

SHERBORNE SCHOOL

ENTRANCE SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION 1965

Special Paper

(1½ hours)

The answers to the two parts are to be handed in separately, and must therefore be written on separate sheets of paper. Do not spend too long over either part.

PART I

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions set out below:

The mountain rose almost sheer from the head of the valley in an unclimbable wall of rock. From where we stood we could look down into the valley, which was hemmed in by high ridges to the east and west. It seemed an immense cul-de-sac from which there could be no exit other than by the way we had come. On its western side was the 40-foot gorge of the river, which originates in the Rongbuk Glacier. The monastery clung to the eastern slopes, on a level with us at 16,000 feet, with a village of small stone houses slightly behind it and on its northern side. Scattered prayer-flags were set in the mountainside behind the monastery and the village.

There was a distance of about 15 miles of practically level ground between us and the great North face with its massive pyramidal formation, which rose almost vertically in an impregnable wall of rock. A climber could have all the pitons and ropes in the world, but he would never be able to progress anywhere near the top in a vertical assault. If the mountain could be sliced through at the level of the Rongbuk monastery and placed at sea level, it would represent a difficult, but not impossible, task. But, rising as it does from the height of Rongbuk to 29,000 feet, it is an impossible climb. The head of the Main Rongbuk Glacier could be seen glistening white, but elsewhere there was surprisingly little snow and ice. An arête and a sloping face to the west held a fair amount of snow, but the north face, too steep to retain snow readily, stood out grey and sombre. A thin, white streamer, the renowned plume of the peak, was being driven away to the east, and extended for about six miles.

The various bands on the upper part of the North face stood out boldly. An oblique line, rising slightly towards the east, cut off what is known as the "yellow band" from the great mass of the mountain. Next came what appeared as a distinct black band, and above that

the untrodden final pyramid. This gave me my idea for establishing proof of reaching the summit, if we should succeed in doing so. My normal habit of collecting small pieces of rock from mountain heights could be put to useful effect. Successive pieces of rock obtained from the various strata comprising the summit block would give reasonable proof of having been that far. I could think of no better proof, and still cannot, for the types of rock from which the different bands are made up must be of a very different nature to show up so clearly from a distance.

1. Only one mountain fits this description, even apart from the proper names used. What mountain is it? How do you know? (2 marks)
2. This mountain was climbed from the other side in 1953. Can you deduce from this passage anything about when it was written? (2 marks)
3. There are several hints in this passage which suggest that it would be more difficult to climb the mountain on the west than on the east. List as many as you can find. (8 marks)
4. An arête (ridge) descends from the summit to the north-east for 2/3 mile, at which point it steepens and turns northwards to fall to a col at 23,000 feet in another 2/3 mile. This col is the climbers' first objective.
 - (i) Sketch the view looking southwards from where the climbers stand, showing the monastery, the river gorge, the glacier and the north face, with the two bands clearly marked. (8 marks)
 - (ii) Draw a plan of the area, as far as your information allows. How far would it be from where the climbers now stand to the col? How far from the col to the tip of the plume? (10 marks)
5. Can you suggest a reason why the writer is anxious to establish proof of having reached the summit? Did he succeed in reaching it? Do you think his method of proof would be conclusive? (10 marks)
6. Imagine yourself on the summit. Describe the view northwards. (10 marks)

PART II

Below is an extract from a rather muddled speech in favour of capital punishment. Read it carefully and answer the questions at the end.

It seems to me obvious that murderers should be hanged. They have killed, and should in their turn be killed as a punishment for their wickedness. It is simply a question of justice. If justice is not

done in Britain, where else in the world is it likely to be done? But besides this there are many other important arguments for capital punishment. For one thing public opinion is in favour of it, and even if abolition of the death penalty is right in principle, the feelings of ordinary people must be considered. Articles and letters frequently published in the newspapers show how strongly the majority of people want to retain capital punishment, and legislation must not run on ahead of popular feeling. Think, too, how humane a punishment hanging really is. It is quick and, nowadays, painless. Even better, it may not be carried out at all. In recent years more than half the convicted murderers have been reprieved—in the case of women, almost all. What could be more humane than that? But this does not alter the fact that in principle capital punishment is right. What else would so successfully deter a would-be murder from committing his ghastly crime? Put yourself in his place: he is human, like you. You would think twice about voluntarily putting your head into the noose: so does he. Do not be misled by so-called “evidence” from foreign countries where the death penalty has been abolished, and where the murder-rate has nevertheless not risen. This is a matter for Britain, and British justice. What applies to a pack of foreigners has no place here. What could be better for all concerned than capital punishment? The murderer knows it is fair retribution, and must prefer it to endlessly rotting in prison for the rest of his life; the victim’s relatives must be allowed it as their just revenge; the public must be protected; and potential killers must be deterred. Again, suppose a reprieved murderer escapes: how safe will be the judge and jury who condemned him, while he is out roaming the countryside? Or with good behaviour his prison sentence may well be cut to comparatively few years: how well then will ordinary people sleep in their beds at night? No! Here, as always, the just principle of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” must prevail. And one final and overwhelming point: which costs the taxpayer less—the expenses of a hangman and the price of a rope, or providing lifelong free board and lodging for one who has not only forfeited all claim to be considered as a member of decent society, but who has also, by taking life, shown himself to be essentially an animal rather than a human being?

1. Some of the arguments in this speech have little connexion with the others, and may even contradict them. Separate the main arguments the speaker uses, and set each out in an independent paragraph. Word your paragraphs so as to bring out any contradictions as clearly as you can.
(40 marks)
2. Say briefly which you think is logically the weakest of the arguments, and explain why.
(10 marks)