

SECTION A: Comprehension: 30 Minutes

The following passage is an extract from Norse Mythology by Neil Gaiman. In it, the god Thor realises he has lost his hammer and tries to get it back. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow on the sheet provided. Your essay will be on a related subject; you will be given a choice of titles in the next examination session.

- 1 Thor, god of thunder, mightiest of all the Aesir¹, the strongest, the bravest, the most valiant in
2 battle, was not entirely awake yet, but he had the feeling that something was wrong. He reached out
3 for his hammer, which he always kept within reach while he slept.
- 4 He fumbled around with his eyes closed. He groped about, reaching for the comfortable and familiar
5 shaft of his hammer. No hammer. Thor opened his eyes. He sat up. He stood up. He walked around
6 the room. There was no hammer anywhere. His hammer was gone.
- 7 Thor's hammer was called Mjollnir. It had been made for Thor by the dwarfs Brokk and Eitri. It was
8 one of the treasures of the gods. If Thor hit anything with it, that thing would be destroyed. If he
9 threw the hammer at something, the hammer would never miss its target, and would always fly back
10 through the air and return to his hand. He could shrink the hammer down and hide it inside his shirt,
11 and he could make it grow again. It was a perfect hammer in all things except one: it was slightly too
12 short in the handle, which meant that Thor had to swing it one-handed.
- 13 The hammer kept the gods of Asgard safe from all the dangers that menaced them and the world.
14 Frost giants and ogres, trolls and monsters of every kind, all were frightened of Thor's hammer.
- 15 Thor loved his hammer. And his hammer simply was not there.
- 16 There were things Thor did when something went wrong. The first thing he did was ask himself if
17 what had happened was Loki's fault. Thor pondered. He did not believe that even Loki would have
18 dared to steal his hammer. So he did the next thing he did when something went wrong, and he
19 went to ask Loki for advice.
- 20 Loki was crafty. Loki would tell him what to do.
- 21 "Don't tell anyone," said Thor to Loki, "but the hammer of the gods has been stolen."
- 22 "That," said Loki, making a face, "is not good news. Let me see what I can find out."
- 23 Loki went to Freya's hall. Freya was the most beautiful of all the gods. Her golden hair tumbled
24 about her shoulders, and it glinted in the morning light. Freya's two cats prowled the room, eager to
25 pull her chariot. Around her neck, as golden and shining as her hair, glittered the necklace of the
26 Brisings, made for Freya by dwarfs far underground.
- 27 "I'd like to borrow your feathered cloak," said Loki. "The one that lets you fly."
- 28 "Absolutely not," said Freya. "That cloak is the most valuable thing I possess. It's more valuable than
29 gold. I'm not having you wearing it and going around and making mischief."
- 30 "Thor's hammer has been stolen," said Loki. "I need to find it."
- 31 "I'll get you the cloak."

¹ A group of Norse gods

32 Loki put on the feathered cloak and he took to the air, in falcon shape. He flew beyond Asgard. He
33 flew deep into the land of the giants, looking for something unusual.

34 Beneath him, Loki saw a huge grave mound, and sitting on it, plaiting a dog collar, was the hugest,
35 ugliest ogre of a giant he had ever seen. When the ogre saw Loki in falcon shape, he grinned a sharp-
36 toothed grin and waved.

37 “What’s up with the Aesir, Loki? What’s the news from the elves? And why have you come along
38 into the land of the giants?”

39 Loki landed beside the ogre. “There’s nothing but bad news from Asgard, and nothing but bad news
40 from the elves.”

41 “Really?” said the ogre, and he chuckled to himself, as if he were extremely pleased with something
42 he had done and thought himself remarkably clever. Loki recognised that sort of chuckle. Sometimes
43 he did it himself.

44 “Thor’s hammer is missing,” said Loki. “Would you know anything about that?”

45 The ogre scratched his armpit, and he chuckled once more. “I might,” he admitted. Then he said,
46 “How’s Freya? Is she as beautiful as they say?”

47 “If you like that sort of thing,” said Loki.

48 “Oh, I do,” said the ogre. “*I do.*”

49 There was another uncomfortable silence. The ogre put the dog collar down on a pile of dog collars
50 and began to plait another one.

51 “I have Thor’s hammer,” the ogre told Loki. “I’ve hidden it so deep beneath the earth that nobody
52 can ever find it, not even Odin. I am the only one who could bring it up again. And I will return it to
53 Thor if you bring me what I want.”

54 “I can ransom the hammer,” said Loki. “I can bring you gold and amber, treasures beyond counting -”

55 “Don’t want them,” said the ogre. “I want to marry Freya. Bring her here in eight days from now. I’ll
56 return the hammer of the gods as a bride-gift on Freya’s wedding night.”

57 “Who are you?” asked Loki.

58 The ogre grinned and showed his crooked teeth. “Why, Loki, son of Laufey, I am Thrym, Lord of the
59 ogres.”

60 “I have no doubt that we can come to an arrangement, great Thrym,” said Loki. He drew Freya’s
61 feathered cloak around him, then stretched his arms and took to the skies.

62 Beneath Loki the world seemed very small: he looked down at the trees and the mountains, tiny as
63 children’s playthings, and the problems of the gods seemed a small thing also.

64 Thor was waiting for him in the court of the gods, and before Loki had even landed he found himself
65 seized by Thor’s huge hands. “Well? You know something. I can see it in your face. Tell me whatever
66 you know, and tell it now. I don’t trust you, Loki, and I want to know what you know right this
67 moment, before you’ve had a chance to plot and plan.

68 Loki, who plotted and planned as easily as other folk breathed in and out, smiled at Thor’s anger and
69 innocence. “Your hammer has been stolen.”

Complete the questions below by circling the correct answer. Do not worry if you don't complete all of the questions in the time allowed – just do your best!

- 1) How does Thor feel when he wakes up? **[1]**
 - a. Tired
 - b. Anxious
 - c. Optimistic
 - d. Safe

- 2) What kind of words are 'mightiest', 'strongest', and 'bravest' in line 1? **[1]**
 - a. Nouns
 - b. Adverbs
 - c. Adjectives
 - d. Verbs

- 3) What does the word 'fumbled' in line 4 suggest? **[1]**
 - a. Clumsiness
 - b. Precision
 - c. Determination
 - d. Calmness

- 4) Which word does **not** describe the hammer? **[1]**
 - a. Strong
 - b. Reliable
 - c. Valuable
 - d. Unmanageable

- 5) What kind of word is 'one-handed' in line 12? **[1]**
 - a. Adjective
 - b. Pronoun
 - c. Adverb
 - d. Noun

- 6) What kind of word is 'menaced' in line 13? **[1]**
 - a. Adjective
 - b. Verb
 - c. Adverb
 - d. Noun

- 7) What do you think Asgard is, in line 13 and line 32? **[1]**
 - a. A person
 - b. A place
 - c. An object
 - d. An idea

- 8) How does Thor feel about Loki? **[2]**
 - a. Suspicious and respectful
 - b. Suspicious and disrespectful

- c. Trusting and respectful
 - d. Trusting and disrespectful
- 9) What does the word 'pondered' mean in line 17? **[1]**
- a. Waited
 - b. Thought
 - c. Prayed
 - d. Swam
- 10) What does the word 'crafty' mean in line 20? **[1]**
- a. Intelligent
 - b. Cunning
 - c. Artistic
 - d. Evil
- 11) How would you describe Freya's hair? **[1]**
- a. Brown and messy
 - b. Brown and shiny
 - c. Blonde and messy
 - d. Blonde and shiny
- 12) How helpful is Freya to Loki? **[2]**
- a. Unhelpful
 - b. Helpful
 - c. Unhelpful then helpful
 - d. Helpful then unhelpful
- 13) What do Freya's cats seem to be used for? **[1]**
- a. Keeping her company
 - b. Catching mice
 - c. Defending her
 - d. Transporting her
- 14) What technique is used in 'as golden and shining as her hair' in line 25? **[1]**
- a. Metaphor
 - b. Simile
 - c. Adverb
 - d. Question
- 15) Why is Freya's cloak so valuable to her? **[2]**
- a. It cost a lot of money
 - b. It was a present
 - c. It allows her to fly
 - d. It was beautiful
- 16) Which tense is the extract written in? **[1]**
- a. Past
 - b. Present

- c. Future
- d. None of the above

17) Which objects have been made by dwarfs? **[2]**

- a. Freya's hair and Thor's hammer
- b. Thor's hammer and Freya's necklace
- c. Freya's necklace and Freya's cloak
- d. Freya's cloak and the ogre's teeth

18) What is a falcon? **[1]**

- a. An angel
- b. A bird
- c. A dinosaur
- d. A mythical lion

19) What is the subject of the sentence 'I'd like to borrow your feathered cloak' on line 27? **[1]**

- a. I
- b. Would
- c. Borrow
- d. Cloak

20) What does the phrase 'took to the air' mean in line 32? **[1]**

- a. Breathed deeply
- b. Felt cold
- c. Began to fly
- d. Looked up at the sky

21) Which word is the pronoun in line 35? **[1]**

- a. Of
- b. A
- c. He
- d. In

22) What does 'sharp-toothed' suggest about the ogre on line 35-36? **[1]**

- a. Friendly
- b. Hungry
- c. Aggressive
- d. Unclean

23) How concerned is the ogre about seeing Loki? **[2]**

- a. Not at all
- b. A little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Extremely

24) Who is the narrator of this extract? **[1]**

- a. Thor
- b. Freya

- c. Loki
- d. None of the above

25) What kind of word is 'himself' on line 41? **[1]**

- a. Noun
- b. Adverb
- c. Preposition
- d. Pronoun

26) What kind of laugh is a 'chuckle' (see line 45)? **[1]**

- a. A loud one
- b. A silent one
- c. A fake one
- d. A quiet one

27) Why was the silence 'uncomfortable' on line 49? **[2]**

- a. Because of the ogre's comments about Freya
- b. Because they are both shy
- c. Because the ogre doesn't want to speak to Loki
- d. Because Loki doesn't need anything from the ogre

28) Which word is the closest synonym for 'ransom' on line 54? **[1]**

- a. Gold
- b. Find
- c. Exchange
- d. Share

29) What is the object of the first sentence on line 55? **[1]**

- a. I
- b. Don't
- c. Want
- d. Them

30) Who is Loki's mother? **[1]**

- a. Freya
- b. Brisings
- c. Laufrey
- d. Asgard

31) What is the name of the ogre? **[1]**

- a. Thrym
- b. Brisings
- c. Aesir
- d. Brokk

32) Which of these statements is true? **[2]**

- a. Loki and the ogre know each other well.
- b. Loki knows the ogre, but the ogre doesn't know Loki.

- c. The ogre knows Loki, but Loki doesn't know the ogre.
- d. Loki and the ogre don't know each other at all.

33) How should Loki try to get the hammer back? **[2]**

- a. Giving the ogre gold
- b. Letting the ogre live in Thor's palace
- c. Persuading Freya to marry the ogre
- d. Looking more carefully in the land of the giants

34) Which word is the proper noun on line 52? **[1]**

- a. I
- b. Odin
- c. Only
- d. Return

35) Which of these words is the closest synonym for 'playthings' on line 62? **[1]**

- a. Toys
- b. Games
- c. Sweets
- d. Friends

36) How does Loki feel when he is flying? **[2]**

- a. Scared
- b. Overwhelmed
- c. Free
- d. Ecstatic

37) Which of these words is the best synonym for 'innocence' on line 69? **[1]**

- a. Happiness
- b. Naivety
- c. Freedom
- d. Desire

38) How does Thor feel at the end of the extract? **[2]**

- a. Angry about the hammer and suspicious of Loki
- b. Angry about the hammer and suspicious of the ogre
- c. Angry about the ogre and suspicious of Freya
- d. Angry about Freya and suspicious of the ogre

39) Which of these statements matches the end of the extract? **[1]**

- a. Loki has got the hammer
- b. The ogre doesn't know anything about the hammer
- c. The hammer will never be found
- d. The ogre might give the hammer back

40) Who is the most powerful god in this extract? **[1]**

- a. Loki
- b. Freya
- c. Thor
- d. Thrym

Section B – Creative Writing – 30 minutes

Complete **one** of the following tasks.

Either:

- 1) Write a short story that begins with the line: 'I had lost something incredibly important.'

Or:

- 2) Imagine that you come across this jewel, which has amazing powers. Write a description of your experience.



Whichever task you choose, you should aim to write three developed paragraphs.

Do your best to demonstrate:

- A wide and interesting vocabulary.
- A good range of different sentence structures.
- Accurate punctuation and spelling.

Your writing will be marked out of 25.

Mark Scheme – Comprehension:

- 1) B
- 2) C
- 3) A
- 4) D
- 5) C
- 6) B
- 7) B
- 8) A
- 9) B
- 10) B
- 11) C
- 12) C
- 13) D
- 14) B
- 15) C
- 16) A
- 17) B
- 18) B
- 19) A
- 20) C
- 21) C
- 22) C
- 23) A
- 24) D
- 25) D
- 26) D
- 27) A
- 28) C
- 29) D
- 30) C
- 31) A
- 32) C
- 33) C
- 34) B
- 35) A
- 36) C
- 37) B
- 38) A
- 39) D
- 40) C