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Could you pass the 11-plus? Exam papers first used in the 1950s puts your family to the test

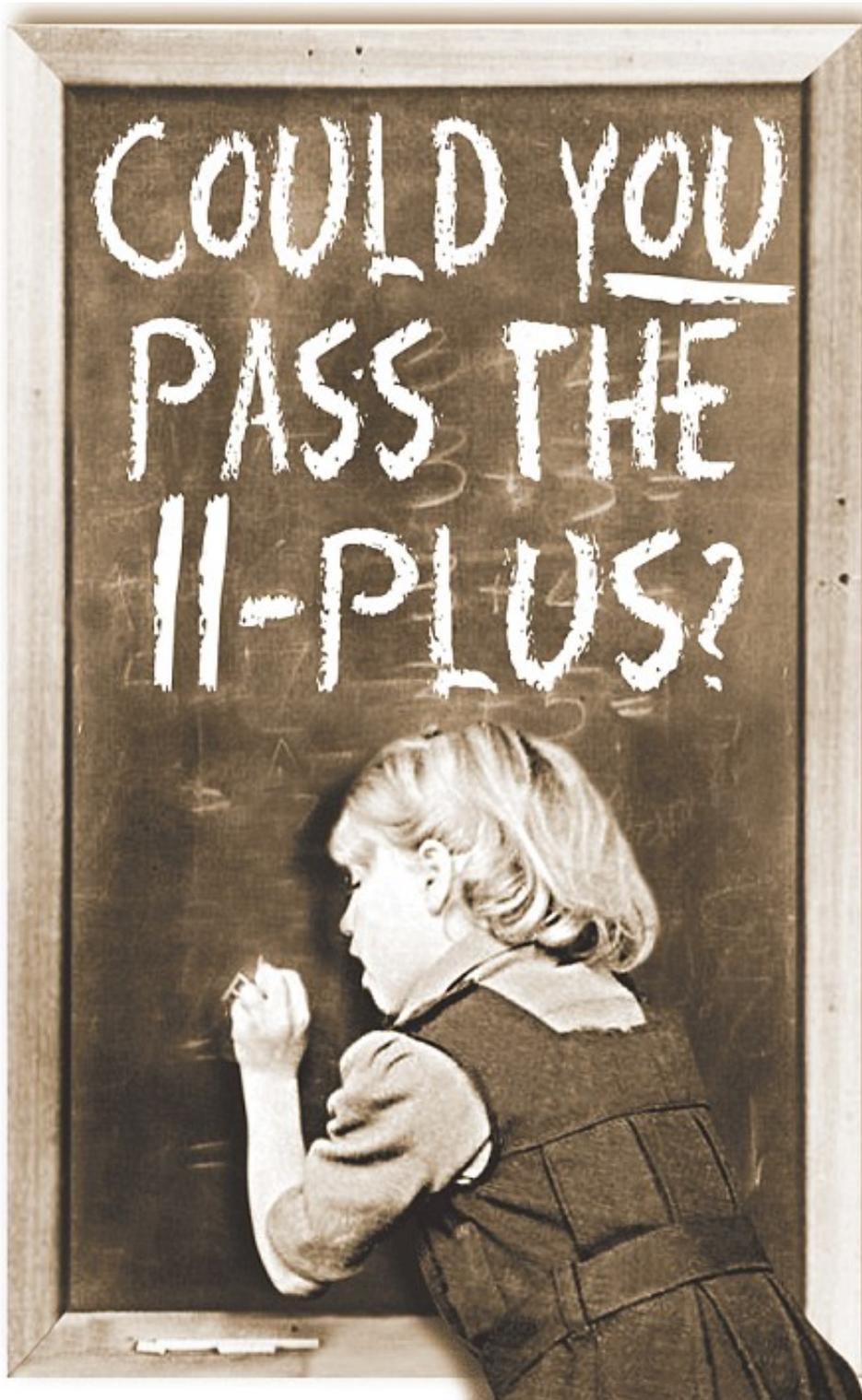
By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

Last updated at 12:12 AM on 01st July 2008

Their very name still deeply divides opinion. For some, the Eleven-Plus exams, which determined whether a child would go to a grammar school or the academically inferior secondary modern, set the educational benchmark.

For others, they were hated symbols of a segregated, two-tier schooling system.

But whichever side you are on, few dispute that the old exams provide a stark illustration of how academic standards have tumbled since the Eleven-Plus was largely phased out in the mid-Seventies. Now a new book of actual questions from the Forties and Fifties allows you to put that claim to the test. So, sharpen your pencil, open your notebook and test the whole family against the standards of another age. . .



GENERAL ENGLISH

1. Make adjectives from these nouns: beauty, slope, glass, friend, doubt, expense, delight, sleep, danger, sport.
2. Write these lines of poetry in the usual way, putting in capital letters and the correct punctuation: the evening is coming the sun sinks to rest the rooks are all flying straight home to the nest caw says the rook, as he flies overhead it's time little people were going to bed.
3. Choose the correct word from those in brackets:
 - a) She gave the (fare, fair) to the conductor.
 - b) I am (confidant, confident) of success.
 - c) Why does she (die, dye) her hair?

- d) His sister has (wrote, written) him a letter.
- e) The screw fell off because it was (lose, loose).
4. Fill in the relative pronoun in the following sentences:
- a) That is the coat my brother took away.
- b) The man to I spoke was very disagreeable.
- c) The boy ball I kicked was offended.
- d) The man does his duty is always brave.
- e) He asked me I intended to do.

5. Each of the following sentences contains one error. Re-write the sentences correctly:

- a) This is not an Infant's School.
- b) I am told that Tom Jones's brother have won a scholarship.
- c) The bishop and another fellow then entered the hall.
- d) When the dog recognised me it wagged it's tail.
- e) The matter does not concern you or I.
- f) Talking to my friend, the bus passed me.

COMPREHENSION

Read the following:

'You are old, Father William,' the young man said, 'And your hair has become very white; And yet you incessantly stand on your head - Do you think, at your age, it is right?'

'In my youth,' Father William replied to his son, 'I feared it might injure the brain; 'But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none, 'Why, I do it again and again.'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'as I mentioned before, 'And have grown most uncommonly fat;

'Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door - 'Pray, what is the reason of that?' 'In my youth,' said the sage, as he shook his grey locks, 'I kept all my limbs very supple.

'By the use of this ointment - one shilling the box - 'Allow me to send you a couple?'

Now answer these questions:

- a) Father William was certainly a queer man. Mention two queer things that he did.
- b) When he was young, Father William thought that one of his pranks might do him harm. When he was old, he changed his mind. Why?
- c) What does 'incessantly' mean? What is a back-somersault?
- d) What does the word 'supple' mean? How did Father William keep supple? Do you keep supple in the same way?
- e) What signs of old age did Father William show?

ARITHMETIC

Read the following:

1. 3,755 is multiplied by 25 and the result is divided by 125. Write down the answer.
2. A motorist leaves home at 10.15am and drives at 32 miles per hour. He stops for lunch from noon to 1.45pm and then continues his journey at 30 miles per hour. How many miles has he travelled by 5pm?

3. An aeroplane uses 100 gallons of petrol for a flight of 150 miles. How far could it fly using 40 gallons?
4. Write in figures: twelve thousand and twelve.
5. A race started at 23 minutes past three and finished at 23 minutes to four. How long did it take?
6. Simplify:
 - a) $1,000 - 10$
 - b) 25×12
 - c) 615 divided by 3
 - d) $0.5 + 0.75$
 - e) The fractions $\frac{4}{5} - \frac{7}{10}$
7. Of 800 people living in a village, half are men and half women. A quarter of the men leave the village to join the army. How many more women than men now remain?
8. Multiply 7,296 by 479.
9. Which of these numbers is divisible by 4 without any remainder: 214, 230, 226, 224, 218?
10. Add all the odd numbers between 12 and 20.

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE/KNOWLEDGE

Read the following:

1. The letters ERBDA are just the letters of the word BREAD mixed up. Now, straighten up the following:

- a) AAANNB is a fruit which comes from abroad.
- b) ROHES is a large animal.
- c) GRATEAMR is a girl's name.
- d) DWEBORRA is an article of furniture.
- e) SAIRINS are used in Christmas puddings.

2. Select and write down one of the answers below which makes the best answer to the following:

A woman who had fallen into the water was dragged out in a drowning condition by a man, but she did not thank him because:

- a) She never felt thankful for small things.
- b) She did not know the man well enough.
- c) She was feeling better.
- d) She was still unconscious.

3. Complete the following by giving words expressing sound and ending in 'ing'.
e.g. the humming of telephone wires.

- a) the of leaves
- b) the of anvils.
- c) the of brakes.
- d) the of stairs.

4. In each of the sets of words given below there is one word meaning something rather different from the other three. Find the different word in each line and write it down:

- a) alike, same, similar, somewhat.

- b) pigeon, duck, goose, swan.
- c) bus, conductor, passenger, driver.
- d) this, that, the, those.
- e) firm, rough, solid, hard.
- f) desk, book, cupboard, drawer.
- g) spade, earth, sand, gravel.
- h) pretty, nice, charm, lovely.
- i) justice, merciful, pitying, forgiving.
- j) tumbler, cup, mug, jug.
- k) fishing, rowing, climbing, swimming.
- l) scarlet, blue, red, pink.
- m) sewing, cotton, needle, calico.

5. Each of the following sentences here can be made into better sense by interchanging two words.

Re-write the sentences correctly: E.g. Milk like cats - Cats like milk.

- a) Our black cat had a retriever with the fight next door.
- b) The sea went to the family for a swim.
- c) The shepherd whistled by the gate and stood to his dog.
- d) A was stung by Joan bee.
- e) Sailors have to climb able to be.

ANSWERS

In addition to the above, students were asked to write essays on subjects as varied as: 'The bravest deed that I know', Eggs, Everest, The Gothic, Queen Salote, The Maoris, and 'What life must be like as a cat'.

One group of students even had to give an account of an imaginary talk between an eagle and an owl.

GENERAL ENGLISH

1. beautiful, sloping, glassy, friendly, doubting, expensive, delightful, sleeping, dangerous, sporting/sporty
2. The evening is coming, The sun sinks to rest, The rooks are all flying Straight home to the nest. 'Caw', says the rook, As he flies overhead, 'It's time little people Were going to bed.'
3. a) fare; b) confident; c) dye; d) written; e) loose
4. a) which; b) whom; c) whose;
5. a) This is not an Infants' School.
- b) I am told that Tom Jones's brother has won a scholarship.
- c) The bishop and another gentleman then entered the hall.
- d) When the dog recognised me it wagged its tail.
- e) The matter does not concern you or me.
- f) While talking to my friend, the bus passed me.

COMPREHENSION

- a) Two queer things that Father William did were to stand on his head and turn a back-somersault at the door.
- b) Father William changed his mind because he is sure he doesn't have a brain to injure.
- c) 'Incessantly' means repeatedly, without relief. A back-somersault is when someone jumps over backwards.
- d) The word 'supple' means flexible. Father William kept supple by using an ointment.
- e) The signs of old age that Father William showed were white hair and growing fat.

ARITHMETIC

1. 751
2. 153.5 miles
3. 60 miles
4. 12,012
5. 14 minutes
6. a) 990 b) 300 c) 205 d) 1.25 e) 1/10
7. 100 more women
8. 3,494,784
9. 224
10. 64

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE/ KNOWLEDGE

1. a) banana; b) horse; c) Margaret d) wardrobe; e) raisins
2. The best answer would be d)
3. a) rustling; b) banging; c) screeching; d) creaking
4. a) somewhat; b) pigeon; c) bus; d) the; e) rough; f) book; g) spade; h) charm; i) justice; j) jug; k) climbing; l) blue; m) sewing
5. a) Our black cat had a fight with the retriever next door.
b) The family went to the sea for a swim.
c) The shepherd stood by the gate and whistled to his dog.
d) Joan was stung by a bee.
e) Sailors have to be able to climb.

- Extracted by Marcus Dunk from The Eleven-Plus Book: Genuine Exam Questions From Yesteryear, published by Michael O'Mara Books at £9.99. To order a copy (p&p free), call 0845 606 4206.

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Easy - the only thing I would have problems with is some of the arithmetic - I have been using a calculator for everything numerical for years!

- Jacqui, London, 01/7/2008 08:32

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That one about the bus passing while he was talking to his friend doesn't make much sense however you write it - it still sounds as if the bus was talking!

That said, I found them easy and I'm sure I could have done these at 11. But then that was 34 years ago ...

- Liz Ward, Huddersfield UK, 01/7/2008 08:31

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I well remember how fearful I was when sitting the 11+ because I was not confident enough. But on reflection I wish I could have succeeded in passing the exam. To my way of thinking it would have been a superb achievement. I was an orphan trying to aspire to better things. Now I think I could pass the exam though. I am still respectful of the exam because I think it was a true reflection of one's knowledge and intelligence. How I wish our country could aspire to greater things, it seems to me the important thing is education but not the education as it stands at present, we have betrayed our country.

- Terence, UK, 01/7/2008 08:20

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Passed my own in 1995 and did well on this one. Easy.

- Heather, UK, 01/7/2008 08:16

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I believe this is the one I passed in 1955. I suspect this is now higher than the GCSE level examinations taken at 16.

- Kenneth, Suffolk, England, 01/7/2008 08:12

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You missed out the questions on pounds, shillings and pence.
Still one cannot expect today's generation to understand the real English currency.

- John Sizeland, Norfolk, 01/7/2008 07:23

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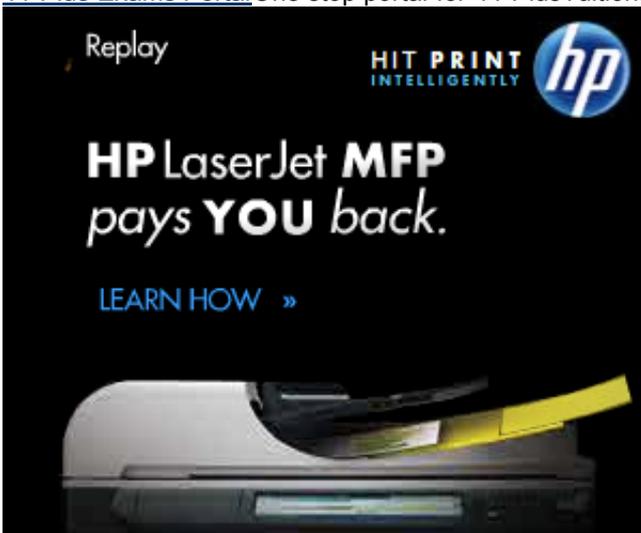
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