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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE · FREE RESOURCE

AP English Language and Composition — Practice Exam 3

Cover Information

SECTION	QUESTIONS	TIME	WEIGHT
Section I: Multiple Choice	45 questions (A–D)	60 minutes	45%
Section II: Free Response	3 essays	2 hours 15 minutes (includes 15-minute reading period)	55%

Total testing time: 3 hours 15 minutes.

About this exam. This practice exam follows the format of the current digital (Bluebook) AP English Language and Composition Exam. Section I contains five question sets: two sets of Reading questions based on published nonfiction passages and three sets of Writing questions based on student drafts. Section II contains the three free-response questions (Synthesis, Rhetorical Analysis, Argument). The Reading passages in Section I and the passage in Question 2 are public-domain texts reproduced from standard editions; the student drafts and the synthesis sources were written for this exam.

General directions. Work on one section at a time. There is no penalty for guessing, so answer every question. In Section II, you may begin writing at any point during the 15-minute reading period, and you may work on the three questions in any order. Suggested time: Question 1, 15 minutes reading plus 40 minutes writing; Question 2, 40 minutes; Question 3, 40 minutes.

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

Time — 60 minutes. 45 Questions.

Directions: This section consists of selections from prose works and questions on their content, form, and style, together with drafts of student writing and questions about how those drafts might be revised. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question and record your choice. For the Reading passages, line numbers appear in parentheses at the start of every fifth line of the passage as it would be laid out in print. For the Writing passages, sentences are numbered in parentheses.

Passage 1 — Reading (Questions 1–12)

The following passage is excerpted from the opening chapter, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," of The Souls of Black Folk (1903), a collection of essays by the American scholar and activist W. E. B. Du Bois. The book was written for a general reading public, both Black and white, at a time when racial segregation was expanding across the United States.

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and (5) then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or, I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a (10) problem? I answer seldom a word.

And yet, being a problem is a strange experience,—peculiar even for one who has never been anything else, save perhaps in babyhood and in Europe. It is in the early days of rollicking boyhood that the revelation first bursts upon one, all in a day, as it were. I remember well when the shadow swept (15) across me. I was a little thing, away up in the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghkanic to the sea. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting-cards—ten cents a package—and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,—refused it (20) peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky (25) and great wandering shadows. That sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads. Alas, with the years all this fine contempt began to fade; for the words I longed for, and all their dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine. But they should not keep these prizes, I said; some, all, (30) I would wrest from them. Just how I would do it I could never decide: by reading law, by healing the sick, by telling the wonderful tales that swam in my head,—some way. With other black boys the strife was not so fiercely sunny: their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy, or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything white; or (35) wasted itself in a bitter cry, Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house? The shades of the prison-house closed round about us all: walls strait and stubborn to the whitest, but relentlessly narrow, tall, and unscalable to sons of night who must plod darkly on in resignation, or beat unavailing palms against the stone, or steadily, half (40) hopelessly, watch the streak of blue above.

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of (45) the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one (50) dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too (55) much to teach the world and Africa. He would not

bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.

60. This, then, is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius.

Note: "Mechanicsville" (line 7) was the site of an 1862 Civil War battle; "the shades of the prison-house" (line 36) echoes a phrase from Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality."

1. The passage is best understood as a response to which of the following exigences?
 - (A) The persistence of racial violence in the Southern states after the Civil War
 - (B) The persistent but unspoken question of what it means to be regarded as a "problem" by one's fellow citizens
 - (C) The failure of New England schools to prepare Black students for professional careers
 - (D) The growing popularity of theories that ranked the world's peoples in a fixed hierarchy
2. In the first paragraph (lines 1–10), the writer's primary purpose is to
 - (A) condemn the hypocrisy of Northerners who claim sympathy with Black Americans
 - (B) explain why he has chosen to write about his private experiences
 - (C) demonstrate that white Americans are incapable of understanding racial prejudice
 - (D) establish the uneasy, indirect relationship between himself and the world he addresses
3. The phrase "reduce the boiling to a simmer" (line 8) is best described as
 - (A) wry, because it treats the questioner's indignant metaphor as a temperature to be managed
 - (B) bitter, because it exposes the writer's suppressed rage at his questioners
 - (C) conciliatory, because it suggests that the writer shares the questioner's outrage
 - (D) detached, because it reduces a moral issue to a scientific observation
4. The anecdote of the visiting-cards (lines 16–22) functions primarily as evidence that
 - (A) New England in the writer's childhood was as segregated as the South
 - (B) children are more honest about racial prejudice than adults are
 - (C) the recognition of one's difference can arrive suddenly, through a small social gesture rather than an overt act of violence
 - (D) the writer's early ambitions were formed in reaction to a single hostile classmate
5. In context, the word "common" (line 24) most nearly means
 - (A) vulgar
 - (B) ordinary
 - (C) undifferentiated
 - (D) mutual
6. The sentence beginning "Alas, with the years" (line 27) marks a shift in the second paragraph from
 - (A) youthful defiance to a recognition of exclusion from opportunity
 - (B) nostalgic reminiscence to a direct appeal for reform
 - (C) personal narrative to historical analysis
 - (D) contempt for white society to admiration of its achievements
7. In lines 32–36 ("With other black boys . . . mine own house?"), the writer qualifies his account of his own boyhood by
 - (A) suggesting that his success in school was more a matter of luck than of merit

- (B) conceding that most Black boys of his generation lacked his ambition
(C) admitting that he, too, eventually succumbed to silent hatred
(D) acknowledging that his defiant response to exclusion was not representative of others' experiences
8. The series of three parallel clauses that ends the second paragraph ("plod darkly on . . . streak of blue above," lines 38–40) primarily serves to
(A) suggest that escape from the "prison-house" is possible for those who persist
(B) enumerate the narrow range of responses available to those confined, emphasizing constraint
(C) contrast the writer's own optimism with the despair of his peers
(D) shift the passage's focus from the individual to the nation as a whole
9. In the third paragraph (lines 41–50), the writer develops the concept of "double-consciousness" primarily through
(A) a historical narrative tracing its origins to slavery
(B) a comparison between Black Americans and the ancient peoples listed in line 41
(C) definition reinforced by figurative language and balanced phrasing
(D) a series of rhetorical questions addressed to white readers
10. Which of the following best states the central claim of the fourth paragraph (lines 51–59)?
(A) Black Americans must choose between loyalty to Africa and loyalty to America.
(B) Black Americans seek a reconciled identity that preserves both their heritage and their claim to full American citizenship.
(C) America has more to teach the world than Africa does.
(D) The "doors of Opportunity" will open only when white Americans abandon their prejudice.
11. In lines 54–57 ("He would not Africanize . . . for the world"), the writer most directly anticipates the concerns of an audience that
(A) fears that Black advancement must take the form of either separatism or total assimilation
(B) believes that Black Americans have no distinctive cultural contribution to make
(C) doubts that any reconciliation between the races is possible
(D) assumes that the writer speaks only for educated Northern Black men
12. Which of the following best describes the line of reasoning the passage develops as a whole?
(A) It refutes a series of common misconceptions about Black Americans and then proposes a program of reform.
(B) It presents an abstract theory of identity and then illustrates it with examples from history.
(C) It compares the experience of Black Americans with that of other oppressed peoples in order to argue for racial unity.
(D) It moves from a personal encounter with exclusion to a general diagnosis of divided identity and finally to a statement of collective aspiration.

Passage 2 — Reading (Questions 13–24)

The following passage is the opening of the Introduction to A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) by the English writer Mary Wollstonecraft. Written in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the book addressed an educated readership of both sexes and argued for women's access to rational education.

After considering the historic page, and viewing the living world with anxious solicitude, the most melancholy emotions of sorrowful indignation have depressed my spirits, and I have sighed when obliged to confess, that either nature has made a great difference between man and man, or that the (5) civilization which has hitherto taken place in the world has been very partial. I have turned over various books written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but what has been the result?—a profound conviction that the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the (10) misery I deplore; and that women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes, originating from one hasty conclusion. The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state; for, like the flowers which are planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to (15) beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity.—One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human (20) creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; and the understanding of the sex has been so bubbled by this specious homage, that the civilized women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities (25) and virtues exact respect.

In a treatise, therefore, on female rights and manners, the works which have been particularly written for their improvement must not be overlooked; especially when it is asserted, in direct terms, that the minds of women are enfeebled by false refinement; that the books of instruction, (30) written by men of genius, have had the same tendency as more frivolous productions; and that, in the true style of Mahometanism,¹ they are treated as a kind of subordinate beings, and not as a part of the human species, when improvable reason is allowed to be the dignified distinction which raises men above the brute creation, and puts a natural sceptre in a feeble (35) hand.

Yet, because I am a woman, I would not lead my readers to suppose that I mean violently to agitate the contested question respecting the equality or inferiority of the sex; but as the subject lies in my way, and I cannot pass it over without subjecting the main tendency of my reasoning to (40) misconstruction, I shall stop a moment to deliver, in a few words, my opinion.—In the government of the physical world it is observable that the female in point of strength is, in general, inferior to the male. This is the law of nature; and it does not appear to be suspended or abrogated in favour of woman. A degree of physical superiority cannot, therefore, be (45) denied—and it is a noble prerogative! But not content with this natural pre-eminence, men endeavour to sink us still lower, merely to render us alluring objects for a moment; and women, intoxicated by the adoration which men, under the influence of their senses, pay them, do not seek to obtain a durable interest in their hearts, or to become the friends of the (50) fellow creatures who find amusement in their society.

I am aware of an obvious inference:—from every quarter have I heard exclamations against masculine women; but where are they to be found? If by this appellation men mean to inveigh against their ardour in hunting, shooting, and gaming, I shall most cordially join in the cry; but if it be (55) against the imitation of manly virtues, or, more properly speaking, the attainment of those talents and virtues, the exercise of which ennobles the human character, and which raise females in the scale of animal being, when they are comprehensively termed mankind;—all those who view them with a philosophic eye must, I should think, wish with me, that they may every day (60) grow more and more masculine.

This discussion naturally divides the subject. I shall first consider women in the grand light of human creatures, who, in common with men, are placed on this earth to unfold their faculties; and afterwards I shall more particularly point out their peculiar designation.

¹ *Mahometanism: an eighteenth-century term for Islam, which many European writers of the period wrongly believed denied that women possessed souls.*

- 13.** The opening sentence (lines 1–6) establishes the writer’s persona as that of
- (A) an impartial historian summarizing the findings of earlier scholars
 - (B) an outraged victim demanding redress for personal injuries
 - (C) a reflective observer whose conclusions have been forced on her reluctantly by study and experience
 - (D) a satirist who exaggerates her distress in order to mock sentimental writers
- 14.** Which of the following best states the overarching thesis of the first paragraph (lines 1–25)?
- (A) The weakness attributed to women is the product of a mistaken system of education rather than of nature.
 - (B) Women are naturally inferior to men and should therefore be educated differently.
 - (C) Books on education have been written almost exclusively by men.
 - (D) Women of the present century are less virtuous than women of earlier ages.
- 15.** The comparison of women to “flowers which are planted in too rich a soil” (lines 13–17) primarily emphasizes that
- (A) women, like flowers, are naturally delicate and require protection
 - (B) cultivation aimed solely at beauty produces a showy but premature decay
 - (C) women’s beauty is their most valuable social asset
 - (D) the “fastidious eye” of men is the true source of women’s happiness
- 16.** In context, the word “bubbled” (line 22) most nearly means
- (A) excited
 - (B) inflated
 - (C) purified
 - (D) deceived
- 17.** In the second paragraph (lines 26–35), the writer supports her claim that books addressed to women deserve scrutiny by asserting that
- (A) such books are too frivolous to have had any lasting influence
 - (B) women rarely read the books of instruction written for them
 - (C) even works by men of genius have had the same weakening effect as frivolous ones
 - (D) books written by women have been systematically suppressed
- 18.** The function of the third paragraph (lines 36–50) in the passage as a whole is to
- (A) introduce the historical evidence on which the argument will rest
 - (B) dispose of a potentially distracting question so that the main argument will not be misconstrued
 - (C) concede that the writer’s opponents have the stronger position
 - (D) shift the discussion from women’s education to men’s conduct
- 19.** The writer’s concession in lines 41–45 (“In the government . . . noble prerogative!”) primarily serves to
- (A) demonstrate that she accepts the social subordination of women as natural
 - (B) undercut her own argument by admitting its central weakness
 - (C) ridicule men who take pride in their physical strength
 - (D) establish her fairness before charging men with pressing their natural advantage beyond its limits

20. In lines 45–50 (“But not content . . . in their society”), the writer develops her argument primarily through
- (A) cause and effect, tracing how men’s flattery produces women’s complacency
 - (B) comparison and contrast between women of different nations
 - (C) a personal anecdote illustrating the dangers of adoration
 - (D) an appeal to the authority of earlier moral philosophers
21. In the fourth paragraph (lines 51–60), the writer responds to the objection against “masculine women” by
- (A) denying that any such women exist
 - (B) distinguishing two senses of the term, conceding the first and embracing the second
 - (C) arguing that men who hunt, shoot, and game are themselves unmanly
 - (D) insisting that the term is too vague to be worth discussing
22. The phrase “all those who view them with a philosophic eye” (lines 58–59) appeals most directly to readers who
- (A) are suspicious of abstract reasoning and prefer practical advice
 - (B) regard women’s beauty as their chief distinction
 - (C) pride themselves on reasoning impartially rather than from prejudice
 - (D) believe that philosophy is an unsuitable pursuit for women
23. The final paragraph (lines 61–64) indicates that the writer will organize the body of her argument by
- (A) comparing the education of women in England with that in France
 - (B) answering her critics one at a time in the order in which they wrote
 - (C) narrating the history of women’s education from antiquity to the present
 - (D) treating women first as human beings in general and then in their particular roles
24. Which of the following best describes the relationship between the third paragraph (lines 36–50) and the fourth paragraph (lines 51–60)?
- (A) The third delivers the writer’s opinion on a contested question; the fourth anticipates and answers an inference readers are likely to draw from it.
 - (B) The third describes a problem; the fourth proposes a specific remedy.
 - (C) The third concerns the past; the fourth turns to the future.
 - (D) The third appeals to emotion; the fourth appeals to the authority of science.

Passage 3 — Writing (Questions 25–32)

The passage below is a draft.

1. Every school day, the cafeteria at a typical American high school hands out hundreds of plastic forks, straws, and clamshell containers that are used for twenty minutes and then thrown away. (2) Most of these items cannot be recycled by municipal programs because they are contaminated with food or made from low-grade resins. (3) Some districts have responded by replacing single-use plastics with compostable or reusable alternatives. (4) School boards should ban single-use plastics in cafeterias because doing so reduces waste, teaches students responsibility, and is affordable over time.
2. The environmental case is straightforward. (6) A 2023 audit by one Midwestern district found that cafeteria plastics made up nearly forty percent of the waste its schools sent to landfills. (7) Plastic that ends up in landfills can persist for centuries, and fragments that escape into waterways break down into microplastics that have been detected in fish, drinking water, and human blood.

3. Critics argue that compostable utensils and reusable trays cost more than plastic. (9) The upfront cost is higher, but a district in Oregon reported that its dishwashing system paid for itself within three years through reduced purchasing and hauling fees. (10) Schools teach students to think about consequences, and a cafeteria that practices what the classroom preaches makes that lesson concrete.

25. The writer wants to add a sentence at the beginning of the first paragraph (before sentence 1) to engage the audience and introduce the topic. Which of the following would best accomplish this goal?

- (A) Plastic is a synthetic material derived from petroleum that was first mass-produced in the twentieth century.
- (B) Lunch lasts about half an hour, but the fork a student throws away afterward will outlast the school building.
- (C) Everyone knows that plastic is bad for the environment, so it is obvious that schools should stop using it.
- (D) This essay will argue that school cafeterias should stop using plastic products.

26. The writer wants to qualify the claim in sentence 4 (reproduced below) so that it is more defensible while still previewing the structure of the argument.

School boards should ban single-use plastics in cafeterias because doing so reduces waste, teaches students responsibility, and is affordable over time.

Which of the following versions best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) School boards must ban all plastics in cafeterias immediately, because waste, irresponsibility, and cost are unacceptable.
- (B) School boards should consider the issue of single-use plastics, which has many sides.
- (C) Although some people disagree, school boards should ban single-use plastics because it is the right thing to do.
- (D) School boards should phase out single-use plastics in cafeterias wherever compostable or reusable alternatives are available, because doing so reduces waste, teaches students responsibility, and becomes affordable over time.

27. The writer wants to add a sentence after sentence 6 to explain how the evidence in sentence 6 supports the claim in sentence 5. Which of the following sentences would best accomplish this goal?

- (A) Because cafeteria waste is generated five days a week in every school building, even a modest reduction per meal compounds into tons of material kept out of landfills each year.
- (B) The audit was conducted by a team of environmental science students and their teacher.
- (C) Forty percent is a very large number, which shows that the problem is serious.
- (D) Other districts have conducted similar audits and found similar results.

28. The writer wants to add evidence after sentence 9 to support the claim that the costs of alternatives decline over time. Which of the following would best accomplish this goal?

- (A) One student interviewed said she preferred metal forks because they do not snap in half.
- (B) An estimated eight million tons of plastic enter the world's oceans every year.
- (C) A university study of twelve districts that switched to reusable trays found that per-meal costs fell below those of disposables by the second year.
- (D) Many experts agree that the costs of reusable systems fall over time.

29. Which of the following versions of sentence 10 most effectively transitions from the discussion of cost in sentence 9 to the writer's final reason?

- (A) Schools teach students to think about consequences, and a cafeteria that practices what the classroom preaches makes that lesson concrete. (as it is now)
- (B) Even setting the savings aside, a ban would serve the school's central mission: schools teach students to

think about consequences, and a cafeteria that practices what the classroom preaches makes that lesson concrete.

(C) For example, schools teach students to think about consequences, and a cafeteria that practices what the classroom preaches makes that lesson concrete.

(D) In contrast, schools teach students to think about consequences, and a cafeteria that practices what the classroom preaches makes that lesson concrete.

30. In sentence 10, the writer wants to replace the phrase “practices what the classroom preaches” with wording that maintains the formal tone of the passage. Which of the following best accomplishes this goal?

(A) walks the walk

(B) does its part

(C) gets with the program

(D) models the principles taught in its classrooms

31. The writer wants to combine sentences 5 and 6 (reproduced below) to clarify the relationship between the ideas.

The environmental case is straightforward. A 2023 audit by one Midwestern district found that cafeteria plastics made up nearly forty percent of the waste its schools sent to landfills.

Which of the following is the best combination?

(A) The environmental case is straightforward: a 2023 audit by one Midwestern district found that cafeteria plastics made up nearly forty percent of the waste its schools sent to landfills.

(B) The environmental case is straightforward, however, a 2023 audit by one Midwestern district found that cafeteria plastics made up nearly forty percent of the waste its schools sent to landfills.

(C) The environmental case is straightforward, although a 2023 audit by one Midwestern district found that cafeteria plastics made up nearly forty percent of the waste its schools sent to landfills.

(D) A 2023 audit by one Midwestern district found that cafeteria plastics made up nearly forty percent of the waste its schools sent to landfills, and the environmental case is straightforward.

32. The writer wants to revise sentence 8 so that it acknowledges the concerns of budget-conscious school administrators more fairly before responding to them. Which of the following versions best achieves this goal?

(A) Critics who care more about money than about the planet argue that compostable utensils and reusable trays cost more than plastic.

(B) Some people think compostable utensils cost more, but they are wrong.

(C) Administrators who must balance tight budgets reasonably worry that compostable utensils and reusable trays cost more than plastic.

(D) Critics argue that compostable utensils and reusable trays cost more than plastic, which is a common misconception.

Passage 4 — Writing (Questions 33–40)

The passage below is a draft.

1. In 2018, fewer than two dozen high schools in the United States fielded competitive video game teams; today, more than 8,000 do. (2) Supporters of these programs want schools to recognize esports as varsity sports, with letters, coaches, and a place in the athletic department. (3) Opponents say that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics. (4) Esports deserve varsity status.

2. Varsity sports exist to teach teamwork, discipline, and resilience under pressure, and competitive gaming demands all three. (6) A five-player team in a strategy game must coordinate decisions in fractions of a second, review recordings of its losses, and practice for hours each week. (7) Having never joined a traditional team, esports gave many students their first experience of representing their school.
3. It is true that gaming does not raise a student's heart rate the way sprinting does. (9) Chess, bowling, and rifle are already recognized as varsity sports by many state associations. (10) The definition of a sport has always depended on organized competition and skill, not on how much a participant sweats.
4. Schools that embrace esports will reach students who have long been on the sidelines.
- 33.** The writer wants to revise sentence 4 so that it presents a defensible thesis that previews the structure of the argument. Which of the following versions best accomplishes this goal?
- (A) Because esports develop the same qualities that justify traditional athletics, and because the definition of a sport has never depended on physical exertion, schools should grant them varsity status.
- (B) Esports are the future, and schools that do not embrace them will be left behind.
- (C) There are many reasons to think about whether esports deserve varsity status.
- (D) Esports are more popular than football among today's students, so they obviously deserve varsity status.
- 34.** The writer wants to revise sentence 3 so that it represents the opposing view fairly to an audience that includes skeptical coaches and athletic directors. Which of the following versions best achieves this goal?
- (A) Opponents, who are mostly older people unfamiliar with gaming, say that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics.
- (B) Opponents say that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics, which is a ridiculous position.
- (C) Opponents say that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics, and some of them even want to ban video games in schools.
- (D) Opponents, including many coaches, argue that an activity performed seated at a keyboard lacks the physical demands that have traditionally defined athletics.
- 35.** The writer wants to add a sentence after sentence 6 to explain how the evidence in sentence 6 supports the claim in sentence 5. Which of the following would best accomplish this goal?
- (A) Strategy games are among the most popular genres of competitive video games.
- (B) Those habits—rapid coordination, honest review of failure, sustained practice—are precisely the disciplines that a varsity program exists to instill.
- (C) This shows that esports are very demanding.
- (D) Professional esports players can earn millions of dollars in prize money.
- 36.** The writer wants to add evidence after sentence 7 to support its claim. Which of the following would best accomplish this goal?
- (A) Many students enjoy playing video games at home with their friends.
- (B) Esports tournaments are often streamed online to large audiences.
- (C) In a 2022 survey of 1,200 students in scholastic esports leagues, 61 percent said they had never participated in any other school-sponsored team.
- (D) Traditional sports teams often cut students who try out, which can be discouraging.
- 37.** Which of the following versions of sentence 9 most effectively follows the concession in sentence 8?
- (A) Chess, bowling, and rifle are already recognized as varsity sports by many state associations. (as it is now)
- (B) Similarly, chess, bowling, and rifle are already recognized as varsity sports by many state associations.

- (C) As a result, chess, bowling, and rifle are already recognized as varsity sports by many state associations.
- (D) But physical exertion has never been the standard: chess, bowling, and rifle are already recognized as varsity sports by many state associations.

38. The writer wants to combine sentences 2 and 3 (reproduced below) to emphasize the contrast between the two positions.

Supporters of these programs want schools to recognize esports as varsity sports, with letters, coaches, and a place in the athletic department. Opponents say that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics.

Which of the following is the best combination?

- (A) Supporters of these programs want schools to recognize esports as varsity sports, with letters, coaches, and a place in the athletic department; opponents counter that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics.
- (B) Supporters of these programs want schools to recognize esports as varsity sports, with letters, coaches, and a place in the athletic department, and opponents say that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics.
- (C) Supporters of these programs, wanting schools to recognize esports as varsity sports, with letters, coaches, and a place in the athletic department, and opponents saying that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics.
- (D) Because supporters of these programs want schools to recognize esports as varsity sports, with letters, coaches, and a place in the athletic department, opponents say that sitting at a keyboard is not athletics.

39. Which of the following revisions of sentence 7 (reproduced below) most clearly conveys the writer's intended meaning?

Having never joined a traditional team, esports gave many students their first experience of representing their school.

- A. Having never joined a traditional team, many students were given by esports their first experience of representing their school.
- B. For many students who had never joined a traditional team, esports provided their first experience of representing their school.
- C. Esports, having never joined a traditional team, gave many students their first experience of representing their school.
- D. Never having joined a traditional team, the first experience of representing their school was given to many students by esports.
- 40.** The writer wants to revise sentence 11 so that it concludes the passage by reinforcing the line of reasoning. Which of the following versions best accomplishes this goal?
- (A) In conclusion, esports are good for schools and should be varsity sports.
- (B) Schools that do not embrace esports are stuck in the past and will lose students to other schools.
- (C) If varsity status exists to honor skill, discipline, and school pride, then extending it to esports is not a lowering of standards but a fulfillment of them—and a way to bring long-sidelined students onto the team.
- (D) Esports are just as hard as traditional sports, and anyone who disagrees has never tried them.

Passage 5 — Writing (Questions 41–45)

The passage below is a draft.

1. Since 2005, the United States has lost more than a quarter of its newspapers, most of them small weeklies and dailies serving towns and counties. (2) When a local paper closes, the consequences extend far beyond the loss of a familiar front-porch delivery. (3) Research has found that communities without local news coverage see lower voter turnout, fewer candidates running for office, and higher municipal borrowing costs. (4) Nobody reports on the school board meeting, so nobody has a clue what got decided.
2. Some argue that social media and neighborhood apps have filled the gap. (6) These platforms circulate rumors quickly. (7) A rumor is not the same as a reporter who sits through a three-hour zoning hearing and explains what it means. (8) Communities should treat local journalism as civic infrastructure—something worth supporting through subscriptions, nonprofit models, and public attention—before the last reporter leaves town.

41. Which of the following sentences, if placed after sentence 3, would best explain how the research in sentence 3 supports the claim in sentence 2?

- (A) These studies were conducted by researchers at several universities over more than a decade.
- (B) Voter turnout has also declined nationally for other reasons.
- (C) Newspapers have been losing advertising revenue to the internet since the early 2000s.
- (D) Each of these effects points to the same mechanism: when no one is watching, officials face less scrutiny and residents have less reason to engage.

42. The writer wants to revise sentence 6 so that it acknowledges the opposing view more fairly before rebutting it in sentence 7. Which of the following versions best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) These platforms do spread information quickly, and they can alert neighbors to a road closure or a lost pet within minutes.
- (B) These platforms circulate rumors quickly, and most of what they circulate is false.
- (C) These platforms are no substitute for real journalism.
- (D) These platforms circulate rumors quickly, which is why they are so popular.

43. The writer wants to add evidence after sentence 7 to support the claim that reporters provide something social media does not. Which of the following would best accomplish this goal?

- (A) Many reporters have college degrees in journalism or communications.
- (B) In one county, a weekly paper's coverage of a routine budget hearing revealed that an official had steered contracts to a relative—a story that no neighborhood app had surfaced.
- (C) Social media companies have been criticized for many reasons in recent years.
- (D) Zoning hearings are often long and can be difficult for ordinary residents to follow.

44. The writer wants to revise sentence 4 so that it maintains the measured tone of the rest of the passage while preserving its point. Which of the following versions best accomplishes this goal?

- (A) Nobody reports on the school board meeting, so nobody has a clue what got decided. (as it is now)
- (B) Nobody bothers to report on the school board meeting anymore, so the public is totally in the dark.
- (C) When no one covers the school board meeting, residents have no reliable way to learn what was decided.
- (D) The school board meets, decisions get made, and, well, good luck finding out what they were.

45. Which of the following sentences, if added after sentence 8, would best serve as a concluding sentence that reinforces the writer's line of reasoning?

- (A) Newspapers have been an important part of American life since the colonial era.

- (B) Everyone should subscribe to a newspaper today.
- (C) Social media will probably continue to grow in the coming years.
- (D) A town that loses its newspaper does not lose its news; it loses its ability to know what the news means.

END OF SECTION I

Section II: Free-Response Questions

Total time — 2 hours 15 minutes (15-minute reading period plus 2 hours of writing). 3 Questions.

Directions: Section II consists of three questions. The 15-minute reading period is intended for reading the sources for Question 1 and planning your response; you may begin writing at any time. The suggested time for each question is 40 minutes. Each question counts for one-third of the total free-response score. Write your responses in clear, well-organized prose.

Question 1 — Synthesis

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

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.

For most of the twentieth century, American downtowns were designed around the automobile: streets were widened, parking lots multiplied, and sidewalks narrowed. In recent years, a growing number of cities have experimented with reversing that pattern by creating car-free zones—blocks or whole districts closed to private vehicles and reserved for pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and deliveries. Supporters point to cleaner air, safer streets, and livelier commerce; critics raise concerns about access, business losses, and the displacement of traffic onto surrounding neighborhoods.

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 whether cities should create car-free zones in their downtown areas.

Make sure 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 (Okafor)

Source B (Lindqvist and Marsh)

Source C (Bellamy)

Source D (table)

Source E (cartoon)

Source F (Reyes interview)

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

Okafor, Daniel. "Two Years In, Harbor Street Pilot Divides a Downtown." The Lakeport Register, 14 Sept. 2024.

The following is excerpted from a news article in a mid-sized city's daily newspaper.

When Lakeport closed six blocks of Harbor Street to private cars in the spring of 2022, the city council called it a "two-year experiment." The experiment is now over, and the council must decide this fall whether to make the closure permanent, expand it, or reopen the street.

The numbers the city released last week tell a mixed story. Pedestrian counts on Harbor Street have risen 48 percent since 2021, and the number of storefronts sitting vacant has fallen from eleven to four. Sales-tax receipts from businesses within the zone grew 12 percent, slightly faster than the citywide average. Police recorded no serious injury crashes on the closed blocks, compared with seven in the two years before the pilot.

But the city's own traffic study also found that average travel times on Fifth and Seventh Avenues, the parallel streets that absorbed Harbor's traffic, grew by four to six minutes during the evening rush. Residents of the Northside neighborhood, which borders Seventh, have complained of idling trucks and cut-through drivers. "They moved the problem, they didn't solve it," said Marcus Dale, who has lived on Seventh for thirty years.

Business owners on Harbor Street are split. A café owner said her weekend sales had doubled. The owner of a hardware store two doors down said his customers "can't carry a sheet of plywood home on a bicycle" and that he is considering relocating. The council is expected to vote in November.

Source B

Lindqvist, Annika, and Thomas Marsh. "Retail Performance in Pedestrianized Commercial Districts: A Review of Forty Case Studies." Journal of Urban Mobility Studies, vol. 18, no. 2, 2023, pp. 211–239.

The following is excerpted from a peer-reviewed article in an academic journal of urban planning.

The claim that removing cars from a commercial street will harm its merchants is among the most durable beliefs in urban retail, and among the least supported by evidence. Across the forty North American and European districts we reviewed, retail sales in pedestrianized zones rose by a median of 17 percent within three years of implementation, compared with 4 percent in matched control streets that remained open to traffic. Vacancy rates fell in thirty-one of the forty cases.

The mechanism is not mysterious. Merchants consistently overestimate the share of their customers who arrive by car; in surveys conducted in six of our case cities, business owners guessed that 55 to 70 percent of patrons drove, when intercept counts showed the actual figure to be between 20 and 35 percent. Pedestrians and cyclists, moreover, visit more frequently and spend more per month than drivers, even though they spend less per trip. A street that is pleasant to linger on is a street on which people linger—and spend.

We caution, however, that aggregate gains conceal variation among business types. Restaurants, cafés, and apparel stores benefited most. Businesses dependent on bulky purchases or short, errand-style trips—hardware stores, pharmacies, dry cleaners—showed flat or declining sales in roughly a third of cases. Successful districts tended to be those that paired the closure with investments in transit access, loading zones for deliveries, and nearby parking garages, rather than simply installing bollards and hoping for the best.

Source C

Bellamy, Ruth. "Don't Close My Street to Save It." Op-ed, *The Midland Courier*, 3 Mar. 2024.

The following is excerpted from an opinion column written by the owner of a family-run furniture store in a downtown district under consideration for a car-free zone.

My grandfather opened our store in 1961, when downtown Midland was where everyone shopped. He survived the mall. My father survived the big-box stores on the highway. I have survived the internet. Now the city wants to help me by making it impossible for my customers to park within three blocks of my front door.

The planners who come to our merchants' meetings show us photographs of cafés in Copenhagen. I do not sell espresso. I sell sofas. My customers are young couples furnishing a first apartment and retirees replacing a recliner, and almost none of them live within walking distance. They come from the townships, where there is no bus, and they come in cars, and they take their purchases home in those cars.

I am told that studies show pedestrian streets are good for business. Perhaps they are good for some businesses. A city that makes its downtown a pleasant place for the people who already live there, while telling the people who drive in from twenty miles away to find somewhere else to shop, is not revitalizing downtown. It is choosing one set of residents over another.

I am not against change. Give us wider sidewalks, more trees, slower speed limits, better crosswalks. But a downtown that cannot be reached is not a downtown that has been saved. It is a park with storefronts.

Source D

Center for Regional Transportation Research, Westbrook University. "Resident and Visitor Attitudes Toward Downtown Vehicle Restrictions: Survey Results from Eight Cities." Working Paper 2024-07, 2024.

The following table is adapted from a report by a university transportation research center that surveyed 4,800 adults in eight U.S. cities that had implemented or were considering downtown car-free zones.

Table 1. Percentage of respondents who support a permanent car-free zone downtown, by respondent characteristics

RESPONDENT GROUP	SUPPORT (%)	OPPOSE (%)	UNSURE (%)
All respondents	54	36	10
Lives within 1 mile of downtown	71	21	8
Lives 1–5 miles from downtown	55	35	10
Lives more than 5 miles from downtown	39	51	10
Usually travels downtown by car	41	49	10
Usually travels downtown by transit, bicycle, or on foot	78	15	7
Reports a disability affecting mobility	44	46	10

RESPONDENT GROUP	SUPPORT (%)	OPPOSE (%)	UNSURE (%)
Age 18–34	66	24	10
Age 65 and older	42	47	11
Owens a business in the downtown area	47	45	8

Note: Columns may not sum to 100 because of rounding. In cities where a car-free zone had already operated for at least one year, overall support was 61 percent; in cities still considering a zone, overall support was 48 percent.

Source E

Hale, Jordan. Editorial cartoon. *The Metro Weekly*, 22 June 2024.

The following is an editorial cartoon from an alternative weekly newspaper.

[The cartoon shows a wide, newly pedestrianized downtown street under a banner reading “WELCOME TO CAR-FREE MAIN STREET!” In the foreground, two well-dressed people sit at a café table under an umbrella, one holding a tiny cup of espresso and saying, “Isn’t it peaceful? You can finally hear the birds.” Directly behind them, filling the rest of the frame, the parallel side street is jammed bumper-to-bumper with cars, delivery trucks, and a city bus, all emitting thick clouds of exhaust that drift over the café. A small figure in a wheelchair sits at the edge of the pedestrian zone looking at a sign that reads “ACCESSIBLE PARKING: 4 BLOCKS →.” A sparrow perched on the banner is coughing.]

Source F

Reyes, Carmen. Interview by Noor Haddad. “Who Gets to Walk? A Conversation About Car-Free Streets and Disability.” *Streetwise*, a blog on urban design and accessibility, 9 Jan. 2025.

The following is excerpted from an interview with the director of a regional disability-rights organization, published on a blog devoted to urban design.

Haddad: Disability advocates have been on both sides of the car-free debate. Where do you come down?

Reyes: I come down on the side of asking better questions. Our members include people who use wheelchairs and people who are blind, people with chronic pain who can walk two blocks but not six, and people for whom a car is the only way they get anywhere. So when a city says “car-free,” my first question is: free for whom?

Haddad: What do cities get wrong?

Reyes: They design for the healthy 30-year-old who bikes to brunch. They close the street, move the accessible parking spaces to the edge of the zone, and call it done. For someone who can walk half a block, a four-block pedestrian zone isn’t a public space. It is a wall.

Haddad: And what do they get right?

Reyes: Plenty, when they listen. Fewer cars means fewer people hit in crosswalks, and disabled pedestrians are hit at far higher rates than everyone else. Wide, level, continuous sidewalks without curb cuts every thirty feet are a gift to wheelchair users. Blind pedestrians tell me they can navigate a quiet street by sound in a way they never could with traffic roaring past. The best zones I have seen keep paratransit and permitted vehicles moving

through at low speed, put accessible drop-off points in the middle of the zone rather than at its edges, and run a free shuttle loop. None of that is expensive compared with building a parking garage. It just requires someone to ask the question before the bollards go in, not after.

Question 2 — Rhetorical Analysis

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

Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906) was a leader of the American woman suffrage movement. In November 1872, she and fourteen other women registered and voted in Rochester, New York, in the presidential election; two weeks later Anthony was arrested and charged with voting illegally. In the months before her trial in June 1873, she delivered the speech below in towns throughout the county where the jury would be drawn, addressing audiences of local citizens, nearly all of whom were men, many of them potential jurors. The following is the opening section of the speech as it is commonly reproduced. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Anthony makes to argue that women's voting is a constitutional right rather than a crime.

Friends and fellow citizens: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, (5) instead, simply exercised my citizen's rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.

The preamble of the Federal Constitution says: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, (10) insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the (15) male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people—women as well as men. And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the (20) use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government—the ballot.

For any State to make sex a qualification that must ever result in the disfranchisement of one entire half of the people is to pass a bill of attainder, or an ex post facto law, and is therefore a violation of the (25) supreme law of the land. By it the blessings of liberty are for ever withheld from women and their female posterity. To them this government has no just powers derived from the consent of the governed. To them this government is not a democracy. It is not a republic. It is an odious aristocracy; a hateful oligarchy of sex; the most hateful aristocracy ever (30) established on the face of the globe; an oligarchy of wealth, where the rich govern the poor. An oligarchy of learning, where the educated govern the ignorant, or even an oligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this oligarchy of sex, which makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the (35) wife and daughters of every household—which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects, carries dissension, discord and rebellion into every home of the nation.

Webster, Worcester and Bouvier all define a citizen to be a person in the United States, entitled to vote and hold office.

40. The only question left to be settled now is: Are women persons? And I hardly believe any of our opponents will have the hardihood to say they are not. Being persons, then, women are citizens; and no State has a right to make any law, or to enforce any old law, that shall abridge their privileges or immunities. Hence, every discrimination against women in the (45) constitutions and laws of the several States is today null and void, precisely as in every one against Negroes.

Note: A "bill of attainder" is a legislative act that punishes a person or group without trial; an "ex post facto law" punishes conduct that was legal when it occurred. Both are forbidden to the states by the U.S. Constitution. "Webster, Worcester and Bouvier" were the authors of standard American dictionaries, the last a law dictionary.

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 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.

Question 3 — Argument

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

In *Walden* (1854), Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude." A century and a half later, many observers of digital life have argued that the constant connectivity made possible by smartphones and social media has transformed Thoreau's observation into a warning: solitude, they claim, has become both rarer and more necessary than ever, because a mind that is never alone never learns to think for itself.

Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which the claim that constant connectivity has made solitude both rarer and more necessary 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.

STOP. END OF EXAM.

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