

Part 1

Read **Passage A** carefully, and then answer **Questions 1** and **2** on the Question Paper.

Passage A: An Orphanage in the Dessert

A university student, Paul Jameson, is visiting an orphanage in Rajasthan, India. He is volunteering there during his summer holiday. The orphanage is home to over 100 children, aged between six months and twelve years.

After a jerky and uncomfortable drive out of the city along broken, pot-holed roads that soon turned into dusty tracks, the driver stopped the rickshaw and signaled towards a brick wall. Was this the place? Babul trees surrounded the wall, their fern-like leaves still in the dead heat of the day. I stepped out of the back of the yellow cart that had transported me here and looked around.

Suddenly, a man, dressed in baggy white clothing, burst out of a wooden side-door, his arms raised in the air. 'Namaste! Namaste!' he shouted, his face alive with enthusiasm as he touched his palms together, bowing, whilst still racing towards me. Although I had never met him before, he reached out to embrace me, pulling me in and slapping my back. 'Namaste,' I returned, in his native tongue, Hindi. The greeting literally means 'I bow to you' but it is used much like 'hello' so it's the first word you learn when visiting India.

I paid the driver before being pulled by the wrist towards the entrance of the compound by the man wearing white. 'This is the Holy Mary Orphanage, isn't it?' I asked, just checking. The man stopped and began to laugh, holding his belly with his hands. 'Silly me,' he said. 'I forgot to introduce myself. I'm Neeraj. It will be my absolute honour to be looking after you whilst you stay us, Mr Paul.' I smiled at him, glad to be in the right place. 'Come,' he said, pulling at me again.

We walked through the door and into the compound which was surrounded by a seemingly endless stretch of wall. Inside, there were a series of ramshackle buildings, whitewashed but dirty from the relentless clinging dust. Some of the buildings had doors and windows and others, just frames where once a door or window must have stood.

Everywhere I turned, there was a child. One group, aged about eight, crouched on the dry and dusty floor, barefoot, playing a game with dice, chatting away in Hindi. Some wore only ripped shorts, either too large or too small, and others just t-shirts or vests. One boy donned a blue, plastic flip-flop that had a cartoon character duck printed on it. He gripped the back of it as if he was afraid that he might lose it. Each child's eyes were fixed on the game.

There was one girl in the group, smaller than the others, who wore a threadbare dress decorated with flowers. Her hair was cropped short to her head. She looked up at me, her eyes wide with curiosity. I smiled at her and ventured a little wave. She held up a tiny stone carving she had been gripping in her hands. It was an elephant. I hesitated and then took it. A smile blossomed on her face, wide and bright. I knew that I would keep the elephant for many years to come.

Neeraj took my bag and ushered me inside the building where my room would be. Excitedly, he opened the door to what would be my home for the next eight weeks. The floor was formed of large, white tiles, clean but cracked. In the corner of the room, there was a single bed with a mattress about an inch thick. I moved to sit on it and it creaked and groaned as if it might give way.

Putting down my bag, Neeraj beckoned me, waving his hand. 'Chai?' he said, offering me tea. I took a deep breath, noticing a gecko making its way across the wall. 'Yes,' I answered. 'That would be great.'