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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE · FREE RESOURCE

AP English Language and Composition — Practice Exam 1

This practice exam was written for study purposes. It follows the structure of the current digital AP English Language and Composition exam. All passages other than Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address (public domain) were written for this exam. Statistics in the synthesis sources are illustrative.

Exam Overview

	SECTION I	SECTION II
Question type	45 multiple-choice questions	3 free-response questions
Time	1 hour	2 hours 15 minutes (15-minute reading period, then 2 hours for writing)
Share of score	45%	55%
Contents	2 reading sets (24 questions), 3 writing sets (21 questions)	Synthesis, rhetorical analysis, argument (equally weighted, 6 points each)

Suggested pacing, Section I: about 12 minutes for each reading set, about 10 minutes for each of the two longer writing sets, and about 6 minutes for the short writing set.

Suggested pacing, Section II: Question 1, 15 minutes reading and planning plus 40 minutes writing; Questions 2 and 3, 40 minutes each.

Directions for Taking This Exam

Take the exam in one sitting if you can, with a timer, in a quiet room. Do not use notes, dictionaries, or the answer key. Mark your answers on a separate sheet. There is no penalty for guessing, so answer every question.

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

Time: 1 hour. Number of questions: 45.

Directions: This section consists of selections from nonfiction prose and drafts of student writing, followed by questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question. For the questions on student drafts, the sentences are numbered so that you can refer to them. Choose the answer that best accomplishes the writer's stated goal.

Note: Pay particular attention to questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT. Each question has four answer choices, (A) through (D).

Questions 1–12. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The following passage is an oration written for this practice exam in the manner of mid-nineteenth-century abolitionist speeches. In the fiction, the speaker is an antislavery lecturer who addresses a mixed audience of townspeople at an Independence Day picnic in a Northern state in 1853.

Friends and fellow citizens: I thank you for the courtesy of this platform, and I thank the committee that, in choosing me, has chosen to be reminded of something unpleasant. For it is a pleasant thing to stand beneath a flag on the fourth of July. The fields are green; the bells have been rung since (5) dawn; and every child in this grove has been taught that the day belongs to him. I would not take a holiday from any child. But I am not a child, and I have been asked to speak, and a guest who has been given a seat at the feast, and who knows what the kitchen cost, is bound to say so.

Our fathers built a house. Let us grant that it was a noble house, framed (10) upon a great principle, roofed against the weather of kings, and furnished with a charter that declared all men equal in their rights. I have read that charter more times than most who cheer it, and I tell you it is a noble paper. But a house is not its blueprint. A house is the people it shelters; and the house our fathers built has a room in the cellar, locked (15) from the outside, in which three million of their countrymen are kept. The company upstairs hears the noise from below and calls it the settling of timbers. They have grown so used to the sound that they would miss it if it stopped, as the miller no longer hears his wheel.

What, then, shall I say of the day? Shall I say that liberty is dear to us? (20) It is dear, and that is the very ground of my complaint; for who can value a thing so highly, and yet permit it to be sold at auction by the pound? Shall I say that we are a Christian people? We build steeples taller than any in the world, and from their shadows the coffin moves down the road to market. Shall I say that we are a prudent people? Prudence would have us (25) pay a debt while it is small. We have let this one grow with interest through three generations, and the sum now due is greater than the whole estate.

I know the answer I shall receive. I shall be told that the evil is old; that it is tangled in the law and the ledger; that the men who hold it are, (30) many of them, neighbors and not monsters; and that gradual remedies are wiser than sudden ones. The first three I grant, and I grant, too, the sincerity of those who say them. Some who defend this wrong are kind to their dogs and generous in their pews. But gradual! The slave does not suffer gradually. He is sold in a morning, and the child is taken from the (35) mother between one breakfast and the next. The question before a nation is not whether its sinners are monstrous. It is whether the sin is to continue. A fire is not made gentler by the good character of the man whose house it consumes, nor is it to be reasoned with by those who stand upwind.

Do not mistake me. I do not speak in despair. Despair is a luxury of those (40) who have stopped working, and there is work enough in this country for all of us. I speak as one who believes that the founders' words are better than the founders' deeds, and that the nation may yet be shamed into catching up with its own paper. The charter is still there. No one has torn it up; they have only ceased to read it aloud. Let us read it aloud. Let us read it in (45) the pulpit and the schoolroom, in the market and the legislature, until the men who cheer its sentences are obliged to hear what they say. And then let this holiday be what it promises to be: not a day on which a free people congratulate themselves, but the day on which a people, having made itself free, opens the cellar door.

1. The first paragraph (lines 1–8) primarily serves to
 - (A) flatter the committee so that the audience will accept the speaker's later criticism of the nation
 - (B) acknowledge the festive spirit of the occasion while signaling that the speaker will not simply celebrate it
 - (C) explain the speaker's reluctance to address an audience that includes children
 - (D) argue that holidays distract citizens from their civic duties
2. The house described in lines 9–18 is best understood as
 - (A) a symbol of the founders' private wealth, which the speaker suggests was acquired through slavery
 - (B) a warning that the nation's institutions will collapse unless they are repaired
 - (C) an extended metaphor for a nation whose professed principles coexist with a concealed injustice
 - (D) a tribute to the founders' skill as builders, which the speaker hopes the audience will imitate
3. The speaker's references to "the settling of timbers" (lines 16–17) and to the miller who "no longer hears his wheel" (lines 17–18) together suggest that the company upstairs
 - (A) has grown so accustomed to the suffering of others that it no longer perceives it as wrong
 - (B) is deliberately cruel and takes pleasure in the noise from the cellar
 - (C) lacks the knowledge needed to understand how the house was built
 - (D) is unaware that any enslaved people live in the country
4. The series of rhetorical questions in lines 19–27 develops the speaker's argument primarily by
 - (A) inviting the audience to supply its own answers, which the speaker then accepts without comment
 - (B) listing the nation's virtues in order to praise them before moving on to criticism
 - (C) shifting the topic from slavery to broader questions of economic policy
 - (D) naming qualities the nation claims for itself and then undercutting each with a contrary fact
5. Which of the following best describes the relationship between the second paragraph (lines 9–18) and the third paragraph (lines 19–27)?
 - (A) The second paragraph states a thesis that the third paragraph qualifies.
 - (B) The second paragraph offers an image of national hypocrisy that the third paragraph develops by examining specific values the nation professes.
 - (C) The second paragraph presents a counterargument that the third paragraph refutes.
 - (D) The second paragraph narrates an event that the third paragraph explains.
6. The speaker's statement "The first three I grant" (line 31) functions primarily to
 - (A) suggest that the speaker's position is closer to his opponents' than the audience might expect
 - (B) indicate that the first three claims are irrelevant to the question at hand
 - (C) postpone the argument until the audience is better prepared to hear it
 - (D) concede points that cannot be denied so that the speaker can concentrate his refutation on the claim about gradual remedies

7. The description of defenders of slavery as “kind to their dogs and generous in their pews” (lines 32–33) most strongly suggests that the speaker assumes his audience
- (A) includes people who regard themselves as decent and would resist being told that they are monstrous
 - (B) is composed largely of slaveholders who must be shamed into repentance
 - (C) shares his view that churches are the primary source of the nation’s injustice
 - (D) is unfamiliar with the customs of the South
8. In lines 33–35, the statements that the slave “is sold in a morning” and that “the child is taken from the mother between one breakfast and the next” serve as evidence that
- (A) the laws governing slavery are too complicated for ordinary citizens to understand
 - (B) the Southern economy depends on the rapid sale of enslaved people
 - (C) the claim that remedies should be gradual ignores the immediacy of the suffering slavery causes
 - (D) mothers and children are treated more cruelly than other enslaved people
9. The sentence in lines 44–46 (“Let us read it in the pulpit . . . what they say”) is constructed so that it
- (A) uses a series of short, blunt clauses to convey the speaker’s impatience
 - (B) delays its main verb until the end to create suspense
 - (C) lists the institutions that the speaker blames for the neglect of the charter
 - (D) moves through parallel prepositional phrases to a subordinate clause that states the result of reading the charter aloud
10. The shift that begins with “Do not mistake me” (line 39) primarily serves to
- (A) retract the criticisms made in the earlier paragraphs
 - (B) clarify that the preceding indictment is offered in hope of reform rather than in despair, and to turn the argument toward action
 - (C) introduce a new accusation against the founders
 - (D) apologize to the committee for the harshness of the speech
11. Which of the following best states the overarching thesis of the passage?
- (A) The founders’ principles were flawed from the beginning and should be abandoned.
 - (B) Gradual emancipation is preferable to sudden emancipation if the South is given time to adjust.
 - (C) A nation that celebrates liberty while tolerating slavery makes its holiday hollow and can honor it only by acting on its own professed principles.
 - (D) The Fourth of July should not be celebrated again until slavery has been abolished.
12. The passage is best understood as a response to which of the following situations?
- (A) An invitation to speak at a patriotic celebration in a nation that proclaims liberty as its founding principle while continuing to enslave millions of people
 - (B) A legislative debate over whether to adopt a program of gradual emancipation
 - (C) A dispute between the speaker and the committee over the choice of a holiday
 - (D) A public controversy over the authenticity of the founding charter

Questions 13–24. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The following essay was written for this practice exam in the manner of the moral essays published in British periodicals in the middle of the eighteenth century. In the fiction, it appeared in a twice-weekly paper addressed to educated general readers.

It is observed by those who have made the human mind their study, that no vice is so frequently confessed, and so seldom amended, as idleness. The drunkard is ashamed of his cups, and the miser of his hoard; but the idle man alone acknowledges his fault with a smile, as if the confession were (5) itself a kind of industry, and he who had admitted that he ought to labour had thereby laboured in part. Of this strange indulgence, which we extend to ourselves and deny to every other offender, I propose to inquire the cause; and I shall perhaps find it in this, that idleness is not commonly a vice of one great act, but of many small omissions, no one of which would (10) be thought worth a reproach.

No man ever became idle in a day. The habit is formed as the sand-bank is formed at the mouth of a river, not by any violence of the current, but by the silent deposit of particles too minute to be noticed in the passing. To-day he defers a letter, which to-morrow will be answered with equal (15) ease; to-morrow he defers it again, upon the reasonable ground that he has already deferred it; and thus every postponement becomes the argument for the next, until the mind, which at first resisted the delay, begins to depend upon it for its quiet. The navigator who has seen the channel narrowed by degrees is not surprised at last to find his vessel aground, (20) but he is always surprised that he did not remark the danger sooner.

I was acquainted in my youth with a gentleman, whom I shall call Eubulus, whose abilities were such as promised distinction in any profession he should choose, and who was by common consent expected to choose the most laborious. He rose every morning with a determination to begin the work of (25) his life; he employed the first hour in arranging his papers, the second in considering which task was most deserving of priority, and the third in reflecting that the day was already too far advanced for any task of consequence. Thus the resolution of the morning was spent before noon in the preparation for performance, and the evening found him, not more (30) indolent than he had been at sunrise, but more convinced that he was destined to begin to-morrow. He died at sixty, regretted by his friends, and leaving behind him nothing but a reputation for what he might have done; which is a possession of all others the most easily conferred, because it can never be examined.

35. It will be said, perhaps, by those who defend their own ease, that the mind requires its seasons of repose, and that the bow which is always bent will lose its spring. To this I willingly assent. But let it be remarked that repose is a thing chosen, and idleness a thing suffered; the man who rests has determined when he will resume his labour, and the idler has determined (40) nothing, but is carried from hour to hour as a leaf is carried on a stream, with the added misfortune that the leaf does not know it is falling. Rest is the servant of industry, and refreshes it; idleness is its usurper, and takes the house.

The remedy, if remedy there be, lies not in those vast resolutions which (45) are made at the new year and forgotten before the twelfth night, but in the conquest of the next small duty. He that cannot command an hour should not attempt to command a life. Let the sluggard begin with the letter he has deferred, and he will find, what every man finds who makes the trial, that the task was lighter than the dread of it, and that the dread, not the (50) task, was the heaviest burden he had carried. Habit, which has been the tyrant, may thus be made the servant; for the mind that has once been accustomed to perform, suffers in omission the same uneasiness it formerly suffered in labour; and it is the happy condition of our nature that we may choose, within certain bounds, which of our habits we will be governed by.

13. In context, “indulgence” (line 6) most nearly means

- (A) enjoyment of luxury
- (B) overindulgence in food or drink
- (C) leniency toward a fault
- (D) a formal pardon

- 14.** Which of the following best states the explanation the writer proposes in the first paragraph for why idleness is so seldom corrected?
- (A) It consists of many small omissions, none of which seems serious enough to deserve reproach.
 - (B) Most people regard it as a pleasant vice that harms no one.
 - (C) It is more difficult to cure than drunkenness or miserliness.
 - (D) Those who are idle lack the intelligence to recognize their fault.
- 15.** The comparison of idleness to a sand-bank at the mouth of a river (lines 11–13) primarily emphasizes that idleness
- (A) results from a single powerful event that cannot be resisted
 - (B) obstructs those who are most eager to make progress
 - (C) is most dangerous to those who travel by water
 - (D) develops gradually through accumulations too small to be noticed
- 16.** The writer includes the example of Eubulus (lines 21–34) primarily as evidence that
- (A) talented people are more likely than others to become idle
 - (B) idleness can persist in a person of ability and good intentions when preparation takes the place of performance
 - (C) friends are rarely honest about the failings of those they admire
 - (D) careful planning is incompatible with the pursuit of a profession
- 17.** The final clause of the third paragraph (“which is a possession . . . can never be examined,” lines 33–34) is best described as
- (A) an expression of sympathy for Eubulus’s family
 - (B) a wry observation that a reputation for unrealized potential is easily granted because it cannot be tested
 - (C) an angry denunciation of Eubulus’s friends
 - (D) a reluctant admission that the writer shares Eubulus’s fault
- 18.** Which of the following best describes the organization of the first three paragraphs?
- (A) A series of anecdotes, each offering a different cause of idleness
 - (B) A proposed definition, followed by an objection, followed by a refutation
 - (C) A comparison of idleness with other vices, followed by an argument for tolerating it
 - (D) A claim about the nature of idleness, an analogy explaining how it develops, and an extended example of its effects
- 19.** In the fourth paragraph (lines 35–43), the writer’s decision to raise the claim that “the mind requires its seasons of repose” suggests that he assumes his readers
- (A) may be inclined to defend their own leisure and need to be persuaded that his argument does not condemn all rest
 - (B) have little experience of labor and must be taught the value of work
 - (C) consider repose a vice deserving the same censure as idleness
 - (D) are concerned chiefly with the physical health of the idle
- 20.** The writer’s statement “To this I willingly assent” (line 37) functions primarily to
- (A) abandon the argument of the preceding paragraphs
 - (B) express irritation with those who defend their own ease
 - (C) concede a legitimate point so that he can distinguish rest from idleness without appearing unreasonable
 - (D) introduce a new example in support of his central claim

21. The fourth paragraph develops its argument mainly through
- (A) a chronological account of a single idle day
 - (B) a chain of cause and effect linking rest to eventual idleness
 - (C) a series of statistics about the hours spent in labor and in repose
 - (D) a contrast between two conditions, one chosen and one suffered, described through figures of service and usurpation
22. The statement “He that cannot command an hour should not attempt to command a life” (lines 46–47) most directly supports which of the following claims?
- (A) Lasting change comes from mastering small, immediate duties rather than from making grand resolutions.
 - (B) Most people are incapable of directing their own lives.
 - (C) Time should be divided into equal portions for work and for rest.
 - (D) Lives are best commanded by those who have first served under others.
23. The remedy proposed in the final paragraph is connected to the argument of the first two paragraphs by the idea that
- (A) the habit of idleness is natural and therefore cannot be undone
 - (B) because idleness grows from many small omissions, it can be reversed by many small performances
 - (C) resolutions are useless because the mind is naturally idle
 - (D) readers who have not yet become idle need no remedy
24. The essay as a whole is best described as
- (A) a satirical portrait of a single idle gentleman
 - (B) a scientific inquiry into the physical causes of habit
 - (C) a reflective moral essay addressed to educated readers, offering both an analysis of a common fault and practical counsel
 - (D) a polemic against the leisured classes of the writer’s time

Questions 25–32. Read the following draft carefully before you choose your answers.

The following is a draft of a student’s argumentative essay for a school-board audience. Some sentences have been numbered so that you can refer to them in answering the questions. The draft may contain flaws that you are asked to correct.

1. Every Friday, nearly one in four students at Millbrook High School is absent. (2) Attendance records from the district office show that Friday absences have exceeded those of every other weekday for three consecutive years. (3) The school board should consider changing the calendar.
2. A four-day week would, first, save the district money. (5) Schools that close on Fridays spend less on transportation, utilities, and substitute teachers. (6) Many districts have seen real savings from this change. (7) A four-day week would also benefit teachers. (8) A free Friday would give them a regular day for planning, grading, and training, which would leave their other four days more focused.
3. Some parents are panicking that students who depend on school for meals and supervision will be abandoned on Fridays. (10) This concern is serious, but the district could keep cafeterias and a supervised study room open on Fridays for the families who need them.

- 25.** The writer wants to revise sentence 3 so that it presents a clear, defensible claim and previews the reasoning of the paragraphs that follow. Which of the following versions of sentence 3 best accomplishes this goal?
- (A) Millbrook should adopt a four-day school week because Friday is the day when the most students are absent.
 - (B) Millbrook should adopt a four-day school week, a change that would save money, support teachers, and, with safeguards for vulnerable families, continue to serve the students who rely on school.
 - (C) A four-day school week is a calendar in which classes are held Monday through Thursday.
 - (D) Many districts across the country have debated whether a four-day school week is a good idea.
- 26.** The writer wants to add a sentence after sentence 2 that establishes why the attendance pattern matters to the argument that follows. Which of the following sentences best accomplishes this goal?
- (A) A calendar that so many students already skip on one day of five deserves to be reconsidered rather than defended out of habit.
 - (B) School calendars in the United States were originally designed around the needs of farming families.
 - (C) Students who skip school on Fridays should be disciplined more severely by their principals.
 - (D) Attendance data can be difficult to interpret because schools define absences in different ways.
- 27.** The writer wants to replace sentence 6 with a sentence that provides specific evidence for the claim in sentence 4. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?
- (A) Many people believe that shorter weeks produce meaningful savings.
 - (B) Teachers in some districts have said that they enjoy the extra day off.
 - (C) The four-day week is also popular in rural areas where students travel long distances.
 - (D) In a survey of twelve districts in neighboring counties, annual transportation costs fell by an average of 11 percent after the switch to a four-day schedule.
- 28.** Which of the following versions of sentence 7 most effectively signals the shift from the financial benefits of the proposal to a different kind of benefit?
- (A) However, a four-day week would benefit teachers.
 - (B) In conclusion, a four-day week would benefit teachers.
 - (C) Money is not the only reason to make the change; a four-day week would also benefit teachers.
 - (D) Teachers are an important part of any school community.
- 29.** The writer wants to combine sentences 4 and 5 to clarify the relationship between the claim and its support. Which of the following is the best combination?
- (A) A four-day week would, first, save the district money, schools that close on Fridays spend less on transportation, utilities, and substitute teachers.
 - (B) A four-day week would, first, save the district money, because schools that close on Fridays spend less on transportation, utilities, and substitute teachers.
 - (C) Although a four-day week would save the district money, schools that close on Fridays spend less on transportation, utilities, and substitute teachers.
 - (D) Schools that close on Fridays spend less on transportation, utilities, and substitute teachers, so a four-day week would not save the district money.
- 30.** Which of the following versions of sentence 9 best maintains the formal, respectful tone of the draft?
- (A) Some parents are freaking out over the idea that students who rely on school for meals and supervision will be dumped on Fridays.
 - (B) Parents who oppose the plan have apparently not considered that students who depend on school for meals

and supervision would have nowhere to go on Fridays.

(C) Some parents are concerned that students who depend on school for meals and supervision would lack both on Fridays.

(D) It is obvious that students who depend on school for meals and supervision will suffer on Fridays, as some parents have noted.

31. The writer is considering deleting sentence 8. Should the writer make this change?

(A) Yes, because the sentence repeats information already given in sentence 7.

(B) Yes, because the sentence shifts the discussion from teachers to students.

(C) No, because the sentence introduces the counterargument that follows in the next paragraph.

(D) No, because the sentence explains how the change would benefit teachers, which supports the claim in sentence 7.

32. The writer wants to add a concluding sentence after sentence 10 that reinforces the line of reasoning of the draft. Which of the following sentences best accomplishes this goal?

(A) By pairing a shorter week with protections for the families who rely on school most, Millbrook can cut costs and strengthen instruction without leaving its most vulnerable students behind.

(B) Many other districts will be watching closely to see what Millbrook decides.

(C) The four-day week is not a perfect solution, and the board may wish to keep studying the question for several years.

(D) Fridays, after all, are the day when most students would rather be anywhere but school.

Questions 33–40. Read the following draft carefully before you choose your answers.

The following is a draft of a student's essay for a school newspaper. Some sentences have been numbered so that you can refer to them in answering the questions. The draft may contain flaws that you are asked to correct.

1. When budgets tighten, school music programs are often the first to be cut. (2) The usual justification is that music is a luxury, a pleasant extra that can be sacrificed so that "core" subjects can be protected. (3) Learning to play an instrument is, however, a form of training that serves the very skills those subjects demand.

2. Playing an instrument requires sustained attention. (5) A violinist cannot half-listen: every note must be heard, judged, and corrected within a fraction of a second. (6) Studying an instrument therefore improves students' performance in every academic subject. (7) Learning an instrument also teaches perseverance. (8) A beginner must practice scales for weeks before a recognizable piece emerges, and no amount of talent can shorten that interval.

3. Some critics argue that chess or team sports could offer the same benefits at lower cost. (10) Chess and sports do build discipline, but music adds something neither provides: the experience of creating beauty for an audience, which gives practice a purpose beyond the practicing. (11) Schools that cut music programs are removing more than an elective.

33. The writer wants to add a sentence before sentence 1 that introduces the topic and engages an audience of school board members. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?

(A) Music has been an important part of human life for thousands of years.

(B) Many students enjoy playing instruments, and some go on to become professional musicians.

(C) Every spring, as school boards search for places to trim, the band room is among the first doors to be closed.

(D) School boards should be ashamed of the decisions they make each year about music.

34. The writer wants to qualify the claim in sentence 6 so that it is more defensible. Which of the following versions of sentence 6 best accomplishes this goal?

(A) Studying an instrument guarantees success in every academic subject.

(B) Studying an instrument never harms a student's academic performance.

(C) Studying an instrument has no clear effect on a student's academic performance.

(D) Studying an instrument for several years is associated with stronger attention and memory, abilities that support learning in many academic subjects.

35. The writer wants to add evidence after sentence 6 to support the claim that studying an instrument benefits students' thinking. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?

(A) In one study of 300 middle school students, those who had taken two years of lessons scored higher on tests of working memory than those who had not.

(B) Several famous scientists have been accomplished amateur musicians.

(C) Many students say that practicing an instrument helps them to relax.

(D) Instruments such as the violin, the trumpet, and the piano differ greatly in how difficult they are to learn.

36. The writer wants to revise sentence 9 so that it signals the shift from supporting the thesis to acknowledging a counterargument. Which of the following versions of sentence 9 best accomplishes this goal?

(A) Furthermore, some critics argue that chess or team sports could offer the same benefits at lower cost.

(B) Skeptics may object, however, that chess or team sports could offer the same benefits at lower cost.

(C) For example, some critics argue that chess or team sports could offer the same benefits at lower cost.

(D) As a result, some critics argue that chess or team sports could offer the same benefits at lower cost.

37. The writer wants to develop the second paragraph by adding a sentence after sentence 8 that uses a comparison to illustrate the point about perseverance. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?

(A) Many famous musicians began playing before the age of ten.

(B) Practice schedules vary widely from one student to another.

(C) Music has been taught in American schools for more than a century.

(D) Like an athlete who trains for months before a single race, a young musician learns that progress is built from repetition.

38. The writer wants to combine sentences 4 and 5 to clarify the relationship between the claim and its explanation. Which of the following is the best combination?

(A) Playing an instrument requires sustained attention, a violinist cannot half-listen, every note must be heard, judged, and corrected within a fraction of a second.

(B) Playing an instrument requires sustained attention, but a violinist cannot half-listen because every note must be heard, judged, and corrected within a fraction of a second.

(C) Playing an instrument requires sustained attention: a violinist cannot half-listen, because every note must be heard, judged, and corrected within a fraction of a second.

(D) Playing an instrument requires sustained attention, so a violinist who cannot half-listen must hear, judge, and correct every note within a fraction of a second.

39. In sentence 2, the writer wants to replace “a pleasant extra” with a phrase that more precisely conveys the critics’ dismissive view of music while maintaining a formal tone. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) a fun thing to do
- (B) a decorative frill
- (C) a vital component
- (D) a source of controversy

40. The writer wants to add a concluding sentence after sentence 11 that reinforces the draft’s line of reasoning and leaves the audience with a sense of urgency. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) Music is enjoyable for students of all ages and backgrounds.
- (B) Some districts may find that they cannot afford to maintain music programs, and that is understandable.
- (C) A district that protects its band rooms is not indulging students; it is investing in the attention, patience, and shared purpose that every other classroom depends upon.
- (D) Students who do not play instruments can still learn perseverance in other ways, and they should be encouraged to do so.

Questions 41–45. Read the following draft carefully before you choose your answers.

The following is a draft of a student’s informational article for a community garden newsletter. Some sentences have been numbered so that you can refer to them in answering the questions. The draft may contain flaws that you are asked to correct.

1. Rooftop gardens may seem like a recent invention of environmentally minded cities, but the idea is thousands of years old. (2) The ancient Mesopotamians built terraced gardens atop their ziggurats, and the legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon, whether or not they existed as described, show that people long imagined cultivated roofs. (3) Back in the 1880s, New York’s fancy hotels and theaters were putting gardens on their roofs, and people just flocked up there to cool off in the summer. (4) Today, rooftop gardens serve purposes their earliest builders could hardly have imagined.
2. A planted roof absorbs rainwater that would otherwise rush into storm drains, and it insulates the building below, reducing the energy needed to heat and cool it. (6) Gardens on roofs also produce food. (7) In dense neighborhoods where ground-level land is scarce and expensive, a roof may be the only place to grow vegetables. (8) Cities are therefore beginning to treat roofs not as wasted space but as a resource.

41. The writer wants to revise sentence 1 so that it more effectively introduces both the historical and the practical focus of the article. Which of the following versions of sentence 1 best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) Rooftop gardens may seem like a recent invention of environmentally minded cities, but they have a history stretching back thousands of years and a set of uses that reaches well beyond decoration.
- (B) Rooftop gardens are becoming more popular in many cities, and people have many opinions about them.
- (C) Gardens can be planted in many places, including yards, windowsills, balconies, and roofs.
- (D) Ancient peoples built gardens on roofs for reasons that historians do not fully understand.

42. Which of the following versions of sentence 4 most effectively transitions from the historical discussion in the first paragraph to the contemporary uses discussed in the second?

- (A) In the same way, rooftop gardens today serve the same purposes their earliest builders intended.
- (B) For this reason, rooftop gardens serve purposes their earliest builders could hardly have imagined.

- (C) Meanwhile, rooftop gardens serve purposes their earliest builders could hardly have imagined.
- (D) Although early roof gardens were largely places of pleasure, today's serve purposes their earliest builders could hardly have imagined.

43. The writer wants to add a sentence after sentence 5 that provides specific evidence for the claim about rainwater. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) In one city's pilot program, green roofs retained more than half of the rainfall they received over the course of a year.
- (B) Many city residents say they would like to see more green space on top of buildings.
- (C) Some roofs are better suited to planting than others because of differences in their structure.
- (D) Storm drains in older cities are often overwhelmed during heavy rains.

44. The writer wants to combine sentences 6 and 7 to clarify the relationship between the ideas. Which of the following is the best combination?

- (A) Gardens on roofs also produce food, but in dense neighborhoods, where ground-level land is scarce and expensive, a roof may be the only place to grow vegetables.
- (B) Gardens on roofs also produce food, and in dense neighborhoods, where ground-level land is scarce and expensive, a roof may be the only place to grow vegetables.
- (C) Gardens on roofs also produce food, so in dense neighborhoods where ground-level land is scarce and expensive, a roof may be the only place to grow vegetables.
- (D) Gardens on roofs also produce food in dense neighborhoods, where ground-level land is scarce and expensive, a roof may be the only place to grow vegetables.

45. Which of the following versions of sentence 3 best maintains the formal, concise style of the article?

- (A) Back in the 1880s, New York's hotels and theaters put gardens on their roofs, where people hung out to beat the heat.
- (B) In the 1880s, New York's hotels and theaters revolutionized urban life forever by opening rooftop gardens.
- (C) In the 1880s, New York's hotels and theaters opened rooftop gardens as summer retreats where patrons could escape the heat.
- (D) In the 1880s, there were many hotels and theaters in New York, and some of them had rooftop gardens, which were places where people could go in the summer when it was hot.

END OF SECTION I

If you finish before time is called, you may check your work on this section only. Do not turn to Section II until you are told to do so.

Section II: Free-Response Questions

Total time: 2 hours 15 minutes. Number of questions: 3.

Directions: Section II of this exam requires answers in essay form. Carefully read the directions for each question. It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading Question 1 (the sources) and 40 minutes writing your response. Plan to spend about 40 minutes on each of Questions 2 and 3. Each question counts for one-third of

the total Section II score. You may use the time in any way you wish, and you may write the essays in any order. Your responses will be judged on the quality of your argument and your writing, not on the length of your essay or the opinions you express.

Question 1 (Synthesis)

Suggested time: 55 minutes (15 minutes to read the sources, 40 minutes to write).

The sources below were written for this practice exam and are modeled on the types of sources that appear on the AP Exam; statistics are illustrative. Organizations, publications, and people named in the sources are fictional.

For generations, most American public schools have followed a calendar built around a long summer break of ten to twelve weeks. In recent decades, some districts have replaced it with a “year-round” calendar. Some of these calendars keep the same 180 days of instruction but spread them across the twelve months, with shorter breaks in every season; others lengthen the school year. Supporters say that year-round calendars reduce the learning that students lose over the summer. Critics say that the benefits are modest, the costs are real, and the traditional summer break has values of its own.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize material from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-written essay in which you develop a position on the value, if any, of year-round school calendars compared with the traditional calendar.

Make sure that your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Whitcomb and Ortega-Hayes)

Source B (Aldous)

Source C (Brandt)

Source D (State Department of Education table)

Source E (Okafor interview)

Source F (cartoon)

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Select and use evidence from at least three of the provided sources to support your line of reasoning. Indicate clearly the sources used through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sources may be cited as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the description in parentheses.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Source A

Whitcomb, Dana R., and Luis Ortega-Hayes. “Summer, Memory, and the School Calendar: What the Evidence Can and Cannot Tell Us.” *Review of Education Policy Research*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2022, pp. 211–229.

The following is excerpted from an article in a peer-reviewed journal in which two education researchers review studies of summer learning loss and calendar reform.

The summer learning loss hypothesis holds that students forget some of what they have learned during a long break from instruction. The evidence for the hypothesis is stronger than skeptics allow and weaker than advocates claim. Across the studies we reviewed, students lost on average about one month of mathematics learning over the summer, with smaller and less consistent losses in reading. The losses were not evenly distributed. Children from lower-income households, who have fewer opportunities for enrichment and less access to books and programs over the summer, lost more reading skill than their peers, and the gap accumulates across the elementary years.

It does not follow, however, that redistributing the same number of instructional days across twelve months will close the gap. Studies of balanced calendars, which keep the 180-day year but replace the long summer with shorter breaks, find effects on achievement that are positive but small, and often statistically indistinguishable from zero. The most promising results come from districts that paired a new calendar with intersession programs offering targeted tutoring during the shorter breaks. In those districts the calendar appeared to serve less as a cure than as a delivery mechanism: it made extra instruction easier to schedule. Policy makers should therefore ask not whether year-round schedules are better in general but what a district intends to do with the time that the new calendar makes available.

Source B

Aldous, Priya. "Riverbend's Calendar Experiment, Two Years In." *The Riverbend Courier*, 14 Sept. 2024, p. A1.

The following is excerpted from a news report in a local newspaper about a district that moved its elementary schools to a year-round calendar.

When Riverbend's nine elementary schools moved to a balanced calendar two years ago, the district promised that the change would "reset the rhythm of learning." Today the results are as mixed as the opinions. Principal Marta Ellison says her teachers spend far less time reviewing at the start of the year. "In the old system, the first month was spent reteaching," she said. "Now the review after a break takes a week." District data show reading scores for low-income third graders rising four points over two years, while scores for other students were essentially unchanged.

The change has not been painless. Because Riverbend's middle and high schools remain on the traditional schedule, many families now have children on different calendars. "I have a fourth grader off in October and a seventh grader in class," said Tomas Reyes, a father of three. "Finding child care in the middle of fall is harder than finding it in June." The district's summer swim program lost nearly a third of its enrollment, and the county parks department reported that fewer teenagers applied for lifeguard jobs. Meanwhile, because school buildings now operate through July, the district's electricity bill for that month was \$212,000 higher than the year before. Superintendent Alan Peretz called the figure "a cost we expected and can defend," but acknowledged that the board has not yet decided whether to extend the calendar to the upper grades.

Source C

Brandt, Helen. "Let Summer Be Summer." *The Meridian Ledger*, 3 June 2023.

The following is an opinion column by the director of a community summer-camp program.

Every June I watch the same transformation. Children who arrive at camp wary and scheduled leave in August sunburned, scraped, and sure of themselves. They have learned to paddle a canoe, to settle an argument without an adult, and to be bored, which is the beginning of every interesting idea a person ever has. Defenders of year-round school treat these weeks as an empty space, a hole into which learning leaks away. I call them the part of the year when children grow into people.

The case for the new calendar rests on an equity argument: that poor children forget more over the summer than rich ones. That is probably true, and it is a scandal. But the scandal is the poverty, not the calendar. A child without books at home will lack them in October as well as in July. Instead of rearranging the school year for everyone, we should pay for what the poorest children are missing: libraries open in July, free camps, summer jobs for teenagers.

Meanwhile, the costs of the new calendar fall on families who can least afford them. Parents who work hourly jobs cannot predict child care for a fall break scattered across the school year. Teenagers who once earned a season's wages scooping ice cream or guarding pools find that those jobs have vanished. A calendar built for the convenience of the school is not the same as a calendar built for the good of the child.

Source D

Calloway State Department of Education, Office of Research and Evaluation. "Calendar Options in Local Districts: A Three-Year Review." March 2023, p. 14.

The following table is adapted from a state government report that compared three groups of districts, classified by the school calendar they adopted.

Table 1. Average change over three years in selected measures, by calendar type (24 districts)

MEASURE	TRADITIONAL CALENDAR (8 DISTRICTS)	BALANCED CALENDAR, 180 DAYS (10 DISTRICTS)	EXTENDED-YEAR CALENDAR, 200 DAYS (6 DISTRICTS)
Change in students proficient in math (percentage points)	+1.1	+2.4	+4.7
Change in students proficient in reading (percentage points)	+0.8	+1.9	+3.6
Change in reading proficiency, low-income students (percentage points)	+0.6	+2.7	+4.1
Change in per-pupil operating cost	+2.9%	+4.1%	+9.6%
Teachers reporting "high burnout" (percent of teachers surveyed)	31%	27%	38%

Note: Districts were not randomly assigned to calendar types. Cost changes are adjusted for inflation.

Source E

Okafor, Jerome. "Interview: Why Our School Went Year-Round." Teaching Forward (blog), 19 Feb. 2024.

The following is excerpted from an interview on a blog for classroom teachers with the principal of an elementary school in which most students come from low-income families.

Q: Why did your school change its calendar?

A: We kept seeing the same pattern. Children who left in June reading at grade level came back in September a half-year behind, and the ones who started furthest behind came back furthest. We could spend the fall catching up, or we could stop the slide.

Q: What does the new calendar actually do?

A: By itself, not much, to be honest. A calendar is just a container. What matters is what we put in it. During each three-week break, we invite about a hundred students who are struggling to attend an optional intersession, with small-group tutoring in the mornings and sports or art in the afternoons. In the old system we never had a way to reach those children in July. They were simply gone. Now they are away for three weeks at most, and they come back to us.

Q: What are the downsides?

A: Plenty. Some families lost the camps and relatives they relied on in summer. Staffing intersessions is hard, and some of my teachers are tired. But when I look at a child who read twelve words a minute in October and sixty by spring, I don't think a longer break would have served her better. I would not tell every district to do this. I would tell them to know what problem they are solving.

Source F

Vasquez-Lind, R. Editorial cartoon. The Meridian Ledger, 21 Aug. 2023. © 2023 R. Vasquez-Lind. Reprinted by permission.

The following is an editorial cartoon published in a regional newspaper.

[A cartoon fills the frame. A large wall calendar shows all twelve months, each shaded the same color and each stamped "SCHOOL." In every month, one or two small squares are circled in red and labeled "BREAK." A boy with a backpack stands in front of the calendar holding a sun hat. Beside him, a man wearing a name tag that reads "SCHOOL BOARD" points to the calendar with a long pointer. The boy says, "So summer's still here. It's just been cut into pieces." The board member answers, "Think of it as summer in bite-size servings." In the lower corner, a banner reads "THE NEW CALENDAR."]

Question 2 (Rhetorical Analysis)

Suggested time: 40 minutes.

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) was the sixteenth president of the United States. He delivered the following address on March 4, 1865, at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., when he was sworn in for a second term. The Civil War, which had begun in 1861, was in its fourth year, and the Union's victory appeared close. Lincoln spoke to a large crowd gathered outdoors at the Capitol, which included members of Congress, soldiers, and citizens of the Union. Read the passage carefully. Write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Lincoln makes to convey his message about the causes of the Civil War and the responsibilities of the nation as the war nears its end.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer's rhetorical choices.
- Select and use specific and relevant evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Fellow-Countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, (5) during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably (10) satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, (15) devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

20. One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the (25) Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a (30) result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of (35) neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed (40) time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do

we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass (45) away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

21. With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all (55) nations.

Question 3 (Argument)

Suggested time: 40 minutes.

In Plato's account of his trial, Socrates tells the jury that "the unexamined life is not worth living." Since then, many thinkers have agreed that a life lived without reflection is a life lived by habit, convention, and chance. Yet it is also true that much of the world's work, from raising children to building bridges to caring for the sick, is done by people who have little time to ask what their lives mean. We often admire the thoughtful person who weighs every choice, and we often admire the person who simply acts.

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which the claim that the unexamined life is not worth living is valid.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible position.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

END OF EXAM

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