

Devonport High School for Boys

Specimen English Entrance Exam

Writing Test



Candidate name _____

Candidate number _____

The Graff Diamond – A thief strikes! – Descriptive Writing

You have 40 minutes to answer the question below. You will need to read the material provided first and then think about the question you have been asked to complete.

You should spend 10 minutes planning your answer before spending 30 minutes writing your response.

You should leave enough time to check your answer and ensure you have accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Notes for opening chapter of novel:

Include the following:

Ideas from this news story

Description of the setting to build atmosphere

Some dialogue

Graff Diamond Stolen!
The world famous Graff Diamond was stolen from the Hertfordshire home of its owners, the Graff family, yesterday.

‘The diamonds are worth millions and are irreplaceable,’ said Marcus Graff. ‘My Grandfather brought them back from India, so they have great sentimental value.’

The diamond has an unusual history, some believing it is cursed. Last night police were searching the Graff mansion and the butler was missing...

Write the **first chapter** of a novel using details about the Graff Diamond robbery. Include a **detective** as your main character and use **descriptive details** to interest your reader.

You must remember to use the following:

- Paragraphs
- A range of descriptive writing techniques, such as similes or metaphors, adjectives and details about the character
- Accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

(20 marks)

DHSB English Entrance Exam Specimen

The Graff Diamonds – A Thief Strikes – Descriptive Writing

The marking criteria set out below is designed to award a ‘best fit’ mark and is indicative of the skills, techniques and content that candidates may demonstrate in their writing, however, marks awarded are not limited solely to these examples.

Sentence Structure, Punctuation and Organisation	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple connectives (<i>and, so</i>) link clauses in the writing (<i>The house and gardens had been searched...</i>). Sentence subjects may be repeated with simple verb forms, not always controlled (<i>The detective wanted. He suspected...</i>). • Simple noun phrases (<i>big house; spooky gardens</i>) add limited detail. Within sections, some attempt to link ideas through content. • Sentences generally correctly demarcated with some attempt to use other punctuation. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences generally grammatically sound with some variation in structure, e.g. simple subordination to give detail to descriptions (<i>The large house was empty but I suspected someone was in there</i>). • Some variation in verb forms and tenses, e.g. modals for making suggestions/suggesting possible motives for the theft (<i>I should have checked the safe...</i>); imperatives (<i>‘Provide an alibi,’ said the Detective</i>), though these patterns may be repeated. • Noun phrases add relevant detail (<i>an empty driveway, a large house</i>). Within sections or paragraphs, content mostly organised around main ideas. • Most sentences correctly demarcated with some use of other punctuation, e.g. dashes or colons to introduce lists. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some range of sentence structures, with some variety of connectives, develops the suggestions (... <i>a number of possibilities, however, the gardener was under suspicion...</i>). • Adaptation of verb forms mostly secure, e.g. conditional and modal to express possibility (<i>‘If you can provide details for when family members left the house it would help ...’</i>). • Relevant detail built up through expanded noun phrases (<i>A dark, deserted driveway led to a grey house...</i>). Within paragraphs or sections, main suggestions developed by some supportive detail (...<i>the window examined earlier couldn’t have provided an escape route as it was firmly locked ...</i>), with some attempt to make effective links between sentences, eg referring back using pronouns (<i>this, that</i>). • Almost all sentences correctly demarcated with some use of a range of other punctuation, e.g. brackets, exclamation marks. 	3,4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of structures used to vary the length and focus of sentences and to develop the story, e.g. fronted phrases for emphasis (<i>As an experienced detective, I ...</i>). • Movement between tenses and verb forms is mostly secure, establishing shades of meaning, e.g. including modals and passive constructions (<i>I recommend a thorough search of the entire property, which should provide further clues</i>). • Adverbials add detail to the story and its plot (<i>‘At four this afternoon we discovered this piece of evidence Sir...’</i>) Within paragraphs, ideas sequenced or linked by range of devices, e.g. controlled use of related connectives (<i>One thing ... another ... something else ...</i>) or time related connectives to help develop chronology and events in story (<i>Firstly, we must check...</i>). • A range of punctuation used mostly securely, to mark the structure of sentences and to give clarity. 	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of sentence structures deployed to give clarity and emphasis and to make the description and development of the story convincing. • Shifts between a range of verb forms are managed confidently, e.g. interweaving present tense with an effective combination of modals (<i>‘I demand a full search as there could be some valuable clues here...’</i>); incorporating impersonal constructions and passives to suggest authority (<i>It is essential that the investigation uncovers the thief!</i>). • Within paragraphs a range of devices is used deliberately to support cohesion, e.g. Connectives to link idea of cause and effect, ‘firstly’, ‘Consequently’, ‘As a result of my 	6

<p>investigation...’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of punctuation used correctly, for clarity and sometimes for emphasis or effect. 	
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Composition and Effect	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing shows evidence of a simple viewpoint (<i>The detective looked around</i>). • Some awareness of appropriate style for a descriptive/creative piece, e.g. through choice of vocabulary (<i>theft, robbery, investigation</i>) though not always sustained. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A form appropriate for the descriptive writing is maintained, showing some awareness of purpose and reader, e.g. opening sets the scene and introduces the crime and key character/s (<i>It was a dark, cold night and the safe was wide open and empty...</i>). • A narrative voice is established and generally maintained, e.g. some thought given to most effective narrative voice – 1st or 3rd person – and used effectively (‘The detective looked carefully; he was knowledgeable...’). • Some straightforward stylistic features support the story, e.g. setting established at start, paragraphs develop story and action before reaching an appropriate ending. 	2,3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of a form appropriate for descriptive writing are used, showing awareness of reader and purpose, e.g. an appropriate tone which builds some suspense and atmosphere appropriate to this genre (‘The Graff diamond was said to be the most expensive in the country; how could it just disappear?’). • A clear and consistent narrative voice is established and controlled, e.g. a central detective figure narrates and talks through the crime and his thinking (‘I suspected the gardener as he had no alibi and had financial problems. But I couldn’t be sure.’). Narrative voice helps to develop the central character/s. • Appropriate stylistic devices used to enhance writing and to show attention to main features of task: descriptive writing techniques used to create atmosphere and suspense, rhetorical questions to help convey character/build narrative (‘Who was responsible?’) and dialogue used to help convey character/s. 	4,5,6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is well-constructed with a convincing detective character and a sense of development throughout the opening chapter, with attention given to how the chapter ends, e.g. with a cliffhanger ending, a question, a moment of intense action, etc. • The viewpoint narrative voice is well controlled and sustained throughout, with a choice of either 1st or 3rd person narrator used to successfully develop story and to reveal aspects of character in a more subtle and controlled manner. • A range of stylistic features supports the opening chapter, e.g. descriptive features such as metaphors and similes to help add to character and atmosphere, extended noun phrases for vivid descriptions as well as features already mentioned. 	7,8,9

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opening chapter is consciously crafted to have an impact on the reader and successfully builds atmosphere and suspense by utilising a range of techniques including the overall structure of the chapter. • The narrative voice is well-sustained and remains consistent throughout, being used to reveal details of character and plot, often creating a strong sense of the detective genre through thoughtful use of the voice ('I thought to myself: what would I do if I were the thief?'). • A range of well-judged stylistic features deployed to create a consistently engaging and convincing opening chapter with features used confidently. 	10
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Spelling and Vocabulary	Marks
<p>Main criterion: the spelling of simple and common polysyllabic words is usually accurate. Likely patterns of error: There may be some confusion of more complex homophones (e.g. <i>course / coarse; breaking / braking</i>), phoneme omission (e.g. <i>rem[em]ber</i>). There may be errors in using suffixes and prefixes (e.g. <i>tryed; familys; dissappear; hoping / hopeing / hopping</i>).</p>	1
<p>Main criterion: the spelling of simple words with complex regular patterns is usually accurate. Likely patterns of error: There may be incorrect hyphenation of some compound words (e.g. <i>re-act; grand-father</i>). There may be errors in more complex suffix formations (e.g. <i>responsable; physicly; basicly</i>).</p>	2
<p>Main criterion: most spelling, including that of irregular words, is usually correct. Likely patterns of error: Errors may occur with unstressed vowels (e.g. <i>dependant; definately</i>) or with consonant doubling in some more complex words (e.g. <i>embarrasement; occassionally; adress</i>).</p>	3
<p>Main criterion: virtually all spelling, including that of complex irregular words, is correct. Any errors stand out as untypical or one-off slips.</p>	4