



KS3

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Provisional Year 7

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Insert

Source A: 21st Century Prose-fiction – an extract from *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne.

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to see the source**

Source A

This extract is from a novel written in the 21st century but set in the Second World War. It is about a rather unusual friendship which develops between two boys. Bruno is the son of a German soldier who has been sent to work in a concentration camp¹ in Poland. He meets a Jewish boy called Shmuel who has been sent to the camp with his family. They make friends by talking through the fence which divides them.

‘All I know is this,’ began Shmuel. ‘Before we came here I lived with my mother and father and my brother Josef in a small flat above the store where Papa makes his watches. Every morning we ate our breakfast together at seven o’clock and while we went to school, Papa mended the watches that people brought to him and made new ones too. I had a beautiful watch that he gave me but I don’t have it any more. It had a golden face and I wound it up every night before I went to sleep and it always told the right time.’

‘What happened to it?’ asked Bruno.

‘They took it from me,’ said Shmuel.

10 ‘Who?’

‘The soldiers, of course,’ said Shmuel as if this was the most obvious thing in the world.

‘And then one day things started to change,’ he continued. ‘I came home from school and my mother was making armbands for us from a special cloth and drawing a star on each one². Like this.’ Using his finger he drew a design in the dusty ground beneath him.

15 ‘And every time we left the house, she told us we had to wear one of these armbands.’

‘My father wears one too,’ said Bruno. ‘On his uniform. It’s very nice. It’s bright red with a black-and-white design on it³.’ Using his finger he drew another design in the dusty ground on his side of the fence.

‘Yes, but they’re different, aren’t they?’ said Shmuel.

20 ‘No one’s ever given me an armband,’ said Bruno.

‘But I never asked to wear one,’ said Shmuel.

‘All the same,’ said Bruno, ‘I think I’d quite like one. I don’t know which one I prefer though, your one or Father’s.’

25 Shmuel shook his head and continued with his story. He didn’t often think about these things anymore because remembering his old life above the watch shop made him very sad.

‘We wore the armbands for a few months,’ he said. ‘And then things changed again. I came home one day and Mama said we couldn’t live in our house anymore -’

‘That happened to me too!’ said Bruno, delighted that he wasn’t the only boy who’d been

30 forced to move. 'The Fury came for dinner, you see, and the next thing I knew we moved here. And I *hate* it here,' he added in a loud voice. 'Did he come to your house and do the same thing?'

'No, but when we were told we couldn't live in our house we had to move to a different part of Cracow⁴ where the soldiers built a big wall and my mother and father and my
35 brother and I all had to live in one room.'

'All of you?' asked Bruno. 'In one room?'

'And not just us,' said Shmuel. 'There was another family there and the mother and father were always fighting with each other and one of the sons was bigger than me and he hit me even when I did nothing wrong.'

40 'You can't have all lived in one room,' said Bruno, shaking his head. 'That doesn't make any sense.'

'All of us,' said Shmuel, nodding his head. 'Eleven in total.'

Bruno opened his mouth to contradict again – he didn't really believe that eleven people could live in the same room together – but changed his mind.

45 'We lived there for some months,' continued Shmuel, 'All of us in that one room. There was one small window in it but I didn't like to look out of it because then I would see the wall and I hated the wall because our real home was on the other side of it. Then one day the soldiers all came with huge trucks,' continued Shmuel, 'And everyone was told to leave the houses. Lots of people didn't want to and they hid wherever they could find
50 a place but in the end I think they caught everyone. And the trucks took us to a train and the train...' He hesitated and bit his lip. Bruno thought he was going to start crying and couldn't understand why.

'The train was horrible,' said Shmuel, 'There were too many of us in the carriages⁵ for one thing. And there was no air to breathe. And it smelled awful.'

55 'That's because you all crowded onto one train,' said Bruno, remembering the two trains he had seen at the station when he had left Berlin. 'When we came here there was another one on the other side of the platform but no one seemed to see it. That was the one that we got. You should have got on it too.'

60 'I don't think we would have been allowed,' said Shmuel, shaking his head. 'We weren't able to get out of our carriage.'

'The doors are at the end,' explained Bruno.

'There weren't any doors,' said Shmuel.

'Of course there were doors,' said Bruno with a sigh. 'They're at the end,' he repeated. 'Just past the buffet section.'

65 'There weren't any doors,' insisted Shmuel. 'If there had been, we would all have got off.'

Glossary:

¹ People from different faiths in countries that had been invaded like Poland were sent to a concentration camp (a type of prison camp where they were treated very harshly and many were killed).

² Jewish people were made to wear armbands with the Star of David to make them stand out.

³ A military armband with the sign of a swastika. This was a symbol of the German invaders.

⁴ Cracow – a large city in southern Poland. Many Jewish families were forced to move there and live in a small part of the city called a ghetto which was walled off from the rest of the city.

⁵ The Jewish families were taken to the camps in over-crowded carriages with no windows or seats.

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