

YEAR 2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PLACEMENT EXAM SPECIMEN

Section A:

Read the following passage and then answer the questions **in full**:

SECRETS OF THE SEASHELL

Caitlyn stepped into the warm, wet sand and shook her toes. The white, foamy waves raced over her feet and up her legs and then pulled back again. Caitlyn was on vacation with her family; her mother and two brothers. She loved playing in the sea. It was so clear that she could practically see the bottom and the little fish that swam nearby but dashed away when she tried to get closer.

“Ouch!” said the 10 year old girl, as her foot stepped on something hard. She looked down as her green eyes reflected the pain she felt. At the bottom of the ocean was a large shell. Caitlyn bent down to pick it up. It was a pretty pink seashell with points and curves and an opening that looked like a horn. She held it up to her ear, hoping to hear the whooshing sound for which they were known. Instead, she heard something quite different.

“Hey kid! How are you doing? Want to hear a joke?”

Caitlyn nearly dropped the shell. Holding it back up to her head, she tried again.

“What’s the most musical part of a fish?” the shell asked.

“I – I don’t know,” Caitlyn whispered.

“Their scales! Ha, ha!” laughed the shell. Caitlyn looked around to see if anyone was looking at her. They weren’t.

“That’s, uh, funny,” she replied. She didn’t really know what to think.

“I’m just getting warmed up, kid! Why don’t oysters share their pearls?” It seemed to be waiting for a reply.

“Uh, I’m not sure?” Caitlyn said. Was she dreaming?

The shell answered its own joke. “Because they’re shellfish! Ha, ha!”

Caitlyn had to laugh. Okay, that was sort of funny.

“kid, why don’t fish play basketball?” the shell asked.

Caitlyn started to relax and enjoy herself. “I don’t know, why don’t you tell me?”

The shell answered, “Because they are afraid of the net! Ha, Ha!”

The girl giggled. On and on the shell went, being silly and making jokes. Caitlyn sat in the shallow water and listened for an hour. When her mother called to her, saying it was time to go, the girl laid the shell gently on the ocean floor. She promised to come back the next day. And she did.

For the rest of the week, Caitlyn would walk into the shallow water and sit with the shell held against her ear. (“What do sea monsters eat? Fish and ships! Ha, ha!”) She smiled and chuckled as it whispered jokes and didn’t care if people walking by on the beach gave her funny looks.

“What did the ocean say to the beach?” the shell asked. “Nothing; it just waved! Ha, ha!” On the last day of her vacation, Caitlyn decided she couldn’t leave the shell behind.

“You’re coming home with me,” she said to the pretty shell. She thought it would be happy. It wasn’t.

“My home is in the sea,” it replied, without any laughter in its voice. But Caitlyn couldn’t bear to go home without it. She promised to take good care of it, and wrapped it up carefully in her suitcase.

When she got home, she took it out and held it to her ear.

Silence.

She tried getting it wet, even putting it in the bathtub with her. Still nothing; no sound at all.

Years went by. The shell never spoke to Caitlyn again.

Ten years later, Caitlyn was now an adult, planning a vacation of her own. As she packed her bags she remembered the shell from long ago. She found it on the back of a bookshelf, dusty and dry. Caitlyn wrapped it and put it in her suitcase.

When she arrived back at the beach, the first thing she did was take the shell down to the sea. “I’m sorry,” she whispered. Gently, she lowered it back under the water, settling it safely on the bottom, and walked away.

Answer the following questions in full:

1. Where is Caitlyn and why?

4 marks

2. Why does Caitlyn love playing in the sea?

5 marks

3. How is the shell described?

6 marks

4. What do you learn about Caitlyn?

10 marks

5. What do you learn about the shell's character?

6 marks

6. Explain in your own words, why Caitlyn takes the seashell with her.

5 marks

7. Why do you think the shell stops talking to Caitlyn?

5 marks

8. Explain why Caitlyn says she is sorry to the shell?

5 marks

9. What do you think happens next?

4 marks

SECTION B:

Choose **one** of the following and write about 300 words:

- 1) Write about a time you went on an amazing vacation.
- 2) Describe a funny person that you know.
- 3) Write an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of Beach Holidays.

50 marks