**GCSE English Language J351/02  
Practice Questions**

**SCHOOL**

Questions 1 and 2 are about the extract from ‘Cider With Rosie’ by Laurie Lee

1. Look again at paragraph 1: “The village school at that time…”

a. At what age did they leave school?

[1 mark]

b. What is implied about the pupils’ grandparents’ education? [1 mark]

c. Identify two phrases which show the limitations of the pupils’ education. [2 marks]

2. Look again at paragraph 7: “I thought this was overdoing it rather…”

How does Laurie Lee make his description of the playground entertaining?

You should use relevant subject terminology in your answer.

[6 marks]

Question 3 is about the extract from ‘The Pieces of Silver’ by Karl Sealy.

3. Look again at paragraphs 5 – 9: “The stout, pompous, acting Headmaster…” to the end.

Explore how the writer presents the acting Headmaster.

Support your ideas by referring to the language and structure of this section, using relevant subject terminology.

[12 marks]

Question 4 is about the extracts from ‘Cider With Rosie’ by Laurie Lee **and** ‘The Pieces of Silver’ by Karl Sealy.

4. ‘In these texts, school is presented as a challenging place for pupils.’

How far do you agree with this statement?

In your answer you should:

* + - discuss your impressions of the pupils’ experiences
    - explain what you find unusual about their school environment
    - compare the ways the writers present the pupils’ experiences of school

Support your response with quotations from both texts.

[18 marks]

**An extract from ‘Cider with Rosie by Laurie Lee**

The village school at that time provided all the instruction we were likely to ask for. It was a small stone barn divided by a wooden partition into two rooms - The Infants and The Big Ones. There was one dame teacher, and perhaps a young girl assistant. Every child in the valley crowding there, remained till he was fourteen years old, then was presented to the working field or factory, with nothing in his head more burdensome than a few mnemonics, a jumbled list of wars, and a dreamy image of the world's geography. It seemed enough to get by with in any case; and it was one up on our poor grandparents.

This school, when I came to it, was at its peak. Universal education and unusual fertility had packed it to the walls with pupils. Wild boys and girls from miles around – from the outlying farms and half-hidden hovels way up at the ends of the valley – swept down each day to add to our numbers, bringing with them strange oaths and odours, quaint garments and curious pies. They were my first amazed vision of any world outside my family; I didn’t expect to survive it for long, and I was confronted with it at the age of four.

The morning came, without any warning, when my sisters surrounded me, wrapped me in scarves, tied up my bootlaces, thrust a cap on my head, and stuffed a baked potato in my pocket.

‘What’s this?’ I said.

‘You’re starting school today.’

‘I ain’t. I’m stopping ‘ome.’

‘Now, come on, Loll. You’re a big boy now.’

‘I ain’t.’

‘You are.’

‘Boo-hoo.’

They picked me up bodily, kicking and bawling, and carried me up the road.

‘Boys who don’t go to school get put into boxes, and turned into rabbits, and get chopped up Sundays.’

I thought this was overdoing it rather, but I said no more after that. I arrived at the school just three feet tall and fatly wrapped in my scarves. The playground roared like a rodeo, and the potato burned through my thigh. Old boots, ragged stockings, torn trousers and skirts, went skating and skidding around me. The rabble closed in; I was encircled; grit flew in my face like shrapnel. Tall girls with frizzled hair and huge boys with sharp elbows, began to prod me with hideous interest. They plucked at my scarves, spun me round like a top, screwed my nose, and stole my potato.

I was rescued at last by a gracious lady – the sixteen-year-old junior-teacher – who boxed a few ears and dried my face and led me off to The Infants. I spent that first day picking holes in paper, then went home in a smouldering temper.

‘What’s the matter, Loll? Didn’t he like it at school, then?’

‘They never gave me the present!’

‘Present? What present?’

‘They said they’d give me a present.’

‘Well, now, I’m sure they didn’t.’

‘They did! They said: “You’re Laurie Lee, ain’t you? Well, just you sit there for the present.” I sat there all day but I never got it. I ain’t going back there again!’

But after a week I felt like a veteran and grew as ruthless as anyone else. Somebody had stolen my baked potato, so I swiped someone else’s apple. The Infant Room was packed with toys such as I’d never seen before – coloured shapes and rolls of clay, stuffed birds and men to paint. Also a frame of counting beads which a young teacher played like a harp, guiding our wandering fingers.

**An extract from ‘The Pieces of Silver’ by Karl Sealy**

When, at five minutes to ten, the bell started to ring, a pall of silence settled over the noisy playfield.

Reluctantly, games of cricket and pick-ups were abandoned; climbers came slithering down from the old tamarind tree on the school grounds or dropped quickly from its branches, making haste to clear their mouths of the green, acid fruit they had been enjoying.

The school of four hundred odd boys assembled in ranks across the pebbled playfield, waiting for inspection before they could file into the red-walled school. Some glanced apprehensively at their dusty, naked feet, while others tried feverishly to make their nails and hands presentable.

The teachers came from the schoolroom in a leisurely bunch, laughing and joking in quiet voices as they sauntered towards the boys.

The stout, pompous, acting Headmaster came to the window that opened off his platform on to the playfield, still making an unnecessary clangour with his bell, and looked sternly over the assembled rows of scholars. The smaller boys straightened and stiffened under his cold gaze.

As the teachers passed slowly along the ranks the boys turned their hands back and forth and grinned to show their teeth. A number of boys who failed to pass the teachers’ inspection of health were hauled out of the ranks and ordered in to the acting Head. There were three strokes with his cane of plaited tamarind stalks for unclean hands, four for improperly brushed teeth and six for an uncombed head.

After the inspection the boys filed quietly into school and to their different classes. When you could have heard a pin drop the schoolmaster rapped out the order: ‘Shun!’ The entire school of boys flung their hands to their foreheads and chanted: ‘Good morning to our teachers.’

The schoolmaster announced a hymn, and emitting an untrue, faltering note, invited the scholars to take it. The boys rendered a rich improvement of the sound, and when the schoolmaster flung his hand up and stamped his foot they tore full-throatedly into the hymn.

At the conclusion of the hymn the boys sang, ‘Amen,’ bringing their hands up to their faces in an attitude of prayer. The schoolmaster submitted a long, impromptu supplication, rambling and ill-worded, at the end of which the boys said ‘Amen’ once more. Again the schoolmaster ordered: ‘Shun!’ The boys came to attention and the school was ready to begin.