

# HIGHGATE

## 11+ test for entry – Exemplar 3

### ENGLISH

**Time allowed: 45 minutes**

- **Questions 1-4 (comprehension and analysis):** 30 minutes, including the time you take to read the passage
- **Question 5 (creative writing):** 15 minutes, including the time you take to check your answer to ensure accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar

Name	
Current school	

Teacher use only	Qu. 1-4 (out of 15)	Qu. 5 (out of 10)	Qu. 5 SPAG (out of 5)

**Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.**

*Gerald Durrell was a British writer with a passion for zoology. When he was a boy, he moved to the Greek island of Corfu with his widowed mother, sister and two brothers. The extract below is taken from his memoir, 'My Family and Other Animals.' Here, Durrell describes the 'Pink Villa' that became the family's first home and also a local taxi driver named Spiro, who quickly establishes himself as their guide and closest friend.*

5 The villa was small and square, standing in its tiny garden with an air of pink-faced  
determination. Its shutters had been faded by the sun to a delicate creamy-green, cracked  
and bubbled in places. The garden, surrounded by tall fuchsia hedges, had the flower-beds  
10 worked in complicated geometrical patterns, marked with smooth white stones. The white  
cobble paths, scarcely as wide as a rake's head, wound laboriously round beds hardly  
larger than a big straw hat, beds in the shape of stars, half-moons, triangles, and circles, all  
15 overgrown with a shaggy tangle of flowers run wild. Roses dropped petals that seemed as  
big and smooth as saucers, flame-red, moon-white, glossy, and unwrinkled; marigolds like  
broods of shaggy suns stood watching their parent's progress through the sky. In the low  
20 growth the pansies pushed their velvety, innocent faces through the leaves, and the violets  
drooped sorrowfully under their heart-shaped leaves. The bougainvillea 1 that sprawled  
luxuriously over the tiny front balcony was hung, as though for a carnival, with its lantern-  
shaped magenta 2 flowers. In the darkness of the fuchsia-hedge a thousand ballerina-like  
25 blooms quivered expectantly. The warm air was thick with the scent of a hundred dying  
flowers, and full of the gentle, soothing whisper and murmur of insects. As soon as we saw  
it, we wanted to live there – it was as though the villa had been standing there waiting for  
30 our arrival. We felt we had come home.

35 Having lumbered so unexpectedly into our lives, Spiro now took over complete control of  
our affairs. It was better, he explained, for him to do things, as everyone knew him, and he  
would make sure we were not swindled.

'Donts you worrys yourselfs about anythings, Mrs Durrells,' he had scowled; 'leaves  
everythings to me.'

So he would take us shopping, and after an hour's sweating and roaring he would get the  
price of an article reduced by perhaps two drachmas. This was approximately a penny; it  
was not the cash, but the principle of the thing, he explained. The fact that he was Greek  
and adored bargaining was, of course, another reason. It was Spiro who, on discovering that  
our money had not yet arrived from England, subsidised us, and took it upon himself to go  
and speak severely to the bank manager about his lack of organisation. That it was not the  
poor manager's fault did not deter him in the least. It was Spiro who paid our hotel bill, who  
organised a cart to carry our luggage to the villa, and who drove us out there himself, his  
car piled high with groceries that he had purchased for us.

That he knew everyone on the island, and that they all knew him, we soon discovered was  
no idle boast. Wherever his car stopped, half a dozen voices would shout out his name, and  
hands would beckon him to sit at the little tables under the trees and drink coffee.  
Policemen, peasants, and priests waved and smiled as he passed; fishermen, grocers, and  
cafe-owners greeted him like a brother. 'Ah, Spiro!' they would say, and smile at him  
affectionately as though he was a naughty but lovable child. They respected his honesty, his  
belligerence<sup>3</sup>, and above all they adored his typically Greek scorn and fearlessness when  
dealing with any form of Governmental red tape.

Spend 30 minutes on Questions 1-4 (comprehension and analysis), including the time you take to read the passage.

**Re-read the opening paragraph (lines 1 to 17).**

1. Give two different features of the villa, either short quotations or in your own words.  
**(2 marks)**

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2. Give a quotation that suggests the villa has not been well looked after.  
**(1 mark)**

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3. a. Give a quotation that makes one of the types of flowers seem vivid to you.

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- b. Explain *how* your quotation does this. Consider the meaning of the words and their associations.

**(5 marks)**

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***Re-read from line 18 to the end.***

4. What does the writer want you to feel about the Spiro? Use quotations to explain your ideas and remember to consider the meanings of words and their associations. You could think about:
- a. How he and his actions are described
  - b. How others react to him

**(7 marks)**

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**Spend 15 minutes on Question 5 (creative writing), including the time you take to check your answer to ensure accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.**

5. Imagine you have travelled to a strange new place on holiday. Write a short diary entry describing your destination and a person whom you encounter.

You should try to make it clear:

- What the place is like
- What the person is like
- How you feel about them

You might like to:

- Use the senses
- Use a simile or a metaphor

**(10 marks for content, 5 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.)**

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