

**Christ's Hospital Entrance Examination:**  
***Sample Reading Passage for Sample January Examination***  
**English**  
**Reading Materials**

*Please read the following extract from Charles Dickens' novel 'Oliver Twist' and then answer the questions in Section A of the question paper.*

5 In a handsome room: though its furniture had rather the air of old-fashioned comfort than of modern elegance: there sat two ladies at a well-spread breakfast table. Mr Giles, dressed with scrupulous care in a full suit of black, was in attendance upon them. He had taken his station some half way between the sideboard and the breakfast table; and with his body drawn up to its full height, his head thrown back, and inclined the merest trifle on one side, his left leg advanced, and his right hand thrust into his waistcoat, while his left hung down by his side, grasping a salver<sup>1</sup> looked like one who laboured under a very agreeable sense of his own importance.

10 Of the two ladies, one was well advanced in years; but the highbacked oaken chair in which she sat, was not more upright than she. Dressed with the utmost nicety and precision, in a quaint mixture of by-gone costume, with some slight concessions to the prevailing taste, which rather served to point the old style pleasantly than to impair its effect, she sat in a stately manner, with her hands folded on the table before her. Her eyes (and age had dimmed but little of their brightness) were attentively fixed upon her young companion.

15 The younger lady, aged seventeen, was in the lovely bloom and spring-time of womanhood; at that age when, if ever angels be for God's good purposes enthroned in mortal forms, they may be, without impiety, supposed to abide in such as hers.

20 A gig drove up to the garden gate: out of which there jumped a fat gentleman, who ran straight up to the door; and who, getting quickly into the house by some mysterious process, burst into the room, and nearly overturned Mr. Giles and the breakfast-table together.

25 "My dear Mrs. Maylie – bless my soul – in the silence of the night, too – I *never* heard of such a thing!"

With these expressions of condolence, the fat gentleman shook hands with both ladies, and drawing up a chair, inquired how the found themselves.

30 "You ought to be dead; postively dead with the fright," said the fat gentleman. "Why didn't you send? Bless me, my man should have come in a minute; and so would I; and my assistant would have been delighted; or anybody, I'm sure, under such circumstances. Dear, dear! So unexpected! In the silence of the night, too!"

35 The doctor seemed especially troubled by the fact of the robbery having been unexpected, and attempted in the night-time; as if it were the established custom of gentlemen in the housebreaking way to transact business at noon, and to make an appointment, by post, a day or two previous.

---

<sup>1</sup> Salver: a type of serving tray.