

LEVEL 1

SECTION A: NON-FICTION

The Crossing

This extract is from The Crossing by Kathy Watson. Here she describes the start of a cross-channel swim by a man called Webb.

The morning of Tuesday 24 August broke gloriously. The barometer signalled calm weather, the sky was overcast but not threatening, there was no wind and the sea was 65 degrees and as smooth as green glass. That day Toms had good news: it was his considered opinion that Webb should start that day around one o'clock. He reckoned
5 Webb would be able to do it in 14 hours. On the other hand, the captain of the *Castalia* passenger boat, thought to be the man most knowledgeable about Channel conditions in England, said he thought 20 hours was nearer the mark. The truth was, nobody really knew – and Webb was about to find out.

10 However large and encouraging your support team, nothing can change the fact that swimming the Channel is a solo endeavour. It's you who has to do it. You're the only one who strips, shivering in the cold air, who dips a hand into the jar of thick grease and rubs it over your body and who has to get into that uncompromisingly cold water and start swimming.

15 The momentary hesitation at the end of the pier was Webb's alone; so too was that view into the greenish-black water 10 feet below. The water would be piercingly cold; that was certain. And the waves would slap his face and the salt water sting his eyes and make his tongue sore and so swollen it would feel too large for his mouth. On a clear day you can see the coast of France from Dover, but that day it was hazy and, before he reached the other shore, there would be hard work and an aching body and
20 frozen limbs and a tiredness that goes right through to the bone and perhaps, after all that, failure again. But still he had to dive in.

He waited. For what? He played to the gallery by pointing significantly in the direction of the opposite coast and, perhaps, bought himself just another second. Then, at precisely four minutes to one o'clock, Webb dived into the Channel. The watching crowd
25 gave three cheers but the sounds were blurred because his ears were full of water and soon the noise stopped and it was just him alone, in the silence of the sea.

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SECTION A: NON-FICTION

Read the passage opposite entitled The Crossing and then answer all the questions below, using complete sentences. The marks at the end of each question are a guide as to how much you should write in your answers.

1. Look carefully at paragraph 1.
At what time does Toms think Webb should start his cross-Channel swim? (1)

2. Give three reasons why Toms thinks Tuesday 24 August is a good day for the swim. (3)

3. Toms disagrees with the captain of the *Castalia* passenger boat on one point.
Explain what this is. (2)

4. Look carefully at paragraph 2.
What is the most difficult thing about swimming the Channel and why? (3)

5. What do swimmers do to prepare themselves for the swim and why? (2)

6. Look carefully at paragraph 3.
Write down three short quotations which show that Webb is feeling nervous. (3)
Explain your choices. (6)

7. Look carefully at paragraph 4.
Imagine you are Webb.
Describe your feelings at the start of this important swim. (5)

(Total marks for this section: 25)

SECTION B: WRITING TASK

Write on any ONE of the following topics. Each one is worth 25 marks. Credit will be given for good spelling, punctuation and presentation as well as for imaginative and exciting use of vocabulary.

1. 'Come in, relax, put your feet up.'
Write a story which contains this line of dialogue.
2. Write a story or description using one of the following titles:
 - (i) Break time
 - (ii) The delivery
 - (iii) The kindness of strangers
3. Write about an occasion when you felt powerless.
You may wish to write about:
 - how the situation came about
 - the different feelings you experienced at the time
 - how you coped with it
 - what you learned from it
4. Is it ever necessary to lie?
Write an essay in which you present your views.
5. A young alien from Mars is about to join your school, and it has never been to the planet Earth before.
You have been appointed as its pen pal.
Write a letter explaining things it will need to know about how your school works.
6. Summer afternoon

(Total marks: 50)