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AP ENGLISH LITERATURE · FREE RESOURCE

AP English Literature and Composition — Practice Exam 2

About This Exam

This practice exam reproduces the format of the current (2025 and later) digital AP English Literature and Composition Exam as administered in the Bluebook application. All multiple-choice questions have four answer choices.

SECTION	CONTENT	QUESTIONS	TIME	WEIGHT
I — Multiple Choice	5 passages (2 poems, 3 prose fiction), each followed by 11 questions	55	60 minutes	45%
II — Free Response	Q1 Poetry Analysis, Q2 Prose Fiction Analysis, Q3 Literary Argument	3 essays	2 hours (suggested 40 minutes each)	55%

Timing. Take Section I in one uninterrupted 60-minute sitting. Take a 10-minute break. Then take Section II in one 120-minute sitting; the three questions may be answered in any order, and the suggested time for each is 40 minutes.

A note on the texts. Poems and passages by named authors are reproduced from public-domain editions. Two Section I prose passages were written for this practice exam in the manner of their period and are labeled as such; no real author's name is attached to text that author did not write.

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

Time — 60 minutes. 55 questions.

Directions: This section consists of selections from literary works and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage or poem, choose the best answer to each question. Note that some questions ask you to identify the choice that is NOT true or is an EXCEPTION; read every stem carefully. Answer every question; there is no penalty for guessing.

Passage 1 (Questions 1–11)

Questions 1–11 refer to the following poem, written in 1818. Read the poem carefully before you choose your answers.

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charactery,¹
Hold like rich garners² the full ripened grain;
(5) When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
(10) That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

¹ *charactery*: written characters; handwriting or print

² *garners*: granaries, storehouses for harvested grain

1. The structure of the poem is best described as

- (A) an octave that presents a problem followed by a sestet that resolves it
- (B) a series of three subordinate “When” clauses that build toward a single main clause introduced by “then”
- (C) three independent assertions, each summarized by the concluding couplet
- (D) a question posed in the first line and answered progressively in the remaining thirteen

2. In lines 2–4, the speaker’s mind is figuratively compared to

- (A) a field whose crop has ripened but has not yet been gathered
- (B) a library whose shelves are overfull
- (C) a granary that holds a completed harvest
- (D) a pen that has run dry

3. The word “gleaned” (line 2) suggests that the speaker regards writing as

- (A) a violent uprooting of what the mind would rather keep hidden
- (B) a careless scattering of ideas
- (C) an act of invention that owes nothing to prior thought
- (D) a patient gathering of what the mind has already produced

4. A student is writing an essay in response to a prompt asking how the poem conveys the speaker’s complex attitude toward his own ambitions. Which of the following would best serve as the essay’s thesis?

- (A) Keats uses imagery and metaphor to describe his fears about dying young.
- (B) The speaker’s ambitions, figured first as an ungathered harvest and then as an unreadable sky, reveal a longing for permanence that the final line exposes as futile.
- (C) The poem is a sonnet that discusses love and fame in a serious tone.
- (D) The speaker is afraid that he will die before he has finished writing all of his books.

5. The phrase “the magic hand of chance” (line 8) suggests that the speaker believes poetic creation depends partly on
- (A) diligent study of earlier poets
 - (B) inspiration that lies beyond the poet’s deliberate control
 - (C) the encouragement of the beloved
 - (D) good fortune in finding a publisher
6. The shift that occurs in line 9 is best described as a shift from
- (A) despair to hope
 - (B) concern with the self to concern with society
 - (C) literal description to figurative description
 - (D) concern with artistic ambition to concern with love
7. The address “fair creature of an hour” (line 9) characterizes the beloved as
- (A) fleeting, subject to the same transience that threatens the speaker
 - (B) unfaithful and likely to abandon the speaker
 - (C) childlike and in need of protection
 - (D) divine and therefore beyond the reach of time
8. In context, “unreflecting” (line 12) is best understood to mean
- (A) failing to give back light
 - (B) thoughtless and irresponsible
 - (C) spontaneous and unexamined
 - (D) unreturned by the beloved
9. The image of the “shore / Of the wide world” (lines 12–13) primarily serves to
- (A) suggest that the speaker is about to depart on a sea voyage
 - (B) recall the harvest imagery of the opening lines
 - (C) evoke the comfort of a familiar landscape
 - (D) emphasize the speaker’s isolation at the edge of an immensity he cannot cross
10. The final line chiefly suggests that
- (A) sustained contemplation of death reduces even the speaker’s deepest desires to insignificance
 - (B) the speaker has resolved to abandon both poetry and love
 - (C) love and fame have been revealed as illusions from the poem’s beginning
 - (D) the speaker finds consolation in the thought of oblivion
11. A student is writing an essay arguing that the speaker fears incompleteness more than he fears death itself. Which of the following quotations would best support that claim?
- (A) “When I have fears that I may cease to be” (line 1)
 - (B) “Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain” (line 2)
 - (C) “upon the night’s starred face” (line 5)
 - (D) “I stand alone, and think” (line 13)

Passage 2 (Questions 12–22)

Questions 12–22 refer to the following passage. The following excerpt is the opening chapter of a novel published in 1813. Read the passage carefully before you choose your answers.

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of (5) the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

10. "But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

15. This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four³ to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take (20) possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

25. "Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? How can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

30. "Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them (35) by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

40. "In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be (45) for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no newcomers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty (50) consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference."

55. "They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves."

60. "You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these last twenty years at least."

"Ah, you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four (65) thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."

"It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."

70. Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied

71. herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married;
its solace was visiting and news.

³ *chaise and four*: a closed carriage drawn by four horses, a sign of considerable wealth

12. The opening sentence (lines 1–2) is best characterized as

- (A) a sincere statement of the moral the novel will illustrate
- (B) a proverb that the characters will later disprove
- (C) an ironic generalization whose air of certainty invites the reader's skepticism
- (D) a direct description of Mr. Bingley's intentions

13. A student is writing an essay arguing that the narrator satirizes the way families treat courtship as a form of acquisition. Which of the following quotations from the first two paragraphs best supports that claim?

- (A) "a single man in possession of a good fortune" (lines 1–2)
- (B) "the feelings or views of such a man" (line 3)
- (C) "he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters" (lines 5–6)
- (D) "on his first entering a neighbourhood" (lines 3–4)

14. The sentence "This was invitation enough" (line 15) serves primarily to

- (A) show that Mr. Bennet is genuinely curious about the new tenant
- (B) mark a shift in the setting of the conversation
- (C) introduce Mrs. Long as a significant character
- (D) underscore, through understatement, Mrs. Bennet's eagerness to speak regardless of her husband's interest

15. Mr. Bennet's question "Is that his design in settling here?" (line 30) is best understood as

- (A) a sincere inquiry into Mr. Bingley's motives
- (B) a deliberately literal response that mocks his wife's assumptions
- (C) an expression of concern for his daughters' reputations
- (D) an indication that he shares his wife's hopes for a match

16. Mr. Bennet's remark that "Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party" (lines 35–36) has the effect of

- (A) expressing genuine admiration for his wife's beauty
- (B) delivering an insult that his wife immediately recognizes and resents
- (C) offering teasing flattery that his wife accepts at face value but that the reader recognizes as mockery
- (D) proposing seriously that she attend without him

17. In context, "establishment" (line 44) most nearly means

- (A) a secure position in life gained through marriage
- (B) a commercial enterprise
- (C) an institution of government
- (D) a household's staff of servants

18. Mrs. Bennet's reference to Sir William and Lady Lucas (lines 45–46) functions primarily as

- (A) evidence of her disdain for her neighbors
- (B) a digression that reveals her tendency to lose track of her argument
- (C) an indication that the Lucases are wealthier than the Bennets
- (D) an appeal to social precedent intended to pressure her husband into visiting

19. A student claims that Mr. Bennet's preference for Lizzy rests on her intelligence rather than on her appearance or temperament. Which of the following quotations best supports that claim?
- (A) "Lizzy is not a bit better than the others" (lines 52–53)
 - (B) "she is not half so handsome as Jane" (line 53)
 - (C) "Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters" (lines 56–57)
 - (D) "I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy" (lines 50–51)
20. Mr. Bennet's statement that his wife's nerves "are my old friends" (lines 60–61) is best described as
- (A) a metaphor expressing genuine affection for his wife
 - (B) hyperbole conveying his alarm at her condition
 - (C) personification used ironically to treat her complaints as a long-familiar performance
 - (D) personification expressing sincere sympathy for her suffering
21. The final paragraph (lines 70–76) differs from the rest of the passage in that it
- (A) replaces dramatized dialogue with direct narrative summary of the two characters
 - (B) adopts Mrs. Bennet's point of view
 - (C) introduces the five daughters as individuals
 - (D) abandons irony in favor of sentiment
22. The narrator's treatment of Mrs. Bennet in the final paragraph includes all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) presenting her "nervous" condition as a response to displeasure rather than as an illness
 - (B) judging her character more quickly and completely than her husband's
 - (C) identifying marriage for her daughters as the central occupation of her life
 - (D) attributing her sufferings to her husband's neglect

Passage 3 (Questions 23–33)

Questions 23–33 refer to the following poem, published in 1896. Read the poem carefully before you choose your answers.

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
(5) And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

10. We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,

11. We wear the mask!

- 23.** The speaker's use of the first-person plural throughout the poem primarily
- (A) establishes the speaker as a spokesman for "the world"
 - (B) presents the experience described as collective rather than individual
 - (C) distances the speaker from the suffering described
 - (D) implies that the speaker is addressing a single listener
- 24.** Line 3 ("This debt we pay to human guile") suggests that the mask is
- (A) a cost exacted by a deceitful world
 - (B) a willing gift offered to humanity
 - (C) a punishment for the speakers' own dishonesty
 - (D) a reward for the speakers' cunning
- 25.** The verb "mouth" (line 5) is used to suggest
- (A) the act of eating
 - (B) loud and open protest
 - (C) silent prayer
 - (D) speech that is performed rather than heartfelt
- 26.** The rhetorical question in lines 6–7 conveys the speaker's
- (A) genuine curiosity about the source of the world's wisdom
 - (B) hope that the world will one day take account of the speakers' sorrows
 - (C) bitter conviction that the world's scrutiny would be neither welcome nor deserved
 - (D) indifference to whether the world notices the speakers at all
- 27.** The refrain "We wear the mask" (lines 9 and 15) functions in which of the following ways?
- I. It gains intensity through a change in punctuation from a period to an exclamation point.
 - II. It shortens the stanza it concludes, breaking the line length established elsewhere in the poem.
 - III. It reveals that the speakers have finally removed the mask.
- (A) I only
 - (B) I and II only
 - (C) II and III only
 - (D) I, II, and III
- 28.** The shift that occurs in line 10 is best described as a shift from
- (A) address directed at "the world" to appeal directed at God
 - (B) despair to joy
 - (C) a plural speaker to a single speaker
 - (D) description to command
- 29.** The images "the clay is vile / Beneath our feet, and long the mile" (lines 12–13) primarily suggest
- (A) the work of a sculptor shaping raw material
 - (B) the literal condition of rural roads
 - (C) the pleasure of a pilgrimage undertaken by choice
 - (D) a degrading and arduous journey
- 30.** In context, "dream" (line 14) is best understood to mean
- (A) sleep
 - (B) remain comfortably deceived

- (C) aspire to something greater
- (D) imagine a better future for the speakers

31. The speaker's attitude toward "the world" can best be described as

- (A) hopeful and trusting
- (B) indifferent and detached
- (C) guarded and defiant
- (D) affectionate but weary

32. The contrast between "smile" and "sing" (lines 10 and 12) and "cries" and "tortured souls" (lines 10–11) serves primarily to

- (A) expose the gap between outward performance and inner suffering
- (B) suggest that singing eases the speakers' pain
- (C) show that the speakers' joy is sincere despite their hardships
- (D) condemn religious faith as another kind of mask

33. Which of the following claims about the poem is best supported by the text?

- (A) The speakers wear the mask because they are ashamed of their suffering.
- (B) The mask is portrayed as both a protection and a torment.
- (C) The poem predicts that the world will eventually remove the mask.
- (D) The speakers ultimately reject the mask as dishonest.

Passage 4 (Questions 34–44)

Questions 34–44 refer to the following passage. The passage is from a short story written for this practice exam in the manner of American regionalist fiction of the 1880s. Read the passage carefully before you choose your answers.

Mrs. Alvira Pease had buried her husband in the March of the hard winter, when the ground had to be opened with a crowbar, and she had put in the corn herself that May because there was nobody else to do it. That was six years ago. The neighbors had said then, with the kindness that is half (5) prophecy, that she would sell to Enoch Tilden before the frost was out of the ground, and Enoch Tilden had said so too, standing at her gate with his hat in his hands and an offer in his pocket. She had thanked him and gone in to see about the hens.

The farm lay on the north slope of the ridge, where the snow stayed longest (10) and the apples came latest, and it had never been a farm that anybody envied. Her husband had worked it with a patience that she had sometimes mistaken for weakness, and she had learned, in the years since, that it was neither patience nor weakness but a kind of agreement he had with the place: he would ask nothing of it that it could not give. She had not (15) inherited the agreement. She asked the hill for everything, and when it refused her she went out and asked again. Her hands had grown broad and brown; her face, which had been called pretty in Barnet when she was a

girl, had taken on the color and set of the fence posts. She did not mind. There was a looking-glass in the front chamber, but she went there only to (20) sleep.

It was Enoch Tilden's fourth offer that brought her, one October afternoon, to the stone wall at the top of the pasture, where she could see the whole of what was hers. The wall had been her husband's work, every stone of it lifted by his hands and laid by his judgment, and it ran straight as a (25) plumb line for forty rods and then wavered, near the woods, where the ledge came up and he had been obliged to go around. She had always disliked the wavering place. She stood with her hand on the cold stones and looked down at the house, which wanted paint, and the barn, which wanted shingles, and the mowing, which had come up thin that summer and would come up thinner (30) next, and she let herself think the thought she had not let herself think in six years.

Enoch Tilden's money would buy a house in the village, with a parlor stove and a neighbor on either hand. It would buy her a seat in the church that did not face the door, so that she need not see who came in late. It would (35) buy her the right to be tired. She was fifty-three years old and she was tired; she had been tired, she supposed, since the March her husband died, and had simply not had time to notice.

A crow went over, complaining of something, and she watched it out of sight.

40. "Well," she said aloud, as she said most things now, "I don't know."

But she did know, and the knowing was like a stone in her apron pocket that she had carried so long she had forgotten its weight. She did not stay for her husband's sake; he was past caring where she lived, and she was not a woman who talked to graves. She did not stay for the land's sake either, (45) for she had no illusions about the land. She stayed because leaving would be a thing done to her, and staying was a thing she did. That was the whole of it, and she had never said it to anybody, and she saw no reason to begin.

She went down through the pasture in the long light, stepping where the (50) ground was dry, and when she came to the wavering place in the wall she stopped, as she had never done before, and set her hand on it. The stones there were laid as carefully as the rest. He had gone around the ledge because the ledge would not move, and he had made the going-around as straight as the ledge allowed. She stood a moment longer. Then she went in (55) to see about the hens, and in the morning she wrote to Enoch Tilden that she was much obliged to him and would not sell.

34. The point of view of the passage is best described as

- (A) first-person retrospective, narrated by the widow in old age
- (B) third-person limited, granting access to the widow's thoughts while maintaining a reticent distance

- (C) third-person omniscient, entering the minds of several characters in turn
(D) objective, reporting only observable actions and speech
- 35.** The phrase “the kindness that is half prophecy” (lines 4–5) characterizes the neighbors’ remark as
(A) a sincere prediction based on long acquaintance with the widow
(B) an open insult to her abilities
(C) a religious consolation offered to the bereaved
(D) sympathy that conceals an expectation of her failure
- 36.** The repetition of “see about the hens” (lines 7–8 and 54–55) primarily serves to
(A) suggest that the widow avoids difficult decisions by retreating into chores
(B) frame her decisions as part of an unbroken continuity of ordinary work
(C) emphasize her fondness for the animals on the farm
(D) indicate that the events of the passage occur within a single day
- 37.** The widow’s relationship to the farm differs from her husband’s in that she
(A) demands from the land what it cannot readily give
(B) refuses to work the land at all
(C) shares his patient acceptance of its limits
(D) blames him for the farm’s poverty
- 38.** The comparison of the widow’s face to “the fence posts” (line 18) suggests that she has
(A) lost her will to live
(B) grown unattractive in the eyes of the village
(C) become as weathered and fixed as the farm itself
(D) built the fences with her own hands
- 39.** In context, “wanted” (line 28) most nearly means
(A) desired
(B) missed
(C) sought after
(D) lacked
- 40.** The sequence of purchases listed in lines 32–35 is arranged so as to
(A) move from material comforts toward an emotional need, culminating in “the right to be tired”
(B) list the village’s attractions in descending order of cost
(C) contrast the village unfavorably with the farm
(D) demonstrate the widow’s indifference to money
- 41.** The simile “like a stone in her apron pocket” (line 41) emphasizes that the widow’s decision is
(A) a burden she longs to set down
(B) recent and still painful
(C) long settled and carried almost unconsciously
(D) a tribute to her husband’s stone wall
- 42.** According to lines 41–48, the widow’s decision to stay is grounded in
(A) a sense of duty to her husband’s memory
(B) a deep attachment to the land itself

- (C) a determination to act rather than be acted upon
- (D) a hope that the farm's fortunes will improve

43. All of the following details contribute to the characterization of the widow as stubbornly self-reliant EXCEPT

- (A) she now says most things aloud (line 40)
- (B) she put in the corn herself the May after her husband died (lines 2–3)
- (C) when the hill refused her, “she went out and asked again” (lines 15–16)
- (D) she wrote her refusal to Enoch Tilden the next morning (lines 55–56)

44. The widow's pause at “the wavering place” in the final paragraph (lines 50–54) chiefly suggests that she

- (A) has decided to rebuild the wall in a straight line
- (B) now blames her husband for the farm's decline
- (C) intends, despite her letter, to sell the farm eventually
- (D) has come to understand and accept, as her husband did, the necessity of yielding to what cannot be moved

Passage 5 (Questions 45–55)

Questions 45–55 refer to the following passage. The passage is from a novel written for this practice exam in the manner of early-twentieth-century fiction. The narrator, the first mate of a trading steamer, recalls a voyage up a tropical river to a remote company post. Read the passage carefully before you choose your answers.

We came up to the station a little before sunset, with the river running brown and quick against us and the forest closing in on both banks like a thing that had been waiting. I had been told at the coast that the post was a considerable place—a wharf, a storehouse, an agent of six years' standing (5) and a reputation for order—and I had pictured it, I suppose, as men picture what they have not seen, in the image of what they know. What I saw was a clearing the size of a ship's deck, a tin roof gone the color of old blood, and a flagstaff from which nothing flew.

The agent came down to meet us. He was a small man, very neat, in a white (10) drill suit that had been washed so often it had the look of paper, and he carried under his arm a ledger bound in green cloth. I remember the ledger because he did not put it down the whole time we were there. He shook hands with the captain and with me and inquired after the mails, and then, before anyone had answered him, he began to speak of the river.

- 15. It had fallen two feet since the rains, he said. It would fall another three before the month was out. He had the figures for the previous year, and the year before that, exact to the inch, and he delivered them in the tone of a man reciting the particulars of a grievance. The river was the only thing he spoke of with any warmth, and it was a warmth of resentment.
- 16. One felt that he had come up here six years ago to manage a trading post and had found, instead, that he was to be managed by a quantity of moving water, and that the discovery had never ceased to astonish him.

The captain asked about the rubber. There was rubber, the agent said—a certain amount—he would show us the books. He opened the ledger then, there (25) on the wharf, in the failing light, and turned the pages toward us as though their columns could be read at arm's length by men who had not slept properly in a fortnight. I saw a great many figures in a very small hand. I saw also that the last entry was dated some weeks back and that the pages after it were blank, and that he turned past them quickly.

30. Behind him, at the edge of the clearing, a dozen men squatted in the shade of the storehouse. They did not look at us. They had the stillness of men who have learned that being looked at is the beginning of being made use of, and I understood, without being told, that they were the station's labor, and that the rubber—the certain amount—had come out of the forest on
31. their backs. The agent did not glance at them once. It was not, I think, that he was ashamed; it was that they did not appear in the ledger except as a number, and he had long since ceased to see anything that did not appear in the ledger.

"You will dine with me," he said. It was not a question.

40. We dined under a lamp that smoked, and the agent talked about the river. When the captain, a blunt man, asked when he had last been down to the coast, the agent looked at him as if he had not understood the words, and then said that he had been very much occupied. Afterward he showed us his garden—a plot behind the house in which, by main force and a great deal of
41. carrying of water, he had made a few European vegetables consent to grow. He showed it to us by lantern light, with a pride I found I could not look at directly. The cabbages were small and bitter-looking and perfectly aligned, and beyond the last row of them the forest stood up black and entire, and did not seem to have noticed that it had been pushed back ten
42. yards.

We left in the morning. He came down to the wharf with the ledger under his arm and stood there while we cast off, not waving, a small white figure against the dark. I have thought of him since, oftener than I should have expected. I do not know that I pitied him. He had made of his six years a (55) column of figures that added up, and that is more than most men manage; it was only that he had left out of the sum everything that could not be counted, and the forest, which cannot be counted, had taken note of the omission.

- 45.** The simile "like a thing that had been waiting" (lines 2–3) establishes the forest as
- (A) a welcome refuge from the river
 - (B) a patient, almost sentient presence
 - (C) an obstacle the steamer easily overcomes
 - (D) a source of commercial promise

- 46.** Lines 3–6 (“I had been told . . . what they know”) serve primarily to
- (A) criticize the officials at the coast for misrepresenting the station
 - (B) establish the narrator’s expertise in river navigation
 - (C) describe the station’s wharf and storehouse accurately
 - (D) reflect on the human habit of imagining the unknown in familiar terms, preparing for the disappointment that follows
- 47.** The details of the agent’s suit, which “had the look of paper” (line 10), and his “ledger bound in green cloth” (line 11) together suggest
- (A) a man who has come to resemble the records he keeps
 - (B) the agent’s extreme poverty
 - (C) the station’s commercial prosperity
 - (D) the narrator’s envy of the agent’s position
- 48.** Which of the following statements about the agent is best supported by the third paragraph (lines 15–22)?
- (A) He regards the river as the chief adversary of his work.
 - (B) He takes pride in the station’s rubber output.
 - (C) He resents the company for sending him upriver.
 - (D) He has grown fond of the landscape over six years.
- 49.** The sentence “One felt that he had come up here . . . never ceased to astonish him” (lines 20–22) is characterized chiefly by
- (A) sympathetic identification with the agent’s ambitions
 - (B) ironic reversal of the role the agent intended to play
 - (C) admiration for the river’s power
 - (D) a shift into the agent’s own first-person perspective
- 50.** The repetition of the phrase “a certain amount” (lines 23–24 and 34) functions to
- (A) emphasize the station’s productivity
 - (B) show the narrator’s uncertainty about the quantity of rubber
 - (C) mark the passage of time between the two scenes
 - (D) expose the evasiveness of the agent’s phrase by attaching it to the human cost of the labor
- 51.** The narrator’s description of the men “in the shade of the storehouse” (lines 30–35) is best described as
- (A) restrained observation that implies exploitation without naming it
 - (B) a detached inventory devoid of judgment
 - (C) an indignant denunciation of the company’s practices
 - (D) a sentimental appeal for the reader’s pity
- 52.** Which of the following does the passage imply about the agent’s relationship to his ledger?
- I. He relies on it in a way that allows him to avoid acknowledging what it cannot record.
 - II. He has recently stopped keeping it up to date.
 - III. He maintains it chiefly in order to deceive the company about the rubber.
- (A) I only
 - (B) I and II only
 - (C) II and III only
 - (D) I, II, and III

53. The garden (lines 43–50) functions primarily as
(A) evidence of the colony's agricultural success
(B) a sign of the agent's hospitality toward his guests
(C) a symbol of the agent's futile effort to impose order on an indifferent environment
(D) a setting that contrasts with the ledger's artificiality
54. The narrator's final attitude toward the agent (lines 53–58) is best described as
(A) open contempt
(B) unqualified pity
(C) nostalgic affection
(D) measured judgment tempered by a reluctant respect
55. All of the following details reinforce the passage's contrast between human measurement and the unmeasurable forest EXCEPT
(A) the river figures given "exact to the inch" (line 17)
(B) the cabbages "perfectly aligned" (lines 47–48)
(C) the "flagstaff from which nothing flew" (line 8)
(D) the "column of figures that added up" (line 55)

END OF SECTION I

Section II: Free-Response Questions

Time — 2 hours. 3 questions.

Directions: Section II of this exam requires answers in essay form. Write your responses in the space provided (or type them, as on the digital exam). You may work on the questions in any order; the suggested time for each is 40 minutes. Each question counts as one-third of the total essay section score. Quality is more important than quantity. Remember to write a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation, to select and explain specific evidence, and to use appropriate grammar and punctuation.

Question 1: Poetry Analysis

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

In the following poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, written in 1880, the speaker addresses a young child who is grieving over the falling leaves of autumn. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hopkins uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker's complex understanding of the child's grief.

In your response you should do the following: - Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation. - Select and use 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.

Spring and Fall *to a young child*

Márgarét, áre you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leáves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
(5) Ah! ás the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal⁴ lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
(10) Now no matter, child, the name:
Sórrrow's springs áre the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost⁵ guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
(15) It is Margaret you mourn for.

⁴ *wanwood leafmeal*: words coined by the poet; roughly, pale, faded woods whose leaves lie fallen and crumbled piece by piece

⁵ *ghost*: spirit, soul

The accent marks are the poet's own, indicating syllables to be stressed.

Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis

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

The following excerpt is from *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, published in 1850. In this passage, set in seventeenth-century Puritan Boston, a crowd has gathered outside the prison to witness the public punishment of Hester Prynne, who has been convicted of adultery and sentenced to wear a scarlet letter on her gown. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hawthorne uses literary elements and techniques to convey the narrator's complex attitude toward the Puritan women gathered at the prison door.

In your response you should do the following: - Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation. - Select and use 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.

It was a circumstance to be noted, on the summer morning when our story begins its course, that the women, of whom there were several in the crowd, appeared to take a peculiar interest in whatever penal infliction might be expected to ensue. The age had not so much refinement, that any sense of
(5) impropriety restrained the wearers of petticoat and farthingale⁶ from stepping forth into the public ways, and wedging their not unsubstantial persons, if occasion were, into the throng nearest to the scaffold at an execution. Morally, as well as materially, there was a coarser fibre in those wives and maidens of old English birth and breeding, than in their
(10) fair descendants, separated from them by a series of six or seven generations; for, throughout that chain of ancestry, every successive mother has transmitted to her child a fainter bloom, a more delicate and

briefly beauty, and a slighter physical frame, if not a character of less force and solidity, than her own. The women who were now standing about the (15) prison-door stood within less than half a century of the period when the man-like Elizabeth had been the not altogether unsuitable representative of the sex. They were her countrywomen; and the beef and ale of their native land, with a moral diet not a whit more refined, entered largely into their composition. The bright morning sun, therefore, shone on broad shoulders (20) and well-developed busts, and on round and ruddy cheeks, that had ripened in the far-off island, and had hardly yet grown paler or thinner in the atmosphere of New England. There was, moreover, a boldness and rotundity of speech among these matrons, as most of them seemed to be, that would startle us at the present day, whether in respect to its purport or its (25) volume of tone.

"Goodwives," said a hard-featured dame of fifty, "I'll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof,⁷ if we women, being of mature age and church-members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne. What think ye, gossips? If the (30) hussy stood up for judgment before us five, that are now here in a knot together, would she come off with such a sentence as the worshipful magistrates have awarded? Marry, I trow not!"

"People say," said another, "that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have (35) come upon his congregation."

"The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch,—that is a truth," added a third autumnal matron. "At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead. Madam Hester would have winced at that, I warrant me. But she,—the naughty (40) baggage,—little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown! Why, look you, she may cover it with a brooch, or such like heathenish adornment, and so walk the streets as brave as ever!"

"Ah, but," interposed, more softly, a young wife, holding a child by the hand, "let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will be always in (45) her heart."

"What do we talk of marks and brands, whether on the bodice of her gown, or the flesh of her forehead?" cried another female, the ugliest as well as the most pitiless of these self-constituted judges. "This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly there (50) is, both in the Scripture and the statute-book. Then let the magistrates, who have made it of no effect, thank themselves if their own wives and daughters go astray!"

"Mercy on us, goodwife," exclaimed a man in the crowd, "is there no virtue in woman, save what springs from a wholesome fear of the gallows? That is (55) the hardest word yet! Hush, now, gossips! for the lock is turning in the prison-door, and here comes Mistress Prynne herself."

⁶ *farthingale*: a hooped petticoat worn to extend a skirt

⁷ *behoof*: benefit, advantage

gossips (lines 29 and 55): in the older sense, close female friends or neighbors; *Marry, I trow not* (line 32):

"Indeed, I think not."

Question 3: Literary Argument

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

Many works of literature feature characters whose relationship to a home or homeland is a defining part of their experience. The home may be lost, left behind by choice or by necessity, or returned to after a long absence, and the character's understanding of what that home is—and of who they are in relation to it—may change in the process.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character's relationship to a home or homeland that is lost, left, or returned to is significant to the work. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how that relationship to home contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following: - Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation. - 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.

Americanah

The Awakening

Behold the Dreamers

Beloved

Brooklyn

Ceremony

Cry, the Beloved Country

A Doll's House

Exit West

Fences

Frankenstein

Gilead

The Glass Menagerie

The Grapes of Wrath

Great Expectations

Hamlet

Homegoing

A House for Mr. Biswas

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents

Interpreter of Maladies
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
The Joy Luck Club
King Lear
The Kite Runner
The Namesake
No-No Boy
The Odyssey
Pachinko
Persuasion
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
A Raisin in the Sun
The Remains of the Day
Salvage the Bones
Song of Solomon
The Tempest
Their Eyes Were Watching God
There There
Things Fall Apart
We Need New Names
The Woman Warrior
Wuthering Heights

END OF EXAM

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