

Name: _____

Candidate Number: _____

StudentBounty.com

mgs
Founded 1515

The Manchester
Grammar School

**ENTRANCE EXAMINATION 2009
PART 2 ENGLISH EXAMINATION
COMPREHENSION**

**You have 45 minutes for this section
which is worth a total of 33 marks.**

**Write your name and candidate number
in the spaces provided above.**

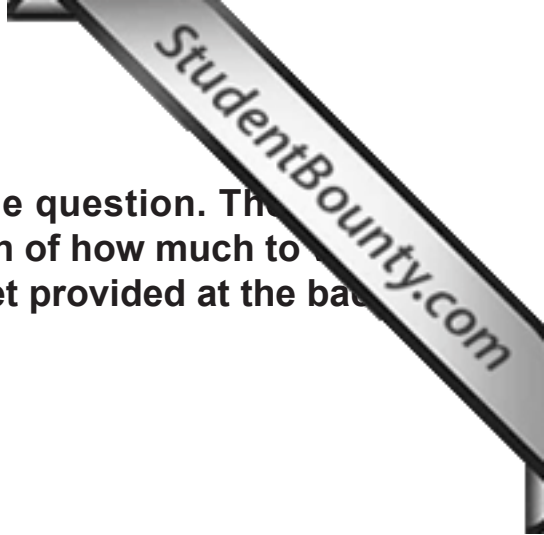
Remove the middle page from the booklet.

**Read through the passage and questions very carefully before
you write anything at all.**

You should spend at least five minutes reading and thinking.

**Write each answer in the space provided after the question.
If you run out of space for an answer, use the space provided
at the back of the booklet.**

Do not open this booklet until you are told to start.



Write each answer in the space provided after the question. The amount of space provided gives you an indication of how much to write. If you run out of space for an answer, use the sheet provided at the back.

1. Uncle Ebenezer uses a lot of chains and bolts to secure his home. What does this suggest about his personality? Give reasons for your answer. [3 marks]

2. The first words that Uncle Ebenezer says to David are: 'It's loaded.' **Using your own words**, explain exactly what this sentence means and go on to explain what threat lies behind these words. [3 marks]

3. When David announces who he is, Uncle Ebenezer glares at him and then speaks curtly to him. What do you imagine David's feelings will be at this stage in the story? You should try to present two possible feelings in your answer, and explain each one carefully. [4 marks]

4. Uncle Ebenezer tells David to go into the kitchen. Why does David have to go a long way forward to get there? [2 marks]

5. The kitchen is 'the barest room' that David thinks he has ever seen. What does this suggest about Uncle Ebenezer's way of life? [2 marks]

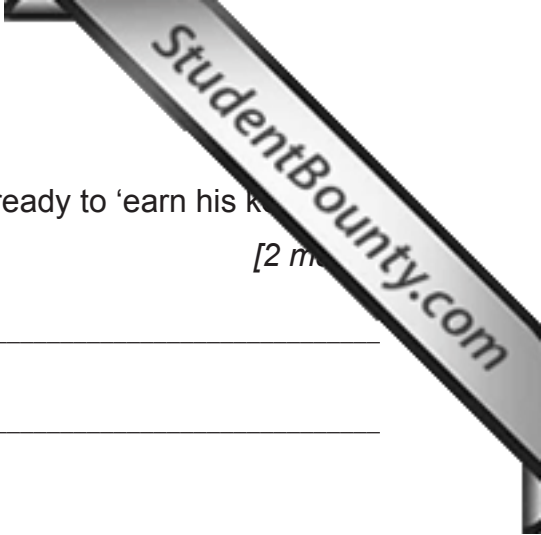
6. David gives us several details about his uncle's appearance when he describes him entering the kitchen. He tells us that Ebenezer is a 'narrow-shouldered, clay-faced creature'. Explain carefully and **in your own words** what 'narrow-shouldered' and 'clay-faced' mean. [3 marks]

7. When Ebenezer enters the kitchen he stares continuously at David but refuses to look him in the eye.

(a) How do you imagine this makes David feel? [2 marks]

(b) Why do you imagine that Ebenezer is looking at him in this strange way?

[2 marks]



8. What does David mean when he tells his uncle that he is ready to 'earn his keep'? Explain carefully and fully **in your own words**.

[2 marks]

9. There are two flashes of lightning in the story.

(a) The first flash of lightning is a hindrance to David. Explain why this is the case.

[1 mark]

(b) The second flash of lightning is a help to David. Explain carefully and fully why this is the case.

[3 marks]

10. Carefully explain what makes David finally realise that Ebenezer has planned to kill him. **Use your own words**.

[2 marks]

11. Readers find the atmosphere of the story exciting. Choose **two** aspects of the passage that you find exciting and briefly explain your choice in each case.

[4 marks]



The Manchester
Grammar School

StudentBounty.com

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION 2009
PART 2 ENGLISH EXAMINATION
COMPREHENSION PASSAGE

Read through the passage very carefully. We recommend that you spend at least five minutes reading and re-reading the following material before you begin to answer the questions.

David Balfour's father has recently died. He has been sent to live with his old uncle Ebenezer, who lives in the old, isolated family home. As David's father had quarrelled with Ebenezer, David has never met his uncle. However, he believes that Uncle Ebenezer is a wealthy man. The story is told by David.

I knocked again at the massive wooden door. Presently there came a great rattling of chains and bolts, and the door was cautiously opened. I beheld an old man wearing a tall nightcap and holding a blunderbuss aimed directly at my head.

"It's loaded," he said.

"I'm David," I cried. "Your nephew!"

My uncle glared at me for several moments. At last he put down the gun. "Go into the kitchen and touch nothing," he said curtly.

While he set himself to replacing the defences of the door, I groped my way forward and entered the kitchen.

The fire had burned up fairly bright, and showed me the barest room I think I had ever seen. A few dishes stood upon the shelves; the table was laid for supper with a bowl of porridge, a spoon, and a mug of small beer. Otherwise, there was nothing in that great, empty chamber except chests arranged along the wall all fastened with great padlocks.

As soon as he had finished chaining up the door, the man rejoined me. He was a mean, stooping, narrow-shouldered, clay-faced creature; and his age might have been anything between fifty and seventy. He was long unshaved; but what most distressed me was the fact he would neither stop staring at me, nor look me in the eye.

If I had been some years younger, I believe I would have burst into tears. Meanwhile, my uncle stood stooping over the fire.

"What brought you here?" he snapped.

"I have nowhere else to go," I replied.

"Ah," said he, frowning, "so you'll be expecting me to look after you?"

I told him I was ready to earn my keep.

For a long time my uncle was silent. Finally, he smiled, but rather cunningly, I thought. He told me I could stay, but that he was growing old and a little broken, and that he would expect me to help him with the house and the bit of garden

I agreed, and expressed my willingness to help.

“Well,” he said, “let’s begin at once.”

I waited, expecting some monstrous demand.

He pulled out of his pocket a rusty key. “There,” said he, “there’s the key of the tower at the far end of the house. You can only get into it from the outside, for that part of the house is derelict. Get yourself in there, and up the stairs, and bring me down the chest that’s at the top. There’s papers in it,” he added.

“Can I have a light, sir?” I asked.

“No,” he said quickly. “There are no candles to spare.”

“Very well, sir,” I said. “Are the stairs good?”

“They’re grand,” said he; and then, as I was going, “Keep close to the wall,” he added; “there are no bannisters. But the stairs are grand underfoot.”

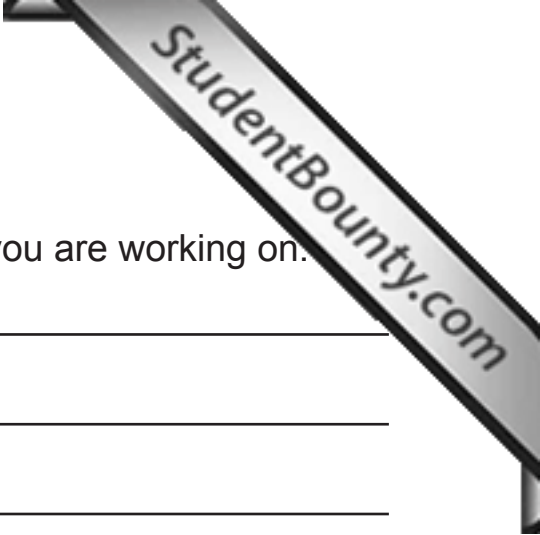
Out I went into the night. The wind was still moaning in the distance. It had become blacker than ever; and I was glad to feel along the wall, till I came to the tower door at the far end of the unfinished wing. I had got the key into the keyhole and had just turned it, when all of a sudden, without sound of wind or thunder, the whole sky lighted up with wild fire and went black again. I had to put my hand over my eyes to get back my night vision; yet I was already half blinded when I stepped into the tower.

It was so dark inside, I could scarcely breathe; but I pushed out with foot and hand, and presently struck the wall with the one, and the lowest step with the other. Remembering my uncle’s word about the bannisters, I kept close to the tower side, and felt my way in the pitch darkness with a beating heart.

The tower stood five full storeys high. As I climbed, it seemed to me the stairs grew airier, and I was wondering what might be the cause of this change, when a second blink of the summer lightning came and went. Fear grabbed me by the throat. The flash shone in on every side through holes in the wall, so I seemed to be clambering up an open scaffold. The same sudden brightness showed me the steps had narrowed greatly, and that one of my feet was at that moment within two inches of the edge and the deadly drop onto the stone floor far below.

A gust of a kind of anger came into my heart. My uncle had sent me here, certainly to run great risks, perhaps to die. I got down upon my hands and knees; and as slowly as a snail, feeling before me every inch, and testing the solidity of every stone, I continued to climb the stairs. The darkness, by contrast with the flash, appeared to have redoubled; nor was that all, for there was now a great stir of bats in the top part of the tower, and the foul beasts, flying downwards, began to beat about my face and body.

Worse was to come. Feeling forward as usual, my hand suddenly slipped over an edge and found nothing but emptiness. Sixty feet of darkness loomed below me. With a terrible shock I realised my uncle had planned to send me straight to my death.



Extra sheet for answers.

Remember to write down the number of the question you are working on.
