



SAMPLE PAPER

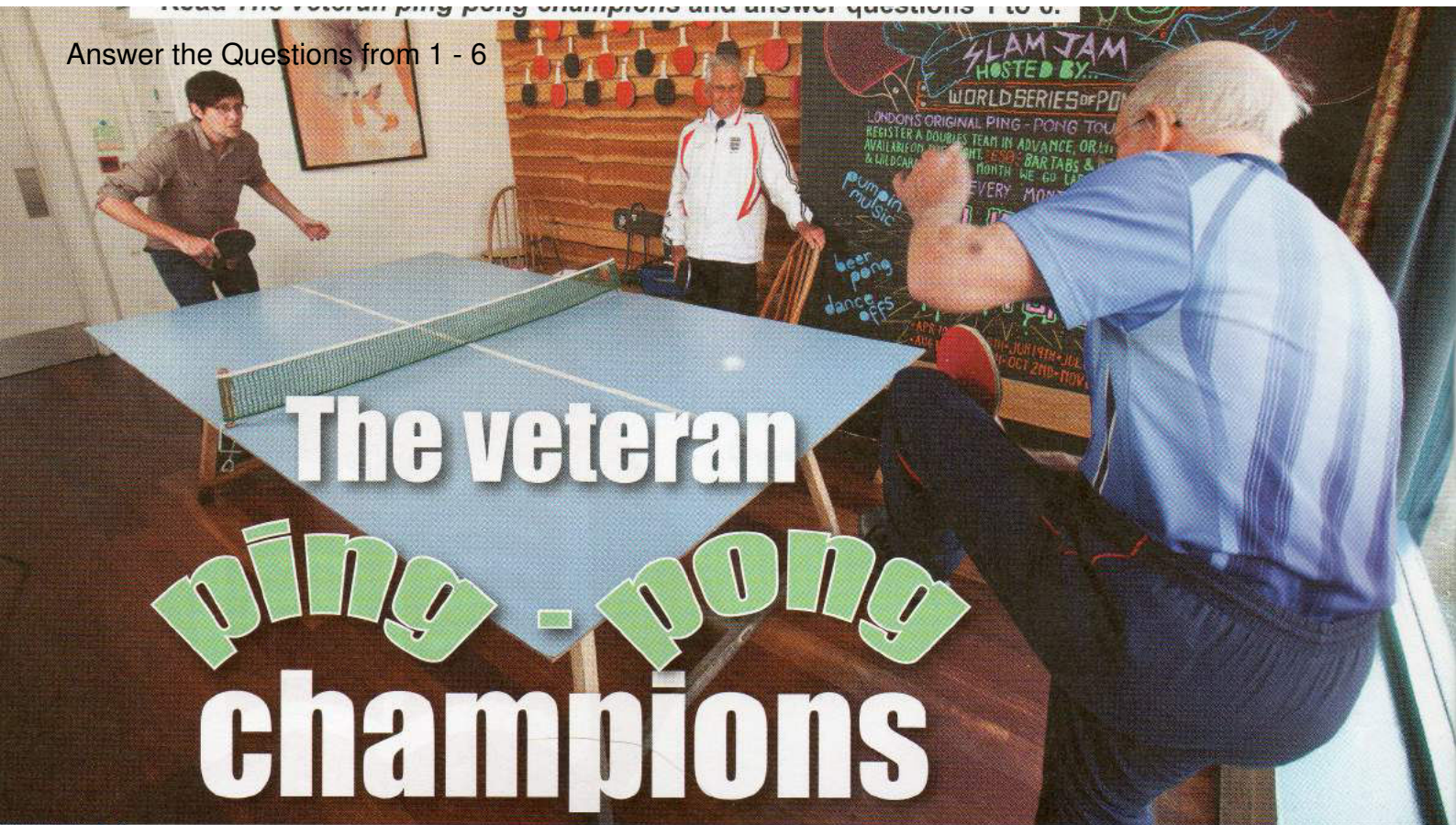
CLASS

08

SCHOOL NAME:	
STUDENT NAME:	
ROLL NO.:	

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please DO NOT OPEN the contest booklet until the Proctor has given permission to start.
2. **TIME ALLOWED: 60 MINUTES**
3. There are 25 **MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS (1-25)**.
4. Each Question carry 04 marks, -1 for wrong answer & 0 for unanswerd question.
5. Mark only one circle for each question.
6. PROCTORING: No one may help any student in any way during the contest.
7. No electronic devices capable of storing and displaying visual information are allowed during the course of the exam.
8. All students must write their Name, School, and Roll Number in the Answer Sheet and Contest booklet.
9. No exam papers and written notes can be taken out by any contestant.
10. Shade your answers neatly & darkly using a Lead pencil in the Answer Sheet.



The veteran ping - pong champions

by Patrick Barkham

Whiff-whaff, wham! The table tennis ball swerves in the air and then rapidly speeds off in the wrong direction when I lunge at it with my bat. Ping-pong, plop. This time, my attempted return skates into the net. I am a reasonably fit 37 year old and I'm sweating. There's not a bead of perspiration on my opponent, Terry Donlon, 83. Donlon had his prostate removed in 1996, his right kidney extracted eight months later and now has terminal bone and lung cancer. His doctors predicted he would be dead by now and he is thrashing me.

'He was being magnanimous there,' nods Les D'Arcy, 91, after Donlon wins our match. D'Arcy then shows me how they would serve in a competitive game. He has chronic pain from his sciatic nerve, desperately needs a knee replacement, and has aggravated his skin cancer by swimming to keep fit, but is competing at the 16th World Veteran Championships in Sweden. D'Arcy has a world title to defend; so does Donlon.

The old friends are two of eight veteran table-tennis players who star in a new documentary,

Ping Pong, which follows the course of the previous world championships, held in China in 2010. *Ping Pong* is being shown at special screenings in care homes around Britain but it's inspirational for people of any age.

Does competitiveness drive them on? D'Arcy recalls the time Donlon was suffering from malaria and swiftly went two games down to a brutally aggressive Yorkshireman (is there any other kind?) before coming back to win the match 3-2. Donlon, said D'Arcy, 'was willing to drop dead to win that match and the other guy was willing to commit murder'.

It may be a cliché but it is striking how positive D'Arcy and Donlon are about their ailments. 'Old age,' muses D'Arcy, 'makes you become a research scientist, looking for the panacea which will enlarge your lifespan. One's always optimistic that you can find the Holy Grail.' He says he will keep playing table tennis, whatever the state of his knee. Perhaps in an admission that he is slowing down, he has also taken up chess—but he plays on a giant board with life-size figures so at least he is getting some exercise, heaving pawns about. 'What options are there left?' he laughs. 'Origami? Ludo?'

Patrick Barkham takes on Les D'Arcy

1. In the first paragraph, the writer includes references to Terry Donlon's age and health problems in order to
 - (A) justify why he was willing to let Donlon win the game.
 - (B) evoke the reader's sympathy for Donlon.
 - (C) reinforce Donlon's belief that elderly people need exercise.
 - (D) emphasise Donlon's remarkable level of fitness.

2. Which quotation suggests that Donlon had deliberately modified his game against the writer?
 - (A) 'There's not a bead of perspiration on my opponent'
 - (B) 'he is thrashing me'
 - (C) 'D'Arcy then shows me how they would serve in a competitive game.'
 - (D) 'D'Arcy has a world title to defend'

3. The writer says that the documentary *Ping Pong* is 'inspirational for people of any age' because
 - (A) it shows both elderly people and young people playing table tennis.
 - (B) it conveys the theme of perseverance.
 - (C) it includes footage of table tennis competitions.
 - (D) it highlights the fierce rivalry between D'Arcy and Donlon.

4. In the quotation 'It may be a cliché', the word 'It' refers to
 - (A) the hope that a cure will be found for Donlon's and D'Arcy's health problems.
 - (B) the response of Donlon and D'Arcy toward their health problems.
 - (C) the inevitability that poor health and old age go hand in hand.
 - (D) the importance of continuing to experiment with a range of cures.

5. What is the main purpose of the dash in the last paragraph?
 - (A) to indicate qualifying details follow
 - (B) to signify the writer's concern about an idea
 - (C) to signal that previous information is unverified
 - (D) to refer to an alternative point of view

6. Which description of Donlon and D'Arcy would the writer agree with?
 - (A) They are two men who have devoted their lives to promoting their sport.
 - (B) They are two elderly men who are no longer able to play competitive sport.
 - (C) They are two old men who are only happy when playing table tennis.
 - (D) They are two men who enjoy their lives to the full.

Read *The prize* and answer questions 7 to 13.

The prize

She said nothing of her plan at home but fell to work next day, much to the disquiet of her mother, who always looked a little anxious when 'genius took to burning'. Jo had never tried this style before, contenting herself with very mild romances for the *Spread Eagle*. Her theatrical experience and miscellaneous reading were of service now, for they gave her some idea of dramatic effect and supplied plot, language and costumes. Her story was as full of desperation and despair as her limited acquaintance with those uncomfortable emotions enabled her to make it and, having located it in Lisbon, she wound up with an earthquake as a striking and appropriate denouement. The manuscript was privately dispatched, accompanied by a note modestly saying that if the tale didn't get the prize, which the writer hardly dared expect, she would be very glad to receive any sum it might be considered worth.

Six weeks is a long time to wait, and a still longer time for a girl to keep a secret; but Jo did both and was just beginning to give up all hope of ever seeing her manuscript again when a letter arrived which almost took her breath away; for on opening it, a cheque

for a hundred dollars fell into her lap. For a minute she stared at it as if it had been a snake, then she read her letter and began to cry. If the amiable gentleman who wrote that kindly note could have known what intense happiness he was giving a fellow creature, I think he would devote his leisure hours, if he had any, to that amusement; for Jo valued the letter more than the money because it was encouraging, and after years of effort it was so pleasant to find that she had learned to do something, though it was only to write a sensation story.

A prouder young woman was seldom seen than she, when, having composed herself, she electrified the family by appearing before them with the letter in one hand, the cheque in the other, announcing that she had won the prize. Of course there was a great jubilee, and when the story came everyone read and praised it; though after her father had told her that the language was good, the romance fresh and hearty, and the tragedy quite thrilling, he shook his head and said in his unworldly way: 'You can do better than this, Jo. Aim at the highest and never mind the money.'

Miss Josephine May
Concord, Massachusetts
United States

No 233

COUNTY BANK

Pay One hundred dollars

\$ 100

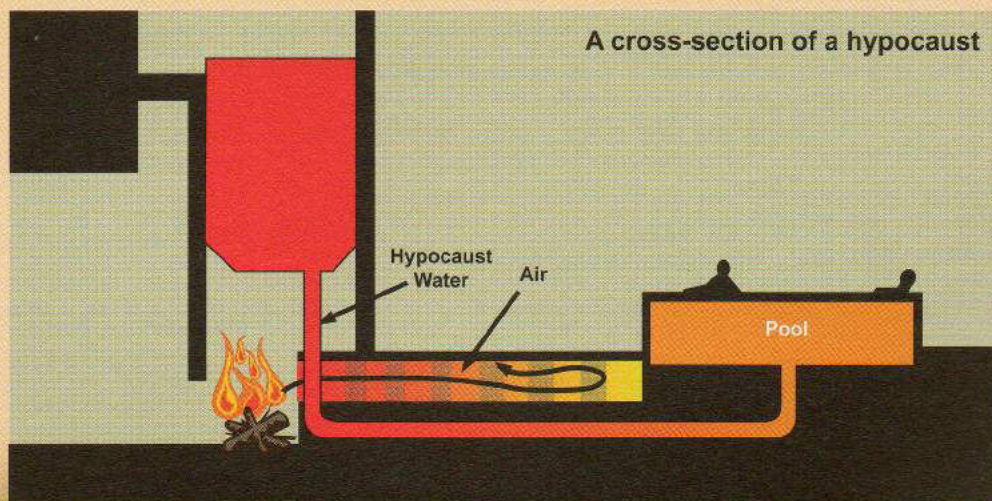
7. In what way was Jo's new story different from the ones she had been writing for the *Spread Eagle*?
- (A) Her new story was of the romance genre.
 - (B) Her new story was written in the form of a play.
 - (C) The setting of her new story was a figment of her imagination.
 - (D) The emotions described in her new story were more intense and dramatic.
8. Which is **NOT** a possible reason for the words 'genius took to burning' being written in quotation marks?
- (A) They are words that are commonly used within the family.
 - (B) They are a quote from a book which the family uses to describe Jo.
 - (C) They are an expression coined by Jo's mother and always used by her.
 - (D) They are words used by Jo to describe herself in the note she sent with the manuscript.
9. Which word from the second paragraph is an adverb?
- (A) 'ever'
 - (B) 'which'
 - (C) 'kindly'
 - (D) 'though'
10. Jo's initial reaction when she received the letter was one of
- (A) happy delight.
 - (B) boastful pride.
 - (C) shocked surprise.
 - (D) uncontrollable excitement.
11. What did the narrator admire most about the gentleman who had sent the letter?
- (A) that he enjoyed making others happy
 - (B) that he had paid Jo the money straightaway
 - (C) that he had made the effort to write a supportive note
 - (D) that he knew Jo had worked on the story for many years
12. What was Jo's father's reaction to Jo winning the prize?
- (A) He encouraged her to develop her talent not just for its material benefits.
 - (B) Although he liked the story, he disapproved of her entering it in a competition.
 - (C) He was the only member of the family who thought her story was slow-moving.
 - (D) Knowing she had won the prize, he had unrealistically high expectations of her ability.
13. The narrator's attitude to the characters is
- (A) indifferent. (B) naive. (C) respectful. (D) affectionate.

Bathing Roman-style

Bathing was a very important part of daily life in ancient Rome. People visited public bath houses, or *thermae*, not just to keep clean but to socialise, exercise and relax. There was also an economic reason for communal bathing: in Rome, water pipes were taxed according to their size, so many houses had only a basic supply of water which would have been used carefully.

The bath houses, often luxuriously appointed with marble, stonework, mosaics, statues and gardens, were engineering feats with innovative piping and heating systems. Some of the bath houses were huge and required extensive heating; a bath complex built by the Emperor Diocletian was the size of a football field! In order to heat the buildings and the bath water, the Romans used a system called a *hypocaust*. This involved building raised floors on pillars and leaving spaces in between the walls which could be heated with warmed air. Slaves working in areas under the raised floors ensured that furnaces were supplied with the fuel needed to heat rooms as well as bathing pools. Rooms which required a lot of heat were positioned close to the furnaces.

The actual process of bathing followed a distinct pattern which could be varied according to personal taste. When visitors arrived at the bath house, they would change out of their clothing and leave their garments with a slave. Sometimes garments went 'missing' as slaves conducted a lively trade in used clothing! The visitor might then be rubbed with oil in the *unctuarium* before moving to the *palaestra* (an area for exercise), working up a sweat before moving into the *tepidarium* (a room with warmed air). Next would be the *caldarium*—a hot room like a modern sauna. The idea was to induce a sweat which would help purify the skin. More oil might be rubbed on the skin at this point and then scraped off using an instrument called a *strigil*. Then the bathing process might be reversed: the bather cooled down slowly by going back to the *tepidarium* and then to the *frigidarium* (no prizes for guessing the temperature in this part of the bathing complex!). To complete the process, the visitor might go for a swim in the main pool, followed by a stroll around the gardens, a visit to the library or perhaps a purchase from one of the many food vendors.



14. What was one reason that many Romans bathed in public baths rather than at home?
- (A) Water was not connected to individual houses.
 - (B) Laws punished any Roman who bathed at home.
 - (C) Roman houses were not designed to include bathrooms.
 - (D) Many Romans could only afford a limited quantity of water.
15. According to the text, for a hypocaust to function, the rooms required
- (A) open space under the floors.
 - (B) a location close to the furnace.
 - (C) thick, solid walls to trap the heat.
 - (D) a system of hot water pipes in the walls.
16. Which word is a synonym for 'distinct', as it is used in the text?
- (A) definite (B) effective (C) separate (D) straightforward
17. 'When visitors arrived at the bath house, they would change out of their clothing and leave their garments with a slave.'
- Which option restates the quotation and retains the same style and meaning?
- (A) Visitors arrived at the bath house while changing out of their clothing which would be left with a slave.
 - (B) On arrival at the bath house, visitors would change out of their clothing, leaving the garments with a slave.
 - (C) Visitors arriving at the bath house left their garments with a slave and then changed into their clothing.
 - (D) During visitor arrival slaves would change them out of their clothing and leave the garments with them.
18. In the third paragraph, the word 'missing' is written in quotation marks to suggest that
- (A) the slaves had actually stolen the clothes.
 - (B) it was said by one of the visitors to the baths.
 - (C) some bathers were careless with their belongings.
 - (D) the visitors had instructed the slaves to sell the clothes.
19. Based on information in the text, the English word 'tepid' is related to the word used for
- (A) a cold room.
 - (B) a bath house.
 - (C) a warm room.
 - (D) an exercise area.
20. Which option shows the 'distinct pattern' of rooms used by a visitor to a Roman bathhouse?
- (A) palaestra → caldarium → frigidarium → tepidarium
 - (B) caldarium → palaestra → tepidarium → frigidarium
 - (C) palaestra → unctuarium → caldarium → frigidarium
 - (D) tepidarium → caldarium → tepidarium → frigidarium
21. The writer suggests that in Roman times, bathing was regarded as being
- (A) spiritual. (B) pleasurable. (C) compulsory. (D) embarrassing.

Perfect unison



Like many youngsters, they rarely walked anywhere; they named a goal and ran for it—the lemon tree, the bicycle shop, the kitchen door. A passer-by might hear a sudden shout from the one or the other, and feel a rush of wind as they both broke into a race towards the intended mark. Then both of them would lunge for the target and collapse, panting with laughter. It was as if they had wings on their heels that lifted them up and propelled them forward. But they ran together, neither one the winner, neither the loser, their friendship more profound than the mere winning of any contest.

It was the last day of the holidays and the day was heavy with a dust of fallen leaves blown by gentle breezes. As the friends ran through the little town, they clung to the passing summer in their minds. Each one's head swam with thoughts: one last dive in the deep, icy waters of the lake; one last climb up the cliff to the secret cave; one last ice-cream melting and dripping down a crisp, honey-flavoured cone.

With just a glance at each other, the pair changed direction and sprinted out of town. The bitumen gave way to dust and gravel, the houses relinquished their hold on the Earth and trees reasserted their position. They were tall, slender-trunked and smooth-barked with branches that overhung the road and darkened the sky. Elongated leaves the colour of mouldy earth hung down and brushed against their backs.

A partly-hidden track led off the road and wound through the bush. The pair silently turned, left the parched road and headed into the undergrowth, racing past thickets of small trees and bushes that reached out to grab them with thorny limbs. With a final rush, they broke through, shouting and laughing. In perfect unison, they dived onto the sandy beach that fringed that part of the lake. They were the only ones there on that late summer day and they savoured the silence and their isolation. They started exploring the shoreline, soaking up the peacefulness of the lake and the warmth of the sun. As they made their way further around the lake, a small dinghy came into view on the furthest shore. It was rocking, rocking, backwards, forwards with the wind-whipped waves. There didn't seem to be anyone around and the boat didn't seem to be anchored.

22. When they raced each other, the friends gained most enjoyment from
- (A) spending their time together.
 - (B) choosing their next goal.
 - (C) startling passers-by.
 - (D) trying to be first.
23. Which of the following is an **ANTONYM** for 'profound', as it is used in the text?
- (A) irrelevant
 - (B) superficial
 - (C) impractical
 - (D) troublesome
24. The phrase 'Each one's head swam with thoughts' indicates that the friends were
- (A) thinking about the likelihood of a swim.
 - (B) overwhelmed by their vivid thoughts.
 - (C) thinking about many things at once.
 - (D) unable to think clearly.
25. What does the quotation 'With just a glance at each other' reveal about the two friends?
- (A) They had simultaneously noticed something happening.
 - (B) They understood what the other was thinking at that moment.
 - (C) They liked to laugh at each other's facial expressions.
 - (D) They sensed something unusual was about to happen.
26. As the friends ran out of the town, they saw that
- (A) the houses were in a state of disrepair.
 - (B) there were fewer houses than in the town.
 - (C) only the foundations of the houses remained.
 - (D) the houses were being replaced by other buildings.
27. In the quotation 'bushes that reached out to grab them with thorny limbs', the writer has used personification in order to
- (A) compare the legs of the friends with the bushes.
 - (B) emphasise the dryness of the undergrowth.
 - (C) suggest that the bushes may prevent the friends from reaching their destination.
 - (D) contrast the softness of the sand with the harshness of the bush.
28. This text is part of a longer narrative. The main purpose of this text is to
- (A) provide a resolution.
 - (B) develop character and setting.
 - (C) explain how the characters became friends.
 - (D) describe the relationship of the youngsters with the town.

Where there's smoke ... there's

It's hard to believe that air pollution could be a problem in the remote and sparsely populated spinifex country of Western Australia's tropical north. Yet in a bad year, the air quality in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions is far worse than on smoggy days in Sydney or Melbourne.

The managers of the north-west's major national park, Karijini, are well aware that the source of the problem is the huge fires that regularly occur in the area. They belch out so much smoke that they can block out the sun and even change local rainfall patterns. When good rains favour vigorous growth of the spinifex, lightning strikes in spring can ignite the dry grass and start fires that may spread rapidly on very wide fronts. In addition, graziers and Aboriginal peoples deliberately light many fires to promote new plant growth for grazing livestock and wild animals, and to stop the prickly spinifex grass from becoming too dense.

Under the right fire conditions, it's not uncommon for a blaze to travel up to 100 kilometres before it peters out or has to be put out.

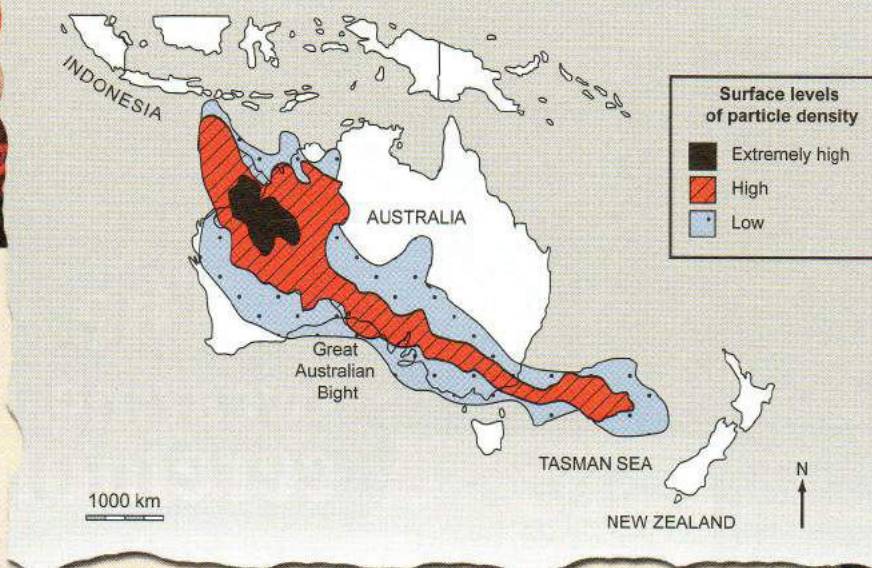
The spring fires in the year 2000 were especially problematic in the Kimberley. Satellite images recorded more than 750 fires in September and October alone. They burnt 188 000 square kilometres—an area almost three times the size of Tasmania. In early October 2000, a series of very large fires burnt into, out of and around Karijini and vast areas of adjoining land. They threw up prodigious amounts of smoke and soot particles. Measurements of air quality taken at Lake Argyle, about 100 kilometres to the east, found that surface levels of particle density were roughly equivalent to a heavily polluted urban centre.

The smoke plume was enormous, spreading from Karijini north-west about 2 000 kilometres to Bali,

29. The first paragraph captures readers' attention by
- (A) providing an unusual fact about air quality.
 - (B) introducing them to remote regions of Australia.
 - (C) providing a challenging scenario about air quality.
 - (D) describing Australia's air pollution levels in bad years.
30. Which words from the text are synonyms?
- (A) 'sparsely' and 'prickly'
 - (B) 'belch' and 'burnt'
 - (C) 'vast' and 'prodigious'
 - (D) 'aloff' and 'emit'
31. Which of the following is used as a verb in the text?
- (A) 'strikes'
 - (B) 'fronts'
 - (C) 'light'
 - (D) 'blaze'
32. According to the text, which of the following is **NOT** a reason why people intentionally start fires in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions?
- (A) to control the density of spinifex
 - (B) to stop introduced weeds from taking over
 - (C) to promote new plant growth for native animals
 - (D) to assist new plant growth for grazing livestock

Australia

Smoke from spring fires in 2000



south nearly 3 300 kilometres to the Great Australian Bight and east another 2 700 kilometres to the Tasman Sea. In all, the plume covered an area of almost 2.5 million square kilometres—about one-third of Australia. The smoke cloud reached up to eight kilometres in altitude, almost as high as Mount Everest. It is thought that between 20 and 80 million tonnes of carbon were carried aloft in that cloud as carbon dioxide—the key greenhouse gas—with another 400 000 to 1.8 million tonnes of smoke. In context, that's about one per cent of the total smoke produced across the world each year—all in just that one plume.

Wildfires burn across more than 100 million hectares of Australia each year, but the area

burnt varies greatly from year to year. In wet years, there are few fires and the regrowth of vegetation can remove as much as 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. But in hot dry years, such as 2003, major fires can release up to 190 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. For comparison, all of Australia's transport sources combined emit about 87 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.

33. The key on the map shows
- (A) the area subject to wildfire risk.
 - (B) the surface levels of smoke pollution.
 - (C) the extent of spring fires in 2000.
 - (D) the area affected by high altitude smoke.
34. What do the concluding sentences in the final two paragraphs have in common?
- (A) They act as topic sentences.
 - (B) They give alternative viewpoints.
 - (C) They summarise the paragraphs.
 - (D) They provide frames of reference.
35. According to the text, the area of Australia affected by wildfires in any year varies greatly depending on
- (A) the amount of rain received.
 - (B) the strength of prevailing winds.
 - (C) the annual fire management strategies.
 - (D) the area burnt by wildfires in previous years.
36. What would be the best alternative title for the text?
- (A) Smoke and greenhouse gas emissions in Australia
 - (B) No smoking! Keep Australians healthy
 - (C) Australia—smoke and mirrors
 - (D) Australia—a country on fire



The swearing-in ceremony

The light sat on the myriad cobbles of the parade ground as if there were a bright penny balanced on each one. I was standing with my sisters and brother in a shock of vaguely made-up dresses and a slight stab at male grandeur. Our mother was dead my whole life and there was only my father's hand and eye to manage these dark matters. It was I think the day my father was made chief superintendent, and we had moved that morning into our new quarters in Dublin Castle, because we were to be denizens of that place. It was a lovely square flower-pink house and I was still so young that I had spent the morning showing my dolls the rooms. But I don't quite know what age I was. My brother Willie seems young enough too in my mind's eye, so it was certainly before the Great War. But all that, whenever it was, before and after, was nothing to the emotion that filled me at the sight of my father in his new dress uniform. There was no guesswork in that. The commissioner, dressed as my father said 'in a London suit of the finest sort', had come over from said London and was formally bestowing on my father, my own father, the signs and formulas of his new condition. I know now he was to lead the B division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and had risen now as high as he could ever expect, after thirty years in the

police. No Wicklow sunrise over Keadeen Mountain, where our cousins and aunts and uncles still lived, could have matched the brightness, the shavenness and the utmost delight in his face. It was the same look I saw every evening I came home from school, and I ran into his arms, and he kissed me, and said, 'If I didn't have your kiss I might never come home', but magnified a thousand times. His large frame that would have thrown any tug-of-war team into despair at the sight of it, if it were coming to oppose them, was bound up in a black uniform with rushing darts of what looked like silver to me on the cuffs, but may only have been glistening white braid. His hat had a white feather that streamed in the solemn castle wind. His height made the commissioner, splendid enough but in his mere civilian suit, look sketchy and oddly fearful, as if my father might somehow engulf him on a whim of strength. The commissioner spoke for a few moments, and all the ranked constables and sergeants, themselves as black as burnt sticks, every one of them six foot tall and more, made a strange murmur of approval, as sweet to my father as the rush of the salt sea on the Shelly Banks was to me. The small delicate tide of friendship, shoaling against my father's bursting face, bursting with pride and certainty.

37. What is the writer referring to in the phrase 'these dark matters'?
- (A) sibling rivalry
 - (B) a death in the family
 - (C) dressing for the ceremony
 - (D) the importance of good behaviour
38. The word 'denizens', as it is used in the text, means
- (A) visitors.
 - (B) owners.
 - (C) occupants.
 - (D) guardians.
39. 'My brother Willie seems young enough too in my mind's eye'
- While the narrative is written in the past tense, the narrator uses the present tense here. What is the effect of this?
- (A) to reveal a shift in perspective from personal to objective that will better engage the reader
 - (B) to show that she is clarifying her uncertainty about the year the ceremony occurred
 - (C) to refer to her disrupted relationship with her brother so the reader feels sympathetic towards her
 - (D) to mention her brother's experience at the ceremony because he has a better memory than her
40. Which statement best describes the father's promotion?
- (A) It was a continuation of a family tradition.
 - (B) It was an attempt to reward people in Dublin.
 - (C) It was an unexpected outcome for an Irishman.
 - (D) It was the culmination of a long successful career.
41. In the description 'but in his mere civilian suit', the narrator uses the word 'mere' to make the point that
- (A) nothing can outshine her father on this occasion.
 - (B) nobody would now dare cause trouble for the family.
 - (C) the Commissioner was improperly dressed for the occasion.
 - (D) the Commissioner's pride could not compare with her own feelings.
42. Which word best describes the bearing of the father at the swearing-in ceremony?
- (A) sombre
 - (B) arrogant
 - (C) imposing
 - (D) threatening

Forum: *Crying wolf*

Forum – a weekly column for contributors to air their opinions, expound their theories and generally let off steam!

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the editor or publisher. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

Scientific hoaxes have a long, inglorious history. Among the most infamous examples are the 1912 'discovery' of the Piltdown man that took until 1953 (more than 40 years) to be exposed as a forgery, and the 1999 'discovery' of Archaeoraptor, an assembly of genuine fossils from several species that was revealed as a fraud in 2000. Scientific hoaxes exploit the human propensity to jump to conclusions, especially when the evidence seems to support a popular theory. Sometimes people do not want the facts to get in the way of a good story. Despite this, the veracity of scientific evidence must be sacrosanct.

How can the public possibly sift through the current avalanche of scientific information to distinguish fact from fiction? The simple answer is that the average person cannot. Most people rely on the socially-accepted gatekeepers of credibility—the scientists themselves and those who report on science. Ultimately, it is a matter of trust. Scientists and scientific journalists are supposed to subscribe to an ethos of honesty and integrity regarding scientific work, and to provide fair and accurate reports. Scientific reports are the conduit between the laboratory and the public, but because these reports are mostly unappealing to non-scientists, an interesting scientific narrative is often constructed. If scientists and scientific reporters play by the rules, the public is provided with scientifically accurate stories. However, the fly in the ointment is often the media and its obsession with sensationalism and spin.

In a world filled with information white noise, how do important scientific stories compete with other news stories for attention? The answer, unfortunately, appears to be through the liberal use of hype and hyperbole. News needs to have the 'wow factor' necessary for abbreviated TV grabs. This leads to the worrying trend of increasingly extravagant claims made in order to get attention. Alarmist stories often receive greater publicity and this can lead to a situation where credibility is the main casualty.

Recent examples of hyperbole in scientific reporting underscore the dangers of using scientific evidence to frighten people into 'doing something'. Some people have claimed that the Pacific Ocean is blighted with a continent-sized mass of plastic waste. These claims have been challenged as grossly misleading by others. Another example is the paranoia surrounding a swine flu pandemic which was fuelled by saturation-level media reports filled with hyperbole.

In an age when it is possible to buy a scientific opinion, how long will the public be willing to accept 'expert evidence' in scientific stories before scepticism and information overload undermine the credibility of scientists? Are we experiencing a case of the little boy who cried wolf with the media's increasing use of hyperbole and the resulting desensitisation of the public? Has the quest for an ever more interesting metaphor, an ever more catchy angle and an ever more attention-grabbing headline forsaken scientific ethics? If it has, then the public is being duped by a form of mass hypnosis that may be the greatest scientific hoax of all.

Barry Drew

**Pacific Ocean
pollution disgrace**

Pittdown man hoax

43. The word 'propensity', as it is used in the text, means
- (A) inclination.
 - (B) talent.
 - (C) capacity.
 - (D) expectation.
44. Which characteristics of the writing weaken Drew's argument?
- (A) biased opinion and overt aggression
 - (B) inappropriate humour and over-use of idiom
 - (C) emotive language and sweeping generalisation
 - (D) irrelevant examples and heavy sarcasm
45. The phrase 'The fly in the ointment', in the second paragraph, refers to
- (A) the need for more informed reporting of scientific news.
 - (B) the public's desire for less science news in the media.
 - (C) the media's attempts to make scientific reports more dramatic.
 - (D) the reporters' lack of scientific knowledge.
46. Drew uses the phrase 'In a world filled with information white noise' to suggest that
- (A) people should treat all media reports with suspicion.
 - (B) most scientific reports that people encounter are inaccurate.
 - (C) people are bombarded with contradictory scientific information.
 - (D) the volume of information available to people is overwhelming.
47. 'Some people have claimed that the Pacific Ocean is blighted with a continent-sized mass of plastic waste. These claims have been challenged as grossly misleading by others.'
- Which of the following could be inserted at the beginning of the second sentence?
- (A) Similarly
 - (B) However
 - (C) Despite this
 - (D) Even though
48. In the last paragraph, Drew uses a series of rhetorical questions to convey his opinion that the public is
- (A) depressed by negative reporting.
 - (B) frightened by alarmist reporting.
 - (C) frustrated by excessive reporting.
 - (D) jaded by exaggerated reporting.

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hoax!

**PACIFIC
ART
DICT
DISAST**

on hoax

A googled Earth

At your desktop, gaze down from altitude to read textures of terrain: humps, rents and contoured canyons.

A panorama of rivers meandering across our fragile Earth the evidence of ancient cataclysms that pushed up mountains.

Can you see the wispy clouds that stretch in vain to cover a vast globe, desperate to make rain for all the continents? 5

Zoom in to immense cities where insatiable multitudes surge, competing and consuming. From birth we strip the Earth.

Skyscrapers rise ever higher, see them growing as you watch, ravenously eating, depleting resources, no one counts the cost. 10

Greed gouges out the forests where species live and feed while humans, never content, take more than we need.

Can you see the glaciers retreating, the ice sheets shrinking as sea levels and temperatures rise? Island nations fear demise.

And in polluted oceans sea creatures choke and tangle in a massive dump of debris morphed and massed together. 15

A floating plastic soup of swirling, wanton waste a new continent of chairs, kayaks, carry bags, bottles, cables.

One hundred million tonnes of flotsam carried on the currents circling the globe must at some time come full circle. 20

Cool in air-conditioned comfort, watch as dusty deserts grow relentlessly droughts steal water, making mosaics of dried mud.

Click on pastures that are toxic, click on rivers running dry, click on rainforests gone to logging, on starved, skeletal trees.

Now, google your street view, without having to leave your room watch yourself through the window oblivious in the gloom. 25

Sheryl Persson

49. Which of the following words from the poem is used as an adjective?
- (A) 'tangle' (line 15)
 (B) 'swirling' (line 17)
 (C) 'carried' (line 19)
 (D) 'running' (line 23)
50. In line 18, why does the poet describe the waste as a 'new continent'?
- (A) The huge amount of waste appears like a large land mass.
 (B) Scientists are considering using the waste to create habitable land.
 (C) The variety of discarded objects is equivalent to the variety of land masses.
 (D) The floating waste will inevitably create a large new land mass.
51. Which quotation from the poem is a literal description?
- (A) 'ravenously eating, depleting resources' (line 10)
 (B) 'Greed gouges out the forests' (line 11)
 (C) 'sea creatures choke and tangle' (line 15)
 (D) 'relentlessly droughts steal water' (line 22)
52. Which two words from the poem are used as synonyms?
- (A) 'altitude' (line 1) and 'panorama' (line 3)
 (B) 'meandering' (line 3) and 'retreating' (line 13)
 (C) 'massive' (line 16) and 'massed' (line 16)
 (D) 'debris' (line 16) and 'flotsam' (line 19)
53. It can be inferred from the poem that the poet thinks that
- (A) people need to move out of cities to conserve energy.
 (B) waste can be used to create new homes for sea creatures.
 (C) environmental degradation is an issue that needs addressing.
 (D) technology can be used to encourage people to take environmental action.
54. The phrase 'come full circle' (line 20) has two meanings. One is that the flotsam will float around the globe back to its starting point. The other is that
- (A) accumulated rubbish will return to have an impact on humans.
 (B) the contents will eventually decay to form their basic components.
 (C) the waste mass will circle around all the continents of the world.
 (D) the mass of flotsam will eventually reach one hundred million tonnes.
55. Both the article *Forum: Crying wolf* on page 14 and the poem *A googled Earth* on page 16 refer to a large mass of waste in the ocean. In which way does the reference to this differ between texts?

	Article	Poem
(A)	uses it as an example of inaccurate reporting	uses it to shock
(B)	uses it to illustrate public antipathy towards the environment	uses it to encourage action
(C)	uses it to demonstrate the poor quality of scientific investigation	refers to it in a purely metaphorical sense
(D)	refers to it as a hoax	presents it as an accepted fact

**GRADE 8
ENGLISH ANSWER KEYS**

QUESTION NO	ANSWERS	QUESTION NO	ANSWERS
1	D	26	B
2	C	27	C
3	B	28	B
4	B	29	A
5	A	30	C
6	D	31	C
7	D	32	B
8	D	33	B
9	A	34	D
10	C	35	A
11	C	36	D
12	A	37	C
13	D	38	C
14	D	39	B
15	A	40	D
16	A	41	A
17	B	42	C
18	A	43	A
19	C	44	C
20	D	45	C
21	B	46	D
22	A	47	B
23	B	48	D
24	C	49	B
25	B	50	A
		51	C
		52	D
		53	C
		54	A
		55	A