



TEST CONTENT INTERNATIONAL SECTION: 3E

There is a written and an oral test

1. The candidate will have 1 hour for the written test which comprises:

- A passage from a text to be read with comprehension and interpretation questions (20 marks)
- An unseen text (poetry or prose) where the candidate will respond with close analysis and reference to the chosen text (20 marks)

2. The oral test lasts about 5 minutes

Candidates must be fluent speakers of English

- Candidates may be asked to read a text aloud and then they will be asked questions on this text
- They will then be engaged in general conversation about the place of English in their world and their motivation for studying in the International Section

HOW TO HELP CANDIDATES TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST

- Read with them regularly
- Encourage them to read aloud for you on a regular basis
- Speak English with them as often as possible
- Allow them the opportunity to interact with native speakers of English here in Singapore where English is an official language
- Have them watch films in English as often as possible
- Ensure that they work hard at their English lessons in school, completing homework thoroughly and accurately, and achieving high grades

EXAMPLE OF A TEST FOR ENTRY TO 3E

READING

You should spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions which follow.

In this passage, the writer describes how some animals hunt together in teams.

Teamwork – a great achievement?

Many animals who hunt find it useful to work together in teams. Chimpanzees regularly hunt in teams within which there are specialised roles, usually taken by particular individuals. These chimpanzees live in forests and usually eat fruit, leaves and nuts. But at least once a week they hunt for meat. Their prey are two species of colobus monkeys. A colobus weighs less than half a chimpanzee, so



they can venture out on to branches that would break under a chimpanzee's weight. So, in theory, a colobus should find it easy to escape from a chimpanzee. The chimpanzees can only catch them by working in teams.

Before a hunt, the team assembles gradually. The males come together in a posse. The change in their behaviour is dramatic. There is no more calling and hooting, no picking up of fruit or plucking of leaves. They pace together through the forest in silence, sometimes stopping and listening for the calls of colobus monkeys. It may take only twenty minutes or as long as two hours before they find the monkeys and are sufficiently close to them to launch an attack.

Suddenly, the driver chimpanzee runs up a tree, climbing swiftly. He will, if he can, isolate one or two monkeys from the main troop. Most of the chimpanzees stay on the ground as spectators. The adult females bob and dance with excitement, standing upright, craning their heads back and forth to see just what is going on. If one monkey is separated, the blocker chimpanzees dash up into the trees ahead to take up their positions, crashing through the branches in a way that is quite unlike their normal movements.

Now all is action. The ambusher chimpanzee sprints ahead to find the place where he will hide in the leaves, while the chasers move in front of the blockers and run along the branches trying to grab the monkey and chasing it towards the place where the ambusher sits hidden. The colobus monkey, driven forward between the blockers, is deceived into thinking that an avenue of escape lies ahead until suddenly the ambusher reveals himself. The monkey hesitates, turns back and is grabbed by the catchers. As they grab the monkey, they scream with excitement. Their calls are immediately taken up by the whole team and the spectators on the ground so that the forest rings with wild and terrifying shrieks.

More than half these hunts are successful. Some only last a few minutes. If a particular monkey is chased and harried for as long as ten minutes, it may become so stressed that eventually it gives up trying to escape and sits to face its death without screaming or even resisting when the hunters finally seize and kill it. Sometimes, it is taken to the ground. There a scrum of excited adults, both male and female, surround it. Two of the senior males of the group, whether or not they have taken part in the hunt, tear the body apart. Each is then surrounded by adults from the group, who are handed pieces in order of seniority. If the body is a small one, the younger hunters may not be given a share.

Adolescents and babes never get anything. In the distance, the bereaved colobus monkeys still sound their alarm calls. The chimpanzees gnawing, on the bones, occasionally squeal in irritation as they squabble, but for the most part, after the excited rushes and the yells of triumph, there is contentment. A human observer may find the scene horrifying. The limp body of the monkey is only too human in its proportions, the cries of triumph only too reminiscent of a hooligan mob bent on violence in a city street. Some of us may see in these chimpanzees the images of our own hunting ancestors. But if we do, we should also detect in them the origins of the teamwork and collaboration that we have brought to an unparalleled peak of complexity and that has brought us some of our greatest achievements.

(Source: adapted from The Trials of Life by David Attenborough, Guild Publishing, 1990, pages 100–107)



Questions

1. Why should a colobus monkey find it easy to escape from a chimpanzee? (Total for Question 1 = 2 marks)
2. Look again at lines 13 – 34. In your own words, explain how the chimpanzees work together as a team during the hunt. (Total for Question 2 = 6 marks)
3. How does the writer try to create interest in the events of this passage? In your answer you should write about:
 - the presentation of the colobus monkeys and the chimpanzees
 - the links the writer makes between animals and humans
 - the words, phrases and techniques which the writer uses.
 - you may include brief quotations from the passage to support your answer.

Literature Questions

Answer EITHER Question 1 OR Question 2.

1. Read the following poem

Blessing

The skin cracks like a pod.
There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,
the small splash, echo
in a tin mug,
the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush
of fortune. The municipal pipe bursts,
silver crashes to the ground
and the flow has found
a roar of tongues. From the huts,
a congregation: every man woman
child for streets around
butts in, with pots,
brass, copper, aluminium,
plastic buckets,
frantic hands,

and naked children
screaming in the liquid sun,
their highlights polished to perfection,
flashing light,
as the blessing sings
over their small bones.

Imtiaz Dharker



Consider this poem carefully. Write about it as fully as you can. In planning your writing you should consider the following:

- The poet's attitude to her subject
- The poet's descriptive skills
- The language used
- The poem's effect on you
- Any other aspects you consider to be of importance

Total for Question 1 = 20 marks

OR

2. Read the following extract from *The Life of Pi*

Pi (the narrator) is an Indian boy from Pondicherry. In this part of the novel he reminisces about his early childhood, growing up in relative luxury, in his father's zoo.

A portion of the grounds of the Pondicherry Botanical Garden was made available rent-free for an exciting business opportunity and – lo and behold – India had a brand new zoo, designed and run according to the most modern, biologically sound principles.

It was a huge zoo, spread over numberless acres, big enough to require a train to explore it, though it seemed to get smaller as I grew older, train included. Now it's so small it fits in my head. You must imagine a hot and humid place, bathed in sunshine and bright colours. The riot of flowers is incessant.

There are trees, shrubs and climbing plants in profusion – peepuls, gulmohurs, flames of the forest, red silk cottons, jacarandas, mangoes, jackfruits and many others that would remain unknown to you if they didn't have neat labels at their feet. There are benches. On these benches you see men sleeping, stretched out, or couples sitting, young couples, who steal glances at each other shyly and whose hands flutter in the air, happening to touch.

Suddenly, amidst the tall and slim trees up ahead, you notice two giraffes quietly observing you. The sight is not the last of your surprises. The next moment you are startled by a furious outburst coming from a great troupe of monkeys, only outdone in volume by the shrill cries of strange birds.

You come to a turnstile. You distractedly pay a small sum of money. You move on. You see a low wall. What can you expect beyond a low wall? Certainly not a shallow pit with two mighty Indian rhinoceros. But that is what you find. And when you turn your head you see the elephant that was there all along, so big you didn't realize those are hippopotamuses floating in the water. The more you look, the more you see.

You are in Zootown!

Explain how the writer uses language to explore the surroundings in this extract.

In your answer you should consider:

- The writer's descriptive skills
- The writer's choice of language
- The writer's use of structure and form



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Support your answer with examples from the extract.

Total for Question 2 = 20 marks

Peepuls	= Sacred gig
Gulmohurs	= Tree
Jacarandas	= Purple flowers
Jackfruits	= Tree which bears fruit