



## **Bishop Challoner School**

### **English**

#### **Sample Questions for Year 9 (13+)**

(Current Year 8)

#### **Instructions:**

- Write your name clearly on the top of each sheet of paper
- You must start Section B on a new sheet of paper
- Answer ONE question in Section A and ONE question in Section B
- There are 12 marks available for Section A and 25 marks for Section B
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers
- Write in black or blue pen.

#### **Advice:**

- You are advised to spend 30 minutes on Section A and 30 minutes on Section B
- Remember: we are interested in reading imaginative and engaging responses as well as the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

## **Section A (12 marks)**

This is your reading comprehension section.

*In this article the writer explains the dramatic changes that take place during adolescence, as young people become teenagers. She also reports on how recent research is beginning to offer new explanations of why adolescents behave as they do.*

# **What's really going on in a teenager's brain?**

Can you believe your eyes? Is it the same person? When you look at a photograph of a teenager as a small child, it is hard to believe that it *is* the same person. For parents, it can be difficult to accept that their cute little toddler has become a complete stranger. Steve Johnson, the father of a teenage boy, says he doesn't understand it: 'He's changed - overnight. He won't get his hair cut and never finishes any homework. And as for getting him out of the house in the mornings...'

This is nothing new. Even Aristotle, the famous philosopher of Ancient Greece, said teenagers appeared 'changeable in their desires'. And Shakespeare describes adolescence as largely a time for 'stealing and fighting'! For Ellen Liddle, the mother of twins, adolescence was like a thunderstorm crashing all round her house: 'It was like having a pair of two-year-olds in the house again.' Lisa Grey, a teenager herself, says she sometimes feels overwhelmed by her feelings: 'My moods are all over the place from day to day.'

So what's really happening? Obviously, adolescence is an important period of change when young people develop emotionally and physically, becoming independent and establishing their own identities. At the same time, they have to go to school, take exams and think about their futures. But why do teenagers who are usually friendly and thoughtful sometimes become grouchy for no reason, slam doors and forget to phone home?

For many years scientists blamed hormones. It was believed that the brain was fully developed by the age of three. But now, in groundbreaking work, scientists have discovered that the teenage brain is actually undergoing a dramatic transformation. 'We used to think that if there were brain changes in adolescence they were slight,' says Elizabeth Sowell, one of the USA's top researchers in the area. Now we are bowled over by what we discover about the teenage brain every day.

So, it is the brain, *not* hormones, that is behind the baffling behaviour of teenagers? Research has shown that the teenage brain is a giant construction project. In fact, the changes taking place in the brain at this time are so great that the adolescence may be as important as early childhood in terms of brain development.

The teenage brain may be maddening and muddled but it is also amazing. After all, it is the teenage brain which begins to grapple with complicated ideas such as honesty and justice. It develops empathy, the ability to understand other people's viewpoints. It also has to absorb huge amounts of knowledge and develop independent ways of thinking.

'I love teenagers,' says one woman with two grown-up children. 'I like their ability to think for themselves, to argue and get excited by ideas. Most of all, I like the way I can learn from them!' Perhaps this view, and the knowledge that the adolescent brain is still growing and changing, will give some reassurance to teenagers like Lisa, and to parents like Steve and Ellen.

**Answer ALL of the following 9 questions, based on the extract:**

1. 'My moods are all over the place from day to day' (paragraph 2). Give one quotation from **paragraph 3** which supports this idea. (1 mark)
2. Steve Johnson says about his son: 'He's changed - overnight'. (paragraph 1). Explain the effect of the dash in this quotation. (1 mark)
3. '...adolescence was like a thunderstorm crashing all round her house.' (paragraph 2). Explain what the choice of language in this quotation suggests about Ellen's view of adolescence (1 mark)
4. In this article about adolescence, the writer has included quotations from a range of people to give a balanced view. What is the effective including quotations from **parents**? (1 mark)
5. Paragraph 4 is about scientists' research into teenage brains. Give one word or phrase from this paragraph which shows that the writer believes the scientists' research is new and important. (1 mark)
6. **Explain** how the scientists have reacted to their discoveries. (1 mark)
7. What does the phrase '*a giant construction project*' (paragraph 5) suggest about the teenage brain? (1 mark)
8. This article has been deliberately structured to achieve a particular effect. Put a tick against the description of the structure which **most closely matches** that of the article.  
Tick only ONE box
  - It gives a different view of teenagers' behaviour, beginning and ending with negative comments.
  - It gives a positive view of teenagers' behaviour, followed by a negative view, and then leaves the reader to come to his or her own conclusion.
  - It sets up a negative view of teenagers and then provides explanations for their behaviour, ending in a positive note.
  - It sets up a negative view of the behaviour of teenagers and then provides evidence to build up a whole case against them.(1 mark)
9. Using evidence from the article, explain why you think the teenage brain makes adolescents behave the way they do. (4 marks)

## **SECTION B (25 marks)**

This section tests your creative skills and accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation. We are keen to read engaging responses that show real care when developing **character**, **place** and **mood**.

When marking your work, we will be interested to see whether you can:

- Use words (i.e. verbs, adjectives, adverbs) to create mood and atmosphere
- Punctuate and paragraph your writing correctly.
- Vary the length and range of your sentences.

Do NOT try to develop a huge plot in such a short period of time. It is far better to work on the three components bullet-pointed above.



Using the above image as a prompt write the opening of a story based on a teenage character who discovers something unexpected. Focus on using emotive language to really explore the character's mindset.