

TEST CONTENT INTERNATIONAL SECTION: 6E

There is a written and an oral test

1. The candidate will have 1 hour for the written test which comprises:

- A passage from a fictional text to be read with comprehension & interpretation questions (20 marks)
- A creative composition continuing the story of the same passage (20 marks: 10 for content and 10 for language accuracy)

2. The oral test lasts about 5 minutes

Candidates must be fluent English speakers.

- Candidates will be engaged in general conversation about the place of English in their world and their motivation for studying in the international section

HOW TO HELP CANDIDATES TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST

- Read with them regularly
- Encourage them to read aloud for you on a regular basis
- Speak English with them as often as possible
- Allow them the opportunity to interact with native speakers of English here in Singapore where English is an official language
- Have them watch films in English as often as possible
- Ensure that they work hard at their English lessons in school, completing homework thoroughly and accurately, and achieving high grades

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EXAMPLE OF A TEST FOR ENTRY TO 6E

Reading Extract

Thimble Summer by Elizabeth Enright is the story of Garnet Linden and her brother Jay who live on a remote farm in the American Midwest in the 1930s. After a long summer without rain, Garnet's parents are worried that the farm will be ruined. Then one day Garnet finds a silver thimble in the river bank and their luck immediately begins to change.

A thimble is a hard object used over a finger to protect it while sewing.



Thimble Summer by Elizabeth Enright

Garnet thought this must be the hottest day that had ever been in the world. Every day for weeks she had thought the same thing, but this was really the worst of all. This morning the thermometer outside the village drugstore had pointed a thin red finger to one hundred and ten degrees Fahrenheit.

It was like being inside of a drum. The sky like a bright skin was stretched tight above the valley, and the earth, too, was tight and hard with heat. Later, when it was dark, there would be a noise of thunder, as though a great hand beat upon the drum; there would be heavy clouds above the hills, and flashes of heat lightning, but no rain. It had been like that for a long time. After supper each night her father came out of the house and looked up at the sky, then down at his fields of corn and oats. "No," he would say, shaking his head, "No rain tonight."

The oats were turning yellow before their time, and the corn leaves were torn and brittle, rustling like newspaper when the dry wind blew upon them. If the rain didn't come soon there would be no corn to harvest, and they would have to cut the oats for hay. Garnet looked up at the smooth sky angrily, and shook her fist. "You!" she cried, "why in time can't you let down a little rain!" At each step her bare feet

kicked up a small cloud of dust. There was dust in her hair, and up her nose, making it tickle.

Slowly Garnet walked to the yellow house under tall maple trees and opened the kitchen door. Her mother was cooking supper on the big black coal stove, and her little brother Donald sat on the floor making a noise like a train.

Her mother looked up. Her cheeks were red from the hot stove. “Any mail, darling?” she asked. “Bills,” replied Garnet.

“Oh,” said her mother and turned back to her cooking.

Garnet set the table by the open window. Knife, fork, knife, fork, knife, fork, knife, fork but only a spoon for Donald, who managed even that so absentmindedly that there was usually as much cereal on the outside of him as inside at the end of a meal. Then she went down to the cold room.

It was still and dim down there. A spigot dripped peacefully into the deep pool of water below, where the milk cans and stone butter crock were sunk. Garnet filled a pitcher with milk and put a square of butter on the plate she had brought. She knelt down and plunged both her arms into the water. It was cloudy with spilled milk but icy cold. She could feel coolness spreading through all her veins and little shiver ran over her.

Going to the kitchen again was like walking into a red-hot oven.

Donald had stopped being a train and had become a fire engine. He charged round and round the room hooting and shrieking. How could he be so lively, Garnet wondered. He didn’t even notice the awful heat although his hair clung to his head like wet feathers and his cheeks were red as radishes.

Her mother looked out of the window. “Father’s coming in,” she said. “Garnet, don’t give him the mail now, I want him to eat a good supper. Put it behind the calendar and I’ll tend to it afterwards.” Garnet hastily pushed the bills behind the calendar on the shelf over the sink.

The screen door opened with its own particular squeak and her father came in. He went to the sink and washed his hands. He looked tired and his neck was sun-burned. “What a day!” he said. “One more like this – “ and he shook his head.

It was too hot to eat. Garnet hated her cereal. Donald whined and upset the milk. Jay was the only one who really ate in a business-like manner, as if he enjoyed it. He could probably eat the shingles off a house if there was nothing else handy, Garnet decided.

After she had helped with the dishes, Garnet and Jay put on their bathing suits and went down to the river. They had to go down a road, through a pasture, and across half a dozen sand bars before they came to a place that was deep enough to swim in. This was a dark, quiet pool by a little island; trees hung over it and roots trailed in it. Three turtles slid from a log as the children approached, making three slowly widening circles on the still surface.

“It looks like tea,” said Garnet, up to her neck in brownish lukewarm water.

“Feels like it too,” said Jay. “I wish it was colder.”

Still it was warm and there was enough of it to swim in. When they were finally sufficiently waterlogged to be red-eyed and streaming, they went exploring on the sandy flats that had emerged from the river during the weeks of drought. They wandered in different directions, bending over, examining and picking things up. The damp flats had a rich, muddy smell. After a while the sun set brilliantly behind the trees, but the air seemed no cooler.

Garnet saw a small object, half-buried in the sand, and glittering. She knelt down and dug it out with her finger. It was a silver thimble! She dropped the old shoe, bits of polished glass, and a half dozen clam-shells she had collected and ran breathlessly to show Jay.

“It’s solid silver!” she shouted triumphantly, “and I think it must be magic too!”

“Magic!” said Jay. “Don’t be silly, there isn’t any such thing.”

<u>Spigot</u> :	a tap
<u>Shingles</u> :	wooden roof tiles

Reading Questions (*Reading Total: 20 points*)

Answer the questions on the extract from *Thimble Summer*.

1. Write down a word from the first paragraph that shows Garnet does not like the heat. Choose only one word. (1)
2. What is the temperature reading on the thermometer described as being like ? (1)
3. "It was like being inside of a drum." (paragraph 2) Give two examples of the way the weather was like being inside a drum. (2)
4. Describe in your own words **two visible signs** the dry weather was having on the farm? (paragraph 3) (2)
5. "Oh," said her mother and turned back to her cooking (paragraph 5). From Garnet's mother's reaction, explain how she feels about the bills. (2)
6. 'Knife, fork, knife, fork, knife, fork, knife, fork but only a spoon for Donald...' (paragraph 6). Explain why this piece of writing is more effective than just saying 'Garnet laid out the four sets of knives and forks...' (2)
7. Look at the description of 'the cold room' (paragraph 7). Do you think that Garnet *does* or *does not* enjoy going down to the room? Give one example from these lines to explain your choice. (2)
8. When Garnet leaves the cold room, the kitchen is described as a 'red-hot oven'. Create your own comparison by completing the same sentence from the extract: *Going in the kitchen again was like* (2)
9. From both his words and actions, what can you say about Garnet's father's mood when he returns home? (2) (*see paragraph 11*)
10. In what two ways was the water like tea? (2) (*see paragraph 13*)
11. Read the last three lines of the extract again. Garnet and Jay's personalities are different. From their reaction to the thimble, explain how they are different. (2)

Writing Question (*Writing total: 20 points*)

You are now going to continue the story. What happens next after Garnet has found the silver thimble? Include the following in your writing:

- Use paragraphs
- Include dialogue
- Continue to show Garnet's personality

Also think about,

- How each family member might react?
- What will they do first?
- What might they do in the long-term?