



ALEXANDERS COLLEGE

Suffolk England

## English Test for Sixth Form Entry

**Time Allowed:** One and a half hours

***Instructions:***

- Use black ink or ball-point pen. Do not write in pencil.
- Put your full name on every sheet of paper you use.
- Number all the sheets of paper you use.
- Answer all the questions on sheets of writing paper.

***Information:***

- The total mark for this paper is 40.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets. Use this as a guide to how much time to spend on each question. The quality and accuracy of your comprehension and writing will be assessed.

***Advice:***

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Keep an eye on the time.
- Try to answer every question.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.



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### Part 1: English Comprehension

*You should spend 45 minutes on this section*

*Read the following passage<sup>1</sup> carefully and then answer the questions underneath:*

I was born poor in rich America, yet my secret instincts were better than money and were for me a source of power. I had advantages that no-one could take away from me – a clear memory and brilliant dreams and a knack for knowing I was happy.

I was at my happiest leading two lives, and it was a satisfaction to me that the second one – of the dreamer or the sneak – I kept hidden. That was how I spent my first fifteen years. Fifteen was young then and I knew this: The poor don't belong. But one summer out of loneliness or impatience my second self did more than wake and watch, and more than remember. He began to see like a historian, and he acted. I have so save my life, I used to think.

Early that summer I was walking down a lovely crumbling little street lined with elms, called Brookview Road. The city of Boston, with its two tall buildings, was visible from one end of the road looking east along the Fellsway. The brook was a shallow ditch at the other end of the road, where the Italian families had tomato gardens. There were rats in the ditch, but it was a pretty part of town in June when the wineglass elms were heavy with leaves.

It was a perfect day of blue sky and the hot summer hum of insects, which made a sound like the temperature rising. I had my rifle over my shoulder – a Mossberg twenty-two – as I passed Tina Spector's house. She was sitting on her piazza, which was our word for porch. I had planned it this way.

She said, 'Hey Andy, where are you going with that gun?'

'Church,' I said.

'It's Tuesday!'

'But I've got a funeral.'

I was still walking, and now Tina started off the piazza towards me. I knew she would: it was part of my plan.

*Questions:*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *My Secret History* by Paul Theroux, London, Penguin Books, 1989. Reproduced for academic purposes only



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1. How do you think the narrator feels, being “poor in rich America”? [3 marks]
2. What does the phrase “I was at my happiest leading two lives” tell us about the narrator’s character? [3 marks]
3. What do you understand from the phrase “He began to see like a historian, and he acted.”? [3 marks]
4. In your own words, describe what “wineglass elms” might look like. [3 marks]
5. How does the writer create tension in the section of the passage that begins: “It was a perfect day...” and ends “...part of my plan”? [8 marks]

*Total marks for this section: 20*

### Part 2: Directed Writing

The passage from *My Secret History* describes a memorable incident from the narrator’s childhood. Describe a memorable incident from your own childhood.

*Total marks for this section: 20*