

# Cambridge Secondary 1 Progression Test

## Insert

Cambridge  
Secondary 1

## English Paper 2

Stage 8



## Section A: Reading

For  
Teacher's  
Use

Read this passage from 'White Fang' by Jack London then answer the questions in the question paper.

The night came. The starving wolves were growing bolder and the lack of sleep was telling upon Henry. He dozed despite himself, crouching by the fire, the blankets over his shoulders, the axe between his knees, and on either side a dog was close to him. He woke once and saw, a few metres in front of him, a big grey wolf, one of the largest of the pack. As he looked, the brute deliberately stretched himself like a lazy dog, yawning in his face. The wolf looked at Henry with a possessive eye, as if, in truth, Henry was just a delayed meal that was to be eaten soon.

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The whole pack showed the same sureness. Henry counted around a score of wolves, staring hungrily at him or calmly sleeping in the snow. They reminded him of children round a table spread with food and waiting for permission to eat – and he was the food they were to going to eat! He wondered how and when the meal would begin.

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Henry woke from another doze to see the red-coloured she-wolf in front of him. She was no more than two metres away, sitting in the snow, examining him thoughtfully. The two dogs were snarling, but she took no notice of them. She was looking at the man, and for some time he returned her look. There was nothing threatening about her. She merely looked at him. Her mouth opened and she licked her jaws in anticipation of a good meal.

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Henry reached hastily for a *brand* to throw at her. But even as he reached, and before his fingers had closed on the stick, she sprang back into safety; and he knew that she was used to having things thrown at her. She had snarled as she sprang away, baring her white fangs to their roots. Henry glanced at his hand, noticing the delicacy of the fingers that gripped the brand, how they curled over, under and around the rough wood. He had never been so fond of this body of his as he was now when he was in such terrible danger.

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All night, with burning brands, he fought off the hungry pack. When he dozed despite himself, the snarling of the dogs woke him. Morning came, but for the first time the light of day failed to scatter the wolves. Henry waited for them to go but they didn't. They remained in a circle surrounding him and his fire. They were confident of victory, shaking his courage born in the morning light.

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Henry made one desperate attempt to head further along the trail. But the moment he left the fire, the boldest wolf leaped for him, but leaped short. He saved himself by springing back, the jaws snapping together a few centimetres from his thigh. The rest of the pack was now up and surging upon him. He had to throw firebrands right and left to drive them back to a respectful distance.

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The second night was a repeat of the night before but the need for sleep was becoming overpowering. The dogs were snarling all the time, and he was so sleepy he no longer took any notice. He fell asleep then awoke with a start and stared at the waiting pack. 'You ain't got me yet!' he cried, savagely shaking his fist at the hungry beasts. There was a loud howl, and the she-wolf slid up close to him across the snow and watched him with patient eyes.

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**Glossary**

*brand*: a piece of burning wood

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