

Durham High School for Girls



11+ Official Practice Paper

ENGLISH

Time Allowed: 60 Minutes

Instructions:

There are two sections; spend approximately 30 minutes on **Section A** and 30 minutes on **Section B**.

Section A – Reading section – comprehension.

Section B – Writing section – creative writing.

Section A – Reading

Read the following extract, and answer all the questions.

Extract from ‘Northern Lights’ by Philip Pullman

Lyra is preparing to leave Jordan College to live with Mrs Coulter:

*quadrangle – square outside area

*cupola – small dome on a roof or ceiling

The dark quadrangle* was still full of the chill night air. Overhead the last stars were still visible, but the light from the east was gradually soaking into the sky above the Hall. Lyra ran into the Library Garden, and stood for a moment in the immense hush, looking up at the stone pinnacles of the Chapel, the pearl-green cupola* of the Sheldon Building, the white-painted lantern of the Library. Now she was going to leave these sights, she wondered how much she’d miss them.

Something stirred in the study window and a glow of light shone out for a moment. She remembered what she had to do and tapped on the glass door. It opened almost at once.

“Good girl. Come in quickly. We haven’t got long,” said the Master, and drew the curtain back across the door as soon as she had entered. He was fully dressed in his usual black.

“Aren’t I going after all?” Lyra asked.

“Yes; I can’t prevent it,” said the Master, and Lyra didn’t notice at the time what an odd thing that was to say. “Lyra, I’m going to give you something, and you must promise to keep it private. Will you swear to that?”

“Yes,” Lyra said.

He crossed to the desk and took from a drawer a small package wrapped in black velvet. When he unfolded the cloth, Lyra saw something like a large watch or a small compass or something of the sort.

“What is it?” she said.

“It’s an alethiometer. It’s one of only six that were ever made. Lyra, I urge you again: keep it private. It would be better if Mrs Coulter didn’t know about it. Your uncle –”

“But what does it do?”

“It tells you the truth. As for how to read it, you’ll have to learn by yourself. Now go – it’s getting lighter – hurry back to your room before anyone sees you.”

He folded the velvet over the instrument and thrust it into her hands. It was surprisingly heavy. Then he put his own hands on either side of her head and held her gently for a moment.

She tried to look up at him, and said, "What were you going to say about Uncle Asriel?"

"Your uncle presented it to Jordan College some years ago. He might –"

Before he could finish, there came a soft urgent knock on the door. She could feel his hands give an involuntary tremor.

"Quick now, child," he said quietly. "The powers of this world are very strong. Men and women are moved by tides much fiercer than you can imagine, and they sweep us all up into the current. Go well, Lyra; bless you, child; bless you. Keep your own counsel."

"Thank you, Master," she said dutifully.

Clutching the bundle to her breast, she left the study by the garden door, looking back briefly once to see the Master's daemon watching her from the windowsill. The sky was lighter already; there was a faint fresh stir in the air.

Questions

There are 5 marks available for each question.

1. Using your own words, explain what Lyra notices about her surroundings in paragraph one.
2. How does the writer make the meeting between Lyra and the Master seem urgent? Explain your ideas in your own words.
3. Describe the effects of the writer's use of language in the following:
 - He crossed to the desk and took from a drawer a small package wrapped in black velvet.
 - Then he put his own hands on either side of her head and held her gently for a moment.
 - "The powers of this world are very strong. Men and women are moved by tides much fiercer than you can imagine, and they sweep us all up into the current.
4. In the final paragraph, Lyra leaves the college. What does the last sentence suggest about her future?

Section B – Writing

Either:

Write a description of one of the following:

- A sinister wood.
- A city at night.
- A busy playground.

OR

Write an article persuading people about one of the following:

- Recycling
- Eating healthy food
- Taking regular exercise

There are 20 marks available.

12 marks for content and 8 marks for spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary.