He saw everything in front of him as though it was a very highly colored dream. There were hundreds and hundreds of faces staring down at him from stands that had been magicked there since he’d last stood on this spot. And there was the Horntail, at the other end of the enclosure, crouched low over her clutch of eggs, her wings half-furled, her evil, yellow eyes upon him, a monstrous, scaly, black lizard, thrashing her spiked tail, leaving yard-long gouge marks in the hard ground. The crowd was making a great deal of noise, but whether friendly or not, Harry didn’t know or care. It was time to do what he had to do . . . to focus his mind, entirely and absolutely, upon the thing that was his only chance. . . .

He raised his wand.

“Accio Firebolt!” he shouted.

Harry waited, every fiber of him hoping, praying. . . . If it hadn’t worked . . . if it wasn’t coming . . . He seemed to be looking at everything around him through some sort of shimmering, transparent barrier, like a heat haze, which made the enclosure and the hundreds of faces around him swim strangely. . . .

And then he heard it, speeding through the air behind him; he turned and saw his Firebolt hurtling toward him around the edge of the woods, soaring into the enclosure, and stopping dead in midair beside him, waiting for him to mount. The crowd was making even more noise. . . . Bagman was shouting something . . . but Harry’s ears were not working properly anymore . . . listening wasn’t important. . . .

He swung his leg over the broom and kicked off from the ground. And a second later, something miraculous happened. . . .

As he soared upward, as the wind rushed through his hair, as the crowd’s faces became mere flesh-colored pinpricks below, and the Horntail shrank to the size of a dog, he realized that he had left not only the ground behind, but also his fear. . . . He was back where he belonged. . . .

This was just another Quidditch match, that was all . . . just another Quidditch match, and that Horntail was just another ugly opposing team. . . .

He looked down at the clutch of eggs and spotted the gold one, gleaming against its cement-colored fellows, residing safely between the dragon’s front legs. “Okay,” Harry told himself, “diversionary tactics . . . let’s go. . . .”

He dived. The Horntail’s head followed him; he knew what it was going to do and pulled out of the dive just in time; a jet of fire had been released exactly where he would have been had he not swerved away . . . but Harry didn’t care . . . that was no more than dodging a Bludger. . . .

“Great Scott, he can fly!” yelled Bagman as the crowd shrieked and gasped. “Are you watching this, Mr. Krum?”

Harry soared higher in a circle; the Horntail was still following his progress; its head revolving on its long neck — if he kept this up, it would be nicely dizzy — but better not push it too long, or it would be breathing fire again —

Harry plummeted just as the Horntail opened its mouth, but this time he was less lucky — he missed the flames, but the tail came whipping up to meet him instead, and as he swerved to the left, one of the long spikes grazed his shoulder, ripping his robes —

He could feel it stinging, he could hear screaming and groans from the crowd, but the cut didn’t seem to be deep. . . . Now he zoomed around the back of the Horntail, and a possibility occurred to him. . . .

The Horntail didn’t seem to want to take off, she was too protective of her eggs. Though she writhed and twisted, furling and unfurling her wings and keeping those fearsome yellow eyes on Harry, she was afraid to move too far from them . . . but he had to persuade her to do it, or he’d never get near them. . . . The trick was to do it carefully, gradually. . . .

He began to fly, first this way, then the other, not near enough to make her breathe fire to stave him off, but still posing a sufficient threat to ensure she kept her eyes on him. Her head swayed this way and that, watching him out of those vertical pupils, her fangs bared. . . .

He flew higher. The Horntail’s head rose with him, her neck now stretched to its fullest extent, still swaying, like a snake before its charmer. . . .

Harry rose a few more feet, and she let out a roar of exasperation. He was like a fly to her, a fly she was longing to swat; her tail thrashed again, but he was too high to reach now. . . . She shot fire into the air, which he dodged. . . . Her jaws opened wide. . . .

“Come on,” Harry hissed, swerving tantalizingly above her, “come on, come and get me . . . up you get now . . .”

And then she reared, spreading her great, black, leathery wings at last, as wide as those of a small airplane — and Harry dived. Before the dragon knew what he had done, or where he had disappeared to, he was speeding toward the ground as fast as he could go, toward the eggs now unprotected by her clawed front legs — he had taken his hands off his Firebolt — he had seized the golden egg —

And with a huge spurt of speed, he was off, he was soaring out over the stands, the heavy egg safely under his uninjured arm, and it was as though somebody had just turned the volume back up — for the first time, he became properly aware of the noise of the crowd, which was screaming and applauding as loudly as the Irish supporters at the World Cup —

3. You now need to think about the whole of the source.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

• what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning

• how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops

• any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

4. Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source from line 27 to the

end.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: “The writer successfully creates a tense atmosphere.”

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

• consider your own impressions of Harry and the dragon

• evaluate how the writer portrays Harry and the dragon

• support your opinions with references to the text.

[20 marks]