

WITHINGTON GIRLS' SCHOOL

ENGLISH

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

2016

COMPREHENSION

TIME : 45 MINUTES

Read the story below very carefully. Then answer the questions on the separate question sheet.

5 It was Emma's first day at her new school and things were not going well. This morning her mum had arranged Emma's hair into a neat plait and already it had started to unravel; her new shoes had got muddy while she was playing football at break and now she seemed to have lost the rest of her form. She tried to
10 decipher the coloured squares and symbols of the timetable she had spent much of the morning colouring in: 'French: Room 19'. Well, that sounded interesting; she was looking forward to learning French for the first time, but room 19? Emma thought back to her tour of the school with her form teacher: she knew where room 20 was and room 18 was just here... but room 19? The
15 corridors were emptying now as people found their way to lessons. Emma hoped she wasn't going to cry.

Suddenly a friendly face appeared in front of her: 'Hi, my name's Khadijah, I'm in Year 9 – I saw you on the bus this morning. Are you lost?'

15 'Well, yes,' said Emma, 'I've lost the rest of my form and I'm supposed to be in room 19. I can't find it anywhere.'

'Don't worry!' said Khadijah, 'No one can ever find room 19. It's just along here – I'll show you.'

20 Gratefully, Emma followed Khadijah along the corridor until they came to a room filled with faces she recognised. She thanked her new friend and slipped into the classroom just as the teacher was starting to take the register. How she wished she could be like Khadijah! She might be only two years older than Emma but she seemed to know everything and she seemed so happy and confident and to have so many friends!

25 Khadijah turned and made her way to her own lesson. She adjusted the weight of her heavy bag on her shoulder and sighed. It was not yet lunchtime and already she had more homework than she could do in one night. She knew she ought to have revised her Biology for tomorrow's test over the holiday but somehow she had just forgotten... and now she had a History essay and Maths too. Glancing out of the window she saw her sister, Zara, with others in Year 11,
30 playing netball. Khadijah wished she had PE now – she would love to be outside in the autumn sunshine, running and shouting to her friends. In fact, Khadijah wished she was in Year 11. Zara had chosen her GCSE options, which meant that she only had to study the subjects she liked and Khadijah was sure her elder sister got less homework than she did! Not only that but their parents
35 allowed Zara much more freedom. She went out with her friends at evenings and weekends, she got more money to buy clothes, she was allowed to wear make-up. It wasn't fair. Khadijah couldn't wait until she was 16!

40 On the netball court Zara missed the catch and, although nobody said anything, she could sense the disappointment of her team. What was going wrong? Zara was usually really good at PE: she played on the school netball team and loved all sport. Her heart just wasn't in it today. She supposed she was a little distracted; over the holiday she had been on a course about architecture and

she now knew without a doubt that this was what she wanted to do: she wanted to design buildings, beautiful buildings where people would be happy, buildings
45 where people would live and work. Buildings which would win awards. The beautiful buildings of her future rose before her eyes, making the present seem ordinary and boring. If only she could do her GCSEs now and get them out of the way so she could concentrate on Maths and Art – the subjects she would need for her career! Zara looked at the Sixth Form students, relaxing in the
50 common room. They had already embarked on their futures. Soon they would be going to university and their lives as adults could begin.

Grace retrieved her Chemistry folder from behind the sofa in the Sixth Form common room, aware that she was being watched from the netball court but refusing to be distracted – she was already late for her lesson. She hoped her
55 teacher wouldn't mind. Grace could not believe that this was the start of her final year at school; the seven years had passed so quickly! She had really enjoyed her time at school – in fact she had enjoyed it so much that she had decided to become a teacher. How knowledgeable they all seemed! She could not wait until she was teaching Science, helping students with experiments and explaining
60 equations. As she rushed to her lesson, Grace passed the Head Teacher, Mrs Spencer, and smiled. It was her ambition to become a head teacher herself one day. 'Good morning, Grace,' said Mrs Spencer, returning her smile. 'I'm looking for room 19 ... I don't suppose you could point me in the right direction?'

'I think it's down there,' replied Grace tentatively, reflecting on the fact that in all
65 her seven years at school she had never really known where room 19 was.

Mrs Spencer sat down at the back of the classroom. She enjoyed all the different aspects of her job as a head teacher but this was the part she liked most: watching students learn. This was a French lesson and it was wonderful to see
70 the girls, who had only been in the school for one day, join in so enthusiastically. She watched a girl at the back of the room, a girl with fair hair which refused to stay in a plait, and mud on her shoes, raise her hand as she suddenly realised that she knew the answer to the teacher's question. Enthusiasm shone in the girl's eyes and Mrs Spencer suddenly envied her. How lucky she was! She had just begun her learning journey; she had seven more years at school, years of
75 exploration and discovery, years to make friends and have fun and after that she had a lifetime of opportunity ahead of her. Even though Mrs Spencer had a wonderful job in a fantastic school she sometimes wished that she could start again – study different subjects and explore all the things she had not had chance to when she was at school. She smiled encouragingly at the girl who
80 proudly answered the teacher's question in stumbling French.

'Well done, Emma!' said the French teacher, smiling gentle encouragement.

Emma smiled back. Maybe the day was not turning out to be so bad after all.