**From ‘A Walk in the Woods’ by Bill Bryson Fiction 1A**

*The narrator is camping in the wilderness with a companion, Stephen Katz.*

There was a sound of undergrowth being disturbed – a click of breaking branches, a weighty pushing through low foliage – and then a kind of large, vaguely irritable snuffling noise.

Bear!

I sat bolt upright. Instantly every neuron in my brain was awake and dashing around frantically, like ants when you disturb their nest. I reached instinctively for my knife, then realized I had left it in my pack, just outside the tent. Nocturnal defence had ceased to be a concern after many successive nights of tranquil woodland repose.

There was another noise, quite near.

‘Stephen, you awake?’ I whispered.

‘Yup,’ he replied in a weary but normal voice. ‘What was that?’

‘How the hell should I know? It sounded big.’

Everything sounds big in the woods.’

This was true. Once a skunk had come plodding through our camp and it had sounded like a stegosaurus. There was another heavy rustle and then the sound of lapping at the spring. It was having a drink, whatever it was.

I shuffled on my knees to the foot of the tent, cautiously unzipped the mesh and peered out, but it was pitch black. As quietly as I could, I brought in my backpack and, with the light of a small torch, searched through it for my knife. When I found it and opened the blade I was appalled at how wimpy it looked. it was a perfectly respectable appliance for, say, buttering pancakes, but patently inadequate for defending oneself against 400 pounds of ravenous fur.

Carefully, very carefully, I climbed from the tent and put on the torch, which cast a distressingly feeble beam. Something about 15 or 20 feet away looked up at me. I couldn’t see anything at all of its shape or size – only two shining eyes. It went silent whatever it was, and stared back at me.

‘Stephen,’ I whispered at his tent ‘did you pack a knife?’

‘No.’

‘Have you got anything sharp at all?’

He thought for a moment. ‘Nail clippers.’

I made a despairing face. ‘Anything a little more vicious than that? Because, you see, there is definitely something out here.’

‘It’s probably just a skunk.’

‘Then it’s one big skunk. Its eyes are three feet off the ground.’

‘A deer then.’

I nervously threw a stick at the animal, and it didn’t move, whatever it was. A deer would have bolted. This thing just blinked once and kept staring.

I reported this to Katz.

‘Probably a buck. They’re not so timid. Try shouting at it.’

I cautiously shouted at it: ‘Hey! You there! Scat!’ The creature blinked again, singularly unmoved. ‘You shout,’ I said.

‘Oh, you brute, go away, do!’ Katz shouted in merciless imitation. ‘Please withdraw at once you horrid creature.’

**Questions**

A1 – List five things that show the narrator was scared. (5 marks)

A2 – How does the writer show that the narrator is more worried than his friend? (5 marks)

*Write about the language used*

A3 – What impression are you given of the dangers of camping in the wild? (10 marks)

A4 – How does the writer build tension and drama in the extract? (10 marks)

A5 – “The men are unable to protect themselves in the wild” How far would you agree or disagree with this statement? (10 marks)