

This publication assists applicants for Year 7 entry to selective high schools to become more familiar with the Selective High School Placement Test. Some of the items have not been included for copyright reasons. In the actual Selective High School Placement Test there are 45 questions in reading, 40 in mathematics and 60 in general ability.

The Selective High School Placement Test measures ability and is set to discriminate at a very high level. Students who are accustomed to answering most questions in tests correctly should not be discouraged if they get a number of questions wrong. It is very rare for even the highest scoring candidates to score full marks on all components of the Selective High School Placement Test.

Selective high school entry does not depend entirely on a student's performance in the Selective High School Placement Test as school assessment scores in English and mathematics are provided by the primary schools.

It is important to note that selection committees and appeals panels will not accept students' performance in this past paper as evidence of academic merit for the purposes of entry into a selective high school in any future year.



Education &
Communities

SELECTIVE HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT TEST

SAMPLE

TEST 1

READING

DO NOT OPEN THIS SECTION UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 You have 40 minutes to complete the Reading test. It contains 45 questions.
- 2 This test contains several passages. In most passages every fifth line is numbered on the right-hand side to help you answer the questions.
- 3 Read each passage and then show your answer to each question by colouring A, B, C or D in pen in the answer booklet.
- 4 If you decide to change your answer, cross it out with X and mark your new answer clearly.
- 5 If you want to work anything out, you **may** write in this question booklet, but remember to show your answer in the answer booklet NOT in this question booklet.
- 6 In the tests you will find Answer Check boxes like this:

ANSWER CHECK (Reading No. 1)

**Look at your answer booklet — was the last bubble you filled in for Question 14?
If it was, keep going. If it wasn't, put your hand up now for help.**

This is to ensure you are answering the question in the right answer bubble.

- 7 Wait for instructions to begin the Reading test.

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CONNIE HART

This passage about Connie Hart is from a book in which Aboriginal people talk about their own lives.

No one taught me to make my baskets. I used to watch my mother do it and when she put her basket down and went outside, I'd pick it up and do some stitches. When I heard her coming back, I would shove it away real quick and run away. I was a great one for sitting amongst the old people because I knew I was learning something just by watching them. But if I asked a question they would say, 'Run away, Connie. Go and play with the rest of the kids.'

5

They didn't want us to learn. My mum told me we were coming into the white people's way of living. So she wouldn't teach us. That is why we lost a lot of culture. But I tricked her. I watched her and I watched those old people and I sneaked a stitch or two.

10

I was about seven when I used to have a go at my mother's work but I didn't make a basket until after she died. It must have been 40 years but I remembered the stitch, I remembered the grass. I picked some grass and I went home and started to do the stitch. The first basket I made was a little one because I was frightened to do it. Then I went on to make mats. I think if my mother was alive today she would knock my head off because I have gone on to better things.

15



My stitching is very tight, where most basket makers pull theirs loose.

20

I put my finger behind and pull it tight. Everybody says my work is fine. I'm growing my own grass in the garden. I'm hoping for it to spread along the fence, and I just go down and get some whenever I want it.

25

To make a good basket, patience would be the first thing. And to pull tight for that tight stitch.

30

Connie with traditional basket for trapping eels. Hart collection. Courtesy Connie Hart.

- 1 Connie's mother didn't want Connie to learn how to make baskets because she thought that Connie
- A should leave her and the old people alone.
 - B could be out playing with the other children.
 - C should only be learning the white people's way of living.
 - D could never make the sorts of baskets that white people would want.
- 2 In what way does Connie say that her baskets are different from the baskets of other basket makers?
- A the type of grass she uses
 - B the type of stitch she uses
 - C the way she makes the stitch
 - D the attitude she has to learning
- 3 According to Connie the two ingredients of a good basket are
- A a vivid memory and strong fingers.
 - B the right attitude and good technique.
 - C determination and an interest in tradition.
 - D a good teacher and access to home grown grass.
- 4 With regard to passing on traditions, Connie thinks that
- A the old people's intentions were good but misguided.
 - B the old people knew that you could not learn simply by watching.
 - C it was the responsibility of the children to learn what they could.
 - D if you were persistent enough people would teach whatever you needed to know.

GO STRAIGHT ON

THE HORSE

The horse moves independently without reference to his load.

He has eyes
like a woman and
turns them
about, throws

back his ears
and is generally *10*
conscious of
the world. Yet

he pulls when
he must and
pulls well, blowing 15
fog from

his nostrils
like fumes from
the twin
exhausts of a car. 20

William Carlos Williams

- 5** Which one of the following sums up the poet's feelings for this horse?

A fear
B respect
C repulsion
D amusement

- 6 The horse does his work in a way that is

A lazy.
B efficient.
C cheerful.
D reluctant.

- 7** Lines 5–12 suggest that the horse

A is enslaved by human beings.
B has a very unusual appearance.
C has its own unique characteristics.
D is a typical example of this species of horse.

- 8** The word ‘yet’ (line 12) could be seen as dividing the poem into two contrasting parts.

Which of the following pairs of words summarises the way the horse is described in the two parts?

first part

(lines 1–12)

second part

(lines 13–20)

A	happy	unhappy
B	special	ordinary
C	disobedient	dependent
D	unconstrained	controlled

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

Jørn Utzon had only a small architecture practice in Denmark when in 1957 he won the international competition to design the Sydney Opera House. The building was completed in 1973 — long after Utzon had retired in frustration and anger. This spectacular building consists of two principal elements: a solid rock-like base containing ancillary areas and a great superstructure of shining tile-covered shells soaring above it, enveloping the two major halls. The base, surfaced with reconstructed granite, rises in massive steps to the halls, whose dished floors are pressed into the base like great thumbprints. The drama of the structure dominates all — both externally and internally — the great shells springing and fanning out from massive point supports. The functions of the building take place within the spaces left by the structure.

5

10

- 9 How does the passage present Jørn Utzon's involvement with the building of the Sydney Opera House?
- A unexpected choice/ bitter process/ inspired outcome
 - B popular choice/ steady progress/ successful outcome
 - C obvious choice/ quiet resignation/ disappointing outcome
 - D unfortunate choice/ poor performance/ disastrous outcome
- 10 By using the words 'soaring', 'springing' and 'fanning' the writer reinforces the idea that the Opera House is
- A solid.
 - B massive.
 - C dramatic.
 - D functional.
- 11 The passage suggests that the 'two principal elements' (line 5)
- A do not fit together in style.
 - B express a single simple vision.
 - C create a successful union through strong contrasts.
 - D are seamlessly joined through common form and material.
- 12 The writer's attitude to the design of the Opera House is generally
- A neutral.
 - B enthusiastic.
 - C disapproving.
 - D condescending.

CAVES

Large caves are most commonly found in limestone because, over time, limestone dissolves in water. Falling rain absorbs carbon dioxide from the air and picks up more from plant roots, bacteria and other organisms as it percolates through the soil. This makes it slightly acidic and more likely to dissolve the limestone.

5

The cave formation process begins when limestone is exposed at the earth's surface. This might happen when relatively young limestone is raised above sea level by movements in the earth's crust or when older limestone in mountain ranges is uncovered by erosion. In Australia, caves have formed in rock as old as 1000 million years and as young as a few thousand years. They are usually a lot younger than the rocks in which they are formed.

10

Limestone forms in layers or beds which encourage cave formation. There are two kinds of openings in this rock: bedding planes between beds; and joints, which are vertical splits in the beds caused by tension in the crust of the earth. Deep caves are often formed in rock that has been split and tilted by the movement of the earth.

15

Near the surface, openings contain both air and water, but lower down they are filled with water. Here a significant stage of the cave formation process takes place. Sluggish water dissolves the limestone most quickly and creates large cavities, while fast-moving water forms complex plumbing systems with rounded cross-sections. When the water-level in these systems drops and air gets in, the water begins to behave as it does in streams on the surface, cutting out meandering courses and canyons in the cave floor. As cavities get bigger, losing the support of the water that used to fill them, they can collapse to form the largest caves.

20

25

13 The structure of limestone encourages cave formation because limestone is

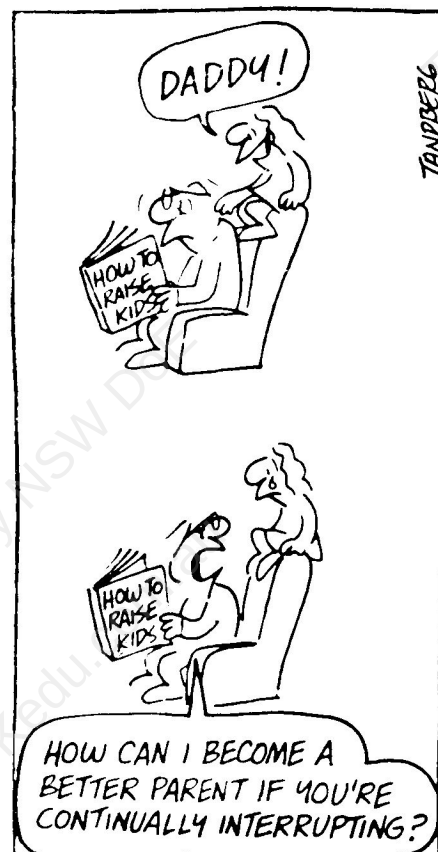
- A** able to absorb water.
- B** often exposed to the air.
- C** formed in beds and layers.
- D** often tilted by movements in the earth.

14 Deep caves are formed in limestone as a result of

- A** exposure to the air.
- B** particularly acidic water.
- C** splitting and tilting of the rock.
- D** geological movements below the crust of the earth.

- 15 Water dissolves limestone most quickly when the
- A water is moving slowly.
 - B water is moving swiftly.
 - C limestone is roughly shaped.
 - D limestone has rounded cross-sections.
- 16 The largest caves are formed in limestone when the
- A rock is exposed to air.
 - B bigger caves collapse.
 - C water is very acidic.
 - D water is sluggish.

HOW TO RAISE KIDS



- 17 This cartoon suggests that the father
- A will never become a better parent because his child is always interrupting.
 - B will become a better parent when he has read the book.
 - C is not becoming a better parent by reading the book.
 - D is already a good parent.

RYL AND DUSTY

This passage describes a conversation between Ryl, a teenager, and Dusty, her grandfather, shortly after they have met for the first time and moved into the old family home.

One night they sat at the top of the tall steps, watching the skyline stretching in a half-circle about them from Brunswick Heads to Surfers Paradise.

‘Funny,’ said Dusty, ‘how much you look like my girl that I had once.’

5

‘And was she the one called Ryl? Same as me?’

‘That’s right. Your father must have named you after her.’

‘How come you lost track of my father?’

Dusty seemed to shift uncomfortably on the wooden step.

‘Him and me fell out.’

10

Ryl longed to know why the two had quarrelled, but it was plain that Dusty had no intention of going into this problem. He talked on, of how he had fallen on hard times, and how all friends and kin had dropped out of his life.

Yesterday she would have listened to the story and heard only the words, and those with impatience. But this evening her mind made pictures of them. And she saw them blending into one picture, the one which the old man tried to conceal — of a life whose end was failure.

15

And now, her banner began to fly. She would make him a success. Better late than never. At the age of seventy-four he would, under her guidance, be set on the road to achievement.

20

Sitting beside him on the worn wooden step in the lime-scented night, Ryl made up her mind about it, and became filled with resolve. Dusty would make good.

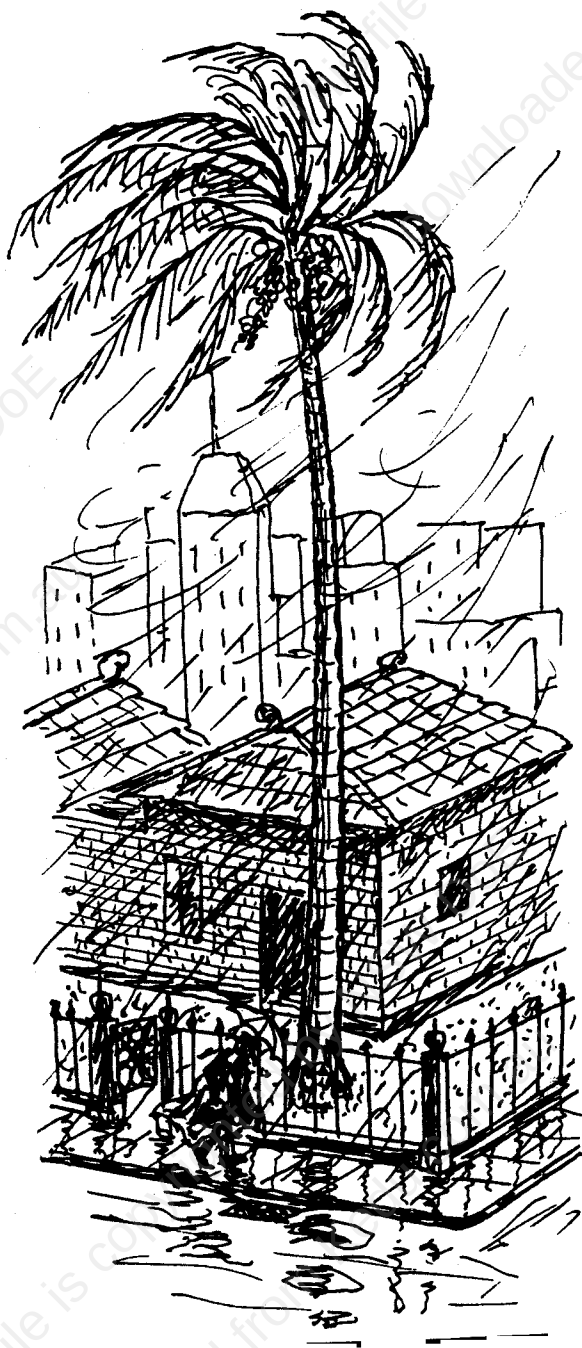
25

18 The setting of the passage is

- A** lonely.
- B** gloomy.
- C** peaceful.
- D** glamorous.

- 19 The discussion about Ryl's name is significant because it
- A explains the disagreement between Ryl's father and Dusty.
 - B shows the part played by coincidence in the story.
 - C establishes a link between Ryl and Dusty.
 - D focuses on how unusual Ryl's name is.
- 20 How does Dusty feel about the 'falling out' with Ryl's father?
- He is
- A still angry with Ryl's father.
 - B upset that Ryl didn't know about it.
 - C uneasy about discussing the matter.
 - D relieved that the matter has been resolved.
- 21 The passage gives the impression that Dusty is
- A aggressive and overconfident.
 - B proud of his achievements.
 - C trusting and affectionate.
 - D defensive about his past.
- 22 'Yesterday she would have listened to the story and heard only the words . . .'
- In lines 15–19, Ryl
- A wants to draw Dusty's portrait.
 - B feels increasingly bored by Dusty's reminiscences.
 - C is beginning to understand Dusty's way of talking.
 - D is making sense of Dusty's experiences in her imagination.
- 23 'And now, her banner began to fly' (line 20) means that Ryl has just
- A become fired with her new idea.
 - B understood the sadness of Dusty's life.
 - C realised how much Dusty cares for her.
 - D confirmed her first impression of Dusty.
- 24 'Dusty would make good' (line 25) refers to
- A Dusty's intention to improve his life.
 - B Ryl's intention to improve Dusty's life.
 - C Ryl's hope that Dusty will take care of her.
 - D Dusty's hope that Ryl will take care of him.

THE PALM TREE



feel the sigh:
 from above grey streets
 and hard-baked bricks
 that bind the soul;
 between choking dust 5
 and roar of car
 and rattling tram,
 beyond hard winter's
 crush and crack
 that chills the heart; 10

hear the call:
 whispering, murmuring,
 seething, roaring, rolling
 like hot tropical thunder,
 booming like ocean swells 15
 on atolls
 out in the sea.

climb with leaden eyes
 up
 the sleek, slim trunk, 20
 up
 grasp, feel, the warm sap
 pulse, promise, pull,
 up
 into ocean blue, 25
 a thousand miles away.
 From here to there, simply,
 shattering silly realities of
 flat, hard nothings,
 far below . . . 30

the palm tree rises through the rot of
 seething city life;
 its lusty howl seduces souls
 and bears them for
 a precious while, 35
 away to paradise.

G J Wightman

- 25 The poem suggests that climbing the palm tree
- A offers a short but worthwhile break from the city's harshness.
 - B offers a permanent escape from the grim reality of city life.
 - C is a useless exercise that can only end in disappointment.
 - D is bad because it means not facing up to life's problems.

- 26 The 'sigh' and 'call' (lines 1 and 11) are likely to come from
- A the sounds of traffic.
 - B wind in the narrow streets.
 - C a thunderstorm passing overhead.
 - D wind in the leaves of the palm tree.

- 27 The 'call' (line 11) serves to
- A remind the poet of the beauty of the city.
 - B make even louder the noise of the city.
 - C transport the speaker to another place.
 - D frighten and confuse the speaker.

- 28 The speaker finds the trunk of the palm tree to be
- A flexible and sticky.
 - B alive and inviting.
 - C brittle and rough.
 - D hard and lifeless.

- 29 The 'ocean blue' mentioned in line 25 is a reference to the
- A sky above.
 - B Pacific Ocean.
 - C blue-grey streets.
 - D thick dust of the city.

- 30 For the speaker the palm tree represents mainly
- A regret.
 - B reality.
 - C escape.
 - D beauty.

DR MICHAEL ARCHER

This passage comes from a history textbook.

Dr Michael Archer, a palaeontologist from the University of New South Wales, has been in charge of excavations at Riversleigh in north-western Queensland. He has uncovered the fossils of many animals that have never been known before. On the dig one morning:

Archer looked down at the rock he was standing on — and almost passed out with excitement; the rock was literally bristling with the teeth and jaws of mammals of every kind imaginable.

5

The events of the next five minutes remain a bit of a blur in all of our memories. The whole group, responding to the incoherent and decidedly unscientific shouts of its leader, descended on the area. Despite the carpet of prickly spinifex grass which almost covered the rocks, everyone was crawling around on hands and knees shouting out to each other all of the new delights they were finding. In that brief handful of moments, in a mere 10 square metres of area, we spotted well over 100 mammal specimens representing about 30 species that no one had ever seen before.

10

15

One of the fossils discovered at Riversleigh is a 'weird thing'. It was a small animal the size of a rabbit. It had only cutting cheek teeth. This means it would not have been able to grind its food before swallowing it. The animal has been nicknamed 'Thingodonta'.

20

31 The passage suggests that in research of this sort it is unusual to find

- A** plant specimens.
- B** mammal specimens.
- C** so many unusual species in one place.
- D** so many examples of a single species in one place.

32 Archer was excited by what he saw on the rock because he

- A** found so many fossils in a single site.
- B** had never before sighted a 'Thingodonta'.
- C** was the first member of the group to find anything.
- D** believed that he would find more fossils in the area.

- 33** In the phrase ‘On the dig one morning’ (line 4) the word ‘dig’ refers to
- A** the site being excavated.
 - B** a kind of rock formation.
 - C** the remains of an animal’s burrow.
 - D** the base camp of the palaeontologists.
- 34** The writer included lines 5–19 in the passage to
- A** give more detail about the fossils.
 - B** give a detailed description of the site.
 - C** give a vivid impression of the excitement.
 - D** convey the careful work required of palaeontologists.
- 35** The fossil was called ‘Thingodonta’ because
- A** it has an unusual size and shape.
 - B** it did not fit any known classification.
 - C** ‘Thingodonta’ is the translation of ‘weird thing’.
 - D** the group thought it must have been a pet in ancient times.

END OF READING SAMPLE QUESTIONS

LOOK BACK OVER YOUR WORK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Reading 1

Item	Key
1	C
2	C
3	B
4	A
5	B
6	B
7	C
8	D
9	A
10	C
11	C
12	B
13	C
14	C
15	A
16	B
17	C
18	C
19	C
20	C
21	D
22	D
23	A
24	B
25	A
26	D
27	C
28	B
29	A
30	C
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