AQA GCSE ENG Lang Paper 1 Section A Reading: Extract from Lord of the Flies

1 “You said you wanted a small fire and you been and built a pile **like a hayrick**. If I say anything,” cried Piggy, 2 with bitter realism, “you say shut up; but if Jack or Maurice or Simon–”

3 He paused in the tumult, standing, looking beyond them and down the **unfriendly side** of the mountain to 4 the great patch where they had found dead wood. Then he laughed so strangely that they were hushed, 5 looking at the flash of his spectacles in astonishment. They followed his gaze to find the **sour joke**.

**6 “You got your small fire all right.”**

7 Smoke was rising here and there among the creepers that festooned the dead or dying trees. As they 8 watched, a **flash of fire** appeared at the root of one wisp, and then the smoke thickened. **Small flames**  9 **stirred** at the trunk of a tree and **crawled** away through leaves and brushwood, dividing and increasing. One 10 patch touched a tree trunk and scrambled up **like a bright squirrel**. The smoke increased sifted, rolled 11 outwards. The **squirrel leapt** on the **wings of the wind** and **clung** to another standing tree**, eating 12 downwards**. Beneath the dark canopy of leaves and smoke the **fire laid hold on the forest** and began to 13 **gnaw**. Acres of black and yellow smoke rolled steadily toward the sea. At the sight of the flames and the

14 irresistible course of the fire, the boys broke into shrill, excited cheering. The flames, as though they were a 15 **kind of wild life**, **crept as a jaguar creeps** on its belly toward a line **of birch-like saplings** that fledged an

16 outcrop of the pink rock. They flapped at the first of the trees, and the branches grew a brief foliage of fire. 17 The heart of flame **leapt nimbly** across the gap between the trees and then went swinging and flaring along 18 the whole row of them. Beneath the capering boys a quarter of a mile square of forest was **savage** with

19 smoke and flame. The separate noises of the fire merged into a **drum-roll** that seemed to shake the mountain.

**20 “You got your small fire all right.”**

21 Startled, Ralph realized that the boys were falling still and silent, feeling the beginnings of awe at the power 22 set free below them. The knowledge and the awe made him savage.

*(An Extract from Lord of the Flies, Golding)*