

SECTION A: Reading

You should spend about 40 minutes on this section.

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

Steve Hall is a paramedic, whose job is to be called out to give emergency help to those who are ill or injured. Here we read about a special day for him, which led to an award for bravery.

A day in the life of a brave paramedic



Steve Hall answered a call to help a man having a heart attack. Instead, he ended up rescuing an elderly man from a serious house fire. When the 47-year-old paramedic arrived at the scene, he found an ambulance was already there. At the same time he heard an alarm coming from a house on the opposite side of the road and saw smoke billowing from the windows. Making a quick choice, he ran to the burning house.

“I saw the ambulance crew had arrived just before I did. It was lucky that they had because I heard a smoke alarm and noticed there was smoke coming from the house across the road. When I got inside there was an elderly gentleman stumbling round the living room in the smoke.”

Steve Hall was unable to open the door but forced a window open and helped the man out of the house. The old man was given oxygen and was checked for injuries.

Mr Hall said: “I went back into the house and put the fire out. It was only a pan that was on fire, but it had produced a lot of smoke. If I hadn’t heard that smoke alarm then I don’t know what would have happened.”

Minutes later Mr Hall’s phone rang and he was called to help with a birth in another district. He said: “I was told there was a birth about to happen and drove across town. The other paramedic at the scene was newly qualified and between us we managed to deliver the baby girl. The young mother was very grateful.” According to Steve Hall, some days at work can be really boring but this was not one of them.

A paramedic for 26 years, he works for the West Midlands Ambulance Service. He has been named a semi-finalist in the Vodafone Life Savers Awards for his actions on that day in April. The annual awards pay tribute to the unsung heroes of our emergency services, as well as recognising the bravery of ordinary people who have saved a life in extraordinary circumstances. Mr Hall’s story will go before the judging panel. They will select ten National Life Savers who will meet the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street in November.

Mr Hall, who lives with his wife Vivienne and their two children Thomas, aged 19, and Rebecca, 17, said: “I wouldn’t say it was a typical day because so many things happened in the space of an hour, but none of those things were out of the ordinary for a paramedic.”



“That’s the part of the job I love best – the not knowing, and never knowing what is going to happen next. I’m very flattered. I’m usually quite quiet and just get my head down and get on with the job, so to be nominated for something like this is quite overwhelming.”

Ally Stevens, from Vodaphone, said: “We felt this was a particularly courageous story which highlights the very important work of the people in our emergency services and is typical of their day-to-day dedication and bravery, which we all so often take for granted.”

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**You should refer closely to the passage to support your answers.
You may include brief quotations.**

1. Why did Steve Hall not need to treat the heart attack that he had been called to?

(Total 1 mark)

Q1

2. What **two** things told Steve that there was a fire across the road?

(Total 2 marks)

Q2



SECTION B: Reading and Writing

You should spend about 40 minutes on this section.

Remind yourself of the passage *Taking on the World* from the London Examinations Anthology, and then answer questions 7 and 8.

From *Taking on the World*

Ellen MacArthur became famous in 2001 when she competed in the Vendée Globe solo round-the-world yacht race. She was the youngest (24 years old) and probably the shortest (just 5ft 2in!) competitor. She came second, despite appalling weather, exhaustion and, as she describes here, problems with her boat.

I climbed the mast on Christmas Eve, and though I had time to get ready, it was the hardest climb to date. I had worked through the night preparing for it, making sure I had all the tools, mouse lines and bits I might need, and had agonised for hours over how I should prepare the *halyard*¹ so that it would stream out easily below me and would not get caught as I climbed. 5

When it got light I decided that the time was right. I kitted up in my middle layer clothes as I didn't want to wear so much that I wouldn't be able to move freely up there. The most dangerous thing apart from falling off is to be thrown against the mast, and though I would be wearing a helmet it would not be difficult to break bones up there. 10

I laid out the new halyard on deck, flaking it neatly so there were no twists. As I took the mast in my hands and began to climb I felt almost as if I was stepping out on to the moon – a world over which I had no control. You can't ease the *sheets*² or take a *reef*³, nor can you alter the settings for the autopilot. If something goes wrong you are not there to attend to it. You are a passive observer looking down at your boat some 90 feet below you. After climbing just a couple of metres I realised how hard it was going to be, I couldn't feel my fingers – I'd need gloves, despite the loss of dexterity. I climbed down, getting soaked as we ploughed into a wave – the decks around my feet were awash. I unclipped my *jumar*⁴ from the halyard and put on a pair of sailing gloves. There would be no second climb on this one – I knew that I would not have the energy. 15
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As I climbed my hands were more comfortable, and initially progress was positive. But it got harder and harder as I was not only pulling my own weight up as I climbed but also the increasingly heavy halyard – nearly 200 feet of rope by the time I made it to the top. The physical drain came far less from the climbing than from the clinging on. The hardest thing is just to hang on as the mast slices erratically through the air. There would be the odd massive wave which I could feel us surf down, knowing we would pile into the wave in front. I would wrap my arms around the mast and press my face against its cold and slippery carbon surface, waiting for the shuddering slowdown. Eyes closed and teeth gritted, I hung on tight, wrists clenched together, and hoped. Occasionally on the smaller waves I would be thrown before I could hold on tight, and my body and the tools I carried were thrown away from the mast; I'd be hanging on by just one arm, trying to stop myself from smacking back into the rig. 25
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By the third *spreader*⁵ I was exhausted; the halyard was heavier and the motion more violent. I held on to her spreader base and hung there, holding tight to breathe more deeply and conjure up more energy. But I realised that the halyard was tight and that it had caught on something. I knew that if I went down to free it I would not have the energy to climb up once again. I tugged and tugged on the rope – the frustration was unreal. It had to come, quite simply the rope had to come free. Luckily with all the pulling I managed to create enough slack to make it to the top, but now I was even more exhausted. I squinted at the grey sky above me and watched the mast-head whip across the clouds. The wind whistled past us, made visible by the snow that had begun to fall. Below the sea stretched out for ever, the size and length of the waves emphasised by this new aerial view. This is what it must look like to the albatross.

I rallied once more and left the safety of the final spreader for my last hike to the top. The motion was worse than ever, and as I climbed I thought to myself, not far now, kiddo, come on, just keep moving... As the mast-head came within reach there was a short moment of relief; at least there was no giving up now I had made it – whatever happened now I had the whole mast to climb down. I fumbled at the top of the rig, feeding in the halyard and connecting the other end to the top of *Kingfisher*'s mast. The job only took half an hour – then I began my descent. This was by far the most dangerous part and I had my heart in my mouth – no time for complacency now, I thought, not till you reach the deck, kiddo, it's far from over...

It was almost four hours before I called Mark back and I shook with exhaustion as we spoke. We had been surfing at well over 20 knots while I was up there. My limbs were bruised and my head was spinning, but I felt like a million dollars as I spoke on the phone. Santa had called on *Kingfisher* early and we had the best present ever – a new halyard.

(Source: Ellen MacArthur, *Taking on the World*, Michael Joseph, 2002)

¹*halyard*: a rope used for raising and lowering sails

²*sheet*: a line to control the sails

³*reef*: reduces area of sails

⁴*jumar*: a climbing device that grips the rope so that it can be climbed

⁵*spreader*: a bar attached to a yacht's mast



