



ST PAUL'S
GIRLS' SCHOOL

First Year Entrance Examination 2020

English

READING PASSAGE

One hour and fifteen minutes
(including the 10 minutes reading time)

Read the passage inside and the short introduction to it very carefully. The numbers on the left of the passage are line numbers.

You should spend 10 minutes reading before you go on to answer the questions in the booklet. You may highlight and make notes on the passage during your reading time. You will be told when the 10 minutes are up.

Set in the 1850s, this passage is narrated by a young boy called David, who is adjusting to life with his mother, Clara, and her new husband, Mr Murdstone. David here describes the arrival of Mr Murdstone's sister, Miss Murdstone, who has come to stay with them for awhile.

After dinner, when we were sitting by the fire, and I was meditating an escape without having the hardihood¹ to slip away, lest it should offend the master of the house, a coach drove up to the garden-gate and he went out to receive the visitor. My mother followed him. I was timidly
5 following her, when she turned round at the parlour door in the dusk, and taking me in her embrace as she had been used to do, whispered me to love my new father and be obedient to him. She did this hurriedly and secretly, but tenderly; and, putting out her hand behind her, held mine in it, until we came near to where he was standing in the garden, where she
10 let mine go, and drew hers through his arm.

It was Miss Murdstone who was arrived, and a gloomy-looking lady she was; dark, like her brother, whom she greatly resembled in face and voice; and with very heavy eyebrows, nearly meeting over her large nose, as if, being disabled by the wrongs of her sex from wearing whiskers,²
15 she had carried them to that account. She brought with her two uncompromising³ hard black boxes, with her initials on the lids in hard brass nails. When she paid the coachman she took her money out of a hard steel purse, and she kept the purse in a very jail of a bag, which hung upon her arm by a heavy chain, and shut up like a bite. I had never, at that
20 time, seen such a metallic lady altogether as Miss Murdstone was.

She was brought into the parlour with many tokens of welcome, and there formally recognised my mother as a new and near relation. Then she looked at me, and said:

‘Is that your boy, sister-in-law?’

25 My mother acknowledged me.

‘Generally speaking,’ said Miss Murdstone, ‘I don’t like boys. How d’ye do, boy?’

Under these encouraging circumstances, I replied that I was very well, and that I hoped she was the same; with such an indifferent grace, that
30 Miss Murdstone disposed of me in two words:

‘Wants⁴ manner!’

Having uttered this, with great distinctness, she begged the favour of being shown to her room, which became to me from that time forth a place of awe and dread, wherein the two black boxes were never seen

¹ *hardihood* - bravery

² *whiskers* - beard and moustache

³ *uncompromising* - not flexible

⁴ *wants* - lacks

35 open or known to be left unlocked, and where (for I peeped in once or
twice when she was out) numerous little steel fetters and rivets,⁵ with
which Miss Murdstone embellished⁶ herself when she was dressed,
generally hung upon the looking-glass in formidable array.⁷

As well as I could make out, she had come for good, and had no
intention of ever going again. She began to ‘help’ my mother next
40 morning, and was in and out of the store-closet all day, putting things to
rights, and making havoc⁸ in the old arrangements. Almost the first
remarkable thing I observed in Miss Murdstone was, her being constantly
haunted by a suspicion that the servants had a man secreted⁹ somewhere
on the premises. Under the influence of this delusion, she dived into the
45 coal-cellar at the most untimely hours, and scarcely ever opened the door
of a dark cupboard without clapping it to again, in the belief that she had
got him.

Though there was nothing very airy about Miss Murdstone, she was a
perfect lark¹⁰ in point of getting up. She was up (and, as I believe to this
50 hour, looking for that man) before anybody in the house was stirring.
Peggotty¹¹ gave it as her opinion that she even slept with one eye open;
but I could not concur¹² in this idea; for I tried it myself after hearing the
suggestion thrown out, and found it couldn’t be done.

On the very first morning after her arrival she was up and ringing her
55 bell at cock-crow. When my mother came down to breakfast and was
going to make the tea, Miss Murdstone gave her a kind of peck on the
cheek, which was her nearest approach to a kiss, and said:

‘Now, Clara, my dear, I am come here, you know, to relieve you of all
the trouble I can. You’re much too pretty and thoughtless to have any
60 duties imposed upon you that can be undertaken by me. If you’ll be so
good as give me your keys, my dear, I’ll attend to all this sort of thing in
future.’

From that time, Miss Murdstone kept the keys in her own little jail all
day, and under her pillow all night, and my mother had no more to do
65 with them than I had.

⁵ *fetters* - chains; *rivets* - metal fasteners

⁶ *embellished* - decorated

⁷ *formidable* - powerful; *array* - an impressive display

⁸ *havoc* - chaos

⁹ *secreted* - hidden

¹⁰ *lark* - a bird that sings early in the morning

¹¹ *Peggotty* - the name of the housekeeper, a servant

¹² *concur* - agree



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Name: _____ **Group:** _____

First Year Entrance Examination 2020

English

QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOKLET

One hour and fifteen minutes
(including the 10 minutes reading time)

- Keep looking back at the passage as you answer the questions
- Take care to do exactly what the question asks you to do
- There are no marks awarded for individual questions – your paper will be assessed as a whole
- Use the space provided for your answers as a guide as to how much we would like you to write
- Write your answers in full sentences
- There are 7 questions. Read them all carefully before you attempt them. You are advised to attempt all questions.

1. How do you think David is feeling in lines 1-10? Use examples to support your ideas.

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2. In your own words, write three things you learn about Miss Murdstone's appearance, as described in lines 11-15:

a)

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b)

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c)

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3. Look again at this quotation from lines 15-17. What does this description of Miss Murdstone's luggage tell you about her character? Pay particularly close attention to the words and phrases underlined.

She had brought with her two uncompromising hard black boxes, with her initials on the lids in hard brass nails.

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4. Look again at this quotation from lines 18-19:

...she kept the purse in a very jail of a bag, which hung upon her arm by a heavy chain, and shut up like a bite.

What do you find interesting about the way that the writer describes Miss Murdstone's bag? Pay particularly close attention to the words and phrases underlined.

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