

English 13+ Entrance Exam, – one hour

Answer both sections, allocating half the time to each.

Section A: Comprehension

Read this extract from *Life of Pi* below, and answer all of the questions that follow.

The narrator, Pi, is stranded at sea in a lifeboat with a tiger whom he has named Richard Parker. A storm hits.

Once there was lightning. The sky was so black, day looked like night. The downpour was heavy. I heard thunder far away. I thought it would stay at that. But a wind came up, throwing the rain this way and that. Right after, a white splinter came crashing down from the sky, puncturing the water. It was some distance from the lifeboat, but the effect was perfectly visible. The water was shot through with what looked like white roots; briefly, a great celestial* tree stood in the ocean. I had never imagined such a thing possible, lightning striking the sea. The clap of thunder was tremendous. The flash of light was incredibly vivid.

I turned to Richard Parker and said, "Look, Richard Parker, a bolt of lightning." I saw how he felt about it. He was flat on the floor of the boat, limbs splayed and visibly trembling.

The effect on me was completely the opposite. It was something to pull me out of my limited mortal ways and thrust me into a state of exalted** wonder.

Suddenly a bolt struck much closer. Perhaps it was meant for us: we had just fallen off the crest of a swell and were sinking down its back when its top was hit. There was an explosion of hot air and hot water. For two, perhaps three seconds, a gigantic, blinding white shard of glass from a broken cosmic window danced in the sky, insubstantial yet overwhelmingly powerful. Ten thousand trumpets and twenty thousand drums could not have made as much noise as that bolt of lightning; it was positively deafening. The sea turned white and all colour disappeared. Everything was either pure white light or pure black shadow. The light did not seem to illuminate so much as to penetrate. As quickly as it had appeared, the bolt vanished – the spray of hot water had not finished landing upon us and already it was gone. The punished swell returned to black and rolled on indifferently.

I was dazed, thunderstruck – nearly in the true sense of the word.

I was breathless and wordless. I lay back on the tarpaulin, arms and legs spread wide. The rain chilled me to the bone. But I was smiling. I remember that close encounter with electrocution and third-degree burns as one of the few times during my ordeal when I felt genuine happiness.

(From *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel)

***celestial**: positioned in, or relating to, the sky or outer space

****exalted**: in a state of extreme happiness

Answer the questions that follow in full sentences, using good spelling and grammar. The number of marks available for each is an indication of how much detail you need in your answers.

Understanding

1. What are Pi and the tiger, Richard Parker, travelling in? (1 mark)
2. How does the reader know that it is dark in the first line? (2 marks)
3. Write down the **two metaphors** that describe the lightning in the first paragraph. (2 marks)
4. How does the reader know that the tiger, Richard Parker, is afraid of the storm? Give **three reasons** from the second paragraph. (3 marks)
5. The flash of light is described as 'incredibly **vivid**' – what does the word 'vivid' **mean**? (1 mark)

Comment and Appreciation – quote from the text

6. As Pi mentions in the last sentence, what are the dangers of being exposed to a thunder and lightning storm at sea? Give **two** possible dangers. (2 marks)
7. The **sound** of the thunder is described many times in the extract. Select **three brief phrases** in which the sound is described and explain the effect on the reader. **Analyse each one separately**, explaining why they are effective in conjuring up the sound of the storm for the reader. (6 marks)
8. Pi's response to the storm is the opposite of the tiger's – how does the reader know this? Select **four brief quotations** and **analyse them separately**. (8 marks)

Total marks for Section A: 25

Section B: Writing

For this task, you should aim to write at least a page but remember: what you write is more important than how much you write.

Answer ONE of the following, remembering to use good spelling and grammar. Try to make your writing as interesting and atmospheric as possible.

EITHER

THE STORM

Continue the description of the thunder and lightning storm at sea.

- Maintain the sense of danger, tension and high drama in the weather
- Explain what happens to Pi and the tiger, Richard Parker, next
- Use your imagination and descriptive writing techniques to write a tense, exciting and interesting tale

OR

HAPPINESS

Write about a time when you felt genuinely happy.

In detail, **describe**:

- Your emotions and feelings
- The event or occurrence that made you happy and any other people involved
- What made this time so memorable for you

You can base your ideas on your own experience or invention, as you wish.

Total marks for Section B: 25

(Total marks for paper: 50)