

Pearson Education  
AP\* Test Prep Series

# AP Literature and Composition

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# About Your Pearson AP\* Guide

Pearson Education is the leading publisher of textbooks worldwide. With operations on every continent, we make it our business to understand the changing needs of students at every level, from kindergarten to college. We think that makes us especially qualified to offer this series of AP\* test prep books, tied to some of our best-selling textbooks.

Our reasoning is that as you study for your course, you're preparing along the way for the AP test. If you can tie the material in the book directly to the test you'll be taking, it makes the material that much more relevant and enables you to focus your time most efficiently. And that's a good thing!

The AP exam is an important milestone in your education. A high score means you're in a better position for college acceptance, and possibly puts you a step ahead with college credits. Our goal is to provide you with the tools you need to excel on the exam . . . the rest is up to you.

Good luck!

# Preface

As a student in an Advanced Placement (AP) Literature and Composition class, you probably have some questions about how the whole AP program works and how it can benefit you. Also, since you will probably be taking an AP Literature and Composition Examination, and you want to find out more about it. This book will help you in several important ways. The first part of this book introduces you to the AP Literature and Composition course and the AP Literature and Composition Exam. You'll learn helpful details about the different question formats—multiple-choice and free-response—that you'll encounter on the exam. In addition, you'll find many test-taking strategies that will help you prepare for the exam.

Part II of this book gives you assistance in writing literary analysis, such as using MIST and Chunking (see Topic 1). The other section of Topic 1 will help you read and understand the novel: to know how a novel is structured, comprehend the role of characterization and character development, identify motifs and symbols, and be able to apply “tips” to see a novel's theme. This section also offers you a Book Review Sheet. In Topic 2 of Part II, the book gives you more tools for approaching the AP exam and gives you practice in answering multiple-choice questions and essay prompts. These are followed by answers and explanations to help you understand how to achieve a quality response.

Finally, in Part III, you will find two full-length sample tests. These will help you practice taking the exam under real-life testing conditions. The more familiar you are with the AP Literature and Composition Exam ahead of time, the more comfortable you'll be on testing day.



# Part I

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## *Introduction to the AP Literature and Composition Examination*

This section gives an overview of the Advanced Placement program and the AP Literature and Composition Examination. Part I introduces the types of questions you will encounter on the exam, explains the procedures used to grade the exam, and provides helpful test-taking strategies. Review Part I carefully before trying the sample test items in Part II and Part III.



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## *The Advanced Placement Program*

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The AP Program is sponsored by the College Board, a nonprofit organization that oversees college admissions examinations. The AP Program offers thirty-three college-level courses to qualified high school students. If you receive a grade of 3 or higher on an AP exam, you may be eligible for college credit, depending on the policies of the institution you plan to attend. Over 3,000 colleges and universities around the world grant credit to students who have performed well on AP exams. Some institutions grant sophomore status to incoming first-year students who have demonstrated mastery of several AP subjects. You can check the policies of specific institutions on the College Board's website ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)). In addition, the College Board confers a number of AP Scholar Awards on students who score 3 or higher on three or more AP exams. Additional awards are available to students who receive very high grades on four or five AP exams.

### **Why Take an AP Course?**

You may be taking an AP course simply because you like challenging yourself and you are thirsty for knowledge. Another reason may be that you know that colleges look favorably on applicants who have AP courses on their secondary school transcripts. AP classes involve rigorous, detailed lessons, a lot of homework, and numerous tests. College admissions officers may see your willingness to take these courses as evidence of your work ethic and commitment to your education. Because AP course work is more difficult than average high school work, many admissions officers evaluate AP grades on a higher academic level. For example, if you receive a B in an AP class, it might carry the same weight as an A in a regular-level high school class.

Your AP Literature and Composition course prepares you for many of the skills you will need to succeed in college. For example, your teacher will have you work with sophisticated novels and poems that will challenge your comprehension, and you will be asked to write thoughtful, well-styled essays on these works. AP Literature and Composition teachers routinely give substantial reading assignments, and students develop an appreciation of how authors use language to craft meaning and create a work of art. By studying a work's structure, style, and themes, you will gain a deeper appreciation of and greater sensitivity to great works of literature. This depth of literary understanding will serve you as well as you enter college.

Each college or university decides whether or not to grant college credit for an AP course, and each bases this decision on what it considers satisfactory grades on AP exams. Depending on what college you attend and what area of study you pursue, your decision to take the AP Literature and Composition Exam could save you tuition money. You can contact schools directly to find out their guidelines for accepting AP credits, or use the College Board's online feature, "AP Credit Policy Info."

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## Taking an AP Examination

The AP Literature and Composition Exam is given annually in May. Your AP teacher or school guidance counselor can give you information on how to register for an AP exam. Remember, the deadline for registration and payment of exam fees is usually in March, two months before the actual exam date in May. The cost of the exam is subject to change and can differ depending on the number of exams taken. However, in 2010, a single exam costs \$87. For students who can show financial need, the College Board will reduce the price by \$22, and your school might also waive its regular rebate of \$8, so the lowest possible total price is \$56. Moreover, schools in some states are willing to pay the exam fee for the student. If you feel you may qualify for reduced rates, ask your school administrators for more information.

The exams are scored in June. In mid-July, the results will be sent to you, your high school, and any colleges or universities you indicated on your answer sheet. If you want to know your score as early as possible, you can get it (for an additional charge of \$8) beginning July 1 by calling the College Board at (888) 308-0013. On the phone, you'll be asked to give your AP number, your social security number, your birth date, and a credit card number.

If you decide that you want your score sent to additional colleges and universities, you can fill out the appropriate information on your AP Grade Report (which you will receive by mail in July) and return it to the College Board. There is an additional charge of \$15 for each additional school that will receive your AP score.

On the other hand, if a feeling of disaster prevents you from sleeping on the nights following the exam, you could choose to withhold or cancel your grade. (Withholding is temporary, whereas canceling is permanent.) Grade withholding carries a \$10 charge per college or university, whereas canceling carries no fee. You'll need to write to (or e-mail) the College Board and include your name, address, gender, birth date, AP number, the date of the exam, the name of the exam, a check for the exact amount due, and the name, city, and state of the college(s) from which you want the score withheld. You should check the College Board website for the deadline for withholding your score, but it's usually in mid-July. It is strongly suggested that you *do not* cancel your scores, since you won't know your score until mid-July. Instead, relax and try to assume that the glass is half full. At this point, you have nothing to lose and a lot to gain.

If you would like to get back your free-response booklet for a post-exam review, you can send another check for \$7 to the College Board. You'll need to do this by mid-September. Finally, if you have serious doubts about the accuracy of your score for the multiple-choice section, the College Board will re-score it for an additional \$25.

## AP Literature and Composition: Course Goals

The course is founded upon focused readings from a variety of genres, cultures, and periods. While each instructor may have different preferences for literary periods or styles, the course mandates a wide array of perspectives and voices.

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You will read works that broaden your perspective of what it means to be human, and you will gain an appreciation for the choices and decisions the writer has made in crafting his or her message. You will learn to ask sophisticated questions of the texts and interpret the answers with acute, responsible criticism.

The three main elements of the approach to such a study involve the experience of literature, the interpretation of literature, and the evaluation of literature. The experience of literature involves your initial and emotional responses as a reader; the interpretation involves your analysis of meaning through close reading; the evaluation of literature involves your understanding of how and why the writers make the choices they do to craft their meanings, as well as the social and cultural significance of the works. Each of these reading elements is honed through written discussion of literary works. These written discussions will range from a student reaction focus—freewriting and journals—to highly focused literary analysis and interpretation. By interacting with and writing about a many works of high “literary merit,” students in AP Literature and Composition will gain an appreciation for literature and an ability to make thoughtful and valid interpretations of that literature.

Although the level of language study does not equal that of AP Literature and Composition, significant emphasis is placed on developing your “voice” and style as a writer. Understanding how to structure, develop, and articulate a thoughtful piece of literary analysis is the foundation of the course. To achieve this goal of sophisticated analysis, instructors offer a wide range of vocabulary and terms for study, as well as specific modes of expression and argumentation. Acquiring and developing these writing skills will come with practice and revision; in the writing process, a premium is placed on revision and drafting.

To help guide and evaluate your development as a reader and writer, your instructor may occasionally have you work with AP English Literature Released Exams. The multiple-choice sections will test your close-reading skills and understanding of important literary terms and principles. These exams offer opportunities for “timed writes,” prompts that ask you to read, analyze, and write on poetry and literary passages. The third type of prompt is an “open” question that asks you to select a novel from your course reading and apply its relevant features to a specific question provided. Many instructors will use these three types of prompts as a first draft that you will build into longer, more developed essays.

## *Understanding the AP Literature and Composition Examination*

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The AP Literature and Composition Exam takes three hours. The exam probably looks like many other tests you’ve taken. It is made up of a multiple-choice section and a free-response (essay) section. The exam consists of 60 minutes for multiple-choice questions followed by 120 minutes for free-response ques-

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tions. Performance on the free-response section of the exam counts for 45 percent of the total score; performance on the multiple-choice section, 55 percent. At the core of the examination are questions designed to measure your reading comprehension, analytical skills, and written expression.

### Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

Section I contains 55 multiple-choice questions that test reading comprehension and literary analysis. You will have 60 minutes to complete Section I. The multiple-choice questions will come from a mix of poems and brief prose passages. The 5 specific texts—some years, two poems and three passages; some years, three poems and two passages—will have between 10–12 questions each. This portion of the exam is followed by a 5–10 minute break—the only official break during the examination. The directions for the multiple-choice section of the test are straightforward and similar to the following:

**Directions:** Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the choice that best answers the question or completes the statement.

The questions will primarily test your understanding of literary terms and reading comprehension. You will be asked to deal with answers “in context” and to illustrate broader understandings of the pieces. Questions that reflect an appreciation for denotative and connotative significance and your ability to understand tone and meaning are common to the test.

#### **TIP FROM THE READERS**

In the past, there was a penalty for guessing, but that is eliminated beginning with the 2011 exam. *Answer every question!*

While there are certainly going to be questions that you may be uncertain of, you can improve your odds on hitting the right answer. For example, if the question asks you to identify the mood of a poem, but you don’t know for certain the meaning of the words “elegiac” and “satiric,” you need to limit your options to improve your chances. If you know any of the other choices and can eliminate some, confidently mark your answer sheet and continue. Remember, answer every question!

#### **Reading Comprehension**

On balance, the largest percentage of the multiple-choice questions deals with your ability to read a poem or passage and understand what the writer is saying and how. These types of questions can be categorized as *Factual* or *Interpretive*.

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### ***Factual: Literary Terms, Vocabulary, and Grammar***

One type of multiple-choice question checks your familiarity with *literary terms*, which will test whether you've mastered certain terms and can identify an author utilizing them.

1. For example, a question from a poem may ask, Line 8 makes dramatic use of . . .
  - (A) assonance and consonance
  - (B) alliteration and assonance
  - (C) metaphor and symbol
  - (D) metonymy and consonance
  - (E) oxymoron and hyperbole

With a question like this, you need to know the vocabulary and be able to apply it. The best way to approach factual questions is to read the question and every one of the five choices carefully.

Within this factual type are also *grammatical questions*. For example,

1. In line 8, "into a shadowy vision of herself" what is the antecedent of "herself"?
  - (A) Connie
  - (B) her mother
  - (C) Connie in the future
  - (D) Connie's mother a young girl
  - (E) Connie's dream of herself

In this question, you need to know not only what the definition for antecedent is, but you must understand how the sentence is working to come to the correct answer.

### ***Interpretive: Purpose and Expression***

Another large percentage of the multiple-choice questions are interpretive and test your ability to gather meaning. These can best be categorized as *Purpose* and *Expression*.

#### ***Purpose***

Purpose questions will ask you to interpret what is happening in a text and the effect of it upon meaning.

1. For example, The poet's use of juxtaposition serves primarily to compare the immortality of the star and . . .
  - (A) the fleeting nature of love
  - (B) the moon's effect on tide
  - (C) the imperfection of human perception
  - (D) the reality of human death
  - (E) the certainty of hopeful love

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With this question, you need to display an understanding of the writer’s message and how it is crafted.

**Expression**

Another type of question tests your understanding of the writer’s style and purpose.

1. What is the effect of the repetition of the word “but” in the fifth paragraph?
  - (A) to link two independent clauses
  - (B) to convey the difference of opinion between the daughter and mother
  - (C) to help characterize the contrast between her domestic and social self
  - (D) to create a fragmented syntax to convey conflict
  - (E) to foster a contrary tone

With a question like this, you need to appreciate how the author’s language use helps foster the meaning.

**“Multiple Answer” Multiple-Choice Questions**

Sometimes the College Board question developers modify the format for questions slightly, and the result is a slightly more difficult type of multiple-choice question. This type of question features four answers that are correct and only one that is incorrect; you are asked to find the incorrect choice. Generally these questions contain the word *NOT* or the word *EXCEPT*. Pay attention to the capitalization of these words in Section I of the exam to avoid making a careless mistake.

1. The first 5 sentences (lines 1–6) have all of the following primary effects EXCEPT
  - (A) conveying his physical discomfort
  - (B) establishing the setting
  - (C) illustrating his transformation
  - (D) analyzing his anguish
  - (E) establishing the racist undertone

The last type of question asks you to shift through, evaluate, and possibly pair answers

2. Which piece of figurative language has the connotation of helpless?
  - I. ... the smoke had become a knife jabbed into my guts (line 21)
  - II. My arms were like lead (lines 15–16)
  - III. ...waving in the smiley-blue atmosphere like drunken dancers (lines 25–6)
  - IV. I stumbled about like a baby or a drunken man (lines 2–3)
  - (A) I
  - (B) I and II
  - (C) II and IV
  - (D) II and III
  - (E) IV



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In both of these types of “multiple answer” questions, you need to keep a sharp eye out for inaccuracies and use them to discard choices.

## Section II: Free Response

The second part of the examination consists of three essays: one on a poem, one on a passage, and the “open” prompt on a novel. You will have 120 minutes for free-response questions; the suggested time for each response is 40 minutes. Performance on the free-response section of the exam counts for 55 percent of the total score.

### **Prompt #1: Poetry**

Most years, the poetry prompt asks you to analyze the methods and meaning of a poem. Discussion of how meaning is conveyed through literary devices (techniques and elements) unique to poetry is expected. **Literary techniques** refers to any specific, deliberate choices or constructions of language that an author uses to convey meaning in a particular way. **Literary elements** refers to particular identifiable characteristics of a *whole text*. They are not “used,” per se, by authors; they represent the elements of storytelling which are common to all literary and narrative forms. You must be able both grasp the meaning and have a strong foundation in the conventions of poetry to write well on the poetry prompt. Some years, you will be asked to compare and contrast two poems in your essay. A strong answer utilizes specific evidence (quotations) in the analysis.

### **Prompt #2: Prose**

Like the poetry prompt, this prompt asks you to analyze the methods and meaning of a prose excerpt or brief piece of fiction. Discussion of how meaning is conveyed through literary devices (techniques and elements) unique to fiction is expected. A strong answer utilizes specific evidence (quotations) in the analysis.

### **Prompt #3: The “Open” Prompt**

The final prompt asks you to apply your understanding of a novel’s (or full length drama’s) methods and themes to a specific question. It will generally ask you to consider *character development*, *impact of setting*, or *literary technique*. While the question is followed by a list of “suggested works of literary merit,” you can certainly write on a novel of “literary merit,” not on that list. At this point it is important to add that the reading list in most AP courses does not include many contemporary, popular novels such as the Harry Potter books. While you may find these novels complex and fascinating, on balance the AP readers do not consider them of high literary merit so it is best not to write on such a novel.

### **Strategies for Prompts 1 and 2**

Both prompts will ask you to discuss meaning and how it is conveyed. Often the prompt will offer a specific focus, such as imagery or tone, for you to dis-

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cuss. To do this well, you must understand the component parts of imagery (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, kinesthetic, and so on) or of tone (word choice, imagery, syntax, and figurative language). If the prompt suggests that you “Consider such devices as imagery, diction, characterization, and tone,” you need to discuss 2–3 of those for a strong answer. Occasionally, the prompt will be more open-ended, such as “analyze how the writer uses language to develop meaning.” Although this is daunting at first, just realize that you need to discuss the conventions and devices critical to poetry or prose. Your charge is to show that you understand how the writer used his or her literary tools to craft message and meaning.

You have 40 minutes to respond. Take the first 10 minutes to understand the task and the material and organize your response. As you read the prompt, make certain you underline what is being asked of you. Put boxes around key words such as “how”; this will, hopefully, tie you to your task and keep you from drifting or summarizing plot or using paraphrase instead of analysis. As you read the prompt, annotate the poem or passage for anything that harkens back to the prompt. Once you are finished reading, create a “stuff list” of ideas and evidence that you want to use in your response. Create a brief outline, then write.

### ***Strategies for the “Open” Prompt***

Read the prompt and underline what it is asking you to do. Then read the suggested works of literary merit, circling ones that you have studied. If you don’t recognize any titles, don’t panic; the odds are that your instructor had you work with many quality novels and plays. Consider which work you have the most confidence in and begin a “stuff list” of what you want to discuss from that work. Take 5–10 minutes to build a “stuff list” and organize. Realize that there is a very good chance that the person reading your essay has taught the novel you are discussing, so don’t summarize plot, but perhaps give a brief overview of the appropriate conflict as it pertains to the prompt and the novel. In your analysis, use specific examples to illustrate your mastery of the text.

#### ***TIP FROM THE READERS***

##### ***Writing Approach to Prompts***

You are writing for an “informed audience,” so limit your summary and paraphrase. Your opening should “give back” some of the prompt, but it should not simply restate it. You should not wax poetic about the wonders of a writer or work; show that you understand the task at hand and begin. While you do not necessarily have to have a clear blueprint of your essay in the introduction, it is helpful to offer a direction for the discussion to follow.

When dealing with prompts 1 and 2, there is a chance that you will not have a clear understanding of the meaning, and therefore you don’t necessarily have to state the meaning in the introduction of your essay.

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However, because you have studied and probably written an essay on the novel you are discussing for the “open” prompt, you should offer a statement of theme or meaning in the introductory paragraph. On balance, follow these principles:

- Maintain a sense of simplicity. The best student writers see much, but say it succinctly.
- Develop your ideas with specific references to the text
- Let your writing dance with ideas and insight. You can get a 6 or 7 with a lockstep approach, but the essays that earn 8s or 9s expand to a wider perspective.
- Write legibly. If a reader can’t read half the words, you won’t get a fair reading even if your essay is passed to another reader with keener eyesight.



# Part II

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## *A Review of Topics with Sample Questions*

Use these practice questions to arm yourself thoroughly for all kinds of test items that you will encounter on the AP exam. Answers and explanations are provided for each question for your further review.



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# *Literary Analysis—How to Approach the AP Literary Passages*

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The passages you will find on the AP Literature and Composition exam have been selected for their literary merit, their depth, and the wide breadth of writing styles and perspectives they provide. They will be challenging. However, approaching these passages strategically will help you to be successful—not only on the exam, but, more importantly, in enjoying and appreciating literature in the future.

## **Annotating the Text**

There are a number of strategies you should consider when analyzing each passage. First and foremost, it is critical to annotate the text as you are reading it. Annotation is a critical part of reading a text actively. An active reader identifies an author's strategies, themes, devices, tone, and the passage's organizational features as he or she reads a passage. How one annotates is in many ways a personal preference. Some choose to circle key words and underline important images. Others prefer to write profusely within the margins of a passage. While these strategies are helpful when reading a text for a class or for pleasure, a more targeted approach is advisable when taking the AP exam. Because many of the multiple-choice questions will ask you to examine the author's purpose, the speaker's tone, relevant themes, structure, and literary devices and strategies utilized by the author, it is useful to focus your attention on these key issues and to annotate accordingly.

## **Approaching the Passage**

Given the time constraints of the AP exam, it is important to realize that you will not be able to identify every strategy and device used by an author in a passage. Your goal is to focus your annotations on the items most likely to be addressed in either the multiple-choice questions or in the essay prompts. As mentioned above, the author's purpose and the passage's theme are keys to understanding the text and preparing your response. You should seek out those lines that shed light on the author's purpose. Such lines are often to be found in either the opening or closing of a passage. You should also be aware of the tone created within the passage. Look for key words that convey the speaker's or narrator's attitude toward the subject matter. Loaded diction and vivid verbs often provide insight to the passage's tone. You should get into the practice of circling these words or phrases as you encounter them.

The passages selected for inclusion on the AP exam will also be rich in imagery and figurative language. You should be on the lookout for the obvious: examples of simile, metaphor, and personification. Get into the practice of underlining such literary devices and noting their presence in the margins. Often such figurative language is helpful in uncovering a passage's theme. Allusions and symbols are also frequently used by authors included in the exam, so you should annotate them similarly.

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Finally, you should pay close attention to the organization or structure of the passage. If the passage is a poem, you should ask yourself how its format enhances its meaning. You should check the poem's rhyme scheme, stanza form, and meter. If it is a prose passage, you should consider the relationship each paragraph has with the preceding and following paragraphs. In other words, you want to examine how the passage is structurally developed and seek out places within the passage where significant shifts occur. While this may sound complicated, a simple strategy is to provide a brief summary of each stanza or paragraph in the margins as you are reading. Such summaries should be written as brief fragments. When viewed collectively, these fragments may help you piece together critical aspects of the passage such as the author's purpose and argument.

Again, it is important to understand that time is critical on the AP exam. However, under no circumstances should you skim the passages. A close and targeted reading of the passage will help you to better answer the questions asked in the multiple-choice section and the prompts posed in the written section. While you will read the passage carefully, do not over analyze the passage at the cost of precious time. Read the passage carefully, identify and annotate what you can, and proceed to the questions or prompts.

### **Practice Poem—Annotation in Action**

Read the following poem, "The Chimney Sweeper," by William Blake. Annotate the passage according to the suggestions provided in the previous section. Remember, you are looking for purpose, tone, theme, figurative language and literary devices, and structural organization.

When my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!  
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

5 There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,  
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved: so I said,  
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,  
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

10 And so he was quiet; and that very night,  
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight,  
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,  
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

15 And by came an angel who had a bright key,  
And he opened the coffins and set them all free;  
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,  
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,  
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;  
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,  
20 He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.



And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,  
 And got with our bags and our brushes to work.  
 Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm;  
 So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

### Sample Annotation

Motherless speaker; chimney sweep; pathetic	When my mother died I was very young, And my father sold me while yet my tongue Could scarcely cry 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.	Couplets; repetition (weep); internal rhyme (sweep—sleep)
Comforts fellow chimneysweep over shaved head	There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head, That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved: so I said, "Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare, You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."	Simile—boy to lamb
Sweep dreams of fellow sweeps in coffins	And so he was quiet; and that very night, As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight, That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack, Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.	Metaphor— chimneys as coffins
Innocent vision of paradise; sweeps are cleansed and freed	And by came an angel who had a bright key, And he opened the coffins and set them all free; Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run, And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.	Religious allusion; alliteration (leaping, laughing)
Sweeps frolic; heaven promised to the good	Then naked and white, all their bags left behind, They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind; And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy, He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.	Imagery— purity and innocence
Sweeps return to work comforted by heaven	And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark, And got with our bags and our brushes to work. Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm; So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.	Ending sounds like a moral

### Organizational T-Charts

The T-chart is another useful strategy for unpacking a passage's meaning and the devices used by an author. The T-chart can be used in either the multiple-choice section, or in analyzing the passages in the essay section. The two columns created in the T-chart are devoted to examining the purpose or argument presented by the passage and those strategies used by the writer within the passage. Again, William Blake's "The Chimney Sweeper" provides an opportunity to explore this technique.

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## Sample T-Chart

Argument/Purpose/Topic Addressed	Strategies
An innocent outlook, in this case, an unquestioning belief in a pleasant afterlife, can provide solace in times of great despair	Childlike rhyme scheme—sounds like a nursery rhyme  Conflicting images of purity and the soil of being a chimney sweep  Simile likening sweep to innocent lamb  Storyteller-like narration  Religious allusions to angel, God, afterlife

As you can see, the T-chart provides a quick method for organizing and examining a passage's key features. The left-hand column forces you to hone in on the passage's meaning, while the right-hand column provides you with a list of devices used to create that meaning. Superfluous annotations are thereby eliminated, and you are better prepared to approach the multiple choice or essay responses.

## Aristotle and the Rhetorical Device Box

Aristotle's art of rhetoric can prove helpful when applied to literary analysis. Aristotelian logic asks the reader to examine three key components of a work: the trustworthiness of its speaker, referred to as *ethos*; the logic of the argument, referred to as *logos*; and the emotional impact it has on its audience, referred to as *pathos*. Considering these three components can be very helpful when analyzing a passage. For the purposes of examining a literary passage, Aristotle's concepts of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* are broken into four components: the speaker, the audience, the purpose of the passage, and its argument. Additionally, those literary devices used by the author are included. Please see the graphic organizer on the next page as a model.

Again, the AP exam places time constraints on you, the test-taker. Considerable time would be required to complete a thorough graphic organizer of the type shown on the following page. However, the more you practice this technique, the better equipped you are to identify the key components quickly. Just as you would in annotating a text, you are training your critical eye to question those things that Aristotle himself questioned when approached by a literary text, or more appropriately in his time, a speech. At the core of understanding any literary work is the need to understand the speaker and his or her motivations, to identify the targeted audience, to tacitly identify the passage's purpose, and to be able to articulate the key claims or argument of the passage. This, with practice, will become second nature to you.

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## Sample Aristotle and Rhetorical Device Box

Speaker—What do we know about the speaker? Is the speaker trustworthy? What is the speaker’s position on the topic explored? How do you visualize the speaker? What is his tone or attitude toward the subject matter? Is the author the speaker?	Audience—Who is the intended audience? What specific appeals does the speaker make to this audience?	Purpose—What is the reason the speaker has written about this subject matter? What goal does the speaker have? If the speaker is not the author, why did the author create the speaker?
Literary Strategies—What strategies does the author use in the passage?		
Argument—What, ultimately, does the piece argue? What are its claims? What is its thesis?		

### MIST

There are many acronyms that are used successfully in literary analysis. Among them is the MIST acronym. A quick but effective way to remember four key terms that help to quickly analyze a work of literature, the MIST acronym works well when time is of the essence. MIST stands for: Mood, Imagery, Shifts, and Tension.

**MOOD:** You might consider the following question: Is the mood of the passage serious or comedic? Satirical or pedantic? Ironic or earnest?

**IMAGERY:** What images are employed in the selection and what literary devices or figurative language are used to develop them? How does the use of imagery impact the mood or tone of the selection and the development of its theme?

**SHIFTS:** Look for shifts in tone, point of view, and tense. These shifts highlight the development of the passage.

**TENSION:** What seem to be the forces pushing or pulling at the narrator or speaker as the passage moves along? Look to the images within the passage to discern these tensions as they are often conveyed subtly in imagery.

### CHUNKING

Chunking is a way in which you consider the rhetorical structure of an entire poem or passage of prose. Once you have identified an author’s message or theme, you should consider how this message or theme was developed. When you chunk a literary selection, you are, in essence, breaking it into larger pieces

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to examine the author’s organizational strategies and their effect on the development of the work’s theme. While you may be inclined to consider individual stanzas or paragraphs as individual chunks, bear in mind that an author may continue to explore an idea, image, or theme over many stanzas and paragraphs. Therefore, to effectively chunk you should examine the major movements or shifts within a piece’s organization. Consider the different ways in which you can chunk the following poem “When I have fears” by John Keats.

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has glean’d my teeming brain,  
Before high piled books, in charact’ry,  
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen’d grain;  
5 When I behold, upon the night’s starr’d face,  
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And think that I may never live to trace  
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;  
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!  
10 That I shall never look upon thee more,  
Never have relish in the faery power  
Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think  
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

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## Approaching the Novel

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Novels are works of fiction of 100 pages or more. Within these pages an author attempts to convey the workings of the human condition by focusing on a specific individual or, occasionally, on a group. Human values are revealed by the personal conflicts of the individual. Through the author's exploration of and focus on the individual and the conflicts he/she must face, the human situation is revealed. The conveyance of this human situation is not predicated by theme or moral; it arises from the character's motivation to act. The meaning or theme realized by the reader is the product of his/her understanding of these motivations.

### Role of a Novel's Structure

Understanding how a novel's structure contributes to its meaning is an important task for an AP student. A novel's structure dictates the manner in which you, the reader, are given information about characters, their motivations, and their outcomes. Moving from scene to scene, it drives the plot of the story and contributes tension and suspense. Most importantly, it controls the way in which the novel's theme is developed. Therefore, it is critical to consider the novel and its structure when preparing for the AP Literature and Composition Exam, particularly given that the final essay prompt, the open question, will ask you to focus on a novel.

Many novels follow a traditional structural format that mimics an arc. The novel begins with the exposition, a stage in which the main characters, the protagonist and the antagonist, are introduced. Often, character flaws and the novel's central themes are intimated at in this stage. Setting, with respect to time and place, is also established in the novel's exposition. The exposition, in essence, provides a frame from which the novel's key actions and characters can spring forth.

Following the exposition is a series of events typically referred to as the rising action of the novel. These events consist of multiple scenes in which the novel's conflict is introduced and developed. This conflict typically arises from tensions developed in a number of different ways. Often tension between two characters leads to conflict, as is the case in a novel like Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. In other novels, tension can lead to a conflict between the individual and the society in which they live, as is the case in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Still other novels use characters with internal, psychological tensions to explore conflict in the novel's rising action. These internal struggles, explored in novels like *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, are psychological in nature. In all cases, conflict drives the rising action of the novel.

Characters are also developed during this stage. Some characters will be rich and dynamic in nature, while others will remain static and flat. You should consider the manner in which characters are developed in the novel, as often their development is critical to understanding the novel's message. Furthermore, you should pay close attention to relationships between characters. Some characters will be naturally attracted to or influenced by others, while other characters will become foils.

The rising action, as a result of the conflict and crisis developed within them, ultimately leads to the novel's critical scene, or its climax. The climax

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marks the highest point within the novel's action, and a novel's climactic scene is often marked by a momentous occasion, an epiphany, or a tragic event. It is, quite literally, the moment to which the entire action of the novel has led.

The novel's climax is typically followed by the story's falling action in which the repercussions of the climax are detailed. Once the repercussions are detailed, the novel's resolution, the point when the final fates of the protagonist and other key characters are revealed, brings the work to a close.

Not all novels will follow this traditional approach to storytelling. Many novels choose to begin the story *in medias res*, in the middle of the action. Such novels begin in the present moment, often a moment of crisis, perhaps even the novel's climactic moment, and then explore the events that lead up to this moment. Only after exploring these events, does the novel move into the future to examine the outcomes of a character's actions.

Other novels may be structured around multiple narrators and perspectives, each with a unique viewpoint of a singular event. The novel may move forward in a chronological fashion, but it may do so only after hearing from multiple narrators. Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* are notable for using this tactic.

Still other novelists will purposely manipulate the traditional arc to achieve their own stylistic goals. You should consider the effect a novel's structure has on its meaning.

## **Role of Characterization and Character Development**

In many ways, characterization and character development are no different in a novel than they are in a short story or a narrative poem. Some characters will be richly detailed, dynamic in nature, and complicated. Others will be one-dimensional, flat, and static by nature. Identifying these qualities and considering how individual characters help to contribute to the meaning of a work as a whole is a good first step to analyzing a novel.

It is important to understand the terms protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is the novel's main character. In first person novels, they are the narrator. Ideal or flawed, the protagonist is the central focus of the novel. The antagonist is the character who creates or accelerates the conflict for the protagonist. These characters are often deeply flawed, and do not have the protagonist's best interests at heart.

Certainly, identifying a novel's antagonist and protagonist is important when exploring a novel's characterization. You should also, however, consider the interplay between and among a novel's various characters. Some novels will create foils, characters whose purpose is to contrast another character, as a means of highlighting a central character's strengths and flaws. Other novels will introduce confidantes whose purpose is to give the central characters advice and guidance and allow them an authentic audience to whom they may bare their souls. Still others will use individual characters in an allegorical way, much like Orwell's *Animal Farm* or Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, to explore certain archetypes.

Ultimately, all characters in a novel serve a purpose. Even minor characters should be afforded your attention. You should consider how each character contributes to the work's meaning.

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## Motifs

When reading a work of literature, one must take into consideration that it is a work of artistic fiction. In other words, it is a well-crafted and deeply considered fabrication. If the writer wanted to simply say, “People are easily seduced and corrupted by money,” perhaps he or she would have written an essay (or possibly just sprayed painted on a wall). Moreover, to get this specific idea across to a reader without being brutally repetitive or obvious, a writer will employ *motifs* to help convey the idea. A motif is a recurring image or action within a novel. Taken individually, these images or actions can seem mundane, but collectively they impact the reader and help the author convey his ideas. A novel can have multiple motifs. They can be as diverse as color, transportation, music, clothes, flowers, trees, games, blood, alcohol, and sex. Motifs, unlike symbols, do not have to be tangible. Keeping a close eye out for such repeated images will give the reader a better understanding of the characters, the author’s point of view, and the novel’s theme.

### ***Tips for Identifying a Novel’s Theme***

Far too often the most daunting task for readers is the consideration of a novel’s theme, what message the work is conveying. Often, students are too apprehensive to try to consider theme on their own, choosing instead to “get it online” or have the teacher simply tell them. However, it is important to remember that each reader finds individual meaning in a text; the writer alone does not dictate or control meaning. The author develops a story to the best of his or her ability, and he or she sends it out into the world. Our job as readers is to enjoy the novel and to make responsible sense out of it, bringing our own interpretation to the work. A novel can have numerous themes, and they are subject to changes in interpretation based on a reader’s personal experience.

One reliable way for readers to consider a novel’s theme is through sentence construction. To use this technique, first make a list of words that are central to the discussion of the text. For example, with J. D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*, the list might look like this: corruption, sex, purity, innocence, outsider, phony, flight, violence, idealism. Next, take a prominent character’s name and write a sentence that makes sense using a couple of those words. For example, “Holden Caulfield struggles to maintain innocence in a world of corruption.” After constructing your sentence, consider its accuracy. Now, remove the character’s name and rework the sentence to make a general statement. “Maintaining innocence in a world of corruption demands flexibility and a deep understanding of self.” Check the statement—is it applicable? Can you find examples from the novel to support it? If so, you have created your own statement of the novel’s theme.

### ***Introduction—Novel Selection***

As you prepare to take the AP exam, it is important to focus on a wide array and many types of novels. Not only should there be a mix of voices, but also of structures and themes.

To ensure a well-rounded arsenal of prepared novels when you enter the exam room, it is a good idea to conduct three important tests for each novel that

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you consider preparing for potential use on the exam. First, evaluate each novel's appropriateness in terms of message and style. Second, consider titles that have appeared on the open prompt in past AP exams. (These are relatively easy to find online.) If the title has appeared on a number of tests, it is a practical choice. Finally, consider the potential "talking points" for each novel. Because the open prompt usually deals with character, setting, or a technical device, the ideal novel allows for a wide range of responses and approaches to it.

Some of the talking points to look for include:

- an interplay between dynamic and static characters
- use of characters to convey theme
- a setting that clearly impacts the novel's plot
- important symbols or motifs that are used to develop an author's message
- structure that helps drive the plot or develop the theme

### Test Preparation with the Novels

A good test preparation skill is the *book review*. The *book review* sheet is important for pre-test review. It is an excellent method of organizing the essential information and analysis for the novels you have read. In preparation for the exam, you should read eight to nine novels and have an intimate understanding of at least four of them. If you do a thoughtful job reading, discussing, writing about, and reviewing each novel, then you should be able understand which work best suits a given prompt. A few weeks prior to the exam, you should review your *book review* sheets and decide which four you want to "have in your hand" when you sit down for the exam. Preparing four or five novels in this way is an excellent strategy. It allows you to be proactive in the novel-selecting process rather than reactive. In being proactive, your preparation should include at least four texts that are varied enough to cover *character*, *literary devices*, or *structure*. Some works, such as *The Great Gatsby* or *The Awakening*, are strong fits for all three areas (there's a reason why they are on the test nearly every year).

An important part of the review sheet is the *word list*. In this section, you will brainstorm single words that come to mind when you think of the plot, characters, conflict, and message. The main point is this: to discuss the right ideas, you need the right words. For example, consider the usefulness of such an initial word list for *The Great Gatsby*: impunity, romance, opulence, lyrical, class, dream, fabrication, ash/dust, shiny surfaces versus dull, corruption, clothing, sordid, whirl and excess, time. Prior to the exam, you should refine the list to just three to four key words. In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, these words might be excess, impunity, corruption, and romantic. The words that are left off could be used to supplement the other areas of the sheet. This list is also useful for the sentence structure exercise mentioned earlier in the **Tips for Identifying a Novel's Theme** section.



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## BOOK REVIEW SHEET

Title:

Author:

Main Characters:

Three scenes most important for developing main character(s):

Important minor characters and their impact on the plot/theme:

Most important scenes for major/minor character interaction(s)

Setting(s) of importance:

Impact of setting(s) on conflict:

Main conflict and minor conflicts:

Motifs and symbols:

Themes (these should each be a sentence):

Narrative point of view:

Style comments and period relevance:

Three quotes worth memorizing from the work:

Word list: words that *need* to be used when discussing this novel thoughtfully.



# Approaching the Multiple-Choice Exam

## *Overview*

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For many students, the multiple choice section of the AP Literature and Composition exam can be infuriating. It is not uncommon for students to challenge the designated correct answers or to debate the relative fairness of a question and its possible responses. This is, in many ways, to be expected, particularly as literature invites varied, often ambiguous responses. Confusion can occur, and the possible answers are often similar in nature and designed, seemingly, to trick the test taker. This is not, however, the intent of the exam. Instead, the College Board has designed questions for the multiple choice section that invite a nuanced reading and deep analysis of the passage. While multiple answers may seem to be correct to some degree, the successful test taker will weigh all of the possible answers carefully before selecting an answer.

### **Format**

So how does one approach the multiple choice section of the exam? First, it is important to understand the format and organization of this section of the exam. You will be asked, typically, to read five passages and respond to approximately 55 multiple-choice questions in a one-hour period. Of the five passages, some will be prose selections and others will be poems. If three poems are selected, you can expect to find two prose passages, and vice versa. There are some variations, however. It is possible that the College Board will select an extended passage from a play in lieu of a prose selection. This will usually explore a dialogue or exchange between characters. It is also possible that you will find a soliloquy or monologue from a play in lieu of a poem. What you can expect is that you will be given five passages of literary merit selected to provide you with a diverse and varied sampling of writing styles and literary periods. Do not expect, for instance, to be bombarded by Victorian literature only.

While some standardized tests do present questions in order of increasing difficulty, the AP Literature and Composition exam does not. Rather, questions

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are presented in order of the parts of the passage to which they refer. For example, the first question is most likely to refer to the introduction or initial stanza. With this in mind, you can expect to move through the text in the same fashion in which you originally read it. Summative questions regarding an author's tone or purpose are most often presented at the end of a set of questions.

## Types of Questions

Understanding the format is certainly helpful in familiarizing yourself with the exam, but reading the passages carefully and, as mentioned in the previous section, annotating them, are the cornerstones to success on the multiple choice section. Therefore, you need to read each passage carefully, anticipating the types of questions the College Board may pose.

So what types of questions will you be expected to answer in the multiple choice section of the exam? The questions will, of course, vary according to the passage, but you will see common threads among the questions. The following categories represent the many different types of questions that you will be asked to answer on the AP English Literature and Composition Exam.

- **Structure or Organization:** Questions that correspond to a work's structure or organization will ask you to consider the way in which a poem or a selection of prose is presented to an audience. In many ways, the chunking exercise discussed in the previous section provides an appropriate strategy for considering how a work's structure or organization (its rhetorical framework) helps to enhance its meaning. Questions may ask you to consider how a particular stanza or paragraph helps to develop the poem or passage's argument, or it may ask you to consider how lists or descriptions within a paragraph contribute to the effect of the work. Regardless, while you read the passage, you should be cognizant of its organization and consider the way in which an author uses lists to impact effect and meaning.
- **Author's purpose or theme:** The majority of passages will be followed by at least one question connected to the author's purpose or the passage's theme. The rhetorical device box exercise discussed in the previous section is helpful in arriving at the author's purpose or the passage's theme. While annotating, look for specific lines or passages that intimate or clearly state the author's purpose or the passage's theme. Often, questions directed at an author's purpose or theme are phrased like this: "the author's purpose in the following passage might best be described as."
- **Narrator's tone or attitude:** Frequently you will be asked to examine a passage's tone or to consider the narrator's or speaker's attitude toward a particular subject matter. These questions might focus on a specific part of the poem or passage or might ask you to reflect on the work as a whole. Often the latter will be one of the final questions asked. You should pay particular attention to an author's use of irony.
- **Interpretive or Analytical:** Reading comprehension and literary analysis are assessed frequently in the Multiple Choice section. Questions that corre-

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spond to interpretation or analysis will often ask you to examine specific line numbers or passages carefully. In such questions, you will often be given line numbers to direct your attention to the specific passage. It is always a good practice to examine your annotations and to read the lines immediately preceding and following the specific lines you have been given in order to put the passage in context.

- **Definition:** You will be asked to define words on the AP Multiple Choice section. Often these questions will be worded as follows: “the following word in context most nearly (or most likely) means...” These questions can be tricky, as their denotative meanings may not necessarily apply to the way in which they are used in context. Like the interpretive or analytical questions, it is important to consider the text preceding and following the word in question in order to arrive at its meaning within the passage.
- **Syntax:** Although questions regarding sentence structure and syntax are more often found on the AP Language and Composition exam, you may be asked to consider the way in which a passage’s sentences or grammatical structures enhance its meaning. Identifying the subject of a sentence or pronoun antecedent questions frequently make up the majority of the questions based on syntax.
- **Figurative Language and Literary Devices:** It is no surprise that the majority of questions asked of you on the AP Multiple Choice section will be directed at your understanding of key literary devices and an author’s use of metaphor, imagery, and the related tropes. These questions may cross over into the interpretive realm, asking you to focus on a specific image, symbol, or metaphor found at a given line number. On the other hand, they may be broad questions that ask you to consider the passage as a whole. For instance, it is not uncommon to find questions on the AP exam that are worded as follows: “All of the following literary devices are used in the passage above EXCEPT.” With this in mind, your ability to annotate and to identify these devices during the reading phase—whether they be metaphors, symbols, imagery, or devices that correspond to sound and meter—will greatly improve your ability to identify the correct answer in a timely fashion.

## Most Common Terms

Your textbook and your instructor will most likely highlight many of the key terms and literary devices that you need to understand to be successful on the AP Literature and Composition exam. While the comprehensive list would be too long to reproduce here, the following terms are perhaps the most useful for AP test taker. Definitions, as well as examples from short stories, poems, and plays, can be found in any good glossary of literary terms..

Allusion	Imagery
Allegory	Irony
Apostrophe	Metaphor
Characterization	Meter
Diction	Narrator/Narration

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Hyperbole	Personification
Point of view	Stanza Form
Prosody/Sound	Structure
Rhyme Scheme	Style
Setting	Symbolism
Simile	Theme
Speaker	Tone

## Question Formats

Each question asked will have five possible answers. Unlike many exams, the AP Literature and Composition exam’s possible answers contain many distractors. A distractor, given only a cursory glance, may lead to you believe an answer is correct, and hasty test-takers may miss questions if they do not consider all of the possible answers before making a selection. Again, the College Board is not trying to trick you, but the passages and poems selected in the multiple choice section do invite a close, nuanced reading in order to choose the precise answer.

Some questions will contain the terms, “ALL” and “EXCEPT.” Be sure to read the question carefully to ensure you understand its intent. When a prompt contains the word “EXCEPT,” you should eliminate all of the answers that you know are correct. For instance, if you are asked a question such as: “In the poem, the author uses all of the following literary devices ‘EXCEPT,’” you should first cross-reference your annotations to identify those devices that have been used. By eliminating the devices you highlighted when annotating from the answer choices, you should put yourself in a strong position to select the correct answer.

Other questions will contain lists offset by roman numerals. Following these lists, you will be given five possible answers, answers that include various configurations from the roman numerals. For example:

1. In the passage above, the relationship between the two characters can be described as
    - I. romantically inclined
    - II. supportive and nurturing
    - III. tempestuous
- (A) I only  
(B) II only  
(C) I and II  
(D) I and III  
(E) I, II and III

In order to respond to these questions appropriately, you should first focus on the initial roman numeral list. Consider each roman numeral and corresponding answer carefully. Eliminate any roman numeral that is incorrect. You should seek to confirm the remaining roman numeral answers within the text and then identify the correct answer from the five lettered answers.

# Poetry Multiple-Choice Questions Followed by Answers and Explanations

## *Overview*

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In this section, you will get the opportunity to practice the strategies discussed thus far in this book. Five poems follow; each is accompanied by ten AP multiple-choice questions. As you read and annotate each poem, make some predictions as to the types of questions you may be asked in interpreting and analyzing it. Consider each poem's speaker, audience, purpose, and ultimate argument (theme). Also consider the literary devices and techniques each author uses in shaping the poem's meaning. Then, read the actual questions to see how many questions you were able to correctly predict.

As you work your way through each of the ten accompanying questions, consider each of the five possible answers. How are the answers formatted? What are the subtle denotative meanings of possible descriptors used in the answers? Where in the text can you find evidence to support the answers you select? Read the questions carefully, and be careful to pay close attention to questions that include words like "ALL" or "EXCEPT."

Additionally, consider the emphasis of each question. Some questions will focus on the purpose of the passage, while others will hone in on the speaker's tone. Still others will ask about the literary devices employed in the poem. Whatever the case may be, it is good practice, particularly in this section, to begin to categorize the types of questions that will ultimately be asked of you on the AP exam in May.

Finally, the practice exams at the end of this book are designed to be taken in a timed setting. This is not necessarily the case with these poems and questions. It is a better strategy to study and deeply examine the poems and the types of questions in this section than it is to rush through them in a timed setting. The more practice and exposure you have to the types of poems that will be presented to you and the sorts of questions that will be asked of you on the AP exam, the better you will do later in the timed setting.

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### Poetry Multiple Choice: “Bright Star”

Questions 1–10. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art—  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like nature’s patient, sleepless Eremite,  
5 The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth’s human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
  
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
10 Pillow’d upon my fair love’s ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

—John Keats

- “Bright star” is an example of
  - metonymy
  - simile
  - apostrophe
  - aubade
  - synecdoche
- In line 1, the word “steadfast” best refers to being
  - strong
  - constant
  - immovable
  - quick
  - eternal
- The poem’s form is best described as
  - an ode
  - a Shakespearean sonnet
  - an Italian sonnet
  - a ballad
  - sestina
- The poem juxtaposes the immortality of the star with
  - the fleeting nature of love
  - the moon’s effect on tide
  - the imperfection of human perception
  - the reality of human death
  - the beauty of nature
- The poem makes dramatic use of all of the following EXCEPT
  - simile
  - personification
  - consonance
  - allusion
  - paradox
- Which is an example of oxymoron?
  - “ripening breast” (line 10)
  - “human shores” (line 6)
  - “lone splendour” (line 2)
  - “sweet unrest” (line 12)
  - “soft-fallen mask” (line 7)



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7. The tone could be described as
- (A) resigned
  - (B) melancholy
  - (C) haughty
  - (D) cynical
  - (E) scornful
8. Which images best illustrate a contrast between a static view of time and a fluid one?
- I. “the new soft-fallen mask/Of snow” (lines 7–8) with “the moving waters” (line 5)
  - II. “watching with eternal lids apart” (line 3) and “its soft fall and swell” (line 11)
  - III. “to feel forever” (line 11) with “tender-taken breath” (line 13)
- (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) III only
  - (D) I and II only
  - (E) II and III only
9. A dominant tension in the poem is conveyed through all of the following types of imagery EXCEPT
- (A) visual
  - (B) tactile
  - (C) auditory
  - (D) olfactory
  - (E) kinesthetic
10. The use of dashes in lines 1, 8, 9, and 14 serves as a scheme of interruption that
- (A) denounces the speaker’s current state
  - (B) objectifies the speaker’s desires
  - (C) defines the speaker’s problems
  - (D) clarifies the speaker’s ideas
  - (E) challenges the speaker’s destiny

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### Poetry Multiple Choice: “Dulce et Decorum Est”

Questions 1–11. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
5 Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling  
10 Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,  
And flound’ring like a man in fire or lime . . .  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

15 In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
20 His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—  
25 My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

—Wilfred Owen

1. What is the difference between the “we” of the speaker and the “you” the speaker is addressing in the poem?  
(A) a soldier and a nurse  
(B) the soldier’s family and a priest  
(C) a government official and soldier  
(D) a soldier and a person safe at home  
(E) a veteran and recruit
2. In context of the poem, the “ecstasy of fumbling” (line 9) could best be characterized as  
(A) irony  
(B) hyperbole  
(C) symbolism  
(D) understatement  
(E) oxymoron

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3. What is the clearest purpose of the poem?
    - (A) to keep soldiers from enlisting in armies
    - (B) to provide an non-romanticized depiction of war
    - (C) to protest the use of toxic chemicals in warfare
    - (D) to illustrate the importance of community on a battlefield
    - (E) to chastise government officials
  4. In lines 4 and 5, which sound technique dominates the flow?
    - (A) onomatopoeia
    - (B) cacophony
    - (C) rhyme
    - (D) assonance and consonance
    - (E) alliteration
  5. What is the effect of the repetition of the word “If” in the last stanza?
    - (A) add an air of plausibility to the situation
    - (B) illustrate the dying soldier’s regret
    - (C) force the older generation to see the effect of their words
    - (D) create a sympathetic mood in the poem
    - (E) none of the above
  6. In the opening stanza, the chief purpose of the figurative language is to
    - (A) portray cowardice
    - (B) deglamorize war
    - (C) humanize soldiers
    - (D) rationalize war
    - (E) celebrate bravery
  7. The use of the word “dreams” in the third and fourth stanzas could best be replaced with
    - (A) hopes
    - (B) illusions
    - (C) goals
    - (D) visions
    - (E) nightmares
  8. What is a plausible reason for Owens’s choice of the Latin “Dulce et decorum est/ Pro patria mori” instead of the English, “It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country”?
    - (A) to instill the wisdom of the ancients
    - (B) to use an antique saying to illustrate the consistency of the pattern
    - (C) to maintain the meter
    - (D) to add an aura of reverence to the deaths of the young men
    - (E) none of the above
  9. Which rhyme inherently conveys the conflict and message of the poem?
    - (A) “sacks” (line 1) and “backs” (line 3)
    - (B) “light” (line 13) and “sight” (line 15)
    - (C) “blood” (line 21) and “cud” (line 23)
    - (D) “glory” (line 26) and “mori” (line 28)
    - (E) “sludge” (line 2) and “trudge” (line 4)
  10. The final line of the poem—“Pro patria mori”—breaks the meter of the poem for what reason?
    - (A) to illustrate the difference in meter between Latin and English
    - (B) to reflect a truncated life of soldiers killed in action
    - (C) to emphasize the poem’s rhyme
    - (D) to pause for effect
    - (E) to announce the theme of the poem

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## Poetry Multiple Choice: “Hawk Roosting”

Questions 1–10. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.  
Inaction, no falsifying dream  
Between my hooked head and hooked feet:  
Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

- 5 The convenience of the high trees!  
The air’s buoyancy and the sun’s ray  
Are of advantage to me;  
And the earth’s face upward for my inspection.

- My feet are locked upon the rough bark.  
10 It took the whole of Creation  
To produce my foot, my each feather:  
Now I hold Creation in my foot

- Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly -  
I kill where I please because it is all mine.  
15 There is no sophistry in my body:  
My manners are tearing off heads -

- The allotment of death.  
For the one path of my flight is direct  
Through the bones of the living.  
20 No arguments assert my right:

The sun is behind me.  
Nothing has changed since I began.  
My eye has permitted no change.  
I am going to keep things like this.

—Ted Hughes

1. All of the following literary devices are used in the poem EXCEPT
  - (A) anthropomorphism
  - (B) conceit
  - (C) irony
  - (D) imagery
  - (E) apostrophe
2. The first two stanzas establish
  - I. The speaker’s perspective
  - II. The self-assertive nature of the speaker
  - III. The speaker’s position of power
  - (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) I and II only
  - (D) II and III only
  - (E) I, II, and III

- 
3. Lines 9–12 most strongly convey the speaker’s
- (A) condemnation of the “whole of creation”
  - (B) admiration of the evolutionary forces that lead to his creation
  - (C) superiority to creation itself
  - (D) realization of the futility of life
  - (E) awareness of his place in the world
4. In line 15, the word “sophistry” means
- (A) logic
  - (B) manners
  - (C) refinement
  - (D) deception
  - (E) hospitality
5. In line 16, “My manners” is a reference to speaker’s
- (A) evolutionary design
  - (B) sophisticated nature
  - (C) haughty arrogance
  - (D) approach to life
  - (E) aloof nature
6. The speaker’s word choice might best be described as
- (A) elevated and cultivated
  - (B) arrogant and coarse
  - (C) assertive but respectful
  - (D) self-effacing and deprecating
  - (E) inquisitive and reverential
7. The imagery of the poem emphasizes
- (A) the speaker’s dominance over the natural world
  - (B) the transitory nature of life
  - (C) the contrast between predator and prey
  - (D) auditory and tactile qualities of the natural world
  - (E) the divide between man and nature
8. The image of the sun in line 21 provides a contrast to
- (A) the death of the speaker’s prey
  - (B) the creation of the hawk
  - (C) the hawk’s eye
  - (D) the future
  - (E) bones of the living
9. Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?
- (A) ambivalent
  - (B) arrogant
  - (C) antagonistic
  - (D) invective
  - (E) domineering
10. The poem is best described as
- (A) a commentary on power
  - (B) an exposition on a universal symbol
  - (C) a description of a natural scene
  - (D) an analysis of creation
  - (E) a prideful digression

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### Poetry Multiple Choice: “Sonnet”

Questions 1–10. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

- I am in need of music that would flow  
Over my fretful, feeling finger-tips,  
Over my bitter-tainted, trembling lips,  
With melody, deep, clear, and liquid-slow.  
5 Oh, for the healing swaying, old and low,  
Of some song sung to rest the tired dead,  
A song to fall like water on my head,  
And over quivering limbs, dream flushed to glow!
- There is a magic made by melody:  
10 A spell of rest, and quiet breath, and cool  
Heart, that sinks through fading colors deep  
To the subaqueous stillness of the sea,  
And floats forever in a moon-green pool,  
Held in the arms of rhythm and of sleep.

—Elizabeth Bishop

- The poem follows which of the following structures:  
(A) an Italian sonnet  
(B) an English sonnet  
(C) a villanelle  
(D) a sestina  
(E) Spenserian stanza
- In lines 1–4 the speaker establishes her current problem, namely  
(A) the loss of a loved one  
(B) the need for revitalization  
(C) the want of a lover  
(D) the desire for peace and composure  
(E) the passing of time and lovers
- Which of the following literary devices is used most in the passage?  
(A) alliteration  
(B) hyperbole  
(C) personification  
(D) simile  
(E) apostrophe
- The images in lines 5–8 deal primarily with  
(A) destruction  
(B) resurrection  
(C) romanticism  
(D) restoration  
(E) deception
- The sound devices used in “some song sung” (line 6) most clearly contrast with  
(A) “fretful finger tips” (line 2)  
(B) “bitter-tainted, trembling lips” (line 3)  
(C) “melody, deep, clear, and liquid slow” (line 4)  
(D) “the tired dead” (line 6)  
(E) “the magic made by melody” (line 9)
- Line 9 marks a shift in mood from  
(A) tense to hopeful  
(B) pessimistic to confident  
(C) lonely to tender  
(D) despondent to serene  
(E) serious to lighthearted

- 
7. The diction used in the poem can best be described as
- (A) elevated and formal
  - (B) ordinary and colloquial
  - (C) sensuous and emotional
  - (D) informal and idiomatic
  - (E) esoteric and detached
8. The poem contains
- I. First person narration
  - II. A clear rhyme scheme and metrical pattern
  - III. A shift or turning point
- (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) I and II only
  - (D) II and III only
  - (E) I, II, and III
9. Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?
- (A) reserved
  - (B) whimsical
  - (C) reverential
  - (D) complimentary
  - (E) dejected
10. The primary purpose of the poem is
- (A) philosophical musing
  - (B) social critique
  - (C) artistic statement
  - (D) inspired confession
  - (E) moral admonishment

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**Poetry Multiple Choice: “I Felt a Funeral in My Brain” by Emily Dickinson**

*Questions 1-10. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.*

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,  
And Mourners to and fro  
Kept treading—treading—till it seemed  
That Sense was breaking through—

5   And when they all were seated,  
      A Service, like a Drum—  
      Kept beating—beating—till I thought  
      My Mind was going numb—

          And then I heard them lift a Box  
10   And creak across my Soul  
      With those same Boots of Lead, again,  
      Then Space—began to toll,

          As all the Heavens were a Bell,  
      And Being, but an Ear,  
15   And I, and Silence, some strange Race  
      Wrecked, solitary, here—

          And then a Plank in Reason, broke,  
      And I dropped down, and down—  
      And hit a World, at every plunge,  
20   And Finished knowing—then—

—Emily Dickinson

- The poem is best described as a
  - analytical narrative
  - poetic drama
  - sober digression
  - dramatic monologue
  - discursive remembrance
- The poet makes use of all of the following EXCEPT
  - parallel clauses
  - metaphor
  - irregular use of punctuation
  - irregular meter
  - symbolism
- The situation in the poem most likely refers to the speaker’s
  - fantastic vision of her own death
  - frustration and angst over her writer’s block
  - derision of her morbid curiosities
  - fascination with the afterlife
  - acknowledgement of her mental breakdown



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4. All of the following types of imagery are used in the poem EXCEPT
- (A) religious
  - (B) auditory
  - (C) tactile
  - (D) nautical
  - (E) olfactory
5. The poet's use of simile in the second stanza serves to
- (A) reinforce man's impotence in the face of time
  - (B) highlight the insensitive quality of traditional religious services
  - (C) emphasize the oppressive nature of the speaker's thoughts
  - (D) call into question the speaker's final destination
  - (E) establish the military order of the speaker's thoughts
6. The meter of the poem might best be described as
- (A) cacophonous and grating
  - (B) percussive and uniform
  - (C) harmonious and soothing
  - (D) balanced and upbeat
  - (E) stately and majestic
7. When examined collectively, many of the capitalized word in the poem share connotations with
- (A) music
  - (B) death
  - (C) seafaring
  - (D) warfare
  - (E) community
8. The progression of each of the poem's stanzas mirrors the speaker's
- (A) realization of the world around her
  - (B) acknowledgement of the futility of rituals
  - (C) clarity of thought
  - (D) descent into madness
  - (E) acceptance of the unknown
9. What is the function of the poem's final two lines (lines 19 and 20)
- (A) they represent the speaker's entrance in the unconscious
  - (B) they demonstrate the uncertainty of knowledge
  - (C) they articulate the speaker's degree of madness
  - (D) they identify the speaker as an enlightened being
  - (E) they portray the lost soul of a struggling artist
10. The tone of the poem might best be describes as
- (A) agitated and bitter
  - (B) caustic and cold
  - (C) restrained and removed
  - (D) detached and dispassionate
  - (E) prosaic and gregarious

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# Poetry Answers and Explanations

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## Poetry Multiple Choice: “Bright Star”

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (C) is correct.** Apostrophe is a literary device in which the speaker addresses an inanimate object or an entity that cannot be expected to respond. In this case, Keats (we assume this poem is autobiographical) is directly addressing the bright star.
- **2. (B) is correct.** He wishes he were as constant and unchanging as the star, an impossibility given that Keats was ill with tuberculosis at the time of the poem’s origin.
- **3. (C) is correct.** While the rhyme scheme appears to be English, the format, an octave followed by a sestet, is Italian.
- **4. (D) is correct.** Keats is on his death bed and reflecting on his death.
- **5. (C) is correct.** Each of the other literary devices are employed in the poem. The poem begins with a *simile*, the star and the natural world are *personified*, an *allusion* is made to an Eremite, and the poem, as a whole, is *paradoxical*.
- **6. (D) is correct.** The words *sweet* and *unrest* are in many ways opposites. One would expect something sweet to bring rest.
- **7. (B) is correct.** This is, in fact, a common theme of Romantic poets.
- **8. (D) is correct.** Roman numerals I and II both contrast static, unchanging images with ones of movement (the moving water and the rising chest of the speaker’s lover).
- **9. (D) is correct.** The sense of smell is not engaged in the poem.
- **10. (D) is correct.** The dashes, in many ways, help the poet provide opportunities to clarify his position so that his audience, in this case the bright star, can better understand his ideas.

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## Poetry Multiple Choice: “Dulce et Decorum Est”

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- 1. **(D) is correct.** In many ways, the poet hopes to educate the person safe at home to the reality of war.
- 2. **(A) is correct.** The word *ecstasy* connotes sexual, procreative energy, which is not the image conveyed in the scene.
- 3. **(B) is correct.** Owen is attacking the “old lie” that it is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country. There is nothing glorious about the scene Owen depicts.
- 4. **(D) is correct.** The lines, through assonance and consonance, mimic the trudging of the soldiers.
- 5. **(A) is correct.** If, in fact, those safe at home could see the reality of war, they might not promote it so much.
- 6. **(B) is correct.** The images are disturbing and inglorious.
- 7. **(E) is correct.** These are, in fact, disturbing visions, more akin to nightmares.
- 8. **(B) is correct.** War itself has established itself as part of human existence. The Latin phrase helps to trace its role in human life since the Romans.
- 9. **(D) is correct.** *Mori* translates as death, which, given the tactics used in modern warfare, is hardly glorious.
- 10. **(B) is correct.** This break is unique, in that the form of the poem helps to advance the author’s message: war does truncate life.

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## Poetry Multiple Choice: “Hawk Roosting”

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### Multiple-Choice Questions

- **1. (E) is correct.** The poem is told from the perspective of an animal; therefore it is an example of anthropomorphism. It can also be interpreted metaphorically, so it is a conceit. Stanza three contains an ironic situation, and the poem is rich with imagery. Therefore, apostrophe is the only possible selection.
- **2. (E) is correct.** The poem is told from the hawk’s perspective, and the hawk asserts itself not only on its prey but also on its natural surroundings. Additionally, images of the hawk atop the trees and in front of the sun suggest its power.
- **3. (C) is correct.** The word *creation* is capitalized in this stanza, leading many critics to believe it to be an allusion to God. Considering the hawk’s comment “Now I hold Creation in my foot,” the hawk views itself as greater than creation or its creator.
- **4. (A) is correct.** Sophistry means faulty logic. In this situation, the hawk asserts the claim that there is no faulty logic in his actions—he was designed to kill.
- **5. (A) is correct.** Line 16 serves as an explanation of the comment made in line 15. The hawk has made reference to its body and concludes in line 16 that the instinctive act of killing is, in fact, a part of the hawk’s design.
- **6. (A) is correct.** The hawk’s diction is elevated and cultivated throughout (*sophistry, buoyancy, allotment*). While arrogant and assertive, the hawk’s word choice is never coarse or disrespectful.
- **7. (A) is correct.** A number of images place the hawk either high above the natural world or in a dominant position (the images of the hawk in front of the sun, or the earth’s face looking up at the hawk come to mind).
- **8. (C) is correct.** The hawk is immediately in front of the sun, an archetypal symbol of power and the gods, suggesting it has usurped the creator’s power.
- **9. (E) is correct.** While some may see the hawk as arrogant, his most troubling comments, “My manners are tearing off heads,” and “I am going to keep things like this” are too matter-of-fact to be seen as merely arrogance. The hawk has clearly stated a clear case for his dominance, a dominance that may contain some arrogance, certainly, but the hawk has proven his strength.
- **10. (A) is correct.** Ultimately, the hawk in this poem could be metaphorical for man, or, perhaps, even nature. Regardless of interpretation, this is a poem about power. The last line reinforces this claim.

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## Poetry Multiple Choice: “Sonnet”

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### Multiple-Choice Questions

- **1. (A) is correct.** The poem follows the Italian sonnet form of abba abba cde cde. It is also divided into two distinct parts, the octave, which introduces a problem, and the sestet, which resolves the problem.
- **2. (B) is correct.** While there are certainly romantic and sensual images in the poem, the speaker is in need of revitalization. She describes herself as “fretful” and “bitter-tainted,” and seeks “healing swaying” with the power to “rest the tired dead.”
- **3. (A) is correct.** The poem is rich in alliterative devices. See lines 2 and 3 for some examples.
- **4. (D) is correct.** The poem’s second four lines (lines 5-8) contrast with the first four lines. While the first quatrain deals with the speaker’s current state, the second quatrain—with its images of restoration (references to healing, dreams, and the purifying quality of water) offers a glimpse into the poem’s final six lines.
- **5. (D) is correct.** The soothing “s” sound contrasts with the hard “d” sound of “tired dead.”
- **6. (D) is correct.** The despondency of her current state, as outlined in the octave of the sonnet (where traditionally problems are presented) is resolved in the sestet. The “magic made by melody” is, in fact a renewed state of serenity. A number of images in the sestet support this: *fading*, *floating*, and *stillness* are all words associated with serenity, as is the image of the “arms of rhythm and of sleep.”
- **7. (C) is correct.** Much of the language and subsequent imagery is highly sensual—bordering on sexual—in nature.
- **8. (E) is correct.** The first person narration is clearly identified in the first line. Given that the poem is an Italian sonnet, it has clear rhyme and meter, as well as a volta, which is a turning point in the Italian sonnet (typically found in line 9, the beginning of the sestet).
- **9. (C) is correct.** The speaker’s attitude toward the “magic made by melody” is highly reverential. She seeks this music as a means of revitalization. The fact that Bishop has selected a timeless form for her poem suggests that she sees the sonnet form itself—and poetry by extension—as potential “magic made by melody.” In other words, she is paying homage to the art of poetry.
- **10. (A) is correct.** The purpose of the poem is to reflect upon the revitalizing force of the arts, whether represented by music or by poetry. The speaker muses on this issue throughout the poem.

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## Poetry Multiple Choice: “I Felt a Funeral in My Brain”

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (A) is correct.** The poem narrates a story in which the poet analyzes not only her situation but also the society in which she lives.
- **2. (D) is correct.** The poem follows a regular pattern of iambic trimeter and iambic tetrameter.
- **3. (E) is correct.** The fact that the speaker “feels” the funeral (as opposed to seeing or hearing it) suggests an incongruity of thought that points to mental illness.
- **4. (E) is correct.** The speaker feels, hears, and engages in a tactile experience. Much of the poem also recreates the image of a funeral service, while the final stanza makes reference to a nautical “plank.” The sense of smell is never engaged.
- **5. (C) is correct.** The simile comparing the service to a drum, along with the repetition of the word “beating,” suggest the speaker’s thoughts have become overwhelming and oppressive.
- **6. (B) is correct.** The poem uniformly follows a pattern of iambic trimeter and iambic tetrameter, as referenced above. The meter is enhanced by the repetition of words in the poem.
- **7. (B) is correct.** Many words—*funeral, service, drum, box, soul, bell, silence*—have connotations of death.
- **8. (D) is correct.** Each stanza offers a further glimpse into the speaker’s sensory experience as she loses her sense of self.
- **9. (A) is correct.** Once the “plank in reason” breaks, the speaker has, in essence, lost her connections to the rational world. Madness leads, ultimately, to the illogical and the unconscious in which the speaker has no control.
- **10. (D) is correct.** The tone of the poem is both detached from the experience and clinical in its approach to retelling it.

# Prose Multiple-Choice Questions Followed by Answers and Explanations

## *Overview*

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In this section you will have the chance to practice the strategies discussed thus far in this book. You will again find five passages with a sample of ten AP multiple-choice questions for each passage.

It is important, particularly given the length of many prose selections, to annotate carefully, to identify literary devices, and to consider the structural development of the passage. Consider each passage's speaker, audience, purpose, and ultimate argument (theme). Also consider the literary devices and techniques each author uses in shaping the passage's meaning and developing tension within the passage. Finally, pay close attention to how things such as the narrator's attitude, the descriptions, the argument, and characterization are developed from one paragraph to the next.

Just as you would with a poem or drama selection, as you read each prose passage you should make a conscious effort to predict the types of questions the AP Literature and Composition exam will ask of you. Again, pay careful attention to the format of each question and consider the denotative meanings of the answer selections, as often you will be given seemingly synonymous words with subtle differences in their meaning. Read the questions carefully, and be careful to pay close attention to questions that include words like "ALL" or "EXCEPT."

Finally, the practice exams at the end of this book are designed to be administered in a timed setting. This is not necessarily the case with the prose passages and questions in this section. These passages and questions are opportunities to experiment with the strategies discussed in this book. The more exposure you have to the types of passages that will be presented to you and the variety of questions that will be asked of you on the AP exam, the better you will do later in the timed setting.

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## Prose Multiple Choice: from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

Questions 1–10. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.

As a whirlpool of boiling waters has a centre point, so, all this raging circled round Defarge’s wine-shop, and every human drop in the caldron had a tendency to be sucked towards the vortex where Defarge himself, already begrimed with gunpowder and sweat, issued orders, issued arms, thrust this man back, dragged this man forward, disarmed one to arm another, laboured and strove in the thickest of the uproar.

“Keep near to me, Jacques Three,” cried Defarge; “and do you, Jacques One and Two, separate and put yourselves at the head of as many of these patriots as you can. Where is my wife?”

“Eh, well! Here you see me!” said madame, composed as ever, but not knitting to-day. Madame’s resolute right hand was occupied with an axe, in place of the usual softer implements, and in her girdle were a pistol and a cruel knife.

“Where do you go, my wife?”

“I go,” said madame, “with you at present. You shall see me at the head of women, by-and-bye.”

“Come, then!” cried Defarge, in a resounding voice. “Patriots and friends, we are ready! The Bastille!”

With a roar that sounded as if all the breath in France had been shaped into the detested word, the living sea rose, wave on wave, depth on depth, and overflowed the city to that point. Alarm-bells ringing, drums beating, the sea raging and thundering on its new beach, the attack began.

Deep ditches, double drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke. Through the fire and through the smoke—in the fire and in the smoke, for the sea cast him up against a cannon, and on the instant he became a cannonier—Defarge of the wine-shop worked like a manful soldier, Two fierce hours.

Deep ditch, single drawbridge, massive stone walls, eight great towers, cannon, muskets, fire and smoke. One drawbridge down! “Work, comrades all, work! Work, Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques One Thousand, Jacques Two Thousand, Jacques Five-and-Twenty Thousand; in the name of all the Angels or the Devils—which you prefer—work!” Thus Defarge of the wine-shop, still at his gun, which had long grown hot.

“To me, women!” cried madame his wife. “What! We can kill as well as the men when the place is taken!” And to her, with a shrill thirsty cry, trooping women variously armed, but all armed alike in hunger and revenge.

Cannon, muskets, fire and smoke; but, still the deep ditch, the single drawbridge, the massive stone walls, and the eight great towers. Slight displacements of the raging sea, made by the falling wounded. Flashing weapons, blazing torches, smoking waggonloads of wet straw, hard work at neighbouring barricades in all directions, shrieks, volleys, execrations, bravery without stint, boom smash and rattle, and the furious sounding of the living sea; but, still the deep ditch, and the single drawbridge, and the massive stone walls, and the



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eight great towers, and still Defarge of the wine-shop at his gun, grown doubly hot by the service of Four fierce hours.

45 A white flag from within the fortress, and a parley—this dimly perceptible through the raging storm, nothing audible in it—suddenly the sea rose immeasurably wider and higher, and swept Defarge of the wine-shop over the lowered drawbridge, past the massive stone outer walls, in among the eight great towers surrendered!

50 So resistless was the force of the ocean bearing him on, that even to draw his breath or turn his head was as impracticable as if he had been struggling in the surf at the South Sea, until he was landed in the outer courtyard of the Bastille. There, against an angle of a wall, he made a struggle to look about him. Jacques Three was nearly at his side; Madame Defarge, still heading some of  
55 her women, was visible in the inner distance, and her knife was in her hand. Everywhere was tumult, exultation, deafening and maniacal bewilderment, astounding noise, yet furious dumb-show.

1. The simile introduced in line 1 is appropriate because
  - I. like a whirlpool, revolts often get overwhelmed by their own inertia.
  - II. both the whirlpool and the revolutionaries represent powerful forces.
  - III. the inertia of both a whirlpool and a revolution is inescapable.

(A) I only  
(B) II only  
(C) III only  
(D) II and III only  
(E) I, II, and III
2. The passage uses all of the following literary devices EXCEPT

(A) onomatopoeia.  
(B) metaphor.  
(C) repetition.  
(D) parallel structure.  
(E) pun.
3. The fact that Defarge calls the other patriots “Jacques” One, Two and Three suggests

(A) that the revolutionaries are automatons.  
(B) the collective unity of the revolutionaries.  
(C) a need to mask the identities of the revolutionaries.  
(D) an insensitivity on the part of Defarge.  
(E) a loss of identity in the face of revolt.
4. The image of Madame Defarge presented in lines 10–12 suggests that women

(A) have been transformed by revolution.  
(B) unwillingly joined the battle.  
(C) have been asked to fight alongside their husbands to the death.  
(D) are relishing the opportunity to serve the greater good.  
(E) are called to duty to support declining numbers.
5. The “detested word” (line 19) refers to

(A) France.  
(B) Bastille.  
(C) Jacques.  
(D) Patriots.  
(E) Roar.
6. The effect of the repetition in lines 22–44

(A) develops sympathy for the oppressed revolutionaries.  
(B) highlights the Bastille’s invincibility and the futility of the task.  
(C) provides commentary on the mindlessness of a mob.  
(D) allows for an accurate portrayal of a historical event.  
(E) creates tension and prolongs the suspense of the scene.

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7. Madame Defarge’s comment, “We can kill as well as the men when the place is taken,” and the following lines (33–35)
- (A) shows the wicked nature of the revolutionary women.
  - (B) indicates the competitive nature of women.
  - (C) indicates the degree to which hunger and oppression motivate.
  - (D) demonstrates her optimism in the face of danger.
  - (E) provides a contrast to her husband’s calls.
8. The fact that Defarge is known as “Defarge of the wine-shop” (line 43)
- (A) emphasizes the role of the middle class in the revolution.
  - (B) indicates that Defarge has overcome a drinking problem.
  - (C) underscores the impersonal relationship between Defarge and the other revolutionaries.
  - (D) is a sign of Defarge’s popularity.
  - (E) serves as a humorous counterpoint to his wife’s piety.
9. In context, the phrase “dumb-show” (line 57) most nearly means
- (A) menacing display.
  - (B) mute performance.
  - (C) vicious mien.
  - (D) insincere protestations.
  - (E) childish prattle.
10. The tone of the passage as a whole is best described as
- (A) informative and emotive.
  - (B) fawning and gregarious.
  - (C) solicitous and complimentary.
  - (D) admiring and terse.
  - (E) casual and frenetic.

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**Prose Multiple Choice: from “A Hunger Artist” by Franz Kafka**  
(this translation by Willa and Edwin Muir)

*Questions 1–10. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.*

During these last decades the interest in professional fasting has markedly diminished. It used to pay very well to stage such great performances under one’s own management, but today that is quite impossible. We live in a different world now. At one time the whole town took a lively interest in the hunger artist; from day to day of his fast the excitement mounted; everybody wanted to see him at least once a day; there were people who bought season tickets for the last few days and sat from morning till night in front of his small barred cage; even in the nighttime there were visiting hours, when the whole effect was heightened by torch flares; on fine days the cage was set out in the open air, and then it was the children’s special treat to see the hunger artist; for their elders he was often just a joke that happened to be in fashion, but the children stood openmouthed, holding each other’s hands for greater security, marveling at him as he sat there pallid in black tights, with his ribs sticking out so prominently, not even on a seat but down among straw on the ground, sometimes giving a courteous nod, answering questions with a constrained smile, or perhaps stretching an arm through the bars so that one might feel how thin it was, and then again withdrawing deep into himself, paying no attention to anyone or anything, not even to the all-important striking of the clock that was the only piece of furniture in his cage, but merely staring into vacancy with half-shut eyes, now and then taking a sip from a tiny glass of water to moisten his lips.

Besides casual onlookers there were also relays of permanent watchers selected by the public, usually butchers, strangely enough, and it was their task to watch the hunger artist day and night, three of them at a time, in case he should have some secret recourse to nourishment. This was nothing but a formality, instituted to reassure the masses, for the initiates knew well enough that during his fast the artist would never in any circumstances, not even under forcible compulsion, swallow the smallest morsel of food; the honor of his profession forbade it. Not every watcher, of course, was capable of understanding this, there were often groups of night watchers who were very lax in carrying out their duties and deliberately huddled together in a retired corner to play cards with great absorption, obviously intending to give the hunger artist the chance of a little refreshment, which they supposed he could draw from some private hoard. Nothing annoyed the artist more than such watchers; they made him miserable; they made his fast seem unendurable; sometimes he mastered his feebleness sufficiently to sing during their watch for as long as he could keep going, to show them how unjust their suspicions were. But that was of little use; they only wondered at his cleverness in being able to fill his mouth even while singing. Much more to his taste were the watchers who sat up close to the bars, who were not content with the dim night lighting of the hall but focused him in the full glare of the electric pocket torch given them by the impresario. The harsh light did not trouble him at all, in any case he could never sleep

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properly, and he could always drowse a little, even when the hall was thronged with noisy onlookers. He was quite happy at the prospect of spending a sleepless night with such watchers; he was ready to exchange jokes with them, to tell them stories out of his nomadic life, anything at all to keep them awake and demonstrate to them that he had no eatables in his cage and that he was fasting as not one of them could fast. But his happiest moment was when the morning came and an enormous breakfast was brought them, at his expense, on which they flung themselves with the keen appetite of healthy men after a weary night of wakefulness. Of course there were people who argued that this breakfast was an unfair attempt to bribe the watchers, but that was going rather too far, and when they were invited to take on a night's vigil without a breakfast, merely for the sake of the cause, they made themselves scarce, although they stuck stubbornly to their suspicions.

- The tone of the passage as a whole might best be described as
  - nostalgic.
  - terse.
  - gregarious.
  - hollow.
  - cynical.
- The word “markedly” in line 1 most nearly means
  - slightly.
  - recently.
  - certainly.
  - immeasurably.
  - conspicuously.
- The narrator’s attitude toward hunger artists might best be described as one of
  - awe and effusiveness.
  - admiration and respect.
  - bitterness and suspicion.
  - detachment and objectivity.
  - contempt and cynicism.
- The following types of onlookers are identified in the passage EXCEPT
  - naïve.
  - skeptics.
  - disinterested.
  - casual.
  - competitors.
- The description of the hunger artist in the cage, lines 13–21, is marked by
  - garishness.
  - showmanship.
  - austerity.
  - decadence.
  - flamboyance.
- The word “initiates” in line 26 most nearly refers to
  - fellow hunger artists who have been a part of the spectacle.
  - skeptical critics who have always questioned the spectacle.
  - converted followers who were once doubters.
  - the watchers who are assigned to observe the hunger artists.
  - those who have witnessed the spectacle before.
- The impresario, mentioned in line 41, is most likely a(n)
  - manager.
  - announcer.
  - critic.
  - tour guide.
  - opponent.

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8. The act of bribery discussed in lines 48–55 plays what role in the passage?
- (A) It suggests that the hunger artist's actions are susceptible to outsider interference.
  - (B) It underscores the generosity of the hunger artist.
  - (C) It creates a contrast between hunger artists and less honest entertainers.
  - (D) It highlights the skepticism critics have of hunger artists.
  - (E) It calls in to question the motives of hunger artists.
9. Kafka's works are highly metaphorical. This passage metaphorically explores the
- I. role of art in society.
  - II. suffering that an artist endures.
  - III. artist's relationship with his audience.
- (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) III only
  - (D) II and III only
  - (E) I, II, and III
10. The passage as a whole moves from descriptions of onlookers on a spectrum that ranges from
- (A) idyllic to skeptical.
  - (B) fawning to ascerbic.
  - (C) restrained to effusive.
  - (D) satiric to sincere.
  - (E) innocent to experienced.

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**Prose Multiple Choice: from “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant**  
(this translation by Edgar V. Roberts)

Questions 1–10. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.

5 She was one of those pretty and charming women, born, as if by an error of destiny, into a family of clerks and copyists. She had no dowry, no prospects, no way of getting known, courted, loved, married by a rich and distinguished man. She finally settled for a marriage with a minor clerk in the Ministry of Education.

10 She was a simple person, without the money to dress well, but she was as unhappy as if she had really gone down in the world, for women have neither rank nor race. In place of high birth or important family connections, they can rely only on their beauty, their grace, and their charm. Their inborn finesse, their elegant taste, their engaging personalities, which are their only power, make working-class women the equals of the grandest ladies.

15 She suffered constantly, feeling herself destined for all delicacies and luxuries. She suffered because of her grim apartment with its drab walls, threadbare furniture, ugly curtains. All such things, which most other women in her situation would not even have noticed, tortured her and filled her with despair. The sight of the young country girl who did her simple housework awakened in her only a sense of desolation and lost hopes. She daydreamed of large, silent ante-rooms, decorated with oriental tapestries and lighted by high bronze floor lamps, with two elegant valets in short culottes dozing in large armchairs under the effects of forced-air heaters. She imagined large drawing rooms draped in the most expensive silks, with fine end tables on which were placed knickknacks of inestimable value. She dreamed of the perfume of dainty private rooms, which were designed only for intimate tête-à-têtes with the closest friends, who because of their achievements and fame would make her the envy of all other women.

25 When she sat down to dinner at her round little table covered with a cloth that had not been washed for three days, in front of her husband who opened the kettle while declaring ecstatically, “Ah, good old beef stew! I don’t know anything better,” she dreamed of expensive banquets with shining place settings, and wall hangings portraying ancient heroes and exotic birds in an enchanted forest. She imagined a gourmet-prepared main course carried on the most exquisite trays and served on the most beautiful dishes, with whispered gallantries that she would hear with a sphinxlike smile as she dined on the pink meat of a trout or the delicate wing of a quail.

30 She had no decent dresses, no jewels, nothing. And she loved nothing but these; she believed herself born only for these. She burned with the desire to please, to be envied, to be attractive and sought after.

35 She had a rich friend, a comrade from convent days, whom she did not want to see anymore because she suffered so much when she returned home. She would weep for the entire day afterward with sorrow, regret, despair, and misery.

40 Well, one evening, her husband came home glowing and carrying a large envelope.

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“Here,” he said, “this is something for you.”

45 She quickly tore open the envelope and took out a card engraved with these words:

*The* CHANCELLOR OF EDUCATION *and*  
MRS. GEORGE RAMPONNEAU

*request that*

MR. AND MRS. LOISEL

50 *do them the honor of coming to dinner  
at the Ministry of Education  
on the evening of January 8.*

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation spitefully on the table, muttering: . . .

1. The author’s use of the word “simple” in line 6 most nearly means
  - (A) imbecilic or simple-minded.
  - (B) lower or working class.
  - (C) austere and plainspoken.
  - (D) natural and Unassuming.
  - (E) uneducated and unsophisticated.
2. The opening paragraphs imply that a woman of beauty, grace and charm
  - (A) belongs only in the upper echelons of society.
  - (B) is likely to be found in any level of society.
  - (C) determines her own fate by using her gifts.
  - (D) is unlikely to achieve greatness without proper family connections.
  - (E) is fortunate to have received such gifts.
3. The third and fourth paragraphs are used by the author to accomplish all of the following EXCEPT to
  - (A) develop the characterization of the protagonist, Mrs. Loisel.
  - (B) emphasize the contrast between the upper and lower levels of society.
  - (C) demonize the extravagance of the wealthy.
  - (D) create interest through rich imagery.
  - (E) show the differences between Mr. and Mrs. Loisel.
4. Mrs. Loisel believes herself destined for all of the following EXCEPT
  - (A) elegant abodes.
  - (B) fine clothing.
  - (C) gourmet meals.
  - (D) fame.
  - (E) admiration.
5. Mr. Loisel’s remark: “Ah good old beef stew! I don’t know anything better,” is given primarily to
  - I. demonstrate his simple nature.
  - II. contrast Mrs. Loisel’s character.
  - III. move the plot forward through dialogue.
  - (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) I and II
  - (D) II and III
  - (E) I, II, and III
6. Mrs. Loisel is best described as:
  - (A) aggravated and contemptuous.
  - (B) acquisitive and spoiled.
  - (C) complacent and pleasant.
  - (D) wistful and melancholic.
  - (E) humble and quaint.

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7. The author's position towards the protagonist can be described as
- (A) admiring.
  - (B) objective.
  - (C) dismissive.
  - (D) disapproving.
  - (E) sympathetic.
8. The use of the adverb "spitefully" in line 54 is used to
- (A) emphasize Mrs. Loisel's jealousy of the wealthy.
  - (B) indicate the antipathy Mrs. Loisel feels toward her husband.
  - (C) express the extent of Mrs. Loisel's excitement.
  - (D) contrast Mrs. Loisel's behavior with that of upperclass ladies.
  - (E) convey the author's lack of sympathy for his protagonist.
9. The intricate details of Mrs. Loisel's day-dreams as described in line numbers 12–34
- I. most likely come from her visits to her childhood friend.
  - II. emphasize the amount of time she gives to imagining a more luxurious life.
  - III. starkly contrast the realities of her life as described in the same paragraphs.
- (A) I only
  - (B) I and II
  - (C) II and III
  - (D) III only
  - (E) I, II, and III
10. Mrs. Loisel's despair when watching the "young country girl who did her simple housework" is most likely the result of
- (A) her fear that she will herself end up as a maid.
  - (B) her jealousy of the girl's youth and simplicity.
  - (C) her dislike for anything connected to her reality.
  - (D) her regret at the loss of any chance at marrying well that she might have had.
  - (E) her apprehension that the girl will entice her husband.



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**Prose Multiple Choice – from “The Yellow Wallpaper”  
by Charlotte Perkins Gilman**

Questions 1–10. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

5 A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

10 John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and *perhaps*—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—*perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster.

15 You see he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

20 If a physician of high standing, and one’s own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

25 So I take phosphates or phosphites—whichever it is, and tonics, and journals, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to “work” until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

30 I did write for a while in spite of them; but it does exhaust me a good deal—having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

35 So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

40 There is a *delicious* garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

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There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.  
There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and  
45 coheirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.  
That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid, but I don't care—there is some-  
thing strange about the house—I can feel it.  
I even said so to John one moonlight evening but he said what I felt was a  
*draught*, and shut the window.  
50 I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes I'm sure I never used to be  
so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.  
But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains  
to control myself—before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.  
I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the  
55 piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz  
hangings! but John would not hear of it.  
He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no  
near room for him if he took another.  
He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.  
60 I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care  
from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.  
He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest  
and all the air I could get. "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear,"  
said he, "and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all  
65 the time." So we took the nursery at the top of the house.  
It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all  
ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playroom and  
gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and  
there are rings and things in the walls.  
70 The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped  
off—the paper in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I  
can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never  
saw a worse paper in my life.  
One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.  
75 It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to  
constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain  
curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outra-  
geous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.  
The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow,  
80 strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.  
It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.  
No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in  
this room long.  
There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a  
85 word.

- 
1. The tone of the speaker can best be characterized as
    - (A) pleasant and dreamy.
    - (B) confiding and romantic.
    - (C) humorous and ironic.
    - (D) caustic and cold.
    - (E) sentimental and passive.
  2. The speaker's husband is best described as
    - (A) controlling and pragmatic.
    - (B) loving and thoughtful.
    - (C) skilled and sarcastic.
    - (D) punctilious and harsh.
    - (E) cold and serious.
  3. The speaker's "temporary nervous depression" is most clearly demonstrated by her
    - (A) fixation upon the strange nature of the house.
    - (B) desire to have a room with chintz hangings.
    - (C) secretive writing.
    - (D) obsession with the wallpaper in her room.
    - (E) certainty that the house is haunted.
  4. The phrase "spoils my ghostliness" in line 46 refers to the
    - (A) contrast of mundane financial affairs with romantic supernaturalism.
    - (B) interference of the speaker's husband with her desire to write supernatural stories.
    - (C) incongruity of the beautiful garden with the spectral nature of the house.
    - (D) speaker's desire to strengthen her spirituality as a method of healing herself.
    - (E) beauty of the place interfering with the speaker's desire to take her own life.
  5. The speaker most desires
    - (A) a room with chintz hangings.
    - (B) the opportunity to write.
    - (C) congenial company.
    - (D) a separation from her husband.
    - (E) freedom to follow her own desires.
  6. The course of treatment for the speaker involves all of the following EXCEPT
    - (A) complete isolation.
    - (B) fresh air.
    - (C) exercise.
    - (D) a cessation of work.
    - (E) tonics and phosphates.
  7. The fact that the speaker's room was once a nursery and playroom reinforces her
    - (A) nervousness and hysteria.
    - (B) role as a wife and mother.
    - (C) subservience and dependence.
    - (D) childlike belief in a ghost.
    - (E) desire to have her own way.
  8. The repetition of the word "personally" in lines 26 and 27 demonstrates the
    - (A) effect of her marginalized role on the speaker.
    - (B) self-centered nature of the speaker.
    - (C) audience's role as arbiter of her fate.
    - (D) contrast with her husband's opinion.
    - (E) speaker's nervous tic.
  9. The speaker's hysteria is echoed in her description of the wallpaper when she refers to
    - I. its flamboyance.
    - II. the contradictions of its patterns.
    - III. its unappealing tint.
    - (A) I only
    - (B) II only
    - (C) I and II
    - (D) II and III
    - (E) I, II, and III
  10. The speaker's attitude toward her husband is best described as
    - (A) grateful and affectionate.
    - (B) docile and obedient.
    - (C) resentful and angry.
    - (D) humble and melancholic.
    - (E) admiring and wistful.

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## Prose Multiple Choice: from *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

*The following passage is from Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. In this scene, the heroine's cousin, a clergyman, presents her with a proposal of marriage.*

“My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly—which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too!) on this subject; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss de Bourgh’s foot-stool, that she said, “Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry.—Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for *my* sake; and for your *own*, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.” Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond any thing I can describe; and your wit and vivacity I think must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place—which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother’s decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.”

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1. The character is portrayed as
    - (A) self-centered and vain.
    - (B) sentimental and nostalgic.
    - (C) credulous and fervent.
    - (D) desperate and lonely.
    - (E) manipulative and selfish.
  2. Humor is created in the following passage through
    - (A) witty observations of the clergyman's foibles.
    - (B) the stilted dialogue.
    - (C) the amorous overtones of the clergyman's speech.
    - (D) the incongruity of the clergyman's businesslike proposal to the situation.
    - (E) the clergyman's continual references to his inheritance.
  3. The speaker's views on marriage most clearly
    - (A) apply only to clergymen.
    - (B) come from Lady Catherine de Bourgh.
    - (C) are the result of experience.
    - (D) center on his own convenience and position.
    - (E) are the result of the fashion of the time.
  4. The diction of the speaker can be described as
    - (A) haughty and condescending.
    - (B) insincere and amorous.
    - (C) avaricious and bold.
    - (D) benevolent and kind.
    - (E) superfluous and trite.
  5. All of the following can be assumed regarding the speaker's audience EXCEPT
    - (A) she is unmarried.
    - (B) she is not wealthy.
    - (C) she is the speaker's cousin.
    - (D) she does not live in Hunsford.
    - (E) she is in love with the speaker.
  6. The relationship of the speaker to his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, can best be described as
    - (A) loyal.
    - (B) admiring.
    - (C) convivial.
    - (D) jealous.
    - (E) pernicious.
  7. Lady Catherine de Bourgh's ideal candidate would have all the following qualities EXCEPT
    - (A) thrift.
    - (B) economy.
    - (C) energy.
    - (D) humility.
    - (E) generosity.
  8. The word "tempered" in line 18 most nearly means
    - (A) balanced.
    - (B) excited.
    - (C) aggravated.
    - (D) juxtaposed.
    - (E) censored.
  9. The final line of the passage emphasizes the
    - (A) strength of the speaker's affection.
    - (B) speaker's assurance of acceptance.
    - (C) speaker's enthusiasm for marriage.
    - (D) speaker's avaricious nature.
    - (E) speaker's role as clergyman.
  10. Which of the following strategies does the speaker employ to woo his listener?
    - I. He compliments her beauty and grace.
    - II. He reminds her of her weak financial position.
    - III. He mentions her potential rivals.
    - (A) I only
    - (B) II only
    - (C) III only
    - (D) I and II
    - (E) II and III

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# Prose Answers and Explanations

## Prose Multiple Choice: from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- 1. **(D) is correct.** The image of a whirlpool is a potent one, as it connotes both power and the ability to draw an object in, in this case empowering average people to revolt against oppressors.
- 2. **(E) is correct.** There are no “plays on words” in the passage.
- 3. **(B) is correct.** Much like the word comrade, the term “Jacques” in the novel suggests the collective nature of the previously oppressed masses. They are in this battle together and see themselves as equals, a departure from the manner in which the aristocrats had previously treated the masses.
- 4. **(A) is correct.** The reference to knitting and her usual “softer implements” suggests a transformative shift from more traditional female roles and associations.
- 5. **(B) is correct.** The “detested word” is a reference to the Bastille mentioned in the previous paragraph. The Bastille was a prison, a symbol of oppression prior to the French Revolution.
- 6. **(E) is correct.** Much like the metaphor of a wave building, this passage helps to create tension and build suspense.
- 7. **(C) is correct.** Madame Defarge, known for her knitting, has dropped her domestic duties in order to fight alongside her husband. Furthermore, the passage points to the role that hunger and oppression have played in shifting the traditional roles of men and women.
- 8. **(A) is correct.** As opposed to the titles given to the aristocracy, the middle class is known for their work.
- 9. **(A) is correct.** While a dumb show is literally a play without words, in this context it is used ironically to mean menacing display.
- 10. **(A) is correct.** There is a lot of documented, historical information about the attack given in the passage. Additionally, there is considerable emotion revealed through the event, particularly in its use of repetition.

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## Prose Multiple Choice: from “A Hunger Artist” by Franz Kafka

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (A) is correct.** The narrator’s attitude, particularly in light of his comments in lines 1–5, indicated a sense of nostalgia for times past.
- **2. (E) is correct.** “Markedly” means to be conspicuously apparent. In this case, the decline in popularity is readily discernable.
- **3. (B) is correct.** The narrator has a high opinion of the hunger artist, and laments the passing of simpler times.
- **4. (E) is correct.** The children in lines 11–21 are described as idyllic, yet naïve onlookers; the watchers were described as both skeptical (lines 39–41) and disinterested (29–34). Line 22 makes mention of casual observers.
- **5. (C) is correct.** The image is one of depravity: the hunger artist is alone in the cage with nothing but a clock to mark the time.
- **6. (E) is correct.** Initiated are those who are familiar with the spectacle. They are not skeptical, however, as they understand the honor code of the hunger artist.
- **7. (A) is correct.** An impresario is a manager or organizer for a performance.
- **8. (D) is correct.** Kafka seems to be highlighting the skepticism that critics have not only of hunger artists, but also (and, more importantly, this is his real intention) the motivations of artists in general.
- **9. (E) is correct.** The work is highly metaphorical. By all accounts, the work functions to discuss the role of art, the artist, and the audience in Kafka’s society.
- **10. (A) is correct.** The first paragraph focuses primarily on the speaker’s nostalgic attitude and the children’s fascination with hunger artists; the second paragraph focuses on the skeptics, those who doubted the authenticity of the act.

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## Prose Multiple Choice: from “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (B) is correct.** Maupassant is emphasizing Mrs. Loisel’s lower station as indicated by the clause “as if she had really gone down in the world.” (line 7)
- **2. (D) is correct.** By detailing Mrs. Loisel’s descent from “clerks and copyists” (line 2) and her lack of rank, Maupassant tells us that beauty and grace alone are not enough to ensure a woman’s success in the world.
- **3. (C) is correct.** While the paragraphs help us to understand the materialistic, discontent nature of the protagonist, and create rich images of splendor that contrast with the stark realities of the Loisel’s home (a situation with which Mr. Loisel is entirely content), it does not in any way cast a negative light upon the riches so coveted by Mrs. Loisel.
- **4. (D) is correct.** Although she fantasizes about fine furnishings and food, is seemingly obsessed with the lovely clothes she lacks, and imagines “whispered gallantries” (lines 32–33), Mrs. Loisel desires only a connection with the famous, rather than fame for herself.
- **5. (C) is correct.** Her husband’s enthusiasm for his plain fare (and likewise his lot in life) captures his simple nature and is in stark contrast to his wife’s desire for “gourmet-prepared” (line 31) dinners. It does not, however, move the plot forward.
- **6. (D) is correct.** With her discontent and constant daydreaming, Mrs. Loisel is wistful and melancholic.
- **7. (B) is correct.** While he mentions her charm and beauty in the opening lines, Maupassant views his protagonist objectively. She is a specific example of a type he has seen and noted in society.
- **8. (B) is correct.** By tossing aside “spitefully” the invitation presented to her in such a glowing manner by her husband, Mrs. Loisel is betraying her impatience with her husband’s failure to understand her desires.
- **9. (E) is correct.** With her friend’s fine home being the only wealthy private home that she visits, the reader can assume that this is a source of her fantasies. Further, the intricacies of her daydreams imply a significant amount of time has been spent shaping them. Finally, the rich images are in direct contrast to the grim images of her actual home.
- **10. (D) is correct.** By telling us that Mrs. Loisel is filled with “desolation and lost hopes” when viewing the maid, we can infer that she is regretting the loss of any hope she might have had for bettering her situation through an advantageous marriage.



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## Prose Multiple Choice: from “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (B) is correct.** Unable to openly give her views to her husband and forbidden to write, the speaker treats the audience as a confidante. Further, the repeated references to supernatural and nature fit the romantic ideal.
- **2. (A) is correct.** Prescribing his wife’s regimen and determining her every moment, the speaker’s husband is controlling. He is also pragmatic, as evidenced by his lack of “patience with faith, an[d] intense horror of superstition” (lines 10–11).
- **3. (D) is correct.** Although the speaker has several traits or actions that bespeak her disorder, her unsettling obsession with the wallpaper in her room is the clearest sign.
- **4. (A) is correct.** The speaker, a writer whose imagination seems captivated by the strangeness of her new abode, is unhappy with the more mundane details attached to the history of the house.
- **5. (E) is correct.** Although the speaker mentions a desire for a, b, and c, she seems most desirous of determining her own fate and course of treatment.
- **6. (A) is correct.** While b, c, d, and e are all mentioned in the treatment described in lines 23–25, it is clear from the speaker’s continued contact with her husband that she is not to be kept in complete isolation.
- **7. (C) is correct.** With her husband determining all aspects of her daily existence, the speaker is placed in a role of subservience and dependence similar to that of a child.
- **8. (A) is correct.** With her husband (and brother) overruling her wishes for freedom (to write, to choose her own room, etc.) and making her decisions for her, the speaker’s use of the word *personally* to preface her opinions in close succession suggests that she is chaffing under the limited role she has been forced to play.
- **9. (B) is correct.** Although the speaker finds fault with the flamboyance and color of the paper, it is only in the discussion of the pattern—which she describes as provoking, irritating, confusing, and suicidal—that her hysteria is displayed.
- **10. (C) is correct.** Although the speaker does mention a need to feel grateful, and is also obedient to her husband’s orders, it is her resentment and anger that are the defining sentiments in the passage. She mentions feeling “unreasonably angry” (line 50) with him, and seems somewhat resentful of his failure to listen to her desires.

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ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

*Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (A) is the correct answer.** The character's diction and repeated references to himself support the fact that he is self-centered and vain.
- **2. (D) is the correct answer.** The character's failure to mention his personal feelings for the supposed object of his affection, while enumerating the duties and outside recommendations that have led him to his choice, make this a humorous proposal of marriage.
- **3. (D) is the correct answer.** While the entire passage points to this, the first nine lines establish his position towards marriage from the outset.
- **4. (A) is the correct answer.** Although he is sincere in his rationale for marriage, the speaker never makes more than a passing reference to emotion. He assumes success and draws a stark contrast between the elevated position of his patroness and that of his listener.
- **5. (E) is the correct answer.** Answers A–D are established in the passage. Selection E is never established.
- **6. (B) is the correct answer.** The speaker clearly establishes his admiration for his patroness in lines 5, and 16–19.
- **7. (E) is the correct answer.** In line 12, Lady Catherine de Bourgh alludes to all of the above, except generosity.
- **8. (A) is the correct answer.** The listener's wit and vivacity will ultimately be balanced by the silence and respect the speaker imagines she will feel.
- **9. (B) is the correct answer.** By using the phrase "when we are married" rather than "if we are married," the speaker highlights his own assurance that he will be accepted.
- **10. (E) is the correct answer.** Although choice I would have been advisable, the speaker instead uses lines 29–33 to accomplish choice II and lines 21–22 to establish choice III.

# Drama Multiple-Choice Questions Followed by Answers and Explanations

## *Overview*

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While the AP Literature and Composition exam typically selects poems and passages from short stories or novels, it is possible that you will be presented with a selection from a play. The selections that follow are examples of the types of passages that you may find on the exam. If the selection is a dialogue, be sure to pay close attention to the way the characters are presented and developed in the passage. Look for tension between them and identify those lines that best highlight the tension. Consider the causes and the ramifications of the tension.

If the passage is a monologue, most likely a soliloquy, consider the same strategies used when approaching a poetry prompt. What do you know about the speaker? What is the speaker's purpose? What key details about the play or its theme are divulged in the passage? These questions are good starting points for tackling such a prompt.

Ultimately, you should not be thrown for a loop if presented with a selection from a work of drama on the AP Literature and Composition exam. The very strategies that will help you be successful in analyzing a poetry and prose selection will be helpful to you if given a selection from a dramatic work.

Just as you would with a poem or prose selection, read each drama passage and consciously predict the types of questions the AP Literature and Composition exam will ask of you. Again, pay careful attention to the format of each question and consider the denotative meanings of the answer selections, as often you will be given seemingly synonymous words with subtle differences in their meaning. Read the questions carefully, and be careful to pay close attention to questions that include words like "ALL" or "EXCEPT."

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## Drama Multiple Choice: from *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

Questions 1–10. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.

MACBETH

We will proceed no further in this business:  
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought  
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
5 Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH

Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?  
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale  
At what it did so freely? From this time  
10 Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard  
To be the same in thine own act and valour  
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,  
And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
15 Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'  
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACBETH

Prithee, peace:  
I dare do all that may become a man;  
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH

20 What beast was't, then,  
That made you break this enterprise to me?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man;  
And, to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place  
25 Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:  
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now  
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know  
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
30 Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,  
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you  
Have done to this.

MACBETH

If we should fail?

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LADY MACBETH

We fail!  
35 But screw your courage to the sticking-place,  
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—  
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey  
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains  
Will I with wine and wassail so convince  
40 That memory, the warder of the brain,  
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason  
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep  
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,  
What cannot you and I perform upon  
45 The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon  
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
Of our great quell?

MACBETH

Bring forth men-children only;  
For thy undaunted mettle should compose  
50 Nothing but males. Will it not be received,  
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two  
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,  
That they have done't?

1. In lines 1–5, Macbeth is most clearly expressing all of the following EXCEPT  
(A) loyalty  
(B) vanity  
(C) impatience  
(D) doubt  
(E) scruples
2. In the lines “I have bought/ Golden opinions from all sorts of people” (lines 2–3) is an example of  
(A) personification  
(B) metonymy  
(C) symbol  
(D) metaphor  
(E) simile
3. In lines 6–10, Lady Macbeth uses the metaphor of drunkenness to suggest all of the following EXCEPT  
(A) inconstancy  
(B) loyalty  
(C) bragging  
(D) remorse  
(E) vacillation
4. In lines 6–16, Lady Macbeth assaults Macbeth with questions in hopes of  
(A) understanding why he changed his mind.  
(B) revealing her empathy for his situation.  
(C) getting specific answers to her long held concerns.  
(D) motivating him to act rather than merely consider.  
(E) venting her dissatisfaction with her station in life.
5. In line 18, the word “man” could best be replaced with the word  
(A) animal  
(B) monster  
(C) woman  
(D) human  
(E) king

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6. In lines 23–24, Lady Macbeth attempts to persuade through
- (A) shame
  - (B) envy
  - (C) wealth
  - (D) flattery
  - (E) sympathy
7. Lady Macbeth’s vow in lines 29–32 could best be characterized as
- (A) manly
  - (B) drunken
  - (C) hyperbolic
  - (D) enigmatic
  - (E) empathetic
8. The word “screw” (line 35) could best be replaced with
- (A) twist
  - (B) stab
  - (C) set
  - (D) focus
  - (E) shift
9. The difference in the consideration of drunkenness (lines 6–10 and 38–47, respectively) in the passage is
- (A) figurative and understated
  - (B) figurative and literal
  - (C) hyperbolic and understated
  - (D) understated and hyperbolic
  - (E) literal and hyperbolic
10. In the passage, Lady Macbeth mistakes
- (A) masculinity for femininity
  - (B) cowardice for conscience
  - (C) conscience for cowardice
  - (D) drunkenness for courage
  - (E) inaction for action

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**Drama Multiple Choice: from *Mrs. Warren's Profession*  
by George Bernard Shaw**

*Questions 1–10. Read the following carefully before you choose your answers.*

5 CROFTS [after a stare: not at all displeased, and much more at his ease on these frank terms than on their former ceremonious ones] Ha! ha! ha! ha! Go it, little missie, go it: it doesn't hurt me and it amuses you. Why the devil shouldn't I invest my money that way? I take the interest on my capital like other people: I hope you don't think I dirty my own hands with the work.

10 Come! you wouldn't refuse the acquaintance of my mother's cousin the Duke of Belgravia because some of the rents he gets are earned in queer ways. You wouldn't cut the Archbishop of Canterbury, I suppose, because the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have a few publicans and sinners among their tenants. Do you remember your Crofts scholarship at Newnham? Well, that was founded by my brother the M.P. He gets his 22 per cent out of a factory with six hundred girls in it, and not one of them getting wages enough to live on. How d'ye suppose they manage when they have no family to fall back on? Ask your mother. And do you expect me to turn my back on 35 per cent when all the rest are pocketing what they can, like sensible men? No such fool! If you're going to pick and choose your acquaintances on moral principles, you'd better clear out of 15 this country, unless you want to cut yourself out of all decent society.

VIVIE [conscience stricken] You might go on to point out that I myself never asked where the money I spent came from. I believe I am just as bad as you.

20 CROFTS [greatly reassured] Of course you are; and a very good thing too! What harm does it do after all? [Rallying her jocularly] So you don't think me such a scoundrel now you come to think it over. Eh?

VIVIE I have shared profits with you: and I admitted you just now to the familiarity of knowing what I think of you.

25 CROFTS [with serious friendliness] To be sure you did. You won't find me a bad sort: I don't go in for being superfine intellectually; but I've plenty of honest human feeling; and the old Crofts breed comes out in a sort of instinctive hatred of anything low, in which I'm sure you'll sympathize with me. Believe me, Miss Vivie, the world isn't such a bad place as the croakers make out. As long as you don't fly openly in the face of society, society doesn't ask any inconvenient questions; and it makes precious short work of the cads who do. There are no secrets better kept than the secrets everybody guesses. In the class of people I can introduce you to, no lady or gentleman would so far forget themselves as to discuss 30 my business affairs or your mothers. No man can offer you a safer position.

35 VIVIE [studying him curiously] I suppose you really think you're getting on famously with me.

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CROFTS Well, I hope I may flatter myself that you think better of me than you did at first.

VIVIE [quietly] I hardly find you worth thinking about at all now. When I  
40 think of the society that tolerates you, and the laws that protect you! when I think of how helpless nine out of ten young girls would be in the hands of you and my mother! the unmentionable woman and her capitalist bully—

CROFTS [livid] Damn you!

1. Crofts mentions “the Duke of Belgravia” and “the Archbishop of Canterbury” (lines 6–8) to convey
  - (A) shame
  - (B) loyalty
  - (C) desire
  - (D) status
  - (E) empathy
2. The pattern best describing Crofts line of questioning (lines 9–15) would be
  - (A) rhetorical
  - (B) inquisitive
  - (C) confrontational
  - (D) sympathetic
  - (E) confounding
3. In line 16, the phrase “decent society” is meant to be interpreted
  - (A) hyperbolically
  - (B) metaphorically
  - (C) ironically
  - (D) objectively
  - (E) subjectively
4. In context, Vivie’s line “I believe I am just as bad as you” (line 19) suggests that
  - (A) morality is subjective
  - (B) birds of a feather flock together
  - (C) ignorance does not excuse behavior
  - (D) the two are well suited for a relationship
  - (E) money is evil
5. With the lines “I don’t go in for being superfine intellectually; but I’ve plenty of honest human feeling;” (line 26–27), Crofts hopes to establish himself as all of the following EXCEPT
  - (A) open and caring
  - (B) well bred
  - (C) approachable and willing
  - (D) learned
  - (E) naturally humanistic
6. In the paragraph running from lines 25 to 34, Crofts suggests that the best way to get ahead in life is to
  - (A) rely on feelings instead of education
  - (B) keep secrets
  - (C) laugh often
  - (D) openly take what you can
  - (E) not ask “inconvenient questions”
7. “There are no secrets better kept than the secrets everybody guesses.” (lines 31–32) depicts “society” as
  - (A) stupid and corrupt
  - (B) omniscient
  - (C) dramatic and willing
  - (D) loyal and corrupt
  - (E) blind



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8. Crofts assumes he is succeeding in his wooing of Vivie for all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) Vivie repeatedly states their similarities
  - (B) He feels his argument is logical and sound
  - (C) He feels his charm is self-evident
  - (D) Vivie expresses her desire to be in “society”
  - (E) He knows Vivie’s mother
9. From the passage, we are able to infer that
- (A) Vivie will marry Crofts
  - (B) Crofts is a “capitalist bully”
  - (C) Vivie feel guilty
  - (D) “honest human feeling” is more important than books
  - (E) Much of “society” is corrupt
10. The various stage directions (in brackets throughout the passage) reveal the
- (A) clear difference between how the two characters are experiencing the interaction
  - (B) difference between witty criticism and objective truth
  - (C) dominant gender roles of the Victorian Period
  - (D) playwright’s motivation for choosing this genre
  - (E) effect of money on any conversation

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# Drama Answers and Explanations

## Drama Multiple Choice: from *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (C) is correct.** Macbeth is expressing reservations and doubt about the idea of killing his king; he is not being impatient with his wife.
- **2. (D) is correct.** "Bought Golden opinions" is a metaphor for the praise he has received for his valorous acts in battle.
- **3. (B) is correct.** Lady Macbeth chides him for his earlier vow to kill Duncan, saying that it was similar to drunken acts, boasting, and unkept promises. All the answers, except loyalty, suggest a lack of follow through on a vow.
- **4. (D) is correct.** Lady Macbeth assaults him with a barrage of questions that all center around the idea of acting rather than considering. She wants him not to think, but merely to act.
- **5. (D) is correct.** To be a man, in this context, is to be human—a person aspiring toward virtue. Lady Macbeth wants him to turn his back on responsible, virtuous thoughts and act with brutality and savagery.
- **6. (A) is correct.** She calls into question not only the value of his word, but the depth and strength of his masculinity.
- **7. (C) is correct.** Her speech is hyperbolic in that she imagines the most gruesome and unnatural possible murder (a mother killing her nursing infant) to challenge Macbeth to keep his word.
- **8. (D) is correct.** Although most of the answers connote stabbing, "focus" is the best answer because it implies that he see nothing else (not his king nor consequences) but the spot to stab.
- **9. (B) is correct.** The early discussion of drunkenness is when she uses a metaphor to pronounce his earlier boast to kill the king as a drunken pledge; when she speaks of the Duncan's assistants as drunken, she means to literally make them drunk so that they will not be able to perform their duties.
- **10. (C) is correct.** While Macbeth had allowed his moral conscience to halt his ambitious move of killing Duncan, Lady Macbeth reverses all his internal checks and paints them as cowardice.

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## Drama Multiple Choice: from *Mrs. Warren's Profession* by George Bernard Shaw

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### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (D) is correct.** The two positions reflect status.
- **2. (A) is correct.** The questions are rhetorical in that he does not expect her to answer them.
- **3. (C) is correct.** The people that he refers to as decent society take advantage of the weak and poor.
- **4. (C) is correct.** Vivie feels bad and knows that she is guilty for not thinking about where her funds have come from.
- **5. (D) is correct.** Crofts states that he is not intellectual.
- **6. (E) is correct.** While keeping secrets is part of the situation of getting ahead in life, success is more about not compromising those in power so that you will not in turn be compromised.
- **7. (D) is correct.** "Society" is defined throughout the passage as the wealthy who stick together and keep their wealth and power secure through unsavory means if need be.
- **8. (D) is correct.** Vivie never expresses a desire to be in society.
- **9. (E) is correct.** Much of what is discussed about society makes it look corrupt, but that is never explicitly stated.
- **10. (A) is correct.** It is clear that most of Croft's directions are positive and self-confident, while Vivie's are a bit incredulous.



# Approaching the AP Literature Essay

## *Overview*

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### **The Nature of Timed Writing**

One of the factors that makes the AP Literature and Composition exam so difficult for so many students is the expectation that students write three well-developed and insightful essays in two hours. This can be an unnerving prospect for many writers who rely on time and the revision process to produce their most thoughtful and well-written commentary. However, the College Board does not expect essays written in the timed setting to be as well-developed or as nuanced as those written without the same time constraints. In fact, most well-written essays in this time setting would still be considered essentially a “first or preliminary draft” in a non-timed setting. A student’s success, therefore, is not determined—necessarily—by the exhaustive explication and analysis of a work of literature, but by the student’s recognition of a work’s primary argument and purpose, as well as an understanding of at least a few of the literary devices used to develop that argument and purpose. In simpler terms, students can find a modicum of success even when faced with a difficult passage with an elusive meaning.

Plot summary and misidentifying one’s audience are common problems associated with timed writing. Students in their rush to complete an essay in a timed setting too often paraphrase the work in question, rather than analyze its central argument and the literary devices used to accentuate it. Likewise, students will often provide contextual information or definitions that their audience is already aware of. Therefore, it is important to consider your audience and assume they will have some preexisting knowledge of the work of literature. Keeping this important idea in mind will help to steer your energies to the task at hand.

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## Approaches to Writing the AP Essay in a Timed Environment

With this consideration in mind, you should approach the AP essay section of the exam in a methodical manner, a manner that allows you time to complete three key tasks. First, it is critical to carefully read and annotate the prompt and passage, ensuring that you are using the strategies outlined earlier in this book. Second, it is imperative that you organize your thoughts and ideas using at least one organizational device prior to the composition process. Too often, students plunge into their essays without properly organizing their ideas first. While these essays can be thoughtful and meet with some success, they do not often garner the highest scores.

Finally, you will need to allocate adequate time to not only compose your essay, but also to edit it. You do not want to spend too much time on one essay and deprive yourself the same opportunities for success on the other two essays.

As a rule of thumb, you should spend no more than ten minutes reading, annotating, and planning your essay. If you follow this approach, you will have thirty minutes to compose and edit your essay. The planning stage cannot, however, be overemphasized. You must plan out your essay carefully by both annotating the passage and by outlining your argument. If this stage is done well, the following thirty minutes can be spent writing. Although AP graders do not necessarily reward longer essays with higher scores, there is a clear correlation that suggests that those essays that earn the highest scores are typically well-developed, well-organized, and thorough.

## Analyzing and Responding to the Prompts

While there are many variations to the language and structure of individual prompts, the AP writing prompt, in essence, asks you to identify and consider two key components of a work of literature. These two components are invariably centered on the author's use of literary devices and meaning. First, the prompt will ask you to consider a literary device or devices used in the work. Then, it will ask you to consider how this literary device or these devices contribute to the theme or meaning of the work. As mentioned above, depending on the prompt, there are a myriad of ways in which these variations can be presented to you. It is critical, however, to annotate the prompt and underline the task or essential question being asked. Looking for these two components will help you to pinpoint precisely what the prompt is asking of you.

One way to ensure that the graders recognize your tacit understanding of the prompt is to “give back the prompt” in the opening lines of your essay. While more confident writers may choose to take a more organic approach to writing, there is nothing wrong with using and recycling language from the prompt.

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## Writing the AP Essay

Once the prompt has been properly dissected, the passage annotated, and a clear outline constructed, writing in earnest can begin. It is again important to acknowledge that your essay is essentially a draft. Although AP graders are indeed appreciative of elevated diction, clever insights, and witty asides, you should not become so focused on impressing your audience with your well-developed hook statement or impressive vocabulary that you lose sight of your essay's primary goal: to respond to the prompt in a thorough manner in a timed setting. A solid, well-organized essay that clearly responds to the prompt and makes use of ample support from the passage or poem is most essential to your success.

One of the major pitfalls of essays that receive lower scores on the AP grading scale is that they rely too much on plot summary and broad statements. A thoughtful and well-organized outline will help eliminate the temptation to summarize the plot. Additionally, students tend to allow quoted passages to speak for themselves. Making use of textual support within the essay is critical, but it must be done thoroughly. That is to say, any quoted passage must be introduced by a claim and followed by a thorough commentary.

Finally, while they may seem trivial in nature, clear paragraphing, neat penmanship, and proper handling of a work's title are indicators of a writer's compositional savvy.

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## The AP 1–9 Grading Scale

### **RUBRIC:**

The following rubric is similar to those found on the AP exam. The rubric has been adapted for use the prose essay on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, *The Great Gatsby*, found on page 124 of this book.

- 9:** These essays offer a persuasive and nuanced analysis of how the narrator’s tone reveals his attitude toward his neighbor, Jay Gatsby. The student crafts an articulate description of the tone and what it reveals about the narrator’s reserved opinion of his neighbor through the discussion of his grounds and opulent party. By accurately discussing such techniques as imagery, word choice, syntax, and figurative language, these students illustrate a nuanced understanding of the narrator’s attitude. These discussions of technique are aptly qualified and contain specific references. Although they may not be totally free from errors, these essays are perceptive, accurate, and clear.
- 8:** These essays reflect a less sophisticated or nuanced analysis and a less skillful use of language than those scoring a 9. Still, these essays represent a perceptive response to the prompt.
- 7:** These essays offer a thoughtful analysis of how the narrator’s tone reveals his attitude toward his neighbor, Jay Gatsby. The students provide sound analysis of the tone through accurate and apt discussion of how such techniques as imagery, word choice, syntax, and figurative language convey the narrator’s muted attitude toward his neighbor. The argument is well-constructed and balanced, with ample evidence from the text.
- 6:** These essays are marked by weaker analysis and a less confident expression. Still, these essays respond to the prompt adequately and support their claims sufficiently.
- 5:** These essays offer a plausible analysis of how the narrator’s tone reveals his attitude toward Gatsby. The analysis of techniques may be poorly weighed or inadequately developed. Rather than well-substantiated analysis, the writing may drift toward plot summary or paraphrase. While the writing may reflect ease with language, there is a lack of force and control in the writing, as well distracting surface errors and poor organization.
- 4:** These essays approach the task too simply or inaccurately. They may misread the tone or misunderstand the application of the various techniques that foster tone in the passage. The analysis may be too reliant on one technique or lack development of evidence as part of the discussion. The analysis offered is merely summary or paraphrase and lacks consideration in the structuring. The writing may be repetitive and marred by surface errors.



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- 3:** These essays reveal an even weaker control of language and composition.
  - 2:** These essays reveal a perfunctory attempt to answer the prompt and have no clear grasp of the task. The discussion is flawed in analysis, support, and organization. The use of language reflects only minimal skill.
  - 1:** These essays reflect even less ability with expression.
  - 0:** No attempt made.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 1—Score 9:**

“At high tide in the afternoon I watched . . .” This line alone, the sole use of “I” in the passage, establishes the narrator’s vantage point as he characterizes his neighbor. The narrator approaches Gatsby with an attitude of both alienation—the result of both literal and figurative distance between the two—and of semi-voluntary fascination with the exotic world of Jay Gatsby. Speaking through first person, the narrator’s tone conveys both the alienation and the fascination of his attitude toward Gatsby, an attitude emphasized by his use of imagery, word choice, and syntax.

The imagery which the narrator employs throughout the passage creates the lush, exotic, almost fairy-tale-like atmosphere of Gatsby’s parties. The guest “came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and stars,” the narrator says, evoking the sort of fantastic party scene to be found in illustrations of the balls and enchanted palaces of fairy tale. The entire passage is characterized by an otherworldly feel, resulting from the manner in which the narrator describes the parties. Gatsby’s car is reduced in size to that of a “bright yellow bug,” while the inconsequential oranges and lemons tower in “pyramid[s] of pulpless halves.” Light, glamour, and glitter are everywhere—on the buffet table, in the pavilions on the lawn, at the bar, with “harlequin designs,” “turkeys bewitched to a dark gold.” The narrator presents an image of sumptuousness that is otherworldly in aspect, and as a result simultaneously entrances the narrator—who goes on at length about the parties and presents them as beautiful and bright—and shuts him out as he watches but does not participate. This imagery of the party relies chiefly upon word choice to create this otherworld. The narrator chooses euphonic, magical words like “champagne,” “stars,” “glistening.” As the party crescendos, the fantastical nature of it—as seen through the narrator’s eyes—is different by “the earth lurch[ing] away from the sun” and the orchestra playing in colors, not sounds.

At this crescendo, too, one notices not only word choice in terms of imagery, but word choice in terms of syntax, which both brings the narrator closer to the party and sets him apart from it. The first half or so of the passage is in reference to these parties in general, and spoken in the past tense. By seven o’clock, however, “the orchestra has arrived” and we are in the present tense. The narrator himself, depicted occupying the position of observer, has been caught up by the whirl of the party and continues to be so until the passage ends, as the rest is all in present tense. This would seem at first glance to have overcome the alien nature of the party in his view, yet it in fact is accompanied by the increased feeling of anonymity and bewilderment that results from the increased excitement and volume of the guests. As a result, though the narrator seems closer to the party, he is more distant from it in his insularity.

Just as the narrator only mentions himself once, he only directly mentions Jay Gatsby twice—once as “my neighbor” and once as “Gatsby,” though he is referred to elsewhere with the possessive “his” in conjunction with his belongings. Even the use of “my neighbor” is in the possessive and in reference to the house. The activity of the passage addresses not the neighbor himself, but the

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objects and events that represent the neighbor. Yet, with Gatsby's person so conspicuously lacking from the festivities, the parties and guests, not the man, is the narrator's true neighbor, which the narrator views with a mixed attitude of fascination and alienation.

## **EXPLANATION OF SCORE**

### **Sample 1—Score 9**

The introduction reveals a sophisticated understanding of both point of view and imagery, and how those two choices are used by Fitzgerald to characterize the narrator and the scene. The discussion of how visual imagery creates “esoteric, almost fairy-tale-like atmosphere” is well developed as the writer develops the idea with such evidence as “yellow bug,” “pyramids,” and “harlequin designs.” The writer's word choice (crescendos) matches the tone of the passage as she discusses the “euphonic” impact of the word choice. The essay really sets itself apart as the writer considers the impact of syntax (verb tense) that allows the narrator to “caught up by the whirl of the party.” The closing discussion on how the imagery, word choice, and syntax comment more on the “façade of his neighbor” brings the essay to a thoughtful conclusion.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 2—Score 8:**

The narrator’s description of his neighbor’s extravagant party is conveyed through a somewhat detached, observational tone. Regardless of whether or not he is passing judgment on his neighbor’s lavish way of life, it is clear that the narrator is impressed and in awe of the opulence. This tone and attitude is created using the literary techniques of word choice and imagery.

The passage makes many references to water and liquids in general, and not only when mentioning the location of Gatsby’s house, which is on the water. Phrases like “blue gardens,” “sea-change of faces,” “spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word,” and “swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath” suggest a conscious purpose in Fitzgerald’s word choice. Water is often an apt symbol and the narrator seems to recognize, possibly unconsciously, how changeable and fleeting the pleasures of Gatsby’s world can be, like the tide. The people at this party are interchangeable and unimportant as individuals, but part of a great system or swell, which is high society. This cynical word choice does not overwhelmingly give the narrator the tone of skepticism or disillusionment, but acts more as a foreshadowing. This indifferent tone shows his attitude as interested, but not fully succumbed to the extravagance.

The descriptive imagery the narrator uses to describe Gatsby’s party reveals both the glamour of the night and the preparation/aftermath. “A pyramid of pulpless halves” is the melancholy one feels when he or she’s stayed too long at a party and the fun has worn out, just as “... Could extract the juice of 200 oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed 200 times by a butler’s thumb” ruins the façade. The narrator is aware of these things, as an outsider, and again shows his noncommittal attitude. However, the struggle between awe and indifference continues with lush imagery like “garnished with glistening hors-d’oeuvres, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold.” Everything at this party shines or has a magical luster, and Nick is slightly intoxicated by it—as we see when the laughter and music and drinks all seem to blend together.

The narrator’s tone is neither blatantly disgusted nor incredibly impressed; rather it is one of admiration and interest. After all, whether the narrator is the sort who avoids rich foods and drink, the man knows a spectacle when he sees one.

**EXPLANATION OF SCORE****Sample 2—Score 8**

This thoughtful essay provides not only an apt consideration of the narrator’s tone, but benefits from a sophisticated understanding of Fitzgerald’s use of imagery, “Water is often an apt symbol and Nick seems to recognize, possibly unconsciously, how changeable and fleeting the pleasures of Gatsby’s world can be, like the tide.” The writer goes on to discuss how the tone is skeptical without becoming cynical; that his viewing of the scenes is more indifferent or aloof than scathing. This point is well developed as the writer discusses the possible internal struggle of the narrator with how to feel “the struggle between awe and indifference.” Although the analysis is strong and the writing clear, the language does not reach the sophistication found in a 9.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 3—Score 7:**

F. Scott Fitzgerald uses this passage in which he describes Gatsby’s party to suggest Nick’s feeling of wonder, fascination, and awe toward Jay Gatsby. The visual, auditory, and gustatory imagery convey the extravagance of the party, while Fitzgerald’s word choice shows the enchanting effect these parties have on the narrator.

The vast amount of imagery in this passage shows in detail the scope of this party. Fitzgerald uses visual imagery to dazzle both the narrator and the reader. The verandas “gaudy with primary colors, and hair shorn in strange new ways” make the party enticing and create an almost longing tone to the narration. The full orchestra and the air “alive with chatter and laughter” appeal to the narrator’s auditory sense. Fitzgerald also uses gustatory imagery with descriptions of the multitude of oranges and lemons that become cocktails and the “glistening hors-d’oeuvre” to again create the enticing feel of the party. Fitzgerald often combines multiple types of imagery—“pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold” with “orchestra playing yellow cocktail music”—to bring depth to the scene. It becomes more like a painting or music itself than merely a description of a party. All of this astounding imagery is paired with an awed and longing tone that illustrates the narrator’s fascination with the goings on at Gatsby’s house, as well as a desire to belong; to be a part of the mystical, musical world.

Imperative to creating the wondrous tone is Fitzgerald’s word choice. He uses words that display a positive, if somewhat mystical sense of the party. The garden becomes a “Christmas tree” while “one of the gypsies” becomes a “trembling opal.” The addition of the word “real” to the “real brass rail” set up in the bar shows some admiration for the host of the party. A “floating round of cocktails” enhances the magic of the party and Nick’s impressed tone. Even the waste of the party—the “pyramid of pulpless halves”—is great.

While the narrator doesn’t necessarily condone Gatsby’s extravagance, he in no way scorns it. Instead he is intrigued with the going on next-door and a little in awe. He almost wished to take place in mysteries of the weekend’s orgies of extravagance. Through lush and varied imagery and rich, nearly mystical word choice we see the narrator’s positive view of his neighbor.

**EXPLANATION OF SCORE****Sample 3—Score 7**

This thoughtful essay illustrates a good understanding of how the different types of imagery combine to create a scene that seems to transcend the mere characterization of a luxurious party to something “like a painting or music itself.” The writer makes a good focal point on the “awed and longing” attitude that is created by the ample imagery. The discussion of the impact of word choice is observant—“trembling opal” and “pyramid of pulpless halves”—but fails to take into account some of the other elements of connotation involved. The writing is coherent and fluid, but lacks some sophistication in approach, word choice, and structuring.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 4—Score 6:**

In this passage from the novel *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator describes the experience of attending one of Jay Gatsby’s luxurious parties. Everything surrounding Gatsby is practically dripping with decadence and plenty, and so by describing Gatsby’s surroundings, an aura of sorts, we gain a sense of the narrator’s attitude. The use of brief figurative language, a variety of imagery, and syntax aids in Fitzgerald’s portraying that the narrator finds Gatsby’s excess awesome.

The passage begins with figurative language to create an atmosphere of irresponsibility, “men and girls came and went like moths among the whispering and the champagne and the stars.” It is a pretty picture, but also one of impermanence and risk. Furthermore, his station wagon becomes a “brisk yellow bug” that delivers people to his party, suggesting again the less-than-human level of interaction that these party-goers joyfully submit to. But while the figurative language is brief, the imagery is lush with color and ripe with sounds. The entire passage is filled with rich visual imagery as the narrator explains and describes the awesome surroundings he finds himself in. While boats “slit the waters of the sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam” there are also “pyramids” of used oranges and lemons leaving out the backdoor. So much seems to be happening in this magical yard that the narrator doesn’t know where to look next. As the party begins to swell, all is color and sound and all of it is warm and glistening; there is nothing that does not seem to appeal to the narrator. By extension, we can assume to some level that the Gatsby and his life appeal to the narrator.

While the syntax is not difficult, it certainly is rushing. So many of the sentences involve lists (many items simply joined with “and”) which seems to echo the narrator’s amazement at what he sees. He seems to be trying to get it all the for his audience convey this one remarkable object or act after another.

The narrator is certain in awe of his neighbor Jay Gatsby, and although he never speaks directly to his feeling on the man, it is clear from his shining words and nearly breathless syntax that he is very much impressed with him.

**EXPLANATION OF SCORE****Sample 4—Score 6**

This essay correctly identifies the attitude of the narrator by considering the “aura of sorts” resonates from Gatsby through his party. The writer does a fine job considering the impact of the similes and makes a nice transition to the discussion of imagery, with specific discussion of types of imagery and the evidence. While the observations are well considered, there is a definite lack of specific evidence to illustrate the writer’s point, particularly in the syntax paragraph.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 5—Score 5:**

The life of the rich and famous may seem like a sweet piece of life to some, but for others it does not tug at their desires. In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby has much to show, but he acts as a puppeteer who brings life to a lifestyle he doesn’t experience in the same way as his guests. As the narrator of the passage describes the first scene he notices at Gatsby’s house, a stern and distanced tone reveals an indifferent attitude, which is displayed through Fitzgerald’s use of fragmented syntax, descriptive word choice, and selective imagery.

The way that Fitzgerald forms the sentences that describe this scene reveal the narrator’s still distance and prejudices toward his neighbor. For example, after the first sentence, “There was music from my neighbor’s house through summer nights,” is followed by yet another descriptive sentence. This is a sign early on in the passage that little emotion will be made very clear about the narrator’s attitude toward the entire scene. The author could have played a sentence after the first to show the narrator’s reaction or feeling to this scene and the man behind it all, but he does not—and that is exactly what proves to narrator’s indifferent attitude toward his neighbor. This unemotional tone is carried throughout the entire passage and is more deeply supported by the author’s word choice.

The choice in language that Fitzgerald makes ever so tactfully allows the narrator to show how empty his opinion is of the actual man who causes the entire scene. The narrator feels a certain way about all of the man’s toys—his cars, his boats, his drinks—but there is not much to base an attitude toward a person because the person is what is absent from this entire scene. This is why the word choice is so important—the reader must realize what is missing. “Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived,” turns to, “every Monday these same orange and lemons left his backdoor in a pyramid of pulpless halves.” The author has made a choice not to display all of the motions behind this event, but only highlights the before and after. Not only does this show the narrator’s true distance from his neighbor, but it reveals his indifference—should he be jealous? Should he be happy to be away from those “enthusiastic meetings”?

Not only does the example of the lemons and oranges serve as an example of word choice, but it is also a strong image that enforces the narrator’s tone and ultimately, his attitude toward his neighbor. The author chose to select certain moments of life and by choosing to describe the pulpless skins and juice behind that fruit, he is using selective imagery to show the narrator’s dry tone and indifferent attitude toward Gatsby.

The descriptive word choice throughout this passage ties into the galvanizing imagery that creates the party, but is descriptive only of that. The true emotional responses that one would typically process through their mind are not displayed within the passage, and as a result we must hunt for clues to find what the narrator is feeling. The lines that are the most memorable such as,

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“enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other’s names” are memorable for the truth and meaning of this observations, not because of the narrator’s response.

This passage from *The Great Gatsby* was a mixture of narrative-like syntax, specific to the scene word choice and selective imagery to show the narrator’s dry tone and ultimately indifferent attitude toward the man Gatsby himself.

## **EXPLANATION OF SCORE**

### **Sample 5—Score 5**

This essay offers a reasonable consideration of the narrator’s view of Gatsby’s party and his attitude toward Gatsby. To repeatedly refer to the attitude as “indifferent” is a slight misread, even though he qualifies this to some degree later. The discussion of the techniques is not as accurate as the stronger essays, and too often this essay drifts into speculation rather than dealing with text at hand. Furthermore, the selection of evidence is too slight and not consistently forceful in making the argument. The writing has a good voice, but it does not exhibit much sophistication or complexity. Finally, the passage exhibits more grammatical and mechanical errors than those scoring a 6 or higher.



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**SAMPLE ESSAY 6—Score 4:**

Fitzgerald’s narrator develops a strong attitude towards his neighbor’s wild lifestyle. The narrator’s tone reveals his critical attitude toward his neighbor with such techniques as imagery, word choice, and syntax.

The narrator feels Gatsby to be over the top and frivolous and his tone reveals this attitude. This attitude is also revealed through the use of imagery. Fitzgerald writes that “The air is alive with chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot.” Gatsby’s house is filled with people who “came and went like moths among the whisperings and champagne and the stars.” With this type of imagery and figurative language the narrator reveals that he believes this party that Gatsby throws for tons of people he doesn’t know to be ridiculous and almost too luxurious. Through imagery Fitzgerald portrays the narrator’s disgust with this lifestyle.

The narrator is quite critical of his neighbor, and this is shown through his word choice. The narrator does not once use Jay Gatsby’s name or speak of what he does to prepare for and clean up after his party. Instead, the narrator uses words like servant, butler, and caterer multiple times. This choice of wording show the narrator’s critical attitude toward his neighbor and who actually accomplishes the work it takes to creates and repair the damage created from this gathering. “And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing brushes and hammers and garden shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.”

Syntax is another technique Fitzgerald uses to reveal the narrator’s attitude toward Gatsby. The sentences, especially the one describing the guests, are long, overdrawn and filled to the brim, showing the narrator’s less-than-satisfied attitude toward Gatsby. “The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs—the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors, and hair shorn in new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castille. These sentences are not only long, but filled with “gaudy,” over the top language that reflects the narrator’s disgust with Gatsby’s life.

This passage clearly reveals the narrator’s attitude in general toward a luxurious and frivolous life-style, but also specifically focuses on the narrator’s disgusted attitude.

**EXPLANATION OF SCORE****Sample 6—Score 4**

While this essay makes some good general observations, describing the attitude as critical is a misread. The student selects evidence that seems to reflect that critical viewpoint, but that is at the expense of an abundance of evidence to the contrary. Moreover, the discussion of evidence lack depth and coherence. The writing is rather flat and stylistically repetitive.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 7—Score 3:**

The narrator witnesses the activities taking place at Gatsby’s house and is intrigued. He is not jealous of the guests nor is he upset at the disruptions that the party causes. The narrator’s tone is studious, comparable to that of a scientist observing an ant hill.

The narrator describes the events not so we know directly what his feeling for them are but so we can understand them which is born from the narrator’s understanding of them. “. . . men and girls came and went like moths . . .” rather than comparing the guests to cockroaches or butterflies he compares them to moths. This is because they are so drawn to the bright grandeur of Gatsby’s party. His tone is not overly respectful but simply shows that he is an outsider, observing as much as possible in hopes of understanding the unknown.

The narrator is very meticulous in their descriptions of everything thing that they observe. They know when events will take place, the quantities of produce and supplies and how the guests migrate from one hot spot to the next. “The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from NY are parked five deep . . . the bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside.” The narrator is an observer and intimately knows everything about the party. The narrator even studies how the party is set up and cleaned up after.

The lavish party filled with exotic food drink, entertainment, and guests are alien to the narrator because they study them so intently. Their tone is not biased, avoiding descriptions that would display contempt or jealous, similar to that of a scientific review. The narrator is intrigued by this life style, yet not to the point of desire, simply innocent curiosity.

**EXPLANATION OF SCORE****Sample 7—Score 3**

This essay starts with an interesting evaluation of the narrator’s attitude as “studious” or scientific; however, the discussion and selection of evidence does not build his point with consistency or force. The writing has enough errors so as to detract from understanding.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 8—Score 2:**

The narrator of the *Great Gatsby* is baffled by the awe of his neighbor's party. When describing the party he uses a lot of imagery.

The narrator's wonder is clear in the stunning imagery with "boats slitting the water." The boats don't just float or drive, but slit, which seems violent and lots of the other imagery is violent. The guests are "moths" that are drawn to a flame, which is deadly for moths which makes it like the narrator doesn't trust his neighbor. Maybe the narrator is very moral and doesn't like that there is drinking and wild behavior at the party so he doesn't like Gatsby.

Because the narrator is a watcher observing the party and not participating it seems to mean that he doesn't like it. As I said, there is wonder—like "wow, that a lot of really expensive stuff," but he doesn't want to meet Gatsby because Gatsby is over the top. The narrator's attitude is mixed with wonder and contempt for his neighbor.

**EXPLANATION OF SCORE****Sample 8—Score 2**

In this essay, there is a lack of development and some speculation that leads the essay away from the text at hand.

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**SAMPLE ESSAY 9—Score 1:**

The narrator never talks about Gatsby, just about his house and the people their so you can't really know what he thinks. To answer the question would just be guessing, that's a stupid thing to do about people you don't know. But most of the words and images the narrator uses seem positive. How can you not be positive about a party like that? I would do everything I could to make friends with Gatsby; the man is connected.

**EXPLANATION OF SCORE****Sample 9—Score 1**

This essay is little more than a personal response to the party scene.

# Poetry Essay Prompts followed by Free-Response Essay Sample Responses

## Overview

The poetry essay prompt is unique. You may be given a prompt that asks you to analyze a single poem carefully. You may, on the other hand, be confronted with a prompt that asks you to compare and contrast two poems. If the latter situation arises, you should expect the two poems to share a similar subject matter, but to have unique perspectives on it. In the past, the College Board has asked students to compare poems by authors like William Blake, who documents on the contrary states of man in his poems exploring innocence and experience. Likewise, the College Board has also asked students to compare and contrast poems that have unique perspective on topics such as love. Often these questions will center on the two speakers' views on the subject matter. Whatever the case—whether you are given one or two poems in which to focus your attention—you need to be able to articulate the way in which an author uses literary devices to help shape an argument.

The following sample poetry prompts will provide you with exposure to both scenarios mentioned above. Regardless of the scenarios, you should be sure to annotate the poems and use the host of strategies discussed in previous sections to help you to generate a thoughtful and accurate response to the prompt.

### Tips and Strategies

When approaching the poetry essay prompt, you should keep in mind the strategies discussed earlier in this book. You should spend no more than nine or ten minutes reading and analyzing the prompt, reading and annotating the poem (or poems), and sketching an outline for your essay. With this in mind, the following strategies can help you focus your response and make the most of your time.

1. Read the prompt carefully and underline the essential task. Put boxes around key words such as *speaker's view*, *diction*, *figurative language*, and

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the like. Additionally, you should underline key words or phrases that reveal pertinent thematic information about the passage. These key words will help you to focus your analysis and annotations when reading the passage, and should also shape the formation of your thesis.

2. Read and annotate the passage.
3. Consider the MIST acronym discussed in the literary analysis section of this book. As you read, highlight suitable points of evidence that respond to the acronym.

MOOD: What is the mood of the poem?

IMAGERY: What types of imagery are being used (this includes figurative language) and how do they impact the mood?

SHIFTS: Look for shifts in tone, point of view, and tense.

TENSION: What conflict creates tension in the passage? How is it developed?

4. Consider the form of the poem. Is the poem formal or informal? Does it have a set rhyme pattern and metrical form or is it written in free verse? How are the stanzas organized? Is it a sonnet or another common verse form (i.e., terza rima, Spenserian stanzas, villanelle)?
5. What is the title? How does the title help to elucidate the meaning of the poem?
6. Consider the punctuation used in the poem. Does the poem make frequent use of questions, dashes, or capitalization? For what effect?
7. Consider the diction of the poem. Does the poem use formal or informal language?
8. After you have finished the passage, make a list of things that you really want to touch on in terms of ideas and evidence in the essay. This list should include any key words that you boxed in the prompt.
9. Create a brief outline with thesis and key supporting points.
10. Write; proofread if you have time, but resist the temptation to scribble out or make margin notes with lots of lines and arrows.

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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “On Monsieur’s Departure”  
by Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth I**

*In the following poem, the speaker—presumably the Queen of England—explores the emotional price paid by those in power. Read the poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the poet’s use of paradox, juxtaposition, and figurative language to reveal her situation. Be sure to support your statements with specific references.*

**“On Monsieur’s Departure”**

I grieve and dare not show my discontent;  
I love, and yet am forced to seem to hate;  
I do, yet dare not say I ever meant;  
I seem stark mute, but inwardly do prate.

5       I am, and not; I freeze and yet am burned,  
      Since from myself another self I turned.

My care is like my shadow in the sun—  
Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it,  
Stands, and lies by me, doth what I have done;

10      His too familiar care doth make me rue it.  
      No means I find to rid him from my breast,  
      Till by the end of things it be supprest.

Some gentler passion slide into my mind,  
For I am soft, and made of melting snow;  
15      Or be more cruel, Love, and so be kind.

Let me or float or sink, be high or low;  
      Or let me live with some more sweet content,  
      Or die, and so forget what love e’er meant.

—Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth I

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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “To My Dear and Loving Husband” by Anne Bradstreet**

*In the following poem, the speaker professes her profound love and affection for her husband. Read the poem carefully. Then, write an essay in which you analyze the poem’s use of such devices as syntax, meter, rhyme, and figurative language to proclaim the speaker’s love for her husband.*

**“To My Dear and Loving Husband”**

If ever two were one, then surely we.  
If ever man were lov’d by wife, then thee.  
If ever wife was happy in a man,  
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.  
5 I prize thy love more than whole Mines of gold  
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.  
My love is such that Rivers cannot quench,  
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.  
Thy love is such I can no way repay.  
10 The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.  
Then while we live, in love let’s so persever  
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

—Anne Bradstreet



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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “To the Naked and the Nude” by Robert Graves**

*The following poem is concerned with language and the unique connotations associated with certain, seemingly synonymous words. Read the poem carefully. Then, write an essay in which you analyze the author’s use of diction, particularly connotative and denotative diction, as well as other literary devices, to offer social and cultural commentary to the audience.*

**“To the Naked and the Nude”**

For me, the naked and the nude  
(By lexicographers construed  
As synonyms that should express  
The same deficiency of dress  
5 Or shelter) stand as wide apart  
As love from lies, or truth from art.

Lovers without reproach will gaze  
On bodies naked and ablaze;  
The Hippocratic eye will see  
10 In nakedness, anatomy;  
And naked shines the Goddess when  
She mounts her lion among men.

The nude are bold, the nude are sly  
To hold each treasonable eye.  
15 While draping by a showman’s trick  
Their dishabille in rhetoric,  
They grin a mock-religious grin  
Of scorn at those of naked skin.

The naked, therefore, who compete  
20 Against the nude may know defeat;  
Yet when they both together tread  
The briary pastures of the dead,  
By Gorgons with long whips pursued,  
How naked go the sometimes nude!

—Robert Graves

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### Poetry Essay Prompt: “Sonnet” by Billy Collins

*Read the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how such choices as form, syntax, sound, imagery, or figurative language are used to convey the author’s attitude toward writing a sonnet.*

#### “Sonnet”

All we need is fourteen lines, well, thirteen now,  
And after this next one just a dozen  
To launch a little ship on love’s storm-tossed seas,  
Then only ten more left like rows of beans.  
5 How easily it goes unless you get Elizabethan  
And insist the iambic bongos must be played  
And rhymes positioned at the ends of lines,  
One for every station of the cross.  
But hang on here while we make the turn  
10 Into the final six where all will be resolved,  
Where longing and heartache will find an end,  
Where Laura will tell Petrarch to put down his pen,  
Take off those crazy medieval tights,  
Blow out the lights, and come at last to bed.

—Billy Collins

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## Poetry Essay Prompt: “Hurt Hawks” by Robinson Jeffers

*Read the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the tone the poet takes toward the hawk. Be sure to support your statements with specific references.*

### “Hurt Hawks”

#### I

The broken pillar of the wing jags from the clotted shoulder,  
The wing trails like a banner in defeat,

No more to use the sky forever but live with famine  
And pain a few days: cat nor coyote

5 Will shorten the week of waiting for death, there is game without talons.

He stands under the oak-bush and waits  
The lame feet of salvation; at night he remembers freedom  
And flies in a dream, the dawns ruin it.

10 He is strong and pain is worse to the strong, incapacity is worse.  
The curs of the day come and torment him  
At distance, no one but death the redeemer will humble that head,

The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.  
The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to those  
That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant.

15 You do not know him, you communal people, or you have forgotten him;  
Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;  
Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are dying, remember him.

#### II

I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk;  
but the great redtail

20 Had nothing left but unable misery  
From the bone too shattered for mending, the wing that trailed under his  
talons when he moved.

We had fed him six weeks, I gave him freedom,  
He wandered over the foreland hill and returned in the evening, asking for  
25 death,  
Not like a beggar, still eyed with the old  
Implacable arrogance.

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I gave him the lead gift in the twilight.  
What fell was relaxed, Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers; but what  
30 Soared: the fierce rush: the night-herons by the flooded river cried fear at  
its rising  
Before it was quite unsheathed from reality.

—Robinson Jeffers

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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “The Life of Trees” by Dorianne Laux**

*In the following poem, the speaker examines the natural world and considers humanity’s place in it. Read the poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the poet uses literary devices to comment on the way in which human should live their lives.*

**“The Life of Trees”**

The pines rub their great noise  
Into the spangled dark.  
They scratch their itchy boughs  
Against the house and the mystery  
5 of that moan translates  
into drudgery of ownership: time  
to drag the ladder from the shed,  
climb onto the roof with a saw  
between my teeth, cut those suckers down.  
10 What’s reality if not a long exhaustive  
cringe from the blade,  
the teeth. I want to sleep  
and dream the life of trees, beings  
from the muted world who care nothing  
15 for Money, Politics, Power,  
Will or Right, who want little from the night  
but a few dead stars going dim, a white owl  
lifting from their limbs, who want only  
to sink their roots into the wet ground  
20 and terrify the worms or shake  
their bleary heads like fashion models  
or old hippies. If they could speak,  
they wouldn’t, only hum some low  
green note, roll their pinecones  
25 down the empty streets and blame it,  
with a shrug, on the cold wind.  
During the day they sleep inside  
their furry bark, clouds shredding  
like ancient lace above their crowns.  
30 Sun. Rain. Snow. Wind. They fear  
Nothing but the Hurricane, and Fire,  
that whipped bully who rises up  
and becomes his own dead father.  
Then the young ones bend and bend  
35 and the old know they may not make it,  
go down with the power lines sparking,  
broken at the trunk. They fling

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their branches, forked sacrifice  
to the beaten earth. They do not pray.  
If they make a sound it's eaten  
40 by the wind. And though the stars  
return they do not offer thanks,  
only ooze a sticky sap from their roundish  
concentric wounds, clap the water  
from their needles, straighten their spines  
45 and breathe, and breathe again.

—Dorianne Laux

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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “Traveling Through the Dark” by William Stafford**

*Read the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay that analyzes the speaker’s conflicted feelings about his experience “traveling through the dark.” Discuss such choices as speaker, imagery, sound, figurative language, syntax, and word choice.*

**“Traveling Through the Dark”**

Traveling through the dark I found a deer  
dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.  
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:  
that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

5 By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car  
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;  
she had stiffened already, almost cold.  
I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

10 My fingers touching her side brought me the reason—  
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,  
alive, still, never to be born.  
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;  
under the hood purred the steady engine.  
15 I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;  
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—,  
then pushed her over the edge into the river.

—William Stafford

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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” by W. B. Yeats versus  
“The World Is Too Much With Us” by William Wordsworth**

*The following poems offer responses to the growing divide between man and the natural world. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the two responses to man’s growing distance from the natural world and analyze the literary devices and techniques used to create them.*

**“The Lake Isle of Innisfree”**

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

5 And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet’s wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
10 I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart’s core.

—W. B. Yeats

**“The World Is Too Much with Us”**

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

5 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not.—Great God! I’d rather be  
10 A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

—William Wordsworth



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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “Ozymandias” by Percy Bysshe Shelley versus  
“Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost**

*The poems below are concerned with the ephemeral and transitory nature of life. Read each poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast both poems, analyzing how each poet uses literary devices and structure to elucidate his point.*

**“Ozymandias”**

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: “Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown  
5 And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
10 ‘My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!’  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

**“Nothing Gold Can Stay”**

Nature’s first green is gold  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf’s a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
5 Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

—Robert Frost

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**Poetry Essay Prompt: “I, Too” by Langston Hughes versus  
“I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman**

*The following two poems present different visions of America and the American dream. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast these two different visions of America and analyze the techniques used to create them.*

**“I, Too”**

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
5 But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I’ll be at the table  
10 When company comes.  
Nobody’ll dare  
Say to me,  
“Eat in the kitchen,”  
Then.

Besides,  
They’ll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

—Langston Hughes

**“I Hear America Singing”**

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
5 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand  
singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the morning, or  
at noon intermission or at sundown,

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- 5 The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of  
the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows,  
robust, friendly,  
10 Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

—Walt Whitman

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# Poetry Essay Prompts Answers and Explanations

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “On Monsieur’s Departure” by Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth I**

Successful essays will correctly identify the paradoxes found in the first stanza of the poem. The Queen is in an untenable position, and the first stanza serves to outline her inner conflict. The second stanza uses figurative language, the metaphor of the Queen’s shadow, to examine the extent her lover will go to be with her. Whether these lines are to be taken literally or not—in other words, was her love literally seeking her out or figuratively haunting her?—the effect of this stanza is to demonstrate a woman who is deeply conflicted. It would be much easier to go forward with her life if he were to just leave her. Likewise, it would also be easier to leave him if he weren’t so kind. This is the dilemma the speaker faces. The third stanza is, perhaps, the bleakest. The speaker, the Queen, again examines her two contrary options: she can be cruel or passionate; live or die; sink or float. The astute essayist will capture the speaker’s conflict and examine the emotional limitations afforded to those in power. Finally, it is worth noting the poem uses a stanza form found in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “To My Dear and Loving Husband” by Anne Bradstreet**

In order to respond successfully to this prompt, you must clearly discuss the speaker’s profound love for her husband. The poem offers a series of unattainable images to which she compares her love. Solid analysis of the poem will pay attention to these comparisons, and discuss the effect of comparing the speaker’s love to “whole Mines of gold,” a love whose thirst not even “rivers can quench” Bradstreet uses these hypothetical situations to separate her love from more base and earthly love, the love of the uninitiated. Astute readers will also make mention of Bradstreet’s use of iambic meter and rhyming couplets, and the effect it has on the purity and simplicity of Bradstreet’s message. Superior responses will note that Bradstreet herself was a Puritan, and will identify the many Puritan ideals present in the poem such as humility, devotion, and the belief in eternal life. Finally, it is important to recognize that the poem’s organization is made possible by the “if...then” syntactical construction present within the poem. These are hypothetical conditions Bradstreet creates, but they help to elucidate her message and her love for her husband.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “To the Naked and the Nude” by Robert Graves**

Successful responses to this prompt must identify the connotative differences between the terms naked and nude. Graves associates positive connotations—love, innocence, man’s natural state—with the state of nakedness, while he associates negative connotations—cunning, deception, and treason—with the state of being nude. An erudite response will discern the significance of these subtle distinctions in language, and elaborate on the social ramifications of such a disparity in seemingly synonymous terms. Additionally, thoughtful responses will examine the images, allusions, and associations made to each term, whether the association be positive ones, like the reference to Hippocrates, or negative ones, like the reference to the showman, who uses his rhetorical skills to manipulate. Finally, excellent responses need to address the ultimate message of the poem, found in the poem’s final two lines, that even the nude at some point must become the naked.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “Sonnet” by Billy Collins**

The best responses to this prompt will capture the playful manner in which Collins reveres the poetical form, but challenges the stiff formality of the time-honored sonnet. The poem is, itself, a sonnet, although it does not have a discernable rhyme scheme nor is it written in iambic pentameter, significant departures from the sonnet’s rigid form. Throughout the poem, Collins provides and defines, humorously, the key elements of both the Elizabethan and Italian sonnet forms. Even the origin of the sonnet form, Petrarch’s sonnets about unrequited love, are playfully ridiculed and made light of. Good analysis will discuss the appropriateness of the poet’s colloquial diction in light of the form. Good analysis will also offer a plausible rationale for Collin’s satirical examination of the sonnet format.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “Hurt Hawks” by Robinson Jeffers**

The essayist will be able to discuss the way in which Jeffers explores the majesty and sublimity of the natural world as witnessed through the death of the hawk. The first stanza presents a detached third-person narrator, one who describes—in an objective manner—the hawk’s injury and the manner in which the hawk faces death and the “wild God of the world.” Solid answers will also comment on the manner in which the second person pronoun is used in the final three lines of the first section to engage and confront the audience. Jeffers is suggesting that most people are not as stoic and dignified as the hawk. The second section marks a shift in the poem from third person narrator to a first person one. The tone is cold, particularly when discussing the manner in which the narrator puts the bird out of its misery. The poem ends by celebrating the grandeur and the spirit of the hawk, a celebration that is limited in many ways by human language’s inability to capture the majesty and spirit of the natural world. Erudite answers will wrestle with Jeffers’ implication that most humans are not the dominant forces they think they are.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “The Life of Trees” by Dorianne Laux**

The essayist will be able to discern the contrast in the poem between the human and the sylvan, arboreal life. The former is represented in the poem’s opening lines, while the latter is developed throughout the remainder of the poem. Astute responses will examine the speaker’s “drudgery or ownership” and the act of cutting limbs down to protect an investment and how that act leads to speaker to contemplate the life of trees, and, in the process, evaluate her own life. Excellent essays will hone in on Laux’s use of personification and imagery as tools that idealize the life of the trees. Excellent responses will also capture the ironic subtleties found within the poem, such as the breathing of the trees in the final lines: in many ways, the trees are far more alive than the humans in the poem, who cringe, sleep and hope to “dream the life of trees, beings / from a muted world who care nothing / for Money, Politics, Power.”

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “Traveling Through the Dark” by William Stafford**

At the crux of this poem is the line, “I thought hard for us all—my only swerving.” The successful essay will tackle this meaningful line, particularly in light of the author’s use of juxtaposition throughout the poem. The car, a mechanical and manmade object, is personified. It “purrs” with life and “glares” at the speaker. Meanwhile, nature’s representative is lifeless. In fact, the dead deer is pregnant, although its fawn will never “be born.” The effect of this juxtaposition suggests that technology and man’s technological footprint on the world run counter to the life itself. In man’s attempt to bring inanimate things to life (cars) and to tame the wilderness (roads), he has negated his own life affirming force. He has become less human. The speaker begins to acknowledge this internal debate—to question whether or not man is a force of life or a force of destruction—but, instead, realizes that such a debate is too uncomfortable. Rather than to continue to question man’s technology, introspection that would cause him to “swerve” away from popular opinion and the status quo, the speaker instead pushes the deer’s carcass over the shoulder of the road, and, presumably, continues down life’s road unchanged.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” by W. B. Yeats versus “The World Is Too Much With Us” by William Wordsworth**

While both poems contain speakers who seek to distance themselves from society and live a more natural existence, the tone is uniquely different in each. The speaker in the Yeats poem speaks longingly and wistfully of the Lake Isle of Innisfree, whereas in the Wordsworth poem the speaker is contemptuous of the material world. In many ways this is the significant difference between the two poems. Yeats does make reference to “the pavements grey,” an allusion to the lifelessness of city life, but he spends the majority of the poem elevating and admiring the healthful peace found at the Lake Isle of Innisfree, a place of gardens and bees. Astute writers will comment on his use of alliteration to create this sense of harmony and peace. Wordsworth’s Italian sonnet, on the other hand, places more emphasis on man’s inability to see the beauty of the natural world. In the sonnet’s initial quatrain, he identifies consumption and materialism as a cause for man’s disconnection from the natural world, a world that, as explored in the second quatrain, offers itself up to man. The poem grows more rebellious in its final sestet, and Wordsworth counters his contemporaries by wishing to be a pagan so that he may reestablish a healthier balance with the world. Excellent writers will emphasize the unique perspectives of the two poets, as well as elaborate upon the manner in which each poem’s tone impacts its ultimate message. Ultimately, Yeats’ poem is far more nostalgic and pensive than is Wordsworth’s. Finally, solid responses will note how the structure of each poem impacts its message.



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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “Ozymandias” by Percy Bysshe Shelley and “Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost**

Both poems focus on the ephemeral and transitory nature of life. The Shelley poem focuses on man’s inability to transcend time through great works or the construction of monuments. He does this by examining the ancient Egyptian ruins and using what are, in essence, three voices in the poem: the voice of the speaker, the voice of the traveler, and the voice—via the pedestal in which his “words appear”—of Ozymandias. Frost, on the other hand, focuses on the inevitable shift from innocence to experience via an unnamed, but knowledgeable speaker. Shelley’s poem functions as a narrative, particularly as the speaker is simply retelling a story he heard from a traveler. Frost’s poem is more informative, and its simplistic rhyme scheme and metrical form help to impart a moralistic tone to the poem. The speaker, thus, comes across as sage and wise. Shelley’s poem, on the other hand, manipulates the time-honored sonnet form. The rhyme pattern quickly dissolves, just as the ancient monument to Ozymandias has disintegrated. Excellent essays will touch on these points and more, comparing and contrasting the two poems.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Poetry Essay Prompt: “I, Too” by Langston Hughes versus “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman**

The essayist will be able to fully identify the unique perspectives on America and the American way of life present in each poem. While the Whitman poem celebrates the unity found in an America where citizens are willing to work together for the promises of the American dream, the Hughes poem—a direct response to Whitman’s poem—provides the African American experience, one that had been marginalized, largely ignored and excluded from the promises celebrated in the Whitman poem. Good responses will focus on each poem’s structure and tone. Whitman’s poem uses repetition and a single unified sentence to capture an American spirit of industrious and unity, while Hughes’ language is less melodic and more direct. The speaker’s voice is honest, but the poem’s fragmented style and sentence structure are a clear departure from Whitman’s poem. Solid responses will offer up thoughtful analysis as to the ways in which Hughes’ poem captures the situation and the resilience of its speaker. Furthermore, the astute reader will discern the distinct difference in the poem’s tone, particularly when compared alongside the Whitman poem.



# Prose Essay Prompts Followed by Free-Response Essay Sample Responses

## Overview

The selection for the prose essay prompt will come from either a short story or a novel and is selected for its literary merit and the effect created by the passage. On occasion, the College Board will select a passage from a drama selection. The passage will most likely emphasize one of the following: character development, the creation of tension or suspense, the mood or tone, and the narrator's point of view. You may also be asked to consider how the author addresses a thematic issue within the passage.

### Tips and Strategies

When approaching the prose essay prompt, you should keep in mind the strategies discussed earlier in this book. You should spend no more than nine or ten minutes reading and analyzing the prompt, reading and annotating the passage, and sketching an outline for your essay. With this in mind, the following strategies can help you focus your response and make the most of your time.

1. Read the prompt carefully and underline the essential task. Put boxes around key words such as *mood*, *character development*, *tone*, and the like. Additionally, you should underline key words or phrases that reveal pertinent thematic information about the passage. These key words will help you to focus your analysis and annotations when reading the passage, and should also shape the formation of your thesis.
2. Read and annotate the passage.
3. Consider the MIST acronym discussed in the literary analysis section of this book. As you read, highlight suitable points of evidence that respond to the acronym.

MOOD: What is the mood of the passage?

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**IMAGERY:** What types of imagery are being used (this includes figurative language), and how do they impact the mood?

**SHIFTS:** Look for shifts in tone, point of view, and tense.

**TENSION:** What conflict creates tension in the passage? How is it developed?

4. After you have finished the passage, make a list of things that you really want to touch on in terms of ideas and evidence in the essay. This list should include any key words that you boxed in the prompt.
5. Create a brief outline with thesis and key supporting points.
6. Write; proofread if you have time, but resist the temptation to scribble out or make margin notes with lots of lines and arrows.

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from *A Dollhouse* by Henrik Ibsen**  
(this translation by R. Farquharson Sharp)

*The following is an excerpt from A Dollhouse, a play by Henrik Ibsen produced in 1879. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their marriage.*

NORA: I suppose you are going to work.

HELMER: Yes. [Shows her a bundle of papers.] Look at that. I have just been into the bank. [Turns to go into his room.]

NORA: Torvald.

5 HELMER: Yes.

NORA: If your little squirrel were to ask you for something very, very prettily—?

HELMER: What then?

NORA: Would you do it?

HELMER: I should like to hear what it is, first.

10 NORA: Your squirrel would run about and do all her tricks if you would be nice, and do what she wants.

HELMER: Speak plainly.

NORA: Your skylark would chirp about in every room, with her song rising and falling—

15 HELMER: Well, my skylark does that anyhow.

NORA: I would play the fairy and dance for you in the moonlight, Torvald.

HELMER: Nora—you surely don't mean that request you made to me this morning?

NORA: [going near him] Yes, Torvald, I beg you so earnestly—

20 HELMER: Have you really the courage to open up that question again?

NORA: Yes, dear, you must do as I ask; you must let Krogstad keep his post in the bank.

HELMER: My dear Nora, it is his post that I have arranged Mrs. Linde shall have.

25 NORA: Yes, you have been awfully kind about that; but you could just as well dismiss some other clerk instead of Krogstad.

HELMER: This is simply incredible obstinacy! Because you chose to give him a thoughtless promise that you would speak for him, I am expected to—

30 NORA: That isn't the reason, Torvald. It is for your own sake. This fellow writes in the most scurrilous newspapers; you have told me so yourself. He can do you an unspeakable amount of harm. I am frightened to death of him—

HELMER: Ah, I understand; it is recollections of the past that scare you.

NORA: What do you mean?

HELMER: Naturally you are thinking of your father.

35 NORA: Yes—yes, of course. Just recall to your mind what these malicious creatures wrote in the papers about papa, and how horribly they slandered him. I believe they would have procured his dismissal if the Department had not sent you over to inquire into it, and if you had not been so kindly disposed and helpful to him.

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40 HELMER: My little Nora, there is an important difference between your father and me. Your father's reputation as a public official was not above suspicion. Mine is, and I hope it will continue to be so, as long as I hold my office.

NORA: You never can tell what mischief these men may contrive. We ought to be so well off, so snug and happy here in our peaceful home, and have no cares—

45 you and I and the children, Torvald! That is why I beg you so earnestly—

HELMER: And it is just by interceding for him that you make it impossible for me to keep him. It is already known at the Bank that I mean to dismiss Krogstad. Is it to get about now that the new manager has changed his mind at his wife's bidding—

50 NORA: And what if it did?

HELMER: Of course!—if only this obstinate little person can get her way! Do you suppose I am going to make myself ridiculous before my whole staff, to let people think that I am a man to be swayed by all sorts of outside influence? I should very soon feel the consequences of it, I can tell you! And

55 besides, there is one thing that makes it quite impossible for me to have Krogstad in the Bank as long as I am manager.

NORA: Whatever is that?

HELMER: His moral failings I might perhaps have overlooked, if necessary—

NORA: Yes, you could—couldn't you?

60 HELMER: And I hear he is a good worker, too. But I knew him when we were boys. It was one of those rash friendships that so often prove an incubus in afterlife. I may as well tell you plainly, we were once on very intimate terms with one another. But this tactless fellow lays no restraint on himself when other people are present. On the contrary, he thinks it gives him the right to

65 adopt a familiar tone with me, and every minute it is "I say, Helmer, old fellow!" and that sort of thing. I assure you it is extremely painful for me. He would make my position in the Bank intolerable.

NORA: Torvald, I don't believe you mean that.

HELMER: Don't you? Why not?

70 NORA: Because it is such a narrow-minded way of looking at things.

HELMER: What are you saying? Narrow-minded? Do you think I am narrow-minded?

NORA: No, just the opposite, dear—and it is exactly for that reason.

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall”  
by Katherine Anne Porter**

*The following passage is an excerpt from Katherine Anne Porter’s short story “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall.” Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how such choices as figurative language, imagery, and dialogue develop the complex emotions the character is feeling.*

In her day she had kept a better house and had got more work done. She wasn’t too old yet for Lydia to be driving eighty miles for advice when one of the children jumped the track, and Jimmy still dropped in and talked things over: “Now, Mammy, you’ve a good business head, I want to know what you think of this? . . .” Old. Cornelia couldn’t change the furniture around without asking. Little things, little things! They had been so sweet when they were little. Granny wished the old days were back again with the children young and everything to be done over. It had been a hard pull, but not too much for her. When she thought of all the food she had cooked, and all the clothes she had cut and sewed, and all the gardens she had made—well, the children showed it. There they were, made out of her, and they couldn’t get away from that. Sometimes she wanted to see John again and point to them and say, Well, I didn’t do so badly, did I? But that would have to wait. That was for tomorrow. She used to think of him as a man, but now all the children were older than their father, and he would be a child beside her if she saw him now. It seemed strange and there was something wrong in the idea. Why, he couldn’t possibly recognize her. She had fenced in a hundred acres once, digging the post holes herself and clamping the wires with just a negro boy to help. That changed a woman. John would be looking for a young woman with a peaked Spanish comb in her hair and the painted fan. Digging post holes changed a woman. Riding country roads in the winter when women had their babies was another thing: sitting up nights with sick horses and sick negroes and sick children and hardly ever losing one. John, I hardly ever lost one of them! John would see that in a minute, that would be something he could understand, she wouldn’t have to explain anything!

It made her feel like rolling up her sleeves and putting the whole place to rights again. No matter if Cornelia was determined to be everywhere at once, there were a great many things left undone on this place. She would start tomorrow and do them. It was good to be strong enough for everything, even if all you made melted and changed and slipped under your hands, so that by the time you finished you almost forgot what you were working for. What was it I set out to do? She asked herself intently, but she could not remember. A fog rose over the valley, she saw it marching across the creek swallowing the trees and moving up the hill like an army of ghosts. Soon it would be at the near edge of the orchard, and then it was time to go in and light the lamps. Come in, children, don’t stay out in the night air.

Lighting the lamps had been beautiful. The children huddled up to her and breathed like little calves waiting at the bars in the twilight. Their eyes followed the match and watched the flame rise and settle in a blue curve, then they moved

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40 away from her. The lamp was lit, they didn't have to be scared and hang on to mother any more. Never, never, never more. God, for all my life, I thank Thee. Without Thee, my God, I could never have done it. Hail, Mary, full of grace.

I want you to pick all the fruit this year and see nothing is wasted. There's always someone who can use it. Don't let good things rot for want of using. You  
45 waste life when you waste good food. Don't let things get lost. It's bitter to lose things. Now, don't let me get to thinking, not when I'm tired and taking a little nap before supper....



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### Prose Essay Prompt: from “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan

*The following passage is from Amy Tan’s short story “Two Kinds.” Read the passage closely. Then write a well-organized essay analyzing how language is used to develop the characters and how their changes reveal meaning.*

5 Every night after dinner my mother and I would sit at the Formica topped kitchen table. She would present new tests, taking her examples from stories of amazing children that she read in *Ripley’s Believe It or Not* or *Good Housekeeping*, *Reader’s Digest*, or any of a dozen other magazines she kept in a pile in our bath-

10 room. My mother got these magazines from people whose houses she cleaned. And since she cleaned many houses each week, we had a great assortment. She would look through them all, searching for stories about remarkable children. The first night she brought out a story about a three-year-old boy who knew the capitals of all the states and even the most of the European countries. A teacher was quoted as saying that the little boy could also pronounce the names of the foreign cities correctly. “What’s the capital of Finland?” my mother asked me, looking at the story.

15 All I knew was the capital of California, because Sacramento was the name of the street we lived on in Chinatown. “Nairobi!” I guessed, saying the most foreign word I could think of. She checked to see if that might be one way to pronounce *Helsinki* before showing me the answer.

20 The tests got harder—multiplying numbers in my head, finding the queen of hearts in a deck of cards, trying to stand on my head without using my hands, predicting the daily temperatures in Los Angeles, New York, and London.

One night I had to look at a page from the Bible for three minutes and then report everything I could remember. “Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance and . . . that’s all I remember, Ma,” I said.

25 And after seeing, once again, my mother’s disappointed face, something inside me began to die. I hated the tests, the raised hopes and failed expectations. Before going to bed that night I looked in the mirror above the bathroom sink, and I saw only my face staring back—and understood that it would always be this ordinary face—I began to cry. Such a sad, ugly girl! I made high-pitched noises like a crazed animal, trying to scratch out the face in the mirror.

30 And then I saw what seemed to be the prodigy side of me—a face I had never seen before. I looked at my reflection, blinking so that I could see more clearly. The girl staring back at me was angry, powerful. She and I were the same. I had new thoughts, willful thoughts—or, rather, thoughts filled with lots of won’ts. I won’t let her change me, I promised myself. I won’t be what I’m not.

35 So now when my mother presented her tests, I performed listlessly, my head propped on one arm. I pretended to be bored. And I was. I got so bored that I started counting the bellows of the foghorns out on the bay while my mother drilled me in other areas. The sound was comforting and reminded me of the cow jumping over the moon. And the next day I played a game with myself, seeing if my mother would give up on me before eight bellows. After a while I usually counted only one bellow, maybe two at most. At last she was  
40 beginning to give up hope.

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko**

*The following passage is an excerpt from Leslie Marmon Silko’s novel Ceremony. Read the passage closely. In a well-developed essay, analyze how Silko uses such devices as setting, characterization, and language to create tension, and how that tension serves to convey meaning.*

Old Betonie’s place looked down on all of it; from the yellow sandrock foothills the whole town spread out below. The old man was tall and his chest was wide; at one time he had been heavier, but old age was consuming everything but the bones. He kept his hair tied back neatly with red yarn in a chongo knot, like the  
5 oldtimers wore. He was sitting on an old time bucket turned upside down by the doorway to his Hogan. When he stood up and extended his hand to Robert and Tayo, his motions were strong and unhesitating, as if they belonged to a younger man. He watched Tayo look around at the Hogan and then back down at the Ceremonial grounds and city streets in the distance. He nodded his head  
10 at Tayo.

“People ask me why I live here,” he said, in good English, “I tell them I want to keep track of the people. ‘Why over here?’ they ask me. ‘Because this is where Gallup keeps Indians until Ceremonial time. Then they want to show us off to the tourists.’” He looked down at the riverbed winding through the north side of  
15 Gallup. “There,” he said, pointing his chin at the bridge, “they sleep over there, in alleys between the bars.” He turned and pointed to the city dump east of the Ceremonial grounds and rodeo chutes. “They keep us on the north side of the railroad tracks, next to the river and their dump. Where none of them want to live.” He laughed. “They don’t understand. We know these hills, and we are comfortable here.” There as something about the way the old ma said the word “comfortable.” It had a different meaning—not the comfort of big houses or rich food or  
20 even clean streets, but the comfort of belonging with the land, and the peace of being with these hills. But the special meaning the old man had given to the English word was burned away by the glare of the sun on tin cans and broken glass, blinding reflections off the mirrors and chrome of the wrecked cars in the dump  
25 below. Tayo felt the old nausea rising up in his stomach, along with a vague feeling that he knew something which he could not remember. The sun was getting hot, and he thought about flies buzzing around their faces as they slept in the weeds along the arroyo. He turned back to Betonie. He didn’t know how the  
30 medicine man could look down at it every day.

“You know, at one time, when my great-grandfather was young, Navajos lived in all these hills.” He pointed to the hills and ridges south of the tracks where the white people had built their houses. He nodded at the arroyo cut by the river. “They had little farms along the river. When the railroaders came and  
35 the white people began to build their town, the Navajos had to move.” The old man laughed suddenly. He slapped his hands on his thighs. His laughter was easy, but Tayo could feel the tiny hairs along his spine spring up. This Betonie didn’t talk the way Tayo expected a medicine man to talk. He didn’t talk the way Tayo expected a medicine man to talk. He didn’t act like a medicine man at all.

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40        “It strikes me funny,” the medicine man said, shaking his head, “people  
wondering why I live so close to this filthy town. But see, this Hogan was here  
first. Built long before the white people ever came. It is that town down there  
which is out of place. Not this old medicine man.” He laughed again, and Tayo  
45        looked at Robert quickly to see what he thought of the old man; but Robert’s  
face was calm, without any mistrust or alarm. When old Betonie had finished  
talking, Robert stepped over to Tayo and touched his shoulder gently, “I guess  
I’ll go now,” he said softly.

50        Tayo watched him walk down the path from the old man’s place, and he  
could feel cold sweat between his fingers. His heart was pounding, and all he  
could think about was that if he started running right then, he could still catch  
up to Robert.

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

*The following is a passage from The Great Gatsby, a novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald published in 1925. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the narrator’s attitude toward his neighbor (Jay Gatsby) by discussing such techniques as figurative language, imagery, word choice, and syntax.*

5 There was music from my neighbor’s house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

10 Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler’s thumb.

15 At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby’s enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d’oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

20 By seven o’clock the orchestra has arrived, no thin five-piece affair, but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos, and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing up-stairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors, and hair shorn in strange new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside, until the air is alive with chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other’s names.

25 The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music, and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath; already there are wanderers,

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40 confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the centre of a group, and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light.

45 Suddenly one of the gypsies, in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and, moving her hands like Frisco, dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her, and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the follies. The party has begun.

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### Prose Essay Prompt: from *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

*The following passage comes from Joseph Conrad's novella Heart of Darkness (1902). Read the selection carefully and then write an essay in which you analyze the narrator's description of the central station manager. Pay particular attention to the narrator's tone and point of view.*

5 “My first interview with the manager was curious. He did not ask me to sit down after my twenty-mile walk that morning. He was commonplace in complexion, in features, in manners, and in voice. He was of middle size and of ordinary build. His eyes, of the usual blue, were perhaps remarkably cold, and he certainly could make his glance fall on one as trenchant and heavy as an axe. But even at these times the rest of his person seemed to disclaim the intention. Otherwise there was only an indefinable, faint expression of his lips, something stealthy—a smile—not a smile—I remember it, but I can’t explain. It was unconscious, this smile was, though just after he had said something it got  
10 intensified for an instant. It came at the end of his speeches like a seal applied on the words to make the meaning of the commonest phrase appear absolutely inscrutable. He was a common trader, from his youth up employed in these parts—nothing more. He was obeyed, yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect. He inspired uneasiness. That was it! Uneasiness. Not a definite mistrust—just uneasiness—nothing more. You have no idea how effective such a . . . a . . . faculty can be. He had no genius for organizing, for initiative, or for order even. That was evident in such things as the deplorable state of the station. He had no learning, and no intelligence. His position had come to him—why? Perhaps because he was never ill . . . He had served three terms of  
20 three years out there . . . Because triumphant health in the general rout of constitutions is a kind of power in itself. When he went home on leave he rioted on a large scale—pompously. Jack ashore—with a difference—in externals only. This one could gather from his casual talk. He originated nothing, he could keep the routine going—that’s all. But he was great. He was great by this little  
25 thing that it was impossible to tell what could control such a man. He never gave that secret away. Perhaps there was nothing within him. Such a suspicion made one pause—for out there there were no external checks. Once when various tropical diseases had laid low almost every ‘agent’ in the station, he was heard to say, ‘Men who come out here should have no entrails.’ He sealed the  
30 utterance with that smile of his, as though it had been a door opening into a darkness he had in his keeping. You fancied you had seen things—but the seal was on. When annoyed at meal-times by the constant quarrels of the white men about precedence, he ordered an immense round table to be made, for which a special house had to be built. This was the station’s mess-room. Where  
35 he sat was the first place—the rest were nowhere. One felt this to be his unalterable conviction. He was neither civil nor uncivil. He was quiet. He allowed his ‘boy’—an overfed young negro from the coast—to treat the white men, under his very eyes, with provoking insolence.”

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## Prose Essay Prompt: from “Araby” by James Joyce

*The following passage is an excerpt from James Joyce’s short story, “Araby.” Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the author uses such techniques as imagery, figurative language, diction, and syntax to develop a characterization of the young boy.*

5 What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables  
10 of the word Araby were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master’s face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could  
15 not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child’s play, ugly monotonous child’s play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking for the hat-brush, and  
15 answered me curtly:

“Yes, boy, I know.”

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlour and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

20 When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and. When its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing  
25 below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

30 When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker’s widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn’t wait any longer, but it was after eight  
35 o’clock and she did not like to be out late as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

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“I’m afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord.”

40 At nine o’clock I heard my uncle’s latchkey in the halldoor. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

“The people are in bed and after their first sleep now,” he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

45 “Can’t you give him the money and let him go? You’ve kept him late enough as it is.”

50 My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” He asked me where I was going and, when I had told him a second time he asked me did I know The Arab’s Farewell to his Steed. When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.



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## Prose Essay Prompt: from “The Interpreter of Maladies” by Jhumpa Lahiri

*The following passage comes from Jhumpa Lahiri’s short story “The Interpreter of Maladies” (1999). In the passage, the Das family, Americans of Indian ancestry, is visiting India and travelling with an interpreter, Mr. Kapasi, to the Sun Temple, a historic landmark. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the techniques the author uses to explore the conflicting cultural values of the two worlds represented by the characters.*

“Monkeys!” Ronny shrieked. “Wow!”

They were seated in groups along the branches, with shining black faces, silver bodies, horizontal eyebrows, and crested heads. Their long gray tails dangled like a series of ropes among the leaves. A few scratched themselves with black leathery hands, or swung their feet, staring as the car passed.

“We call them the hanuman,” Mr. Kapasi said. “They are quite common in the area.”

As soon as he spoke, one of the monkeys leaped into the middle of the road, causing Mr. Kapasi to brake suddenly. Another bounced onto the hood of the car, then sprang away. Mr. Kapasi beeped his horn. The children began to get excited, sucking in their breath and covering their faces partly with their hands. They had never seen monkeys outside of a zoo, Mr. Das explained. He asked Mr. Kapasi to stop the car so that he could take a picture.

While Mr. Das adjusted his telephoto lens, Mrs. Das reached into her straw bag and pulled out a bottle of colorless nail polish, which she proceeded to stroke on the tip of her index finger.

The little girl stuck out a hand. “Mine too. Mommy, do mine too.”

“Leave me alone,” Mrs. Das said, blowing on her nail and turning her body slightly. “You’re making me mess up.”

The little girl occupied herself by buttoning and unbuttoning a pinafore on the doll’s plastic body.

“All set,” Mr. Das said, replacing the lens cap.

The car rattled considerably as it raced along the dusty road, causing them all to pop up from their seats every now and then, but Mrs. Das continued to polish her nails. Mr. Kapasi eased up on the accelerator, hoping to produce a smoother ride. When he reached for the gearshift the boy in front accommodated him by swinging his hairless knees out of the way. Mr. Kapasi noted that this boy was slightly paler than the other children. “Daddy, why is the driver sitting on the wrong side in this car, too?” the boy asked.

“They all do that here, dummy,” Ronny said.

“Don’t call your brother a dummy,” Mr. Das said. He turned to Mr. Kapasi. “In America, you know . . . it confuses them.”

“Oh yes, I am well aware,” Mr. Kapasi said. As delicately as he could, he shifted gears again, accelerating as they approached a hill in the road. “I see it on *Dallas*, the steering wheels are on the left-hand side.”

“What’s *Dallas*?” Tina asked, banging her now naked doll on the seat behind Mr. Kapasi.

“It went off the air,” Mr. Das explained. “It’s a television show.”

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40 They were all like siblings, Mr. Kapasi thought as they passed a row of date trees. Mr. and Mrs. Das behaved like an older brother and sister, not parents. It seemed that they were in charge of the children only for the day; it was hard to believe they were regularly responsible for anything other than themselves. Mr. Das tapped on his lens cap, and his tour book, dragging his thumbnail occasionally across the pages so that they made a scraping sound. Mrs. Das continued to polish her nails. She had still not removed her sunglasses. Every now and then Tina renewed her plea that she wanted her nails done, too, and so at one point Mrs. Das flicked a drop of polish on the little girl's finger before depositing the bottle back inside her straw bag.

50 "Isn't this an air-conditioned car?" she asked, still blowing on her hand. The window on Tina's side was broken and could not be rolled down.

"Quit complaining," Mr. Das said. "It isn't so hot."

"I told you to get a car with air-conditioning," Mrs. Das continued. "Why do you do this, Raj, just to save a few stupid rupees. What are you saving us, fifty cents?"

55 Their accents sounded just like the ones Mr. Kapasi heard on American television programs, though not like the ones on *Dallas*.

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from “Blue Winds Dancing” by Tom Whitecloud**

*The following passage, an excerpt from “Blue Winds Dancing” by Tom Whitecloud, considers the thoughts and feelings of a contemporary Native American returning to his people. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author examines his cultural heritage and point of view.*

I walk along the trail to the lodge, watching the northern lights forming in the heavens. White waving ribbons that seem to pulsate with the rhythm of the drums. Clean snow creaks beneath my feet, and a soft wind sighs through the trees, singing to me. Everything seems to say, “Be happy! You are home now—  
5 you are free. You are among friends—we are your friends; we, the trees, and the snow, and the lights.” I follow the trail to the lodge. My feet are light, my heart seems to sing to the music, and I hold my head high. Across white snow fields blue winds are dancing.

Before the lodge door I stop. Afraid, I wonder if my people will remember  
10 me. I wonder—“Am I Indian, or am I white?” I stand before the door a long time. I hear the ice groan on the lake, and remember the story of the old woman under the ice, trying to get out, so she can punish some runaway lovers. I think to myself, “If I am white I will not believe that story; If I am Indian, I will know that there is an old woman under the ice.” I listen for a while, and I know  
15 that there is an old woman under the ice. I look again at the lights, and go in.

Inside the lodge there are many Indians. Some sit on benches around the walls, others dance in the center of the floor around a drum. Nobody seems to notice me. It seems as though I were among a people I have never seen before. Heavy women with long hair. Women with children on their knees—small  
20 children watch with intent black eyes the movements of the dancers, whose small faces are solemn and serene. The faces of the old people are serene, too, and their eyes are merry and bright. I look at the old men. Straight, dressed in dark trousers and beaded velvet vest, wearing soft moccasins. Dark, lined faces intent on the music. I wonder if I am at all like them. They dance on, lifting  
25 their feet to the rhythm of the drums swaying lightly, looking upward. I look at their eyes, and am startled at the rapt attention to the rhythm of the music.

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”  
by Joyce Carol Oates**

*Read carefully the following passage from Joyce Carol Oates’s short story “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Oates uses techniques such as narration, point of view, and description to build tension in the scene.*

One Sunday Connie got up at eleven—none of them bothered with church—and washed her hair so that it could dry all day long in the sun. Her parents and sister were going to a barbecue at an aunt’s house and Connie said no, she wasn’t interested, rolling her eyes to let her mother know just what she thought of it. “Stay home alone then,” her mother said sharply. Connie sat out  
5 back in a lawn chair and watched them drive away, her father quiet and bald, hunched around so that he could back the car out, her mother with a look that was still angry and not at all softened through the windshield, and in the back seat poor old June, all dressed up as if she didn’t know what a barbecue was,  
10 with all the running yelling kids and the flies. Connie sat with her eyes closed in the sun, dreaming and dazed with the warmth about her as if this were a kind of love, the caresses of love, and her mind slipped over onto thoughts of the boy she had been with the night before and how nice he had been, how sweet it always was, not the way someone like June would suppose but sweet, gentle, the  
15 way it was in movies and promised in songs; and when she opened her eyes she hardly knew where she was, the back yard ran off into weeds and a fence-like line of trees and behind it the sky was perfectly blue and still. The asbestos ranch house that was now three years old startled her—it looked small. She shook her head as if to get awake.

20 It was too hot. She went inside the house and turned on the radio to drown out the quiet. She sat on the edge of her bed, barefoot, and listened for an hour and a half to a program called XYZ Sunday Jamboree, record after record of hard, fast, shrieking songs she sang along with, interspersed by exclamations from “Bobby King”: “An’ look here, you girls at Napoleon’s—Son and Charley  
25 want you to pay real close attention to this song coming up!”

And Connie paid close attention herself, bathed in a glow of slow-pulsed joy that seemed to rise mysteriously out of the music itself and lay languidly about the airless little room, breathed in and breathed out with each gentle rise and fall of her chest.

30 After a while she heard a car coming up the drive. She sat up at once, startled, because it couldn’t be her father so soon. The gravel kept crunching all the way in from the road—the driveway was long—and Connie ran to the window. It was a car she didn’t know. It was an open jalopy, painted a bright gold that caught the sunlight opaquely. Her heart began to pound and her fingers  
35 snatched at her hair, checking it, and she whispered, “Christ. Christ,” wondering how bad she looked. The car came to a stop at the side door and the horn sounded four short taps, as if this were a signal Connie knew.

She went into the kitchen and approached the door slowly, then hung out the screen door, her bare toes curling down off the step. There were two boys in

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40 the car and now she recognized the driver: he had shaggy, shabby black hair  
that looked crazy as a wig and he was grinning at her.  
“I ain’t late, am I?” he said.  
“Who the hell do you think you are?” Connie said.  
“Toldja I’d be out, didn’t I?”  
45 “I don’t even know who you are.”

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde**

Read carefully the following exchange from Act II, Part I of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Then write a well-organized essay analyzing the way in which Wilde uses characterization and humor to criticize social conventions of the Victorian Age.

CECILY. [Rather shy and confidingly.] Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

5 GWENDOLEN. [Quite politely, rising.] My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday at the latest.

CECILY. [Very politely, rising.] I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [Shows diary.]

10 GWENDOLEN. [Examines diary through her lorgnette carefully.] It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at 5.30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. [Produces diary of her own.] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid I have the prior claim.

15 CECILY. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

20 GWENDOLEN. [Meditatively.] If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

CECILY. [Thoughtfully and sadly.] Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

25 GWENDOLEN. Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

CECILY. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an engagement? How dare you? This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

30 GWENDOLEN. [Satirically.] I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

[Enter MERRIMAN, followed by the footman. He carries a salver, table cloth, and plate stand. CECILY is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe.]

35 MERRIMAN. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

CECILY. [Sternly, in a calm voice.] Yes, as usual. [MERRIMAN begins to clear table and lay cloth. A long pause. CECILY and GWENDOLEN glare at each other.]

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40 GWENDOLEN. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?  
CECILY. Oh! yes! a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one  
can see five counties.

GWENDOLEN. Five counties! I don't think I should like that; I hate crowds.

CECILY. [Sweetly.] I suppose that is why you live in town? [GWENDOLEN bites  
45 her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol.]

GWENDOLEN. [Looking round.] Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

CECILY. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

CECILY. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

50 GWENDOLEN. Personally I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist  
in the country, if anybody who is anybody does. The country always bores  
me to death.

CECILY. Ah! This is what the newspapers call agricultural depression, is it not? I  
believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is  
55 almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some  
tea, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN. [With elaborate politeness.] Thank you. [Aside.] Detestable girl!  
But I require tea!

CECILY. [Sweetly.] Sugar?

60 GWENDOLEN. [Superciliously.] No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any  
more. [CECILY looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps  
of sugar into the cup.]

CECILY. [Severely.] Cake or bread and butter?

GWENDOLEN. [In a bored manner.] Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely  
65 seen at the best houses nowadays.

CECILY. [Cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray.] Hand that to  
Miss Fairfax.

[MERRIMAN does so, and goes out with footman. GWENDOLEN drinks the tea  
and makes a grimace. Puts down cup at once, reaches out her hand to the  
70 bread and butter, looks at it, and finds it is cake. Rises in indignation.]

GWENDOLEN. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked  
most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known  
for the gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of  
my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you may go too far.

75 CECILY. [Rising.] To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machina-  
tions of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

GWENDOLEN. From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were  
false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impres-  
sions of people are invariably right.

80 CECILY. It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable  
time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in  
the neighbourhood.

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from *Othello* by William Shakespeare**

*Read carefully the following passage from Act II, Scene I of Shakespeare's tragedy Othello. Then write a well-organized essay that identifies Iago's ultimate goal and examines the manner in which he works to forward this goal throughout his exchange with Roderigo.*

IAGO

Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come  
hither. If thou be'st valiant,—as, they say, base  
men being in love have then a nobility in their  
natures more than is native to them—list me. The  
5 lieutenant tonight watches on the court of  
guard:—first, I must tell thee this—Desdemona is  
directly in love with him.

RODERIGO

With him! why, 'tis not possible.

IAGO

Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed.  
10 Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor,  
but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies:  
and will she love him still for prating? let not  
thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed;  
and what delight shall she have to look on the  
15 devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of  
sport, there should be, again to inflame it and to  
give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour,  
sympathy in years, manners and beauties; all which  
the Moor is defective in: now, for want of these  
20 required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will  
find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge,  
disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will  
instruct her in it and compel her to some second  
choice. Now, sir, this granted,—as it is a most  
25 pregnant and unforced position—who stands so  
eminent in the degree of this fortune as Cassio  
does? a knave very voluble; no further  
conscionable than in putting on the mere form of  
civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing  
30 of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why,  
none; why, none: a slipper and subtle knave, a  
finder of occasions, that has an eye can stamp and  
counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never  
present itself; a devilish knave. Besides, the



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35 knave is handsome, young, and hath all those  
requisites in him that folly and green minds look  
after: a pestilent complete knave; and the woman  
hath found him already.

RODERIGO

I cannot believe that in her; she's full of  
40 most blessed condition.

IAGO

Blessed fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of  
grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never  
have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou  
not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst  
45 not mark that?

RODERIGO

Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

IAGO

Lechery, by this hand; an index and obscure prologue  
to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met  
so near with their lips that their breaths embraced  
50 together. Villanous thoughts, Roderigo! when these  
mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes  
the master and main exercise, the incorporate  
conclusion, Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me: I  
have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night;  
55 for the command, I'll lay't upon you. Cassio knows  
you not. I'll not be far from you: do you find  
some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking  
too loud, or tainting his discipline; or from what  
other course you please, which the time shall more  
60 favourably minister.

RODERIGO

Well.

IAGO

Sir, he is rash and very sudden in choler, and haply  
may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for  
even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to  
65 mutiny; whose qualification shall come into no true  
taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So  
shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by  
the means I shall then have to prefer them; and the  
impediment most profitably removed, without the  
70 which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

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RODERIGO

I will do this, if I can bring it to any  
opportunity.

IAGO

I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel:  
I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

RODERIGO

75 Adieu. (Exit )

IAGO

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;  
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit:  
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,  
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,  
80 And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona  
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;  
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure  
I stand accountant for as great a sin,  
But partly led to diet my revenge,  
85 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor  
Hath leap'd into my seat; the thought whereof  
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;  
And nothing can or shall content my soul  
Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife,  
90 Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor  
At least into a jealousy so strong  
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,  
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash  
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,  
95 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,  
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb—  
For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too—  
Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me.  
For making him egregiously an ass  
100 And practising upon his peace and quiet  
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused:  
Knavery's plain face is never seen tin used. (Exit)

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**Prose Essay Prompt: from *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles (this translation by F. Storr)**

*Read carefully the following exchange between Oedipus and Teiresias, the blind prophet, from Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the way in which Sophocles outlines and develops Oedipus's tragic flaw through the exchange. You should consider diction, as well as the use of equivocation and dramatic irony.*

TEIRESIAS

Alas, alas, what misery to be wise  
When wisdom profits nothing! This old lore  
I had forgotten; else I were not here.

OEDIPUS

What ails thee? Why this melancholy mood?

TEIRESIAS

5 Let me go home; prevent me not; 'twere best  
That thou shouldst bear thy burden and I mine.

OEDIPUS

For shame! no true-born Theban patriot  
Would thus withhold the word of prophecy.

TEIRESIAS

10 Thy words, O king, are wide of the mark, and I  
For fear lest I too trip like thee . . .

OEDIPUS

Oh speak,  
Withhold not, I adjure thee, if thou know'st,  
Thy knowledge. We are all thy suppliants.

TEIRESIAS

15 Aye, for ye all are witless, but my voice  
Will ne'er reveal my miseries—or thine.

OEDIPUS

What then, thou knowest, and yet wiltst not speak!  
Wouldst thou betray us and destroy the State?

TEIRESIAS

I will not vex myself nor thee. Why ask  
Thus idly what from me thou shalt not learn?

OEDIPUS

20 Monster! thy silence would incense a flint.  
Will nothing loose thy tongue? Can nothing melt thee,  
Or shake thy dogged taciturnity?

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TEIRESIAS

Thou blam'st my mood and seest not thine own  
Wherewith thou art mated; no, thou taxest me.

OEDIPUS

25 And who could stay his choler when he heard  
How insolently thou dost flout the State?

TEIRESIAS

Well, it will come what will, though I be mute.

OEDIPUS

Since come it must, thy duty is to tell me.

TEIRESIAS

30 I have no more to say; storm as thou wilt,  
And give the rein to all thy pent-up rage.

OEDIPUS

Yea, I am wroth, and will not stint my words,  
But speak my whole mind. Thou methinks thou art he,  
Who planned the crime, aye, and performed it too,  
All save the assassination; and if thou  
35 Hadst not been blind, I had been sworn to boot  
That thou alone didst do the bloody deed.

TEIRESIAS

Is it so? Then I charge thee to abide  
By thine own proclamation; from this day  
Speak not to these or me. Thou art the man,  
40 Thou the accursed polluter of this land.

OEDIPUS

Vile slanderer, thou blurtest forth these taunts,  
And think'st forsooth as seer to go scot free.

TEIRESIAS

Yea, I am free, strong in the strength of truth.

OEDIPUS

Who was thy teacher? not methinks thy art.

TEIRESIAS

45 Thou, goading me against my will to speak.

OEDIPUS

What speech? repeat it and resolve my doubt.

TEIRESIAS

Didst miss my sense wouldst thou goad me on?

OEDIPUS

I but half caught thy meaning; say it again.

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TEIRESIAS  
50 I say thou art the murderer of the man  
Whose murderer thou pursuest.

OEDIPUS  
Thou shalt rue it  
Twice to repeat so gross a calumny.

TEIRESIAS  
Must I say more to aggravate thy rage?

OEDIPUS  
Say all thou wilt; it will be but waste of breath.

TEIRESIAS  
55 I say thou livest with thy nearest kin  
In infamy, unwitting in thy shame.

OEDIPUS  
Think'st thou for aye unscathed to wag thy tongue?

TEIRESIAS  
Yea, if the might of truth can aught prevail.

OEDIPUS  
60 With other men, but not with thee, for thou  
In ear, wit, eye, in everything art blind.

TEIRESIAS  
Poor fool to utter gibes at me which all  
Here present will cast back on thee ere long.

OEDIPUS  
Offspring of endless Night, thou hast no power  
O'er me or any man who sees the sun.

TEIRESIAS  
65 No, for thy weird is not to fall by me.  
I leave to Apollo what concerns the god.

OEDIPUS  
Is this a plot of Creon, or thine own?

TEIRESIAS  
Not Creon, thou thyself art thine own bane.

OEDIPUS  
70 O wealth and empery and skill by skill  
Outwitted in the battlefield of life,  
What spite and envy follow in your train!  
See, for this crown the State conferred on me.  
A gift, a thing I sought not, for this crown  
The trusty Creon, my familiar friend,

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75       Hath lain in wait to oust me and suborned  
          This mountebank, this juggling charlatan,  
          This tricky beggar-priest, for gain alone  
          Keen-eyed, but in his proper art stone-blind.  
          Say, sirrah, hast thou ever proved thyself  
80       A prophet? When the riddling Sphinx was here  
          Why hadst thou no deliverance for this folk?  
          And yet the riddle was not to be solved  
          By guess-work but required the prophet's art;  
          Wherein thou wast found lacking; neither birds  
85       Nor sign from heaven helped thee, but I came,  
          The simple Oedipus; I stopped her mouth  
          By mother wit, untaught of auguries.  
          This is the man whom thou wouldst undermine,  
          In hope to reign with Creon in my stead.  
90       Methinks that thou and thine abettor soon  
          Will rue your plot to drive the scapegoat out.  
          Thank thy grey hairs that thou hast still to learn  
          What chastisement such arrogance deserves.

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# Prose Essay Prompts Answers and Explanations

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from *A Dollhouse* by Henrik Ibsen**

A strong essay will analyze the way in which Torvald comes across as a (business) man in charge; he has work to accomplish, and he can see through Nora's guile. Nora must demean herself and act as something cute and weak to curry his favor, but when it comes to business, Torvald will brook no silliness. Moreover, Torvald is self-righteous and vain; he sees himself as morally upright and steadfast. The marriage is not on equal footing, and the only means for the woman to assert her opinion is to use demeaning guile. Excellent essays will capture the depths of each of these two characters, comment specifically on their marriage, and identify the values of the characters, both as individuals and as a family unit.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" by Katherine Anne Porter**

Excellent responses to this essay prompt will acknowledge the hold that the past has on the main character. The third-person narrator provides insight into Granny Weatherall's inner thoughts, thoughts that veer into the past, and, at the end of the passage, transform into hallucinations. The narrator devotes a considerable amount of time in the passage to cataloguing Granny's life and hardships, while also seeking to portray her as a sympathetic character. These are points on which you should comment. Additionally, your commentary should address the fact that she is a widow, and a woman who has spent the majority of her life engaged in child-rearing and the management her property. She has changed so much over the years that she doubts her deceased husband would even recognize her. Astute responses should also hone in on the author's use of symbolic light in the excerpt, particularly as it marks a transition from the lucid into the delusional.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan**

Excellent essays will explore the narrative voice and the way in which it explores the inner conflict created when an overbearing mother attempts to mold her young daughter into a prodigy, much like the ones she’s read about in magazines taken from the homes she cleans. The narrator initially engages in the mother’s designs, enthusiastically providing answers, albeit incorrect ones; but the narrator is quickly made to feel inferior. The narrator grows, however, when she takes stock of herself in the mirror, a critical scene in the passage. She decides to be herself, something that in many ways is very American, a departure from her immigrant heritage. The passage ends when the narrator details her defiance, cruel and disinterested, and independence from her mother’s desire and designs. In responding to this prompt, you should pay close attention to the way in which the narrator presents herself to her audience, and the manner in which she garners sympathy without entirely transforming her mother into a villain.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko**

Excellent essays will focus on the setting of the old man’s camp, particularly the degraded area around it. This setting, complete with trash, speaks to the wasting of life and the sad changes that have come to this land. Perhaps the characterization and selection of detail do the most to create the fear, despair, and anxiety of the passage. Old Betonie has a calm and a timelessness about him that makes Tayo anxious, as he has no center around which to fix himself. This tension between the juxtaposition of settings and characters speaks to the struggle for identity and purpose in a modern Indian’s life. Excellent responses should center on these details, and hone in on the manner in which these devices convey the struggle for identity, with particular consideration of the interior musing of Tayo and his outward appearance and actions.



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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION***Essay***Prose Essay Prompt: from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

The excellent essay will consider the range of techniques and their impact on conveying the narrator's attitude toward excess and conspicuous consumption. The attitude toward his neighbor can (and should) range from awe, envy, incredulousness, and, possibly, disdain. A discussion of how the mood of the place seems to overtake the narrator's spirit and, subsequently, affect his use of language will certainly reflect sophisticated analysis. Excellent essays will also note that the passage's descriptions are, in many ways, overwhelming to the narrator's (and thus the audience's) senses. Food, music, and lighting, for example, are described in great detail. Such vivid descriptions of the preparation for the party are as overwhelming and rich as the scene itself, a point that should not go unnoticed to the discerning reader. Compound and complex sentences add to the cataloguing effect of the descriptions.

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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION***Essay***Prose Essay Prompt: from *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad**

The author uses syntax, figurative language, and imagery to create the tone in this passage. The syntax is important because of its complexity. The author's use of punctuation, varied sentence length, and style helps to convey the narrator's frustration, disbelief, and odd fascination with regard to the central station manager. Additionally, the imagery in the passage is powerful in the sense that it conveys mystery, an otherworldliness, and a sense of confusion that parallels the narrator's depiction of the central station manager as one who is neither qualified or efficient. Excellent responses will discuss the manner in which these descriptions, along with the narrator's perspective, help to cast a shadow on the colonization process, specifically the trading outposts that purported to bring civilization into the depths of Africa.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from “Araby” by James Joyce**

Excellent responses will highlight both the narrator’s heightened excitement at the prospect of attending the bazaar and the anxiety he experiences while waiting for his uncle to return to give him money for admission. Such responses will also pay close attention to the manner in which the character elevates his journey. This is no mere trip to a carnival. The bazaar itself is exotic and foreign, and “cast[s] an Eastern enchantment [over him].” Of interest in the passage, also, is the frequent mention of air, and astute responses should examine the symbolic significance air, whether it be fresh or stale, plays in the passage. The syntax of the passage is also of interest, and careful observers will note a shift in the style of the passage beginning with line 13. The first 12 lines capture the narrator’s excitement, while the remaining passage captures his anxiety. Finally, attention should be given to the description of the narrator’s house, as well as his the love interest’s house.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from “The Interpreter of Maladies” by Jhumpa Lahiri**

Excellent essays will analyze techniques such as narration and the use of dialogue to explore the conflicting cultural values of the two worlds represented by the characters. Of particular interest is the juxtaposition of the monkeys native to the region described at the beginning of the passage with the behavior of the American family in the cab. Thoughtful essayists will comment upon the childish behavior of the privileged American family who in many ways seems as much an object of interest to the cabdriver, Kapasi, as the monkeys are to the family themselves. Also of note is the author’s use of the third person limited-omniscient narrator, a narrator that allows insight into the cabdriver’s thoughts but provides only descriptions of the Americans’ actions. Keen writers will note that the effect of this narrative voice permits the reader to associate more readily with Kapasi, and by doing so highlights the image of ugly Americans abroad. Finally, it is important to recognize that the American family is less interested in connecting with their cultural heritage than they are in achieving their own selfish interests.

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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION***Essay***Prose Essay Prompt: from “Blue Winds Dancing” by Tom Whitecloud**

The excellent essay will discuss such devices as imagery, dialogue, myth, and selection of detail to reveal the narrator’s values as he struggles to feel connected to his heritage. The tension between his cultural heritage that is founded on the natural world and man’s unity with it (which speaks directly to him) is juxtaposed with the narrator’s brief desire to scientifically explain the ice noises from a white world perspective. Understanding the physicality of the music and emotion blending into a comfortable sense of belonging is important. Top essays will connect the initial music imagery of the northern lights with the Indians as they move to the rhythm of the drums in the lodge.

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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION***Essay***Prose Essay Prompt: from “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” by Joyce Carol Oates**

The well-crafted essay will examine techniques such as narration, point-of-view and description as a means of building tension in the scene from Joyce Carol Oates’s “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” The passage begins by detailing the romantic dreams and reflections of the story’s protagonist, Connie. Astute readers will note an air of typical adolescent self-preoccupation and self-supposed savvy, as Connie is portrayed as both petulant and narcissistic by the narrator. It is important to note that Connie’s dreams of love are juxtaposed with the reality of her “asbestos ranch house.” In fact, her dreams are not realistic, and it is after this characterization has been established that the real tension in the passage develops. This tension begins in earnest in line 30 when she hears the car and is “startled” from her lethargy. At this point in the passage, descriptions and references to the stifling and hot air give way to diction and descriptions that connote anxiety. The passage reaches its climax when she acknowledges that the guests are indeed strangers and that her safety is very much in question.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde**

The argument of the women over the rights to a man is made hilarious because of the decorous reserve that the women maintain throughout most of the excerpt. Whereas some women would fight tooth and nail for their betrothed, these women merely add unwanted sugar and offer mistaken snacks. This level of understatement reflects the social premium on politeness and female deference. The class distinctions with the Victorian Age also surface in a non-direct fashion. Gwendolen's aristocratic airs are shown with her "never seen a spade," while Cecily defends her situation with the rumor that the aristocracy suffers from "agricultural depression." The humor primarily comes through ironic word play and understatement of emotion. The sweet veneer that these women maintain is all pretense and artificiality that echoes Victorian restraint and civility.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from *Othello* by William Shakespeare**

Although many essayists may be familiar with Shakespeare's play, *Othello*, familiarity with the play is not necessary to respond well to this prompt. The prompt asks the essayist to determine Iago's goal. This goal is revealed in the character's soliloquy at the end of the passage. The astute essayist will work backwards to determine the tactics Iago employs in order to enlist Roderigo in his vengeful plan. Iago, hoping to drive the Moor mad as a means of revenge for the Moor's supposed infidelity with Iago's wife, plans to convince the Moor of Desdemona's infidelity, knowing that Othello loves Desdemona and would be destroyed by her betrayal. In order to accomplish his goals, he must convince Roderigo that Desdemona desires an adulterous liaison with Cassio. The author's use of sexually charged diction throughout lines 9–38 and his character-assassination of both Desdemona and Othello contribute to his purpose. Excellent responses should also focus on the psychological nature of Shakespeare's Iago, as well as the way Iago makes use of the prejudices of the time period in his attempt to sway Roderigo's judgment.

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## ANSWER AND EXPLANATION

### *Essay*

#### **Prose Essay Prompt: from *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles**

Thoughtful readers will quickly identify many of Oedipus's flaws. Among them are hubris, jealousy, and wrath. These flaws are played upon in this exchange with Teiresias, the blind prophet. In the passage Teiresias comes across as aggressive and mocking, yet oddly equivocal and ambiguous. Although he claims that Oedipus is the "polluter" of the land, he fails to provide Oedipus with proof of this charge and claims that Oedipus is "living in disgrace" without qualifying his statement. Moreover, the audience, particularly those familiar with the play, acknowledges Teiresias's misleading language and its effect on Oedipus's psyche. Although Oedipus claims to be a man able to properly handle the truth, he is enraged by the discourse that takes place, and presents himself, ultimately, as angry, headstrong, and possibly paranoid. Dramatic irony is rife in this passage, as, again, the audience is well aware of the character's flaws and witnesses their development, whereas Oedipus himself is unaware of them.



# Open Essay Prompt

## Overview

To be successful on the open essay prompt, you must demonstrate a nuanced understanding of and appreciation for at least one work that meets the prompt's criteria. Do not fear, however. The AP open essay prompts invite a wide range of potential novels that could be selected. You may, however, select a work that is not on the provided list. These works, however, should be selected for their literary merit; in other words, they should be works of literature that invite a deep reading and provide nuanced arguments. The review exercises in the literary analysis section of this book, particularly the book review assignment, offer some strategies to help you refocus your energies on books that you have read in the past. It is important that your knowledge of the book encompasses the key characters, themes, plot points, setting, conflicts, and narrative style.

The key to success on the open prompt centers upon your ability to articulate the meaning of the work as a whole. In fact, a majority of the essay prompts use this exact language. Regardless of the specific point of emphasis, you should always expect the open prompt to reference the work's central theme.

### Strategies

1. Show up having a firm grasp of four different novels, representing a wide range of books and writing styles. Intimate knowledge of Jane Austen's six novels, for example, will not adequately prepare you because this range is too narrow.
2. Read the prompt carefully and underline the essential task. Put boxes around key words such as *mood*, *character development*, *tone*, and the like. These key words should shape the formation of your thesis.
3. Make a list of things that you really want to touch on in terms of ideas and evidence in the essay. This includes *characters*, *pertinent evidence*, *key words*, and anything else that you need to use in the discussion to illustrate expertise with the novel.
4. Compose a brief outline.
5. Write; proofread if you have time, but resist the temptation to scribble out or make margin notes with lots of lines and arrows.

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**Open Essay Prompt A:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Many novels contain characters that flee from place, person, or social conventions, a flight that shapes their morality or changes their outlook on the world. Choose a novel in which a character undergoes such a flight and discuss how the character's struggles, both internally and externally, and development as a result of the flight contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*Huckleberry Finn*

*The Odyssey*

*A Tale of Two Cities*

*The Kite Runner*

*Candide*

*Song of Solomon*

*Invisible Man*

*Their Eyes Were Watching God*

*The Scarlet Letter*

*The Awakening*

*Brave New World*

*Wide Sargasso Sea*

*The Grapes of Wrath*

*Nineteen Eighty-Four*

*The Catcher in the Rye*

*The Age of Innocence*

*The Road*

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*



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**Open Essay Prompt B:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Many works of literature include a recurring image, a motif, used to explore a dominant idea or theme. Select a work of literature that uses a recurring image and write an essay in which you analyze how the recurring image functions in the work and what it contributes to the ideas and themes of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*A Tale of Two Cities*

*Macbeth*

*The Kite Runner*

*Song of Solomon*

*Invisible Man*

*The Awakening*

*The Great Gatsby*

*A Doll's House*

*The Metamorphosis*

*The Grapes of Wrath*

*Persuasion*

*Great Expectations*

*Atonement*

*Othello*

*The Piano Tuner*

*Night*

*Slaughterhouse Five*

*Death of a Salesman*

*Fight Club*

*Ceremony*

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**Open Essay Prompt C:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Many works of literature contain a femme fatale, an alluring and dangerous woman, who, knowingly or unknowingly, brings about the downfall or destruction of her victims. Choose a novel or play in which a character meets his moral, spiritual, or physical downfall at the hands of a femme fatale. Then write an essay in which you show how the character's interactions with the femme fatale and his subsequent downfall contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*Romeo and Juliet*

*Tristan and Isolde*

*Madame Bovary*

*Lady Chatterley's Lover*

*The Scarlet Letter*

*Hedda Gabler*

*Beloved*

*The Custom of the Country*

*Rebecca*

*All the Pretty Horses*

*The Shipping News*

*The Sun Also Rises*

*A Streetcar Named Desire*

*The Great Gatsby*

*The Odyssey*

*Antony and Cleopatra*

*The Crucible*

*The French Lieutenant's Woman*

*Macbeth*

*Ceremony*

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**Open Essay Prompt D:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

In many works of literature, a decline in a character's physical or mental health often results in an inability to maintain control and order. In a novel or play you have studied, identify a character who suffers from a physical or mental ailment and whose new situation contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Then write an essay that analyzes the character's ailment and the work's central message.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

<i>Othello</i>	<i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i>
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>Ceremony</i>	<i>Crime and Punishment</i>
<i>The Hours</i>	<i>Heart of Darkness</i>
<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	<i>The Crucible</i>
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>
<i>The Metamorphosis</i>	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i>
<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	<i>Passage to India</i>
<i>Frankenstein</i>	<i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>

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**Open Essay Prompt E:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Many works of fiction contain scenes in which seemingly minor decisions resonate throughout the work. Identify a work that contains such a scene, and write an essay analyzing how that scene contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*House of Mirth*

*Macbeth*

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

*Wide Sargasso Sea*

*The God of Small Things*

*Light in August*

*The History of Love*

*Beloved*

*The Stranger*

*The Book Thief*

*Great Expectations*

*Ironweed*

*Pride and Prejudice*

*A Prayer for Owen Meany*

*Native Son*

*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

*Things Fall Apart*

*Huckleberry Finn*

*The Odyssey*

*The Crucible*

*Death of a Salesman*

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**Open Essay Prompt F:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Fictional works often include scenes that are set in educational institutions to reflect a disparity between what is being taught and what is being learned. Select a work of literary merit in which such a scene plays a significant role. Then write an essay in which you analyze the way the educational setting contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*The Catcher in the Rye*  
*This Side of Paradise*  
*Lord of the Flies*  
*Huckleberry Finn*  
*Great Expectations*  
*Animal Farm*  
*Candide*  
*Gulliver's Travels*  
*The Handmaid's Tale*  
*Death of a Salesman*

*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*  
*Jane Eyre*  
*A Separate Peace*  
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
*Old School*  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*  
*Invisible Man*  
*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*  
*Schooled*  
*Empire Falls*

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**Open Essay Prompt G:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Many works of literature use characters who are children to amplify adult corruption. Examine a work of literary merit in which the treatment or depiction of children helps to contrast with the corrupt nature of the adult world. Then write an essay that analyzes the way in which such a contrast helps to elucidate the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*The Bear*  
*Great Expectations*  
*The Catcher in the Rye*  
*Huckleberry Finn*  
*The Kite Runner*  
*Romeo and Juliet*  
*Lord of the Flies*  
*The Scarlet Letter*  
*Frankenstein*  
*The Crucible*  
*Metamorphosis*  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*

*A Doll's House*  
*Atonement*  
*The Bluest Eye*  
*Wuthering Heights*  
*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*  
*Oliver Twist*  
*Hard Times*  
*David Copperfield*  
*About a Boy*  
*This Boy's Life*  
*Bastard Out of Carolina*  
*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

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**Open Essay Prompt H:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

A proverb states, “What soberness conceals, drunkenness reveals.”

Many works of literature contain characters whose loss of inhibition reveals dynamic truths about the society in which they live. Consider the depiction of such characters, and write an essay that analyzes such a depiction and how it contributes to the meaning of a work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*The Great Gatsby*  
*The Awakening*  
*The Catcher in the Rye*  
*The Sun Also Rises*  
*Macbeth*  
*Ceremony*  
*The Odyssey*  
*Huckleberry Finn*  
*Paint It Black*  
*A Million Little Pieces*

*The Glass Menagerie*  
*The Picture of Dorian Gray*  
*Lord of the Flies*  
*Othello*  
*The Long Goodbye*  
*Ironweed*  
*Black Boy*  
*King Lear*  
*Heart of Darkness*  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*

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**Open Essay Prompt I:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Rimbaud states, “Life is the farce which everyone has to perform.”

Consider a work of literature in which a character knowingly views life as farcical or absurd. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s vision of life fosters the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>The Stranger</i>                    | <i>Pygmalion</i>                       |
| <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> | <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest</i> |
| <i>Metamorphosis</i>                   | <i>The Awakening</i>                   |
| <i>Candide</i>                         | <i>Androcles and the Lion</i>          |
| <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>       | <i>As You Like It</i>                  |
| <i>The Misanthrope</i>                 | <i>Waiting for Godot</i>               |
| <i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i>            | <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>      |
| <i>Macbeth</i>                         | <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>             |
| <i>Grendel</i>                         | <i>Catch-22</i>                        |
| <i>King Lear</i>                       | <i>Heart of Darkness</i>               |



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**Open Essay Prompt J:**

*(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)*

Many works of fiction contain characters whose mode of transportation reflects their status in society and their personal values. Select a work of fiction in which such a character and respective mode(s) of transportation permeate the work, and write an essay that analyzes how the relationship between character and transportation contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*The Great Gatsby*  
*The Grapes of Wrath*  
*Huckleberry Finn*  
*All the Pretty Horses*  
*As I Lay Dying*  
*Anna Karenina*  
*Heart of Darkness*  
*A Passage to India*  
*Song of Solomon*  
*Moby Dick*

*The Odyssey*  
*On the Road*  
*The English Patient*  
*The Things They Carried*  
*The Life of Pi*  
*Into the Wild*  
*A Star Called Henry*  
*Catch-22*  
*The Amateur Immigrant*  
*The Road*

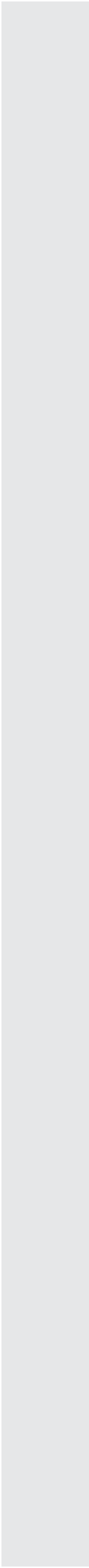


# Part III

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## *Sample Tests*

On the following pages are two sample exams. They mirror the actual AP exam in format and question types. Set aside time to take these exams, timing yourself as you will be timed when you take the real test, to prepare you for your actual test-taking experience.



# AP Literature Sample Practice Test 1

## Section 1 Multiple Choice Questions

Time: 60 minutes

54 Questions

*Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case and then fill in the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.*

### “How Beastly the Bourgeois Is” by D. H. Lawrence

How beastly the bourgeois is  
especially the male of the species—

Presentable, eminently presentable—  
shall I make you a present of him?

5 Isn't he handsome? Isn't he healthy? Isn't he a  
fine specimen?

Doesn't he look the fresh clean Englishman,  
outside?

10 Isn't it God's own image? tramping his thirty  
miles a day

after partridges, or a little rubber ball?  
wouldn't you like to be like that, well off, and  
quite the thing?

Oh, but wait!

15 Let him meet a new emotion, let him be faced  
with another man's need,

let him come home to a bit of moral difficulty,  
let life face him with a new demand on his  
understanding

20 and then watch him go soggy, like a wet  
meringue.

Watch him turn into a mess, either a fool or a  
bully.

25 Just watch the display of him, confronted with  
a new demand on his intelligence,  
a new life-demand.

How beastly the bourgeois is  
especially the male of the species—

30 Nicely groomed, like a mushroom  
standing there so sleek and erect and eye-  
able—

and like a fungus, living on the remains of a  
bygone life

35 sucking his life out of the dead leaves of  
greater life than his own.

And even so, he's stale, he's been there too  
long.

40 Touch him, and you'll find he's all gone inside  
just like an old mushroom, all wormy inside,

and hollow  
under a smooth skin and an upright  
appearance.

Full of seething, wormy, hollow feelings  
rather nasty—

45 How beastly the bourgeois is!

Standing in their thousands, these  
appearances, in damp England  
what a pity they can't all be kicked over  
like sickening toadstools, and left to melt back,

50 swiftly  
into the soil of England.

1. In the context of the poem, “bourgeois” most nearly means
  - (A) the privileged in society
  - (B) the hardworking, upwardly mobile
  - (C) a benevolent ruling class
  - (D) a subversive faction of English
  - (E) royalty
  
2. The speaker’s attitude toward the bourgeois, “especially the male of the species,” is one of
  - (A) sardonic disdain
  - (B) sincere curiosity
  - (C) clinical indifference
  - (D) ribald anger
  - (E) obsequious interest
  
3. The imagery employed in the poem to describe the bourgeois
  - I. contrasts life and death
  - II. provides commentary on English society
  - III. emphasizes facades with little substance behind them
  - (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) III only
  - (D) I and II only
  - (E) II and III only
  
4. The reference to sport hunting and polo in lines 9–11 serves to
  - (A) make reference to popular English sports
  - (B) differentiate the bourgeois from the rest of English society
  - (C) emphasize the connection the bourgeois had with the natural world
  - (D) stress the gamesmanship of the bourgeois.
  - (E) provide a model by which other Englishmen could aspire
  
5. All of the following are true of the bourgeois EXCEPT
  - (A) He is defined by his style
  - (B) He is morally vacuous
  - (C) He is self-centered and vain
  - (D) He lives a life of leisure
  - (E) He is logical
  
6. The third stanza (lines 5–13) most nearly parallels
  - (A) stanza 4 (lines 14–26)
  - (B) stanza 6 (lines 29–35)
  - (C) stanza 7 (lines 36–42)
  - (D) stanza 8 (lines 43–45)
  - (E) stanza 9 (line 46–51)
  
7. The speaker’s reference to mushrooms and fungi (lines 29–35) provide
  - (A) commentary on the natural cycle of decay and growth
  - (B) historical perspective to the origin of the status quo
  - (C) social criticism regarding the plight of the poor
  - (D) images that speak to the pleasing appearance and self-consciousness of the bourgeois
  - (E) satirical commentary regarding the life-negating qualities of the bourgeois
  
8. The poet uses all of the following literary and rhetorical strategies in the poem EXCEPT
  - (A) simile
  - (B) repetition
  - (C) personification
  - (D) apostrophe
  - (E) hyperbole

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9. The purpose of the poem is
- (A) to challenge English society to reexamine the status quo
  - (B) to criticize the proletariat for the complicit consent of bourgeois power
  - (C) to compare English aristocracy to the Darwin's theory of natural selection
  - (D) to lament the cyclical nature of English social and political culture
  - (E) to inspire the bourgeois to become more socially conscious
10. The poet's use of diction in the poem might best be described as
- (A) colloquial
  - (B) moralistic
  - (C) pretentious
  - (D) sensuous
  - (E) connotative

**“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold**

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| <p>The sea is calm to-night.<br/>The tide is full, the moon lies fair<br/>Upon the straits; on the French coast the light<br/>Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England<br/>stand;<br/>5 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.<br/>Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!<br/>Only, from the long line of spray<br/>Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,<br/>Listen! you hear the grating roar<br/>Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and<br/>10 fling,<br/>At their return, up the high strand,<br/>Begin, and cease, and then again begin,<br/>With tremulous cadence slow, and bring<br/>The eternal note of sadness in.</p> <p>15 Sophocles long ago<br/>Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought<br/>Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow<br/>Of human misery; we<br/>Find also in the sound a thought,<br/>20 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.</p> | <p>The Sea of Faith<br/>Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's<br/>shore<br/>Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.<br/>But now I only hear<br/>25 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,<br/>Retreating, to the breath<br/>Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear<br/>And naked shingles of the world.</p> <p>Ah, love, let us be true<br/>30 To one another! for the world, which seems<br/>To lie before us like a land of dreams,<br/>So various, so beautiful, so new,<br/>Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,<br/>Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;<br/>35 And we are here as on a darkling plain<br/>Swept with confused alarms of struggle and<br/>flight,<br/>Where ignorant armies clash by night.</p> |
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| <p>1. The sea in Matthew Arnold's poem functions as a(n)<br/>(A) extended metaphor<br/>(B) allusion<br/>(C) allegory<br/>(D) synecdoche<br/>(E) metonymy</p> <p>2. The speaker's audience is most likely<br/>(A) a distant relative<br/>(B) a loved one<br/>(C) a person of faith<br/>(D) a historical scholar<br/>(E) a literary critic</p> | <p>3. The speaker's attitude toward the world is best described as<br/>(A) cautious yet optimistic<br/>(B) bleak and uncertain<br/>(C) indifferent and disengaged<br/>(D) inquisitive and passionate<br/>(E) sardonic and caustic</p> <p>4. The setting of the poem is established in lines 1–4 by the author's use of<br/>(A) predicate adjectives<br/>(B) predicate nouns<br/>(C) direct objects<br/>(D) indirect objects<br/>(E) prepositional phrases</p> |
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5. The allusion to “Sophocles long ago” in line 15 helps to
- connect present conflicts with those of the past
  - establish the speaker as an educated person
  - compare modern society to that of Ancient Greece
  - develop ethos in the poem
  - compare the speaker to Sophocles
6. The simile in lines 21–23, “The Sea of Faith . . . a bright girdle furled,” serves best to contrast
- lines 7–8
  - lines 17–18
  - lines 27–28
  - lines 30–32
  - lines 35–38
7. Line 24–25, “But now I only hear / . . . withdrawing roar,” primarily lends an example of
- assonance
  - alliteration
  - consonance
  - euphony
  - onomatopoeia
8. The “naked shingles” in line 28 refers to
- the speaker’s soul
  - rooftops
  - a battlefield
  - the horizon
  - the beach
9. The repetition of the “neither . . . nor” in lines 33–34 serves to emphasize the
- emptiness of the setting
  - speaker’s loneliness
  - contrary nature of romance
  - illusory nature of life
  - falseness of hope
10. The images of “the darkling plain” in line 35 best contrasts
- “moon-blanching land” line 8
  - “the Sea of Faith” line 21
  - “a bright girdle” line 23
  - “the vast edges drear” line 27
  - “a land of dreams” line 31
11. The final stanza serves as a(n)
- firm renunciation
  - ironic observation
  - impassioned plea
  - formal denial
  - reluctant pledge
12. The tone of the passage might best be described as
- melancholic
  - laconic
  - sardonic
  - satiric
  - insincere
13. On an interpretive level, the “ignorant armies [that] clash by night” represent
- Those who challenge faith
  - Those who challenge love
  - Those who follow the status quo
- I only
  - II only
  - III only
  - I and II
  - II and III

**from *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley**

I spent the following day roaming through the valley. I stood beside the sources of the Arveiron, which take their rise in a glacier, that with slow pace is advancing down from the summit of the hills, to barricade the valley. The abrupt sides of vast mountains were before me; the icy wall of the glacier overhung me; a few shattered pines were scattered around; and the solemn silence of this glorious presence-chamber of imperial Nature was broken only by the brawling waves, or the fall of some vast fragment, the thunder sound of the avalanche, or the cracking reverberated along the mountains of the accumulated ice, which, through the silent working of immutable laws, was ever and anon rent and torn, as if it had been but a plaything in their hands. These sublime and magnificent scenes afforded me the greatest consolation that I was capable of receiving. They elevated me from all littleness of feeling; and although they did not remove my grief, they subdued and tranquilized it. In some degree, also, they diverted my mind from the thoughts over which it had brooded for the last month. I retired to rest at night; my slumbers, as it were, waited on and ministered to by the assemblance of grand shapes which I had contemplated during the day. They congregated round me; the unstained snowy mountain-top, the glittering pinnacle, the pine woods,

and ragged bare ravine; the eagle, soaring amidst the clouds—they all gathered round me, and bade me be at peace.

Where had they fled when the next morning I awoke? All of soul-inspiring fled with sleep, and dark melancholy clouded every thought. The rain was pouring in torrents, and thick mists hid the summits of the mountains, so that I even saw not the faces of those mighty friends. Still I would penetrate their misty veil, and seek them in their cloudy retreats. What were rain and storm to me? My mule was brought to the door, and I resolved to ascend to the summit of Montanvert. I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul, and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind, and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. I determined to go without a guide, for I was well acquainted with the path, and the presence of another would destroy the solitary grandeur of the scene.

The ascent is precipitous, but the path is cut into continual and short windings, which enable you to surmount the perpendicularity of the mountain. It is a scene terrifically desolate.

1. The word “barricade” (line 5) refers back to the
  - (A) valley
  - (B) mountain
  - (C) glacier
  - (D) dark thoughts
  - (E) trees
2. The diction of the passage could best be described as
  - (A) concise
  - (B) elevated
  - (C) simple
  - (D) static
  - (E) wordy
3. The mood of the sentence running from lines 5–17 is developed primarily through
  - (A) visual imagery
  - (B) auditory imagery
  - (C) similes
  - (D) olfactory imagery
  - (E) metonymy

4. Throughout the first lengthy paragraph, nature is depicted as all of the following EXCEPT a/an
- (A) protected space
  - (B) companion
  - (C) powerful force
  - (D) indifferent, hostile force
  - (E) realm of purity
5. The phrase “littleness of feeling” (line 20) could best be replaced by
- (A) sadness
  - (B) apathy
  - (C) projection
  - (D) guiltiness
  - (E) self-pity
6. “Where had they fled when the next morning I awoke?” (lines 34–35) is used to
- (A) illustrate the flimsiness of his earlier projections with nature
  - (B) re-establish the singularity of the narrator
  - (C) re-establish the melancholy and celebratory tones
  - (D) cast nature as a warm, but fickle friend
  - (E) create the possibility for other friends arrival
7. The shift in weather between the first and second paragraphs is used to
- (A) mirror his shift in mood
  - (B) transition to a naturalistic point of view
  - (C) show time lapse
  - (D) shift from an objective to a subjective tone
  - (E) complicate the syntax to reflect his thoughts
8. One of the main structures of tone of this passage is the interplay between
- (A) interior and exterior imagery
  - (B) the weather and the mountains
  - (C) the narrator’s memories and the future
  - (D) syntax and figurative language
  - (E) syntax and diction
9. “What were rain and storm to me?” (lines 41–42) serves to
- (A) reiterate his love of nature
  - (B) confirm his independence
  - (C) illustrate his prowess in nature
  - (D) underscore his previous hardships
  - (E) display nature’s indifference
10. In line 60, the word “it” refers to
- (A) the glaciers
  - (B) the summit of Montanvert
  - (C) his mule
  - (D) his soul
  - (E) his mind

from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

Blindfolded, I could no longer control my motions. I had no dignity. I stumbled about like a baby or a drunken man. The smoke had become thicker and with each new blow it seemed to sear and further restrict my lungs. My saliva became like hot bitter glue. A glove connected with my head, filling my mouth with warm blood. It was everywhere. I could not tell if the moisture I felt upon my body was sweat or blood. A blow landed hard against the nape of my neck. I felt myself going over, my head hitting the floor. Streaks of blue light filled the black world behind the blindfold. I lay prone, pretending that I was knocked out, but felt myself seized by hands and yanked to my feet. "Get going, black boy! Mix it up!" My arms were like lead, my head smarting from blows. I managed to feel my way to the ropes and held on, trying to catch my breath. A glove landed in my midsection and I went over again, feeling as though the smoke had become a knife jabbed into my guts. Pushed this way and that by the legs milling around me, I finally pulled erect and discovered that I could see the black, sweat-washed forms weaving in the smoky, blue atmosphere like drunken dancers weaving to the rapid drum-like thuds of blows.

Everyone fought hysterically. It was complete anarchy. Everybody fought everybody else. No group fought together for long. Two,

three, four, fought one, then turned to fight each other, were themselves attacked. Blows landed below the belt and in the kidney, with the gloves open as well as closed, and with my eye partly opened now there was not so much terror. I moved carefully, avoiding blows, although not too many to attract attention, fighting group to group. The boys groped about like blind, cautious crabs crouching to protect their midsections, their heads pulled in short against their shoulders, their arms stretched nervously before them, with their fists testing the smoke-filled air like the knobbed feelers of hypersensitive snails. In one corner I glimpsed a boy violently punching the air and heard him scream in pain as he smashed his hand against a ring post.

For a second I saw him bent over holding his hand, then going down as a blow caught his unprotected head. I played one group against the other, slipping in and throwing a punch then stepping out of range while pushing the others into the melee to take the blows blindly aimed at me. The smoke was agonizing and there were no rounds, no bells at three minute intervals to relieve our exhaustion. The room spun round me, a swirl of lights, smoke, sweating bodies surrounded by tense white faces. I bled from both nose and mouth, the blood spattering upon my chest.

- The first 5 sentences (lines 1–8) have the primary effect of
  - conveying his physical discomfort
  - establishing the setting
  - illustrating his transformation
  - analyzing his anguish
  - establishing the racist undertone
- Which pieces of figurative language have the connotation of helplessness?
  - I stumbled about like a baby or a drunken man (line 2–3)
  - My arms were like lead (line 16–17)
  - ... the smoke had become a knife jabbed into my guts (line 21–22)
  - I
  - I and II
  - II and IV
  - II and III
  - IV

3. The syntax of lines 29–31 could best be characterized as
- (A) simple
  - (B) static
  - (C) complex
  - (D) effusive
  - (E) stream-of-consciousness
4. The word “hysterically” (line 29) could best be replaced with the word
- (A) humorously
  - (B) loudly
  - (C) accurately
  - (D) wildly
  - (E) happily
5. The line “Blows landed below the belt and in the kidney, with the gloves open as well as closed” (lines 33–35) best illustrates the
- (A) boxers’ lack of technique
  - (B) brutality of the boxers
  - (C) savagery of the situation
  - (D) empathy of the narrator
  - (E) point of view
6. The primary effect of the figurative language in lines 39–45 is to
- (A) set the tone
  - (B) suggest the diminished humanity of the boxers
  - (C) show the similarities between the boys and the crowd
  - (D) convey the group mentality of the boxers
  - (E) depict appropriate means for fighting
7. The imagery in the passage changes from predominantly
- (A) kinesthetic to auditory
  - (B) taste to oral
  - (C) tactile to auditory
  - (D) auditory to visual
  - (E) visual to gustatory
8. The description of the isolated fighter (lines 45–51) juxtaposes most forcefully with the image
- (A) “I had no dignity” (line 2)
  - (B) “Get going, black boy!” (line 16)
  - (C) “Everyone fought hysterically” (line 29)
  - (D) “... their arms stretched nervously before them” (lines 42–43)
  - (E) “I bled from both nose and mouth ...” (lines 59–60)
9. The passage relies on imagery to
- (A) convey the action
  - (B) personalize the experience
  - (C) depict the setting
  - (D) maintain the point of view
  - (E) blur the lines of individuality
10. The narrator’s attitude toward his fellow boxers could best be described as
- (A) sympathetic
  - (B) objective
  - (C) impassioned
  - (D) comical
  - (E) degrading

### Shakespeare Sonnet 60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,  
 So do our minutes hasten to their end;  
 Each changing place with that which goes before,  
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.  
 5 Nativity, once in the main of light,  
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,  
 Crooked elipses 'gainst his glory fight,  
 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.  
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth  
 10 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,  
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,  
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:  
 And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,  
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

- The form of the poem is a(n)
  - terza rima
  - English sonnet
  - Spenserian stanza
  - Petrarchan sonnet
  - dramatic monologue
- Which of the following best describes the speaker's current situation?
  - He is preoccupied with the concept of time's passing
  - He has recently lost his lover's affection
  - He is experiencing melancholy and dejection
  - He is on his death bed
  - He is experiencing writer's block
- In the poem, time is characterized as
  - contemptuous and cruel
  - omnipotent and benevolent
  - natural and life-affirming
  - indifferent and destructive
  - malicious and harmful
- The function of the first quatrain (lines 1–4) is to
  - provide a comparison between the waves and mankind's trials and tribulations
  - suggest that time, like water, has the ability to purify man's existence
  - to parallel patterns found in nature to patterns found in man's temporal existence
  - establish an argument he hopes to refute in the poem's couplet
  - provide a contrast to the following two quatrains (lines 5–12)
- The central image evoked in the second quatrain (lines 5–8) traces
  - the sun's path throughout the day
  - the various stages of a man's life
  - the spiritual growth of man
  - I only
  - II only
  - III only
  - I and II only
  - I, II, and III

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6. Lines 5–8 most clearly assert that time
- (A) both gives and takes life
  - (B) corrupts all that is beautiful
  - (C) fights against humanity
  - (D) confuses and perplexes humanity
  - (E) is a destructive and immovable force
7. “Confound” in line 8 most nearly means
- (A) confuse
  - (B) mystify
  - (C) startle
  - (D) endure
  - (E) take away
8. Lines 9–12 most nearly parallel
- (A) Lines 1–2
  - (B) Lines 3–4
  - (C) Lines 5–8
  - (D) Line 13
  - (E) Line 14
9. The metaphor established in lines 9–12 presents time as a(n)
- (A) farmer
  - (B) seafarer
  - (C) death
  - (D) aged man
  - (A) nature
10. The three quatrains, lines 1–4, 5–8, and 9–12 respectively, serve to
- (A) refute the final couplet
  - (B) provide a list of grievances
  - (C) examine a cause and effect relationship
  - (D) develop a sequential argument
  - (E) catalogue the effects of time
11. What is the function of the final couplet?
- (A) to defy time
  - (B) to declare his eternal love
  - (C) to lament the passing of time
  - (D) to challenge his creator’s rationale
  - (E) to praise his lover’s eternal beauty

## Section 2

### Essays

#### Question 1

(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

#### Poetry Essay: “The Bull Moose” by Alden Nowlan

Read the following poem carefully. Then, write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the speaker’s attitude toward both the bull moose and the onlookers.

#### “The Bull Moose”

<p>Down from the purple mist of trees on the mountain, lurching through forests of white spruce and cedar, stumbling through tamarack swamps, came the bull moose 5 to be stopped at last by a pole-fenced pasture.</p> <p>Too tired to turn or, perhaps, aware there was no place left to go, he stood with the cattle. They, scenting the musk of death, seeing his great head like the ritual mask of a blood god, moved to 10 of the field, and waited.</p> <p>The neighbours heard of it, and by afternoon cars lined the road. The children teased him with alder switches and he gazed at them like an old, tolerant collie. The woman asked 15 if he could have escaped from a Fair.</p> <p>The oldest man in the parish remembered seeing a gelded moose yoked with an ox for plowing. The young men snickered and tried to pour beer down his throat, while their girl friends took their pictures.</p>	<p>20 And the bull moose let them stroke his tick- ravaged flanks, let them pry open his jaws with bottles, let a giggling girl plant a little purple cap of thistles on his head.</p> <p>When the wardens came, everyone agreed it was a shame 25 to shoot anything so shaggy and cuddlesome. He looked like the kind of pet women put to bed with their sons.</p> <p>So they held their fire. But just as the sun dropped in the river the bull moose gathered his strength like a scaffolded king, straightened and lifted 30 his horns so that even the wardens backed away as they raised their rifles.</p> <p>When he roared, people ran to their cars. All the young men leaned on their automobile horns as he toppled</p>
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## Question 2

(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

### Prose Essay

*The following passage is taken from The Death of Ivan Ilyich by Leo Tolstoy. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the description of the main character, Ivan Ilyich, provides a critique on morality and the condition of the soul.*

He got up at nine, drank his coffee, read the paper, and then put on his undress uniform and went to the law courts. There the harness in which he worked had already been stretched to fit him and he donned it without a hitch: 5 petitioners, inquiries at the chancery, the chancery itself, and the sittings public and administrative. In all this the thing was to exclude everything fresh and vital, which always disturbs the regular course of official business, and to admit only official relations with people, and then only on official grounds. 10 A man would come, for instance, wanting some information. Ivan Ilych, as one in whose sphere the matter did not lie, would have nothing to do with him: but if the man had some business with him in his official capacity, something that could be expressed on officially stamped paper, he would do everything, positively everything he could within the limits of such relations, and in doing so would maintain the semblance of friendly human relations, that is, would observe the courtesies of life. As soon as the official relations ended, so did everything else. 15 Ivan Ilych possessed this capacity to separate his real life from the official side of affairs and not mix the two, in the highest degree, and by long practice and natural aptitude had brought it to such a pitch that sometimes, in the manner of a virtuoso, he would even allow himself to let the human and official relations mingle. He let himself do 20 this just because he felt that he could at any time he chose resume the strictly official attitude again and drop the human relation. and he did it all easily, pleasantly, correctly, and even artistically. In the intervals between the sessions he smoked, drank tea, chatted a little about politics, a little about general topics, a little about cards, but most of all about official appointments. Tired, but with the feelings of a virtuoso—one of the first violins who has played his part in an orchestra with precision—he would return home to find that his wife and daughter had been out paying calls, or had a visitor, and that his son had been to school, had done his homework with his tutor, and was surely learning what is taught at High Schools. Everything was as it should be. After dinner, if they had no visitors, Ivan Ilych sometimes read a book that was being much discussed at the time, and in the evening settled down to work, that is, read official papers, compared the depositions of witnesses, and noted paragraphs of the Code applying to them. This was neither dull nor amusing. It was dull when he might have been playing bridge, but if no bridge was available it was at any rate better than doing nothing or sitting with his wife. Ivan Ilych's chief pleasure was giving little dinners to which he invited men and women of good social position, and just as his drawing-room resembled all other drawing-rooms so did his enjoyable little parties resemble all other such parties. 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65

(this translation by Louise and Alymer Maude)

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**Question 3**

(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

**Open Essay Prompt**

*Many works of literature employ multiple points of view to examine similar events—either in the form of alternating narrators or in the form of shifting points of view—to provide social, cultural, and/or political commentary. Select a work of literary merit that contains multiple points of view and analyze how the author’s use of this strategy contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.*

*The History of Love*  
*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*  
*To the Lighthouse*  
*As I Lay Dying*  
*The Sound and the Fury*  
*Mrs. Dalloway*  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*  
*Fight Club*  
*Dreaming in Cuban*  
*The Joy Luck Club*  
*The Poisonwood Bible*

*Frankenstein*  
*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*  
*The Portrait of a Lady*  
*The Book Thief*  
*We Were the Mulvaney*  
*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*  
*The Hours*  
*Wuthering Heights*  
*Ulysses*  
*Schooled*

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# *Answers and Explanations for Sample Tests*

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## **AP Literature Sample Practice Test 1**

### **“How Beastly the Bourgeois Is” by D. H. Lawrence**

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#### **ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS**

##### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (A) is correct.** The poet is attacking those in society who have both financial means and social status. His commentary focuses on an affluent class.
- **2. (A) is correct.** The speaker is scornful and disdainful of the bourgeois. Furthermore, the poem, with its many hyperbolic references and its repetition, is highly sarcastic.
- **3. (E) is correct.** While the poem does have many images relating to death, there are no life-affirming images. The poems both criticize English society and emphasize the hollow façade the bourgeois class has created for themselves.
- **4. (B) is correct.** Most English citizens had little access to these sports.
- **5. (E) is correct.** His intelligence, therefore his ability to reason, is challenged in lines 22–26.
- **6. (B) is correct.** Stanzas 3 and 6 both examine the way in which the bourgeois presents himself.
- **7. (E) is correct.** The speaker claims the bourgeois literally feeds off the poor.
- **8. (D) is correct.** The poet does not employ apostrophe, the direct address of a non-human entity.
- **9. (A) is correct.** While not necessarily a call-to-arms, the poem challenges its audience to question the current status quo that allows the bourgeois to prosper.
- **10. (E) is correct.** Many of the words used in the poem are highly suggestive or provide negative connotations of the bourgeois.

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**“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold**

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**ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS*****Multiple-Choice Questions***

- **1. (A) is correct.** An extended metaphor, also referred to as a conceit, develops or “extends” a comparison. In this poem, the Sea of Faith is continuously developed as a metaphor.
- **2. (B) is correct.** References to “Ah, love” in line 29 suggest the audience is the speaker’s lover.
- **3. (B) is correct.** The speaker’s outlook on modern society is bleak and uncertain. In fact, all he is certain of is the love between two people.
- **4. (A) is correct.** The linking verb “is” followed by an adjective is repeated in these lines multiple times.
- **5. (A) is correct.** In many ways, Arnold is suggesting a human pattern, one in which a period of certainty is followed by one of uncertainty.
- **6. (C) is correct.** The positive connotations of the simile are offset and contrasted by the bleak image established in lines 27–28.
- **7. (A) is correct.** These lines present a series of open vowel sounds.
- **8. (E) is correct.** The term “shingles” refers to small stones on a beach.
- **9. (E) is correct.** The repetition serves to underline a series of denials, which in this case refers to a denial of hope.
- **10. (E) is correct.** The image of “a land of dreams” is, in fact, negated by the reality of the “darkling plain.”
- **11. (C) is correct.** The speaker, despite his negative outlook on the world, still sees some hope in individual relationships, and thus pleads to his love to remain true.
- **12. (A) is correct.** This is a deeply melancholic and depressing poem. It was inspired by the anxiety of the Victorian Age, an age in which geological studies and Darwin’s theory of evolution challenged the faith of many.
- **13. (A) is correct.** References to the Sea of Faith in the second stanza, as well as the dark imagery of the poem, suggest that “the ignorant armies” are in fact those who are beginning to challenge the certainty of faith that once existed in England.

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**From *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley**

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**ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS*****Multiple-Choice Questions***

- **1. (C) is correct.** Barricade refers back to the glacier.
- **2. (B) is correct.** The language, specifically words like *accumulated*, *immutable*, *consolation*, *assemblance*, and the like, could best be characterized as elevated.
- **3. (B) is correct.** While there is some visual imagery, the mood is mostly conveyed through auditory.
- **4. (D) is correct.** While it is powerful and caring, it is not hostile toward him.
- **5. (B) is correct.** Although he does feel some self-pity and melancholy, the communion with nature stirs his emotions rather than keeping the staid or heavy.
- **6. (A) is correct.** Nature is not fickle; the narrator simply projects his emotions.
- **7. (A) is correct.** The weather is another projection or reflection of his mood.
- **8. (A) is correct.** There are numerous situations where nature seems to enfold the narrator or reflect his internal musings; these are juxtaposed by the narrator's view of what is actually occurring in nature.
- **9. (D) is correct.** While on some level the line suggests the unstated other choices, he is suffering angst that is threaded throughout the passage.
- **10. (D) is correct.** It refers to his soul.

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**Prose Essay: from “Battle Royale” from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison**

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**ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS*****Multiple-Choice Questions***

- 1. (C) is correct. The first five sentences reflect his transformation.
- 2. (C) is correct. Choices II and IV best convey his helplessness.
- 3. (A) is correct. The short sentences illustrate simple syntax.
- 4. (D) is correct. Because they are blindfolded, the boxers fight wildly and without control.
- 5. (C) is correct. Because they are all blindfolded, none of the elements of boxing pertain.
- 6. (B) is correct. The figurative language conveys the dehumanizing effect of the boxing set-up.
- 7. (D) is correct. While he is blindfolded, the imagery is auditory, but as he is able to see more, the imagery is predominantly visual.
- 8. (D) is correct. He is blinded and swinging, while all the others probe tentatively.
- 9. (B) is correct. The imagery serves to personalize and convey the experience.
- 10. (B) is correct. He makes no emotional appeals to his fellows in the ring, just reports what he sees and feels.

## Shakespeare Sonnet 60

### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### Multiple-Choice Questions

- **1. (B) is correct.** The poem is an English sonnet. Its rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG is typical of Shakespeare's sonnets.
- **2. (A) is correct.** The first three quatrains, lines 1–12, examine the effect of time on different facets of life, suggesting the speaker's preoccupation.
- **3. (A) is correct.** Time is destructive, as the reference to the scythe suggests; furthermore, time is not indifferent to man himself. References to time's "cruel hand" and its ability to "confound" and "transfix" suggest that time is contemptuous of man.
- **4. (C) is correct.** The simile in line 1 establishes this comparison. The incessant nature of the wave is not unlike the incessant nature of time.
- **5. (D) is correct.** The quatrain makes references to both the sun's arc across the sky throughout the day and the various stages of a man's life, from birth and infancy to old age and infirmity.
- **6. (A) is correct.** While time creates (the reference to nativity and birth), it also destroys (the reference to the gift confounded). In other words, the gift—which is life—is both given and taken away by time.
- **7. (E) is correct.** In this case, confound is the opposite of the word "gave" in line 8.
- **8. (C) is correct.** Once again, the concept of time as both a creator and destroyer is explored. In stanza 3, time creates man's youthful beauty, but also brings about the aging process ("delves the parallels in beauty's brow").
- **9. (A) is correct.** References to the "parallels in beauty's brow" also allude to an agricultural field that has been prepared for a season of growing. The reference in line 12 to the scythe and mowing, an instrument and action which occur at the end of a grow cycle, continue to develop this metaphor.
- **10. (E) is correct.** Each stanza serves to catalogue (or list) the effects of time: Shakespeare often catalogues according to the elements. Quatrain 1 focus on water; quatrain two on the sky; and quatrain three on the earth, the waves, the sun, and the land respectively).
- **11. (A) is correct.** While he certainly praises his lover's eternal beauty (as captured in this poem), the primary function of the couplet is to defy time's ravages by composing an eternal poem.

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**“The Bull Moose” by Alden Nowlan**

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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION*****Essay***

Excellent responses to this essay prompt will focus on the narrator’s attitude toward both the bull moose and the onlookers. Keen responses will identify the narrator’s sympathetic attitude toward the bull moose. The descriptions, particularly early on, highlight the moose’s predicament, his exhaustion, and, ultimately, his patience. There is a sense of nobility in the narrator’s portrayal of the moose, particularly as highlighted in lines 30–33, and excellent analyses will pick up on these points. In contrast to the moose is the behavior of the onlookers who tease, poke, and prod him. They behave in rather inhuman ways, failing to respect the grandeur of one of nature’s creatures. The narrator clearly frowns on their behavior, treating the onlookers as both ignorant and cruel, establishing clear commentary on the elevated stature of the moose, an extension of the natural world. Finally, in analyzing the speaker’s attitude, excellent responses will hone in on the author’s descriptions, his use of parallelism, and imagery.

***The Death of Ivan Ilyich by Leo Tolstoy***

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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION*****Essay***

Excellent essays will identify Ivan Ilyich as morally ambiguous, neither good nor bad. He is completely disengaged from those things that are “fresh and vital,” and instead is defined by the mechanical and prescribed approach to his job, his family, and his friends. More importantly, however, excellent responses will offer analysis regarding the condition of Ivan Ilyich’s soul. While responses will vary, astute readers will note that the passage captures the mundane, passionless nature of Ivan Ilyich’s days. They will also mention his inability to form relationships with people unless those relationships follow a set of rules—that of the petitioner to the court or the guest at the dinner party. He sees neither beauty nor love, two qualities often associated with the soul.



# AP Literature Sample Practice Test 2

## Section 1 Multiple Choice Questions

Time: 60 minutes

54 Questions

*Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case and then fill in the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.*

### “The Author to Her Book” by Anne Bradstreet

Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain,  
Who after birth did'st by my side remain,  
Till snatcht from thence by friends, less wise  
than true,  
Who thee abroad exposed to public view,  
Made thee in rags, halting to th' press to  
5 trudge,  
Where errors were not lessened (all may  
judge).  
At thy return my blushing was not small,  
My rambling brat (in print) should mother  
call.  
I cast thee by as one unfit for light,  
10 The visage was so irksome in my sight,  
Yet being mine own, at length affection would  
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could.  
I washed thy face, but more defects I saw,

And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw.  
15 I stretcht thy joints to make thee even feet,  
Yet still thou run'st more hobbling than is  
meet.  
In better dress to trim thee was my mind,  
But nought save home-spun cloth, i' th' house  
I find.  
In this array, 'mongst vulgars may'st thou  
roam.  
20 In critic's hands, beware thou dost not come,  
And take thy way where yet thou art not  
known.  
If for thy father askt, say, thou hadst none;  
And for thy mother, she alas is poor,  
Which caused her thus to send thee out of  
door.

- The poem is written primarily in
  - trochaic couplets
  - iambic pentameter
  - terza rima
  - Spenserian stanza
  - slant rhyme
- The diction in the poem might best be described as
  - familiar and critical
  - cold and condemning
  - affectionate and admiring
  - obsequious and terse
  - haughty and bombastic

3. In line 1, “offspring” refers to the author’s
- (A) rhetoric
  - (B) poetry
  - (C) infant child
  - (D) thoughts
  - (E) book
4. The author’s attitude toward her friends in line 3 is best described as
- (A) affectionate
  - (B) irritated
  - (C) bitter
  - (D) remorseful
  - (E) pleased
5. The parenthetical comment in line 6, “(all may judge),” reveals the speaker’s
- (A) embarrassment resulting from poor editing
  - (B) consternation regarding critical viewpoints
  - (C) distress over the appearance of her child
  - (D) anxiety over being judged by others
  - (E) disdain the author has for her peers
6. The subject of lines 7–8, “At thy return my blushing . . . should mother call,” is
- (A) brat
  - (B) call
  - (C) mother
  - (D) blushing
  - (E) thy
7. The word “visage” in line 10 refers to
- (A) the author’s writing
  - (B) an infant’s face
  - (C) a brat’s rambling
  - (D) the author’s blushing
  - (E) blemishes
8. Metaphorically, lines 13–14, “I washed thy face . . . still made a flaw,” refer to the
- (A) drafting process
  - (B) writing process
  - (C) publishing process
  - (D) editing process
  - (E) review process
9. In lines 15–16, “I stretched thy joints . . . hobbling than is meet,” the speaker is critical of her
- (A) writing’s faulty metrical form
  - (B) flaws in rhyme scheme
  - (C) failure to maintain her conceit
  - (D) inappropriate diction
  - (E) lack of literary success
10. The speaker’s reference to “home-spun cloth” in line 18 most likely refers to
- (A) meter
  - (B) rhyme scheme
  - (C) diction
  - (D) the paper the book is written upon
  - (E) the book’s title
11. The word “vulgars” in line 19 might best be defined as
- (A) the average reader
  - (B) other private writing
  - (C) harsh critics
  - (D) uneducated citizens
  - (E) inexpensive newspapers

- 
12. The speaker's concern regarding "critic's hands" in lines 20–21 might best be paraphrased as:
- (A) She is concerned that the book will be misinterpreted by those unfamiliar with her and her ideals.
  - (B) She is afraid of being thought vain and prideful.
  - (C) She is concerned with creating feelings of jealousy in other writers.
  - (D) She is disdainful of the critics right to judge her book.
- (A) She is concerned her work will be anthologized.
13. The puritan ideal of modesty is seen in
- I. Lines 1–2
  - II. Lines 17–18
  - III. Lines 23–24
- (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) III only
  - (D) II and III
  - (E) I, II, and III
14. The poem as a whole is an example of a(n)
- (A) extended metaphor
  - (B) villanelle
  - (C) lyrical ballad
  - (D) dramatic monologue
  - (E) hyperbolic language

from “The Minister’s Black Veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape, that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them.

Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one: he strove to win his people heavenward by mild, persuasive influences, rather than to drive them thither by the thunders of the Word. The sermon which he now delivered was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something, either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they had ever heard from their pastor’s lips. It was tinged, rather more darkly than usual, with the gentle gloom of Mr. Hooper’s temperament. The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them. A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms. There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said, at least, no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister, that they longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger’s visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper.

At the close of the services, the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the centre; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper’s eyes were so weakened by the midnight lamp, as to require a shade. After a brief interval, forth came good Mr. Hooper also, in the rear of his flock. Turning his veiled face from one group to another, he paid due reverence to the hoary heads, saluted the middle aged with kind dignity as their friend and spiritual guide, greeted the young with mingled authority and love, and laid his hands on the little children’s heads to bless them. Such was always his custom on the Sabbath day.

1. During Mr. Hooper’s sermon, the veil does all of the following EXCEPT
  - (A) change his style and manner
  - (B) make his words more powerful
  - (C) make his audience self-conscious
  - (D) add violence to the discourse
  - (E) make the audience question the speaker’s identity
2. The veil serves as a symbol for
  - (A) racial tension
  - (B) disease prevention
  - (C) hidden sin
  - (D) God’s wrath
  - (E) human vanity

3. The “Omniscient” refers to  
(A) the Church  
(B) Nature  
(C) Minister Hooper  
(D) God  
(E) public opinion
4. The word “pathos” in line 37 could best be defined as  
(A) dread  
(B) Divine reason  
(C) amazement  
(D) pity  
(E) longing
5. The tone of the passage could be characterized as  
(A) playful  
(B) sarcastic  
(C) difficult  
(D) dull  
(E) tense
6. The congregations reaction could be characterized by all of the following EXCEPT  
(A) angry  
(B) fearful  
(C) apathetic  
(D) amused  
(E) ashamed
7. The minister wears the veil to thwart  
I. hypocrisy  
II. complacency  
III. self-righteousness  
IV. scriptural misreads  
(A) I  
(B) II  
(C) III  
(D) I, II, III  
(E) I, II, IV
8. In line 53, “ostentatious” could best be replaced with  
(A) wealthy  
(B) loud  
(C) arrogant  
(D) sinister  
(E) pious
9. The dark and light imagery in the passage reflects  
(A) chaos and order  
(B) sin and despair  
(C) oppression and freedom  
(D) age and youth  
(E) words and actions
10. The veil dramatically impacts the congregation’s  
(A) interaction with the minister  
(B) interaction with one another  
(C) imagination  
(D) speaking style  
(E) understanding of God

**“Richard Cory” by Edwin Arlington Robinson**

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
We people on the pavement looked at him:  
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
Clean-favored and imperially slim.

5 And he was always quietly arrayed,  
And he was always human when he talked;  
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
“Good Morning!” and he glittered when he walked.

10 And he was rich, yes, richer than a king,  
And admirably schooled in every grace:  
In fine—we thought that he was everything  
To make us wish that we were in his place.

15 So on we worked and waited for the light,  
And went without the meat and cursed the bread,  
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,  
Went home and put a bullet in his head.

- Who is the speaker in the poem?
  - Richard Cory
  - a wealthy former friend
  - a family member
  - a common person from town
  - a wealthy business man
- Lines 1 and 2 use all of the following sound techniques to foster the mood EXCEPT?
  - alliteration
  - consonance
  - assonance
  - rhyme
  - cacophony
- In line 3, the word “crown” has the connotation of
  - disdain
  - head
  - royalty
  - indifference
  - jewels
- The use of repetition (syntactical and word choice) in the poem does all of the following EXCEPT
  - foster a tone of simplicity
  - develop a fixed point of view
  - foster rhythm and mood
  - provide insight into Richard Cory
  - illustrate the speaker’s envy
- The final paired “And” in stanza 4 is structurally different from the paired “and” in stanzas 2 and 3 to convey the speaker’s
  - indifference for Richard Cory
  - reverence toward Richard Cory
  - dawning awareness of unity
  - shift of voice
  - contempt for the wealthy

- 
6. In the context of the second stanza, the phrase “fluttered pulses” (line 7) suggests all of the following except
- (A) fear
  - (B) anger
  - (C) desire
  - (D) joy
  - (E) fatigue
7. “So on we worked and waited for the light,  
And went without the meat and cursed the bread,” juxtaposes
- (A) poverty and dissatisfaction
  - (B) hope and despair
  - (C) civilization and chaos
  - (D) sacrifice and duty
  - (E) toil and fatigue
8. The word “calm” in line 15 could best be considered
- (A) hyperbolic
  - (B) symbolic
  - (C) ironic
  - (D) static
  - (E) comic
9. The speaker’s final attitude toward Richard Cory could best be described as a combination of
- (A) envy and sympathy
  - (B) anger and envy
  - (C) suffering and sacrifice
  - (D) reverence and bafflement
  - (E) empathy and joy
10. The suicide of Richard Cory should force the speaker to
- (A) work harder and be kinder
  - (B) recalibrate his understanding of success
  - (C) give people the benefit of the doubt more often
  - (D) avoid sacrificing the present for the future
  - (E) not lose touch with his fellow man

***God's Grandeur* by Gerard Manley Hopkins**

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
 It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
 It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
 Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
 5 Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
 And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
 And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
 Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.  
 And for all this, nature is never spent;  
 10 There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
 And though the last lights off the black West went  
 Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—  
 Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
 World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

1. The phrase "is charged with" (line 1) could be replaced by the phrase
  - (A) "is run at with"
  - (B) "is responsible to"
  - (C) "is dutiful to"
  - (D) "is filled with"
  - (E) "is hastened with"
2. The two initial similes in the poem serve to illustrate the universality of God's grandeur through
  - (A) juxtaposition of opposites
  - (B) connotation
  - (C) hyperbole
  - (D) understatement
  - (E) a conceit
3. "Why do men then now not reckon his rod?" (line 4) is an example of
  - I. a rhetorical question
  - II. a metaphor
  - III. rhyme
  - IV. consonance
  - (A) I
  - (B) I & II
  - (C) I, II, & IV
  - (D) I & III
  - (E) I, II, III, & IV
4. The repetition in line 5 reflects the
  - (A) staying power of the human spirit
  - (B) constancy of God's will
  - (C) march of evolution
  - (D) simplicity and sameness of humanity
  - (E) practiced dogma of unbelievers
5. What is the antecedent for "all" in line 6?
  - (A) humanity
  - (B) clothing
  - (C) souls
  - (D) innocence
  - (E) nature
6. This is an example of a(n)
  - (A) ballad
  - (B) Italian sonnet
  - (C) Shakespearean sonnet
  - (D) ode
  - (E) apostrophe



- 
7. The repetition of “and” at the start of four different lines conveys all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) a pattern of human flaws
  - (B) the limitlessness of God’s grandeur
  - (C) a renouncement of the speaker’s initial position
  - (D) the necessity for unity between man and nature
  - (E) the irrevocable consistency of God’s activity
8. The mood of lines 10–12 is crafted in part by
- I. alliteration
  - II. consonance
  - III. assonance
  - IV. metonymy
- (A) I
  - (B) II
  - (C) I and II
  - (D) I, II, and IV
  - (E) I, II, and III
9. The poet’s attitude toward humans seems to shift from
- (A) ambivalence to disdain
  - (B) apathy to disgust
  - (C) contempt to hope
  - (D) love to bewilderment
  - (E) irony to empathy
10. The primary theme of the poems comes through imagery of
- (A) violence and anger
  - (B) degradation and rejuvenation
  - (C) filth and ablutions
  - (D) denial and acceptance
  - (E) sinfulness and repentance

**“The Lady with the Pet Dog” by Anton Chekov**  
(this translation by Constance Garnet)

When they got out of the carriage at Oreanda they sat down on a bench not far from the church, and looked down at the sea, without talking. Yalta could be dimly discerned through the morning mist, and white clouds rested motionless on the summits of the mountains. Not a leaf stirred, the grasshoppers chirruped, and the monotonous hollow roar of the sea came up to them, speaking of peace, of the eternal sleep lying in wait for us all. The sea had roared like this long before there was any Yalta or Oreanda, it was roaring now, and it would go on roaring, just as indifferently and hollowly, when we had passed away. And it may be that in this continuity, this utter indifference to the life and death of each of us lies hidden the pledge of our eternal salvation, of the continuous movement of life on earth, of the continuous movement toward perfection.

Side by side with a young woman, who looked so exquisite in the early light, soothed and enchanted by the sight of all this magical beauty—sea, mountains, clouds and the vast expanse of the sky—Gurov told himself that, when you came to think of it, everything in the world is beautiful really, everything but our own thoughts and actions, when we lose sight of the higher aims of life, and of our dignity as human beings.

Someone approached them—a watchman, probably—looked at them and went away. And there was something mysterious and beautiful even in this. The steamer from Feodosia could be seen coming towards the pier, lit up by the dawn, its lamps out.

“There’s dew on the grass,” said Anna Sergeyevna, breaking the silence.

“Yes. Time to go home.”

They went back to the town.

After this they met every day at noon on the promenade, lunching and dining together, going for walks, and admiring the sea. She complained of sleeplessness, of palpitations, asked the same questions over and over again, alternately surrendering to jealousy and the fear that he did not really respect her. And often, when there was nobody in sight in the square or the park, he would draw her to him and kiss her passionately. The utter idleness, these kisses in broad daylight, accompanied by furtive glances and the fear of discovery, the heat, the smell of the sea, and the idle, smart, well-fed people continually crossing their field of vision, seemed to have given him a new lease of life. He told Anna Sergeyevna she was beautiful and seductive, made love to her with impetuous passion, and never left her side, while she was always pensive, always trying to force from him the admission that he did not respect her, that he did not love her a bit, and considered her just an ordinary woman. Almost every night they drove out of town, to Oreanda, the waterfall, or some other beauty-spot. And these excursions were invariably a success, each contributing fresh impressions of majestic beauty.

All this time they kept expecting her husband to arrive. But a letter came in which he told his wife that he was having trouble with his eyes, and implored her to come home as soon as possible. Anna Sergeyevna made hasty preparations for leaving.

1. In the first paragraph, the sea is characterized as
  - (A) an escape
  - (B) leisurely
  - (C) ironic
  - (D) eternal
  - (E) purifying
2. Gurov's aspiring thought "when we lose sight of the higher aims of life and of our dignity as human beings" (lines 27–29) is best juxtaposed later by the line
  - (A) "... the monotonous hollow road of the sea" (lines 8–9)
  - (B) "They went back to town" (line 39)
  - (C) "He told Anna Sergeyevna she was beautiful and seductive" (lines 55–56)
  - (D) "... they drove out of town, to Oreanda, the waterfall, or some other beauty-spot." (lines 62–64)
  - (E) "All this time they kept expecting her husband to arrive." (lines 67–68)
3. The church from the opening paragraph and the watchman from the third paragraph are minor details that serve to
  - (A) influence action
  - (B) build tension
  - (C) develop characters
  - (D) establish setting
  - (E) define character motivation
4. The dialogue in lines 36–38 could best be characterized as
  - (A) symbolic
  - (B) enigmatic
  - (C) simple
  - (D) portentous
  - (E) complicated
5. The woman's "sleeplessness" and "palpitations" (line 43) most clearly reflect
  - (A) too much caffeine
  - (B) a poor diet
  - (C) the onset of sickness
  - (D) guilt
  - (E) desire
6. Lines 20–27 from early in the story and the final lines 67–72 contrast each other in
  - (A) syntax and imagery
  - (B) literal and figurative language
  - (C) point of view and narration
  - (D) imagery and diction
  - (E) syntax and point of view
7. Gurov is buoyed by the love affair; Anna is
  - (A) joyful
  - (B) depressed
  - (C) furtive
  - (D) insecure
  - (E) indifferent
8. The description of "the hollow roar of the sea" (lines 8–9) serves to underscore the
  - (A) jealous husband
  - (B) nobility of life
  - (C) affair's ephemeral nature
  - (D) man's pride
  - (E) woman's anger
9. Gurov's appreciation for nature's beauty and timelessness
  - (A) makes him more attractive to Anna
  - (B) shows that he is educated
  - (C) shows that he is uneducated
  - (D) is projected onto Anna
  - (E) confuses Anna
10. The imagery that conveys the most tension in the passage could best be described as
  - (A) light and dark
  - (B) interior and exterior
  - (C) static and dynamic
  - (D) visual and olfactory
  - (E) auditory and visual

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## Section 2

### Essays

#### Question 1

(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

#### Poetry Essay

*The following two poems are dejection odes. Read the poems carefully. Then write an essay in which you compare and contrast the ways in which the authors portray their unique views on dejection.*

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#### “Written After Swimming from Sestos to Abydos” by Lord George Byron

If, in the month of dark December,  
Leander, who was nightly wont  
(What maid will not the tale remember?)  
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont!

5 If, when the wintry tempest roared,  
He sped to Hero, nothing loath,  
And thus of old thy current poured,  
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

10 For me, degenerate modern wretch,  
Though in the genial month of May,  
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,  
And think I’ve done a feat today.

15 But since he crossed the rapid tide,  
According to the doubtful story,  
To woo—and—Lord knows what beside,  
And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

20 ‘Twere hard to say who fared the best:  
Sad mortals! thus the gods still plague you!  
He lost his labour, I my jest;  
For he was drowned, and I’ve the ague.

—Lord George Byron

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**“Ode on Melancholy” by John Keats**

NO, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist  
 Wolf’s-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;  
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kist  
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine  
 5 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,  
 Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
     Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl  
 A partner in your sorrow’s mysteries;  
 For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
 10     And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall  
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,  
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
 15 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,  
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,  
     Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;  
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,  
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,  
 20     And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
 Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
 Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
 25 Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
 Veil’d Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
     Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
 Can burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine;  
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,  
 30     And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

—John Keats

## Question 2

(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

### Prose Essay

*The following is a passage from Raymond Carver’s short story “Cathedral.” The passage relates a scene between the narrator, his wife, and a blind man that she had befriended before meeting her husband. Read the passage closely. Then write a well-organized essay analyzing how such choices in characterization as dialogue, word choice, point of view, and syntax develop the tension in the scene.*

I remembered having read somewhere that the blind didn’t smoke because, as speculation had it, they couldn’t see the smoke they exhaled. I thought I knew that much and that much only  
 5 about blind people. But this blind man smoked his cigarette down to the nubbin and then lit another one. This blind man filled his ashtray and my wife emptied it.

When we sat down at the table for dinner,  
 10 we had another drink. My wife heaped Robert’s plate with cube steak, scalloped potatoes, green beans. I buttered him up two slices of bread. I said, “Here’s bread and butter for you.” I swallowed some of my drink. “Now let  
 15 us pray,” I said, and the blind man lowered his head. My wife looked at me, her mouth agape. “Pray the phone won’t ring and the food doesn’t get cold,” I said.

We dug in. We ate everything there was to  
 20 eat on the table. We ate like there was no tomorrow. We didn’t talk. We ate. We scarfed. We grazed that table. We were into serious eating. The blind man had right away located his foods, he knew just where everything was on  
 25 his plate. I watched with admiration as he used his knife and fork on the meat. He’d cut two pieces of meat, fork the meat into his mouth, and then go all out for the scalloped potatoes, the beans next, and then he’d tear off a hunk of  
 30 buttered bread and eat that. He’d follow this up with a big drink of milk. It didn’t seem to bother him to use his fingers once in a while, either.

We finished everything, including half a  
 35 strawberry pie. For a few moments, we sat as if stunned. Sweat beaded on our faces. Finally, we  
 40 got up from the table and left the dirty plates. We didn’t look back. We took ourselves into the living room and sank into our places again. Robert and my wife sat on the sofa. I took the  
 45 big chair. We had us two or three more drinks while they talked about the major things that had come to pass for them in the past ten years. For the most part, I just listened. Now and then I joined in. I didn’t want him to think I’d left  
 50 the room, and I didn’t want her to think I was feeling left out. They talked of things that had happened to them—to them!—these past ten years. I waited in vain to hear my name on my wife’s sweet lips: “And then my dear husband  
 55 came into my life”—something like that. But I heard nothing of the sort. More talk of Robert. Robert had done a little of everything, it seemed, a regular blind jack-of-all-trades. But most recently he and his wife had had an  
 60 Amway distributorship, from which, I gathered, they’d earned their living, such as it was. The blind man was also a ham radio operator. He talked in his loud voice about conversations he’d had with fellow operators in Guam, in the  
 65 Philippines, in Alaska, and even in Tahiti. He said he’d have a lot of friends there if he ever wanted to go visit those places. From time to time, he’d turn his blind face toward me, put his hand under his beard, ask me something.  
 70 How long had I been in my present position? (Three years.) Did I like my work? (I didn’t.) Was I going to stay with it? (What were the options?) Finally, when I thought he was beginning to run down, I got up and turned on the TV.

My wife looked at me with irritation. She was heading toward a boil. Then she looked at the blind man and said, "Robert, do you have a TV?"

75 The blind man said, "My dear, I have two TVs. I have a color set and a black-and-white thing, an old relic. It's funny, but if I turn the TV on, and I'm always turning it on, I turn on the color set. It's funny, don't you think?"

80 I didn't know what to say to that. I had absolutely nothing to say to that. No opinion. So I watched the news program and tried to listen to what the announcer was saying.

"This is a color TV," the blind man said. 100  
85 "Don't ask me how, but I can tell."

"We traded up a while ago," I said.

The blind man had another taste of this drink. He lifted his beard, sniffed it, and let it fall. He leaned forward on the sofa. He positioned his ashtray on the coffee table, then put the lighter to his cigarette. He leaned back on the sofa and crossed his legs at the ankles.

90 My wife covered her mouth, and then she yawned. She stretched. She said, "I think I'll go upstairs and put on my robe. I think I'll change into something else. Robert, you make yourself comfortable," she said.

"I'm comfortable," the blind man said.

95 "I want you to feel comfortable in this house," she said.

"I am comfortable," the blind man said.

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**Question 3**

(Suggested time: 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

**Open Essay Prompt**

*Many works of literature explore the impact that love—whether it be a platonic love, a romantic love, or the love of an idea—has on its main character. Select a novel or play of literary merit in which love leads to a character’s downfall or expulsion from society, and analyze how that character’s downfall illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.*

*Anna Karenina*

*Romeo and Juliet*

*Tess of the D’Urbervilles*

*Things Fall Apart*

*Like Water for Chocolate*

*The Great Gatsby*

*Lady Chatterley’s Lover*

*The Scarlet Letter*

*Madame Bovary*

*Ethan Frome*

*The Awakening*

*Othello*

*Ulysses*

*Lolita*

*Wide Sargasso Sea*

*Wuthering Heights*

*A Tale of Two Cities*

*Death of a Salesman*

*Sons and Lovers*

*Doctor Zhivago*



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# *Answers and Explanations for Sample Tests*

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## **AP Literature Sample Practice Test 2**

### **“The Author to Her Book” by Anne Bradstreet**

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#### **ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS**

##### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (B) is correct.** The poem, with the exception of line 16, is written entirely in iambic pentameter.
- **2. (A) is correct.** Much of the diction in the poem is familiar in that it refers to motherhood. The diction also includes language that is critical, albeit humble, particularly when addressing the book.
- **3. (E) is correct.** The entire poem is an extended metaphor comparing an infant to a book, which is apt, as both are creations of love.
- **4. (A) is correct.** The comment “less wise than true” does not admonish her friends for releasing her work to the public’s eye. In fact, she shows affection for her friends when she acknowledges that their intentions were “true.”
- **5. (D) is correct.** The speaker is concerned that others will judge her work. She is particularly concerned with the fact that she had been unable to correct the errors in her book.
- **6. (D) is correct.** The subject of the sentence is “blushing,” the sense of embarrassment the author felt when the book was returned to her.
- **7. (A) is correct.** Visage refers to a face or countenance. In this case, visage metaphorically refers to the author’s book.
- **8. (D) is correct.** Despite multiple attempts at correction and revision, the author still sees her work as flawed.
- **9. (A) is correct.** Line 16, in fact, contains an extra syllable, marring the poem’s otherwise perfect iambic pentameter.
- **10. (C) is correct.** The author here, true to the puritan ideal of modesty, downplays her use of diction, referring to it as “home-spun” as opposed to ornate or sophisticated.

- **11. (B) is correct.** By “vulgars,” Bradstreet is suggesting that her book, because of its flaws and inadequacies, should “roam” only with similar books, books that are personal or not meant for publication. In this way, the book will be safe from undue criticism.
- **12. (A) is correct.** Bradstreet is primarily concerned that her book will fall into the hands of those outside her familiar world.
- **13. (E) is correct.** All three sections reveal the puritan ideal of modesty. In line one, the speaker refers to her brain as feeble; in lines 17–18, she comments that her diction is limited and simple; in lines 23–24 she comments on her poverty, not entirely in terms of wealth, but rather in terms of her writing ability.
- **14. (A) is correct.** The entire poem is an extended metaphor, comparing her book to her offspring. This metaphor is developed throughout the poem and, in many ways, is chronological with regard to both a child’s and the book’s development.

### from “The Minister’s Black Veil” by Nathaniel Hawthorne

#### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

##### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (D) is correct.** The excerpt specifically states that no violence was added to the sermon.
- **2. (C) is correct.** Hidden sin is mentioned throughout the passage.
- **3. (D) is correct.** The capitalized “Omniscient” (all knowing) in a religious sense signifies God.
- **4. (D) is correct.** The quality of “pathos” is the ability to move an audience, to create pity.
- **5. (E) is correct.** The tone is tense because of the imagery and characterization of the disconnect between Mr. Hooper and his flock.
- **6. (C) is correct.** All are moved to some degree; apathy (indifference) is felt by no one.
- **7. (D) is correct.** There is nothing about scriptural misreads in the passage.
- **8. (B) is correct.** While the laughter could be interpreted as arrogant (c), it is most certainly loud and open compared with the others from the flock.
- **9. (C) is correct.** The black veil is a symbol of an individual’s secret sin that oppresses the listeners, but when they get outside into the open air and light, they feel free and relieved of the weight.
- **10. (C) is correct.** The veil makes their imagination run about the minister’s identity and purpose, as well as forcing them to consider how aware they (and others) may be about their sins.

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**“Richard Cory” by Edwin Arlington Robinson**

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**ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS*****Multiple-Choice Questions***

- **1. (D) is correct.** “We people on the pavement” compare to the rich man on the hill.
- **2. (E) is correct.** There is repetition of “W” and “P” for the consonance; “E” and “O” for the assonance; and there is a clear meter.
- **3. (C) is correct.** Royalty is the connotation (c), even though the denotation is the head (b); also, although royalty may be indifferent (c) or disdainful (a), it is not clearly connoted here.
- **4. (D) is correct.** The steady repetition of “and” and the structure of “he was . . .” and “when he . . .” illustrates that the speaker notices many things about Cory on the surface, but does not know him intimately.
- **5. (C) is correct.** The first two pairs of “and” opening stanzas 2 and 3 serve to provide information about Richard Cory. The pair of “and” in the last stanza occur in the middle and discuss both the townspeople and Richard Cory, thus connecting the two. There is no shift in speakers or voice.
- **6. (E) is correct.** The fluttering pulses could be a sign of all of these emotions, but it is not clearly connect to physical fatigue from toil in this stanza.
- **7. (B) is correct.** The phrase “on we worked” illustrates the hopeful notion that with hard work comes success (“Light”), while they are also cursing what they are doing without and cursing what they do have, as is reflected in the “despair.”
- **8. (C) is correct.** So much about Richard Cory is placid, serene, and successful, so to have him commit such a violent act on a “calm summer night” is ironic.
- **9. (D) is correct.** The speaker clearly envies Richard Cory and aspires to be like him; to have that person that you wish to emulate commit suicide leaves one questioning his or her view of life (bafflement).
- **10. (B) is correct.** This point gets at the central theme of the poem. While most of the answers do ring true about the emotions a person feels when faced with a suicide, it is the reconsidering of what makes a person happy (goals and success) that is the poem’s primary message.

## “God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins

### ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

#### *Multiple-Choice Questions*

- **1. (D) is correct.** While all the other choices have an approximation to the word “charged,” only “filled with” works in the context of the poem.
- **2. (A) is correct.** “like shining from shook foil” is dramatically opposite from the movement and appearance of “like the ooze of oil crushed.” It suggests that it is found in many forms.
- **3. (E) is correct.** The lines contain all of these techniques.
- **4. (D) is correct.** “D” says that “generations” have trod, so it is not about God (b); the poem certainly does not concern evolution (c); there is nothing about the beliefs of irreligious folks (e). A close answer is the “staying power of the human spirit,” but the context of the poem is more about toil, tedium, and filth than the spirit. “D” best describes the human condition.
- **5. (E) is correct.** The sonnet considers the destructive impact man has on nature, which is characterized in the poem as a rejuvenating gift from God. Humanity, clothing, souls, and innocence are specifically aligned with mankind, the cause of the problem.
- **6. (B) is correct.** The Italian sonnet form divides the poem's 14 lines into two parts, an octave (first eight lines) and a sestet (last six lines). The rhyme scheme for the octave is typically a b b a a b b a. The octave and sestet have special functions in a Italian sonnet. The octave's purpose is to introduce a problem, express a desire, reflect on reality, or otherwise present a situation that causes doubt or conflict within the speaker. It usually does this by introducing the problem within its first quatrain (unified four-line section) and developing it in the second. The beginning of the sestet is known as the volta, and it introduces a pronounced change in tone in the sonnet.
- **7. (C) is correct.** The poem deals with the rift between God’s gifts/benevolence and mankind’s limited appreciation and degradation of these gifts.
- **8. (E) is correct.** Metonymy is not used in the lines.
- **9. (C) is correct.** The poem has contempt for the misuse of and lack of appreciation for God’s gifts by mankind, but there is a desire that this will change, like the closing of the night and the dawning of the day.
- **10. (B) is correct.** Early in the poem, we see that mankind, in our short-sightedness, has tarnished and abused the natural world. All of the first words from the answer choices work as approximations for this, but with the second word in the pair, only rejuvenation is echoed as the sun rises and God protects. There is no water imagery for the “ablutions” (c).

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**“The Lady with the Pet Dog” by Anton Chekhov**

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**ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS*****Multiple-Choice Questions***

- **1. (D) is correct.** The word “eternal” is actually used in the paragraph.
- **2. (E) is correct.** While he discusses higher aims and finer things, he is participating in an adulterous affair that has the woman bound with guilt and self-loathing.
- **3. (B) is correct.** Sitting by the church and the passing watchman both underscore the illicit and deviant nature of their affair.
- **4. (C) is correct.** The simple, surface dialogue on trivial points creates tension when compared to the author's use of symbolic imagery (the sea) and weightier conversations, such as those seen in line 40–66.
- **5. (D) is correct.** Although her physical reactions to the love affair could be the onset of sickness, we are given no proof that she becomes sick. We do, however, have ample evidence of her guilt.
- **6. (A) is correct.** The syntax of the second paragraph (which is one long sentence) is complex and lush in its imagery, whereas the final paragraph employs simple syntax (two short sentences and one moderate length), and it is primarily factual observations of plot.
- **7. (D) is correct.** Anna is referred to as “pensive,” and she tries to force him to admit that “he did not love her a bit, and considered her just an ordinary woman.” These emotions may lead to depression, but they are mostly signs of insecurity in the affair.
- **8. (C) is correct.** The two best choices would be B and C, but there is little discussed about the “nobility of life”; on the contrary, most of what is shown of life is morally suspect and fleeting compared to the “eternal salvation” of the sea.
- **9. (D) is correct.** There is nothing that suggests that his appreciation of beauty makes him attractive to Anna; we never get an understanding of why she is with him. However, each time he waxes poetic on the beauties of nature, he turns his attention to Anna's beauty and physicality.
- **10. (B) is correct.** The primary tension in the passage is the emotion each feels about their physical affair. Lines 40–66 and 67–72 reflect this tension because much of their actions are furtive, but we are told how the lovers feel about them. There is no light and dark imagery; the visual/auditory/olfactory do not come into sharp contrast. Also, there is very little static imagery, in that most of it is dynamic with movement.

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**“Written After Swimming from Sestos to Abydos” by Lord George Byron****“Ode on Melancholy” by John Keats**

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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION***Essay*

The well-written essay will be sure to compare and contrast the ways in which the authors portray their unique views of dejection. Solid responses will make note of Byron’s more personal approach to the idea of disappointment. He calls himself a degenerate, modern wretch, and it is this self-loathing that captures Byron’s dejection. Unlike Leander, who “swam for love,” Byron laments that his only cause is glory, pride. The Keats poem, on the other hand, does not obsess on self-loathing but instead encourages one to embrace melancholy and dejection, for melancholy is but one of the many states in which man is fully aware of his existence. Keats elevates melancholy and places it on the same pedestal as Beauty and Pleasure. Astute readers will make note of both poets’ use of allusion, personification, and imagery. Additionally, well-written responses may focus on Keats’s use of punctuation and capitalization or on Byron’s subtle, self-deprecating humor.

**“Cathedral” by Raymond Carver**

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**ANSWER AND EXPLANATION***Essay*

A well-written essay will carefully examine how Carver uses characterization, dialogue, diction, point of view, and syntax to develop tension in this scene from “Cathedral.” Well-qualified responses will focus on the descriptions of the dinner scene, particularly in the manner in which eating offers the characters refuge from discussion and human interaction. These descriptions are repetitive, using simple sentences and terse language. These responses will also detect the narrator’s jealous attitude toward Robert, the blind man, and how this jealousy contributes to the tension in the scene. Likewise, astute responses will also discuss the incongruity of a blind man watching television, as well as the role of television-viewing as a potential escape from human interaction. Thus, the tension in this scene centers on the narrator’s self-centered world-view and its interruption by his wife’s blind friend. He feels, unlike the blind man’s assertion at the end of the passage, uncomfortable.

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