life-raft.

Mr Brooks called his wife in London on his satellite phone. She said: “He said they were both in the life-raft but were okay and could I call the emergency people.”

Meanwhile, distress signals were being beamed from the ditched helicopter and from Mr Brooks' Breitling emergency watch, a wedding present.

- 25 The signals from the aircraft were deciphered by Falmouth coastguard in England and passed on to the rescue co-ordination centre at RAF Kinloss in Scotland.

The Royal Navy's ice patrol ship, HMS Endurance, which was 180 miles away surveying uncharted waters, began steaming towards the scene and dispatched its two Lynx helicopters.

- 30 One was driven back because of poor visibility but the second was on its way when the men were picked up by a Chilean naval vessel at about 10.20am British time.

Though the pair wore survival suits and the weather at the spot where they ditched was clear, one Antarctic explorer told Mr Brooks' wife it was “nothing short of a miracle” that they had survived.

- 35 Both men are experienced adventurers. Mr Brooks, a property developer from London, has taken part in expeditions to 70 countries in 15 years. He has trekked solo to Everest base camp and walked barefoot for three days in the Himalayas. He has negotiated the white water rapids of the Zambezi river by kayak and survived a charge by a silver back gorilla in the Congo. He is also a qualified mechanical engineer and pilot.

- 40 He and his wife spent their honeymoon flying the helicopter from Alaska to Chile.



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The 16,000-mile trip took three months.

Mr Smith, also from London, claims to have been flying since the age of five. He has twice flown a helicopter around the globe and won the world freestyle helicopter flying championship.

45 Despite their experience, it is not for the first time they have hit the headlines for the wrong reasons.

In April, Mr Brooks and another explorer, Graham Stratford, were poised to become the first to complete a crossing of the 56-mile wide frozen Bering Strait between the US and Russia in an amphibious vehicle, Snowbird VI, which could carve its way through ice
50 floes and float in the water in between.

But they were forced to call a halt after the Russian authorities told them they would scramble military helicopters to lift them off the ice if they crossed the border.

Ironically, one of the aims of the expedition, for which Mr Smith provided air backup, was to demonstrate how good relations between east and west had become.

55 The wisdom of the team's latest adventure was questioned by, among others, Gunter Endres, editor of Jane's Helicopter Markets and Systems, who said: "I'm surprised they used the R44. I wouldn't use a helicopter like that to go so far over the sea. It sounds like they were pushing it to the maximum".

60 A spokesman for the pair said it was not known what had gone wrong. The flying conditions had been "excellent".

The Ministry of Defence said the taxpayer would pick up the bill, as was normal in rescues in the UK and abroad. The spokesperson said it was "highly unlikely" that it would recover any of the money.

65 Last night the men were on their way to the Chilean naval base where HMS Endurance was to pick them up. Ms Vestey said: "They have been checked and appear to be well. I don't know what will happen to them once they have been picked up by HMS Endurance – they'll probably have their bottoms kicked and be sent home the long way".

(Source: Steven Morris, *The Guardian*, 28 January 2003)



