

WITHINGTON GIRLS' SCHOOL

ENGLISH

ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

2013

COMPREHENSION

TIME : 45 MINUTES

**Read the poem below very carefully and then answer the questions that follow.**

### **The Listeners**

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,  
Knocking on the moonlit door;  
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses  
Of the forest's ferny floor;  
5 And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
Above the Traveller's head:  
And he **smote** upon the door a second time;  
'Is there anybody there?' he said.  
But no one **descended** to the Traveller;  
10 No head from the leaf-fringed sill  
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,  
Where he stood **perplexed** and still.  
But only a host of **phantom** listeners  
That dwelt in the old house then  
15 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight  
To that voice from the world of men:  
Stood **thronging** the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,  
That goes down to the empty hall,  
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken  
20 By the lonely Traveller's call.  
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
Their stillness answering his cry,  
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,  
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;  
25 For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
Louder, and lifted his head –  
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,  
That I kept my word,' he said.  
Never the least stir made the listeners,  
30 Though every word he spake  
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house  
From the one man left awake:

Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,  
And the sound of iron on stone,  
35 And how the silence surged softly backward,  
When the plunging hooves were gone.

By Walter de la Mare (1912)

**Answer all the questions.**

**Use the paper provided; put your name and examination number on each sheet of paper you use and number your answers correctly.**

1. Write what happens in the poem in your own words. (4 marks)
2. The poem was written over one hundred years ago. Write down two reasons you can tell it was written and set a long time ago. (4 marks)
3. Why do you think the Traveller goes to the house? (2 marks)
4. The poet does not explain what the 'listeners' are but he encourages us to use our imagination. Who or what do you think the listeners are? (2 marks)
5. Describe the setting of the poem. How does this setting add to the sense of mystery in the poem? (5 marks)
6. Write the meanings of the following words as they are used in the poem:
  - smote (line 7)
  - descended (line 9)
  - perplexed (line 12)
  - phantom (line 13)
  - thronging (line 17) (5 marks)
7. Imagine you are the Traveller in the poem. Write a letter to a friend describing your visit to the lonely house and how you felt about your experiences. (8 marks)