

0860/401

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2008

TUESDAY, 6 MAY
10.35 AM – 11.25 AM

ENGLISH
STANDARD GRADE
Foundation Level
Reading
Text

Read carefully the passage overleaf. It will help if you read it twice. When you have done so, answer the questions. Use the spaces provided in the Question/Answer booklet.



Home for Christmas

- 1 Christmas Eve was not a good day to hitch-hike. Billy had been at the motorway services for nearly five hours without a sniff of a lift. No-one had even slowed down to take a look at him. And the weather was lousy. At one point, he'd had to shelter from the rain next to some bins behind the petrol station. He'd dozed off, and there was another hour gone.
- 2 Now it was getting dark, and a fog was coming in. Cars drove by him as if he wasn't there. So much for Christmas spirit! It wasn't as though Billy had a big, off-putting bag either. All he carried was a small rucksack, which used to belong to his mum. It contained all his worldly goods, such as they were, and would fit beneath his legs in the smallest car.
- 3 Maybe he should cross the six-lane road, and try to hitch back to London, where he'd come from that morning. People said that you could get a bed and something to eat more easily at Christmas. But no. With Billy's luck, he'd probably get run over crossing the motorway.
- 4 Billy began to cough. He'd had this cold on and off for two months. Other homeless people told him that your body got used to the life, when you'd been living on the streets long enough. Maybe. He'd been sleeping rough for a year now. That was long enough for him to decide that it wasn't the life for him.
- 5 The fog was getting thicker. It was colder, too. When it got really dark, he'd wander into the café, warm up a bit. Billy had enough money left for a cup of coffee. That was, presuming they'd serve him. He looked a mess.
- 6 The rain started up again. Billy shivered. His jacket was supposed to be "shower-proof", but it was wet through. Puddles were forming around his feet. Suddenly, he saw a lorry, coming towards him from the direction of the petrol station. The lorry didn't have its lights on and was driving really close to the kerb. Instead of holding his thumb out, Billy took a step back. He didn't want to get splashed by the foul, oily water that lay on the road.
- 7 Still, the lorry seemed to be driving straight at him. Billy decided to get out of its way. But as he was about to make his move, the lorry turned its lights on, full beam. He couldn't see a thing. He stood there, frozen to the spot, like a rabbit dazzled by a poacher's torch, waiting to be shot.
- 8 The lorry stopped. One of its wheels was on the kerb, only centimetres from Billy's right foot. The passenger door opened. A deep voice spoke.
- 9 "You after a lift?"
- 10 It all felt wrong. Billy knew that. But it was raining hard now, and he had been there all day. He went up to the door and opened it a little farther.
- 11 "How far are you going?" the deep voice asked.
- 12 Billy still couldn't see the driver, only hear his harsh voice.
- 13 "I'm going to Scotland. To Gretna."
- 14 "I'm going that way myself. Get in."
- 15 Billy hesitated. He had learnt to walk away from threatening situations. But the man's accent was Scottish, like his, and he could take him all the way home—or, at least, to the place he used to call home.
- 16 Billy got into the cabin. He slid his bag beneath his feet and pulled on the seatbelt before looking at the driver.
- 17 "Thanks for stopping," he said. "It's pretty horrible out there."

18 The man said nothing. His thick hands reached for the gear stick. He began to accelerate onto the M1, towards the grim, frozen north.

19 In the half light of the lorry cabin, Billy looked at the driver. The man was in his late thirties, forty at most. He had short, dark hair. His eyes were set so deeply beneath his heavy eyebrows that Billy could barely make them out. His face was scarred. He was heavy set and wore a lumberjack shirt over shapeless jeans.

20 Billy hadn't done a lot of hitching, but he knew that there was an etiquette. The hitcher had to make conversation. It was your duty to entertain the driver, even if he didn't have a lot to say for himself. The driver had to concentrate on the driving, after all.

21 "I'm Billy," he said to the man, in his friendliest voice, "Billy Gates."

22 For a moment, he thought that the driver wasn't going to reply.

23 "Hank."

24 "Bad day to have to work, Christmas Eve."

25 Again, Hank didn't answer. Instead, he speeded up, until they were doing fifty. The fog was getting thicker and it felt too fast. Still, it wasn't Billy's place to say their speed was dangerous.

26 The silence was almost as threatening as the speed they were doing. There was a radio. Billy wondered whether he should suggest switching it on.

27 "Should I . . . ?"

28 Hank interrupted before Billy had formed the sentence.

29 "I don't like music."

30 The way he said it made Billy want to jump out of the cab, even though their speed was up to fifty-five and there was nothing but filthy fog outside. Instead, he began to say the first things that came into his mind.

31 "Do you know how many cars went by before you picked me up?"

32 Hank remained silent.

33 "A thousand at least."

34 Now that he'd starting talking, he couldn't stop.

35 "I think this time of year is a pain, really," Billy said. "You know what I mean? Everyone's expected to have a good time, so when you're not, somehow it seems a hundred times worse."

36 "Aye," said Hank. "I know that all right."

37 He began to drive even faster.

Adapted from a short story

[END OF PASSAGE]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Article is taken from *Home for Christmas* from a book called *Mysterious Christmas Tales* by David Belbin. ISBN 0 439 01284 8. Published by Jennifer Luithlen Agency. Reproduced by permission of David Belbin.

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TUESDAY, 6 MAY
10.35 AM – 11.25 AM

ENGLISH
STANDARD GRADE
Foundation Level
Reading
Questions

Fill in these boxes and read what is printed below.

Full name of centre

--

Town

--

Forename(s)

--

Surname

--

Date of birth

Day Month Year

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Scottish candidate number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Number of seat

--

**NB Before leaving the examination room you must give this booklet to the invigilator.
If you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.**



QUESTIONS

Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Look at Paragraphs 1 and 2.

1. When and where does the story begin?

2 1 0

2. "... not a good day to hitch-hike." (Paragraph 1)

Give two pieces of evidence from Paragraph 1 which show this is true.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

3. Billy's situation becomes worse as it grows late.

Write down two things from Paragraph 2 which add to his difficulties.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

4. Write down an expression from Paragraph 2 which shows that drivers paid no attention to Billy.

2 ■ 0

5. Billy is carrying a rucksack.

Why would this not be a problem for drivers?

2 ■ 0

□

PAGE TOTAL

6. Give **two** reasons why the rucksack might be important to Billy.

2 1 0

Look at Paragraphs 3 to 5.

7. Billy thinks about crossing the road and returning to London.

(a) Why does he consider doing this?

2 1 0

(b) Why does he decide **not** to?

2 ■ 0

8. Billy is in bad physical shape.

(a) **Write down two ways** the writer shows us this.

2 1 0

(b) **Why** is Billy in such bad shape?

2 1 0

9. Give **two** reasons why Billy plans to go into the café later.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

10. **Write down an expression** which suggests he is a bit unsure about going into the café.

2 ■ 0

[Turn over

PAGE
TOTAL

Look at Paragraphs 6 and 7.

11. The weather is making Billy more and more miserable.

Write down three things which show this.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

2 1 0

12. **Why** has the writer put inverted commas around the word “shower-proof”?

2 ■ 0

13. When Billy **first** sees the lorry (Paragraph 6), which **two** things make it dangerous?

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

14. “. . . like a rabbit dazzled by a poacher’s torch, waiting to be shot.” (Paragraph 7)

(a) What technique is the writer using in this expression? Tick (✓) the correct box.

rhyme	<input type="checkbox"/>
metaphor	<input type="checkbox"/>
alliteration	<input type="checkbox"/>
simile	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 ■ 0

(b) What **two** things does this expression suggest about Billy?

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

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Look at Paragraphs 8 to 18.

15. **Before** Billy gets into the lorry, how does the writer make the driver seem mysterious and threatening?

2 1 0

16. “Billy hesitated.” (Paragraph 15)

Give **two** reasons why he then decides to accept the lift after all.

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2 1 0

17. “. . . —or, at least, to the place he used to call home.” (Paragraph 15)

How do you think Billy feels about his home in Scotland?

2 ■ 0

18. “. . . the grim, frozen north.” (Paragraph 18)

Explain why this is a good description of Billy’s destination.

2 1 0

Look at Paragraphs 19 and 20.

19. “. . . etiquette.” (Paragraph 20)

Tick (✓) the box beside the best definition of “etiquette”.

a conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>
a gadget	<input type="checkbox"/>
a way of behaving correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>
a solution to a problem	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 ■ 0

[Turn over for Questions 20 to 22 on Page six

Look at Paragraphs 21 to 37.

20. Billy becomes more and more nervous.

Write down three things about Hank's behaviour which make Billy feel like this.

- (i) _____
- (ii) _____
- (iii) _____

2 1 0

21. "Everyone's expected to have a good time . . ." (Paragraph 35)

Why does this bother Billy?

2 1 0

Think about the passage as a whole.

22. Do you feel sorry for Billy?

Tick (✓) one box.

Yes

No

Give two reasons from the passage to support your answer.

- (i) _____
- _____
- (ii) _____
- _____

2 1 0

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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p2

p3

p4

p5

p6

TOTAL
MARK

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