

Sample pieces for sight reading based tasks in Acting and Speaking exams

Covering the following tasks:

- **sight-reading**
- **narrative based on a picture**
- **narrative based on a group of words**
- **improvisations based on a set plot outline**

Contents

Sight Reading

Grade 4 Performing Text	3
Grade 5 Speech and Drama/Performing Text	5
Grade 6 Speech and Drama/Performing Text (prose)	7
Grade 6 Speech and Drama (verse)	9

Pictures for Narratives

Grade 2 Speech and Drama	12
Grade 3 Speech and Drama	14

Words for Narratives

Grade 4 Speech and Drama	16
Grade 5 Speech and Drama	16
Grade 6 Speech and Drama	16

Plot Outlines

Grade 6 Acting in Pairs	17
-------------------------	----

Sight Reading

Exam title: Performing Text

Grade: 4

Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate reads at sight a passage of prose provided by the examiner.

Sample piece 1

***Hetty Feather* by Jacqueline Wilson**

London, 1876.

My name is Hetty Feather. Don't mock. It's not my real name. I'm absolutely certain my mother would have picked a beautiful romantic name for me – though sadly I have not turned out beautiful or romantic.

I shall picture her:

'My little darling,' my mother whispered, wrapping me up tightly in a shawl. She held me close close close to her chest, as if she could never bear to let me go.

'My little . . .' Rosamund? Seraphina? Christobel? My eyes are my best feature, as blue as the summer sky. Did she perhaps call me Sapphire? Azure? Bluebell? I like to think my baby hair had not yet sprouted from my little pink head. A bald baby can still just about be beautiful. An infant with hair as scarlet as sin is an abomination, spawn of the Devil. So says Matron Bottomly, and she pulls my hair hard. Once when I cheeked her really wondrously, calling her Matron Stinking Bottomly, she pulled so fiercely, a whole hank of my hair came away in her hand. She would have been in trouble if anyone had spotted my poor bald patch, but she crammed my cap down hard and no one saw. Well, two hundred foundling girls witnessed her assault on me, but Matron Bottomly didn't give a fig about them.

It took an entire year for my hair to grow back properly, but it was worth it because from that day onwards we all referred to her as Matron Stinking Bottomly – though not out loud. No other girl is as bold as me. I have a nature as fiery as my wretched hair.

I do so hope I was bald when I was newly born in 1876. Suppose I came into the world with little red tufts. Oh dearie, what a shock for my poor mother. Maybe she was tempted to call me Carrot or Goldfish or Marmalade.

No, I am absolutely certain my mother would not mock me. She held me close, she rubbed her cheek over my flaming head, she gently wound a little lock around her finger. She loved my red hair because it was mine. She cut off one tiny tuft to plait with pins and keep within a locket. That way she kept a small part of me for ever.

Sample piece 2

***The Boy in the Dress* by David Walliams**

For a while Dennis thought life without his mum would be some kind of adventure. He'd stay up late, eat take-aways and watch rude comedy shows. However, as the days turned into weeks, and the weeks turned into months, and the months turned into years, he realised that it wasn't an adventure at all.

It was just sad.

Dennis and John sort of loved each other in that way that they had to because they were brothers. But John tested this love quite often by doing things he thought were funny, like sitting on Dennis's face and farting. If farting had been an Olympic sport (at time of writing I am told it isn't, which I feel is a shame), he would have won a number of gold medals and probably received a knighthood from the Queen.

Now, reader, you might be thinking that as their mum had left, the two brothers would be brought closer together.

Sadly, it only drove them apart.

Unlike Dennis, John was full of silent rage with his mum for leaving, and agreed with Dad that it was better never to mention her again. It was one of the rules of the house:

No talking about Mum.

No crying.

And worst of all – no hugging.

Dennis, on the other hand, was just full of sadness. Sometimes he missed his mum so much that he cried in bed at night. He tried to cry as quietly as possible, because he and his brother shared a room and he didn't want John to hear.

But one night Dennis's sobs woke John up.

"Dennis? Dennis? What are you crying for now?" demanded John from his bed.

"I don't know. It's just... well... I just wish that Mum was here, and everything," came the reply from Dennis.

"Well, don't cry. She's gone and she's not coming back."

"You don't know that..."

"She's never coming back, Dennis. Now stop crying. Only girls cry." But Dennis couldn't stop crying. The pain ebbed and flowed inside him like the sea, crashing down on him, almost drowning him in tears. He didn't want to upset his brother, though, so he cried as quietly as he possibly could.

Exam title: Speech and Drama/Performing Text

Grade: 5

Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate reads at sight a passage of prose provided by the examiner.

Sample piece 1

***Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer**

Jacob strolled to a nearby driftwood tree that had its roots sticking out like the attenuated legs of a huge, pale spider. He perched lightly on one of the twisted roots while I sat beneath him on the body of the tree. He stared down at the rocks, a smile hovering around the edges of his broad lips. I could see he was going to try to make this good. I focused on keeping the vital interest I felt out of my eyes.

"Do you know any of our old stories, about where we came from?" he began.

"Not really," I admitted.

"Well, there are lots of legends, some of them claiming to date back to the Flood—supposedly, our ancestors tied their canoes to the tops of the tallest trees on the mountain to survive like Noah and the ark." He smiled, to show me how little stock he put in the histories. "Another legend claims that we descended from wolves—and that the wolves are our brothers still. It's against tribal law to kill them.

"Then there are the stories about the cold ones." His voice dropped a little lower.

"The cold ones?" I asked, not faking my intrigue now.

"Yes. There are stories of the cold ones as old as the wolf legends, and some much more recent. According to legend, my own great-grandfather knew some of them. He was the one who made the treaty that kept them off our land." He rolled his eyes.

"Your great-grandfather?" I encouraged.

"He was a tribal elder, like my father. You see, the cold ones are the natural enemies of the wolf—well, not the wolf, really, but the wolves that turn into men, like our ancestors. You would call them werewolves."

Sample piece 2
***Kaspar* by Michael Morpurgo**

Prince Kaspar Kandinsky first came to the Savoy Hotel in a basket. I know because I was the one who carried him in. I carried all the Countess' luggage that morning, and I can tell you, she had an awful lot of it.

But I was a bell-boy so that was my job: to carry luggage, to open doors, to say good morning to every guest I met, to see to their every need, from polishing their boots to bringing them their telegrams. In whatever I did I had to smile at them very politely, but the smile had to be more respectful than friendly. And I had to remember all their names and titles too, which was not at all easy, because there were always new guests arriving. Most importantly though, as a bell-boy – which, by the way, was just about the lowest of the low at the hotel – I had to do whatever the guests asked me to, and right away. In fact I was at almost everyone's beck and call. It was "jump to it, Johnny", or "be sharp about it, boy", do this "lickedysplit", do that "jaldi, jaldi". They'd click their fingers at me, and I'd jump to it lickedysplit, I can tell you, particularly if Mrs Blaise, the head housekeeper, was on the prowl.

We could always hear her coming, because she rattled like a skeleton on the move. This was on account of the huge bunch of keys that hung from her waist. She had a voice as loud as a trombone when she was angry, and she was often angry. We lived in constant fear of her. Mrs Blaise liked to be called "Madame", but on the servants corridor at the top of the hotel where we all lived – bell-boys, chamber maids, kitchen staff – we all called her Skullface, because she didn't just rattle like a skeleton, she looked a lot like one too. We did our very best to keep out of her way.

Exam title: Speech and Drama/Performing Text

Grade: 6

Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate reads at sight a passage of prose or verse provided by the examiner.

Sample piece 1 – Prose

***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen**

And when the party entered the assembly room it consisted only of five all together, – Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest, and another young man.

Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. His sisters were fine women, with an air of decided fashion. His brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, merely looked the gentleman; but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a-year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud; to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.

Mr. Bingley had soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room; he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself at Netherfield. Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves. What a contrast between him and his friend! Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behaviour was sharpened into particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters.

Sample piece 2 - Prose
***After Dark* by Haruki Murakami**

The electric door slides open and a lanky young man walks in. Short black leather coat, wrinkled olive-green chinos, brown work boots. Hair fairly long and tangled in places. Perhaps he has had no chance to wash it in some days. Perhaps he has just crawled out of the underbrush somewhere. Or perhaps he just finds it more natural and comfortable to have messy hair. His thinness makes him look less elegant than malnourished. A big black instrument case hangs from his shoulder. Wind instrument. He also holds a dirty tote bag at his side. It seems to be stuffed with sheet music and other assorted things. His right cheek bears an eye-catching scar. It is short and deep, as if the flesh has been gouged out by something sharp. Nothing else about him stands out. He is a very ordinary young man with the air of a nice—but not very clever—stray mutt. The waitress on hostess duty shows him to a seat at the back of the restaurant. He passes the table of the girl with the book. A few steps beyond it, he comes to a halt as if a thought has struck him. He begins moving slowly backward as in a rewinding film, stopping at her table. He cocks his head and studies her face. He is trying to remember something, and much time goes by until he gets it. He seems like the type for whom everything takes time. The girl senses his presence and raises her face from her book. She narrows her eyes and looks at the young man standing there. He is so tall, she seems to be looking far overhead. Their eyes meet. The young man smiles. His smile is meant to show he means no harm.

Sorry if I've got the wrong person," he says, "but aren't you Eri Asai's little sister?"

She does not answer. She looks at him with eyes that could be looking at an overgrown bush in the corner of a garden.

"We met once," he continues. "Your name is . . . Yuri . . . sort of like your sister Eri's except the first syllable."

Keeping a cautious gaze fixed on him, she executes a concise factual correction: "Mari."

He raises his index finger and says, "That's it! Mari. Eri and Mari. Different first syllables. You don't remember me, do you?"

Mari inclines her head slightly. This could mean either yes or no. She takes off her glasses and sets them down beside her coffee cup.

Exam title: Speech and Drama

Grade: 6

Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate reads at sight a passage of prose or verse provided by the examiner.

Sample piece 1 – Verse

I carry your heart with me

by E. E. Cummings

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere
i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done
by only me is your doing,my darling)

i fear
no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true)
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart)

Sample piece 2 – Verse
Sonnet 21
by William Shakespeare

So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,
Making a couplement of proud compare
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare,
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O! let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fixed in heaven's air:
Let them say more that like of hearsay well;
I will not praise that purpose not to sell.

Sample Piece 3 - Verse

***I was so much older then,
I'm younger than that now***
By Kate Tempest

It roars. Precious and hot and before time.
We played games on the alleyway railing.
I was the fat one. Good-natured and kind.
They were my friends. The world was our plaything.

We climbed hills to bury things. We drew maps.
Pulled our feet from the suck of the Quaggy.
Rules were if you flinched they got two free slaps.
My specs were large and my clothes were baggy.

Collected things that we found on the ground.
Always the goalie. I never complained.
I told the stories; they did the sounds.
We painted potatoes whenever it rained.

Pictures for Narratives

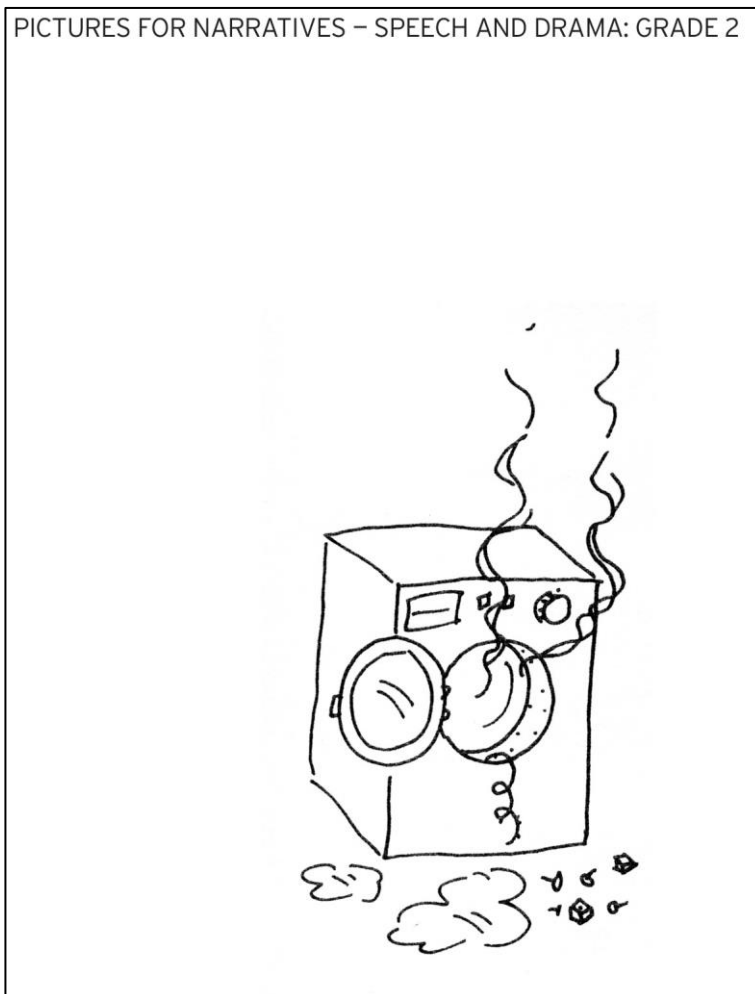
Exam title: Speech and Drama

Grade: 2

Task: 4

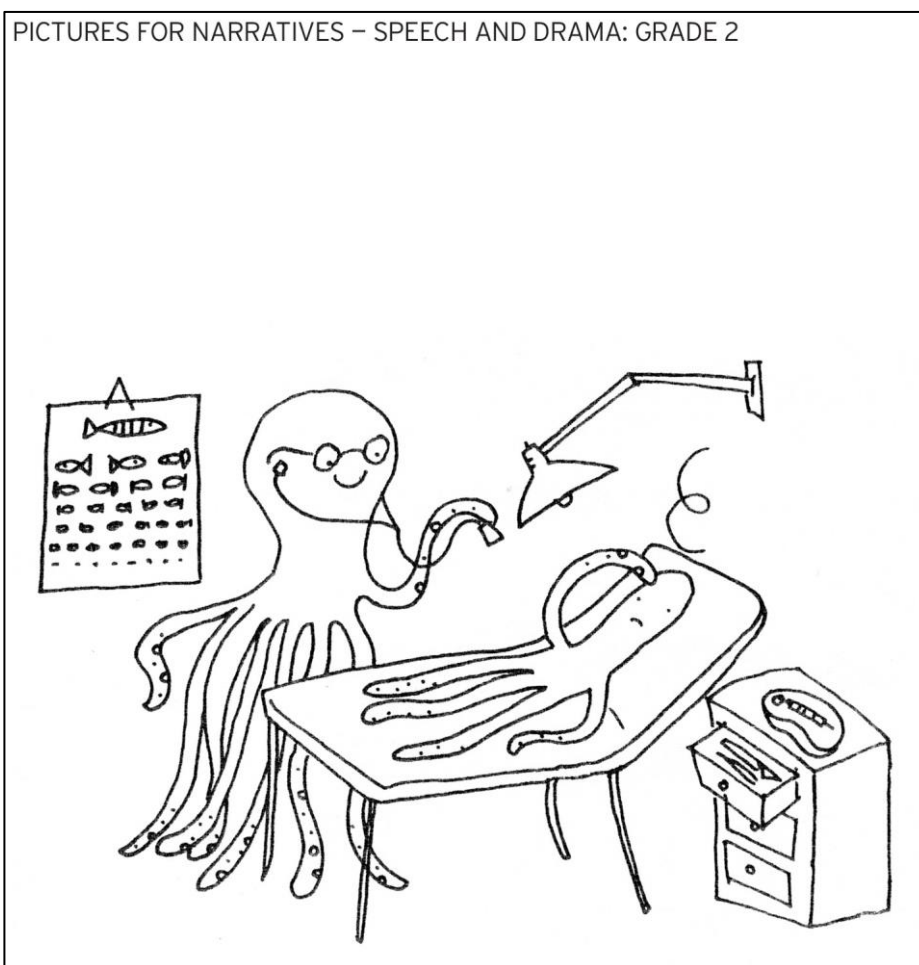
Requirement: The candidate invents and tells a story based on a picture provided by the examiner.

Sample 1



Sample 2

PICTURES FOR NARRATIVES – SPEECH AND DRAMA: GRADE 2



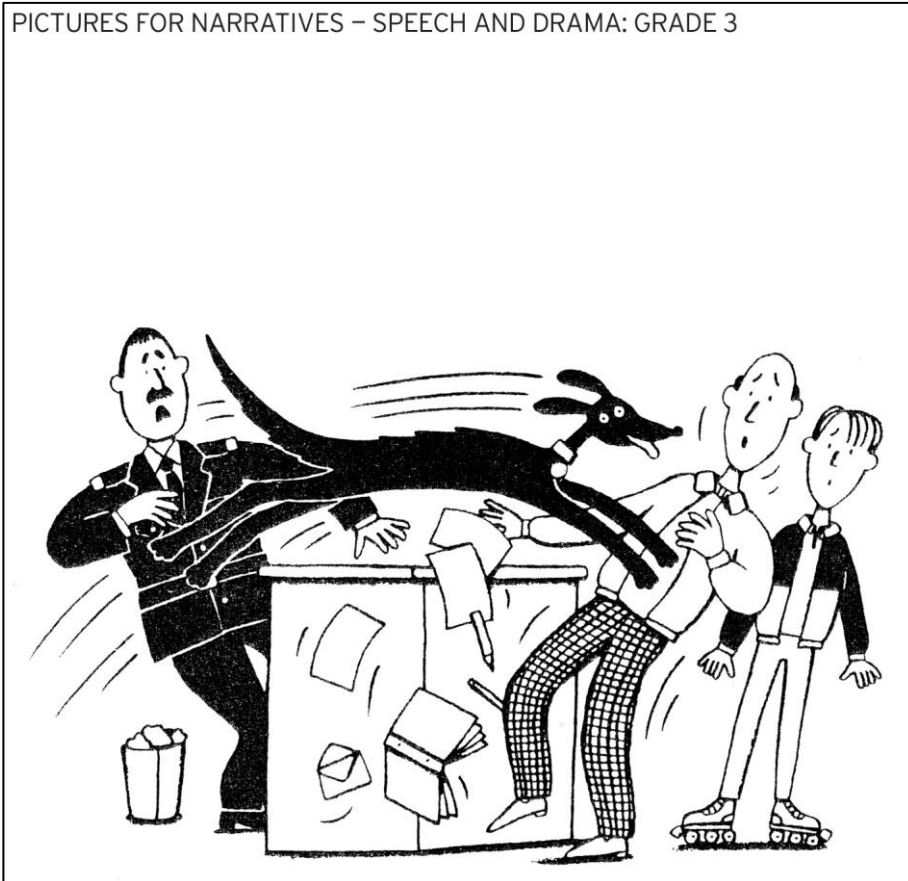
Exam title: Speech and Drama

Grade: 3

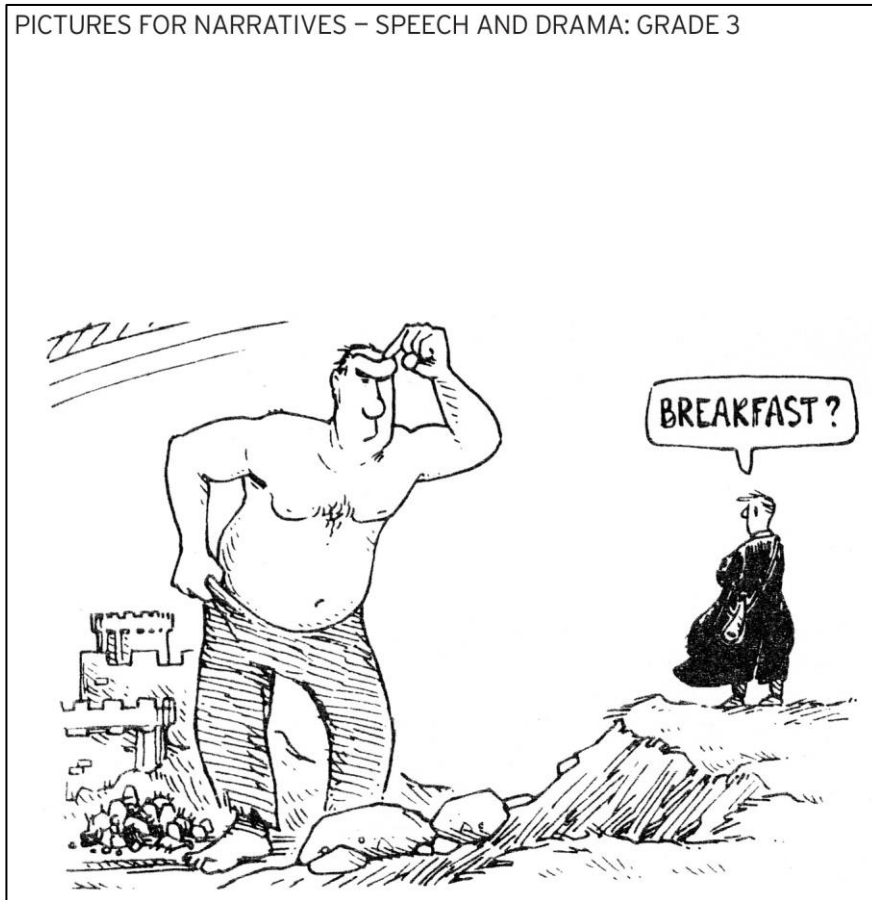
Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate invents and tells a story based on a picture provided by the examiner.

Sample 1



Sample 2



Words for Narratives

Exam title: Speech and Drama

Grade: 4

Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate invents and tells a story using four words provided by the examiner.

Sample 1

beautiful beach somersault gloom

Sample 2

tablet rocks party desperation

Exam title: Speech and Drama

Grade: 5

Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate invents and tells a story using five words provided by the examiner.

Sample 1

wobbly tiger music diamond study

Sample 2

Teapot damp diamonds bucket birds

Exam title: Speech and Drama

Grade: 6

Task: 4

Requirement: The candidate invents and tells a story using six words provided by the examiner.

Sample 1

mystery puncture invitation criminal whisper obedient

Sample 2

confident shared gravity invitation trust sandwich

Plot Outlines

Exam title: Acting in Pairs

Grade: 6

Task: 2

Requirement: The candidates introduce and perform a scene developed through improvisation based on a plot outline provided by the examiner 15 minutes before the exam.

Sample 1

A birthday party is about to begin. An unexpected guest arrives.

Sample 2

A sudden change in the weather means that plans have to be changed. This is much more significant for one of the characters than it is for the other.