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AP ENGLISH LITERATURE · FREE RESOURCE

AP English Literature and Composition — Practice Exam 5

Exam format	Digital (Bluebook-style) practice exam, two sections
Section I	Multiple choice: 55 questions, 60 minutes, 45% of composite score
Section II	Free response: 3 essay questions, 2 hours (suggested 40 minutes each), 55% of composite score
Total time	3 hours
Passages in Section I	2 poems, 2 prose fiction excerpts, 1 drama excerpt

General directions. Work in one sitting if you can, with a timer, and without notes or reference materials. Section I is a separate 60-minute block; Section II follows after a short break. Do not turn to the answer key until you have finished both sections.

Suggested pacing.

TASK	SUGGESTED TIME
Section I, Passage 1 (poem, Questions 1–11)	about 11 minutes
Section I, Passage 2 (prose, Questions 12–22)	about 12 minutes
Section I, Passage 3 (poem, Questions 23–33)	about 11 minutes
Section I, Passage 4 (drama, Questions 34–44)	about 13 minutes
Section I, Passage 5 (prose, Questions 45–55)	about 13 minutes
Break	5–10 minutes
Section II, Question 1 (poetry analysis)	40 minutes
Section II, Question 2 (prose fiction analysis)	40 minutes
Section II, Question 3 (literary argument)	40 minutes

Notes on the passages. Authors, titles, and dates are given only where the exam would normally give them. Some passages in this exam are excerpts from published works; others were written for this practice exam in period styles, and the headnotes say which. Footnotes gloss a few archaic words. Line numbers in the prose and drama passages are approximate and refer to the lines as laid out in the margin of the printed exam; the line numbers cited in the questions are keyed to those marginal numbers.

Strategies to rehearse (not rules). Read the question stems before the passage when a set is long; mark shifts in tone, speaker, or subject as you read; return to the lines cited in each question and read a line before and after; and, for “EXCEPT” questions, test each choice against the text and cross out the three that are true. On the essays, spend the first five minutes planning a thesis that says *what* is complex, and spend most of your writing time explaining how particular words and choices create meaning.

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

Time: 60 minutes. Number of questions: 55.

Directions: This section consists of selections from literary works and questions on their content, style, and form. After you read each passage, choose the answer that best answers each question. Each question has four choices, (A) through (D). There is no penalty for guessing, so answer every question. Line numbers appear in parentheses at the start of every fifth line.

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

The following poem was published in 1794.

London

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.
(5) In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.
How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
(10) Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.
But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
(15) Blasts the new-born Infants tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

1. The speaker of the poem is best described as
 - (A) a reformer who proposes specific remedies for the suffering he describes
 - (B) an observer who moves through the city and records the suffering he sees and hears
 - (C) a resident who feels secure within the city's institutions
 - (D) a visitor who is surprised by the city's unfamiliar customs
2. In context, "charter'd" (lines 1 and 2) most nearly means
 - (A) officially mapped and named
 - (B) hired for private use
 - (C) granted special distinction
 - (D) controlled by legal privilege and ownership
3. The repetition of "every" and "marks" in lines 3–7 primarily serves to
 - (A) suggest that suffering is so pervasive that the speaker cannot avoid perceiving it
 - (B) emphasize the speaker's sense of his own superiority to the people he sees
 - (C) imply that the people of London have become indifferent to one another
 - (D) create a soothing rhythm that softens the harshness of the scene
4. In context, "appalls" (line 10) most nearly means
 - (A) amuses
 - (B) darkens
 - (C) shocks and shames
 - (D) summons
5. Each of the following kinds of imagery appears in the poem EXCEPT
 - (A) visual
 - (B) auditory
 - (C) olfactory
 - (D) kinesthetic
6. Lines 9–12 suggest which of the following about the institutions of power?
 - I. The Church and the Palace are stained by suffering they do not relieve.
 - II. The cries of the powerless have consequences for the symbols of authority.
 - III. The Church and the Palace respond sympathetically to the sufferers' complaints.
 - A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
7. The image in line 12, "Runs in blood down Palace walls," chiefly suggests that
 - (A) the soldier's private suffering is also an accusation against the authority that sent him to war
 - (B) the Palace has been damaged by a recent battle
 - (C) the soldier has been punished for expressing sorrow
 - (D) the monarchy takes pride in the sacrifices of its soldiers
8. The phrase "But most" (line 13) introduces a shift from
 - (A) the speaker's personal despair to hope for the city's future
 - (B) a description of daytime streets to an account of the speaker's memories

- (C) a general survey of the city's people to a catalogue of specific officials
(D) suffering associated with public institutions to suffering within intimate, family life
9. The phrase "Marriage hearse" (line 16) is best described as
(A) a euphemism that softens the harshness of the final stanza
(B) an oxymoron that joins an institution of new life to an image of death
(C) an allusion to a specific funeral
(D) a simile comparing marriage to a journey
10. Which of the following claims about the poem is best supported by the text?
(A) The poem presents London's suffering as widespread and as sustained by institutions and attitudes the city accepts.
(B) The poem suggests that individual acts of charity could end the suffering it describes.
(C) The poem blames the poor for failing to resist their circumstances.
(D) The poem contrasts the corruption of the city with the innocence of the countryside.
11. A student is writing an essay arguing that the poem presents the city's suffering as partly self-imposed. Which quotation would best support this claim?
(A) "I wander thro' each charter'd street" (line 1)
(B) "Marks of weakness, marks of woe" (line 4)
(C) "The mind-forg'd manacles I hear" (line 8)
(D) "Blasts the new-born Infant's tear" (line 15)

Questions 12–22. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The following excerpt is from a novel published in the early nineteenth century. The narrator is a young scientist.

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; (5) the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the (10) wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more (15) horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose (20) of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a (25) long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, (30)

walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started (35) from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on (40) me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the (45) greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed (50) on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

I passed the night wretchedly. Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly (55) sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness. Mingled with this horror, I felt the bitterness of disappointment; dreams that had been my food and pleasant rest for so long a space were now become a hell to me; and the change was so rapid, the overthrow so complete!

endued (line 49): endowed

12. The details of the hour and the weather in lines 4–6 chiefly serve to

- (A) suggest that the narrator has been careless about the time
- (B) foreshadow a storm that will interrupt the experiment
- (C) show that the narrator’s work has been hindered by poor conditions
- (D) create a bleak atmosphere that tempers the triumph the narrator’s “accomplishment” might otherwise suggest

13. The narrator’s statement that he “had selected his features as beautiful” (line 11) suggests that the narrator

- (A) expected the creature to resemble his ideal and is shocked by the discrepancy
- (B) takes pride in the creature’s appearance despite its flaws
- (C) believes that beauty is irrelevant to the creature’s moral nature
- (D) values the creature’s strength above its features

14. The exclamation “Beautiful! Great God!” (line 12) is best understood as the narrator’s

- (A) sincere admiration for his own craftsmanship
- (B) bitter acknowledgment of the gap between his intentions and his result
- (C) mocking reply to an imagined critic
- (D) fearful recognition that others will see the creature

15. The description in lines 12–17 develops a contrast between

- (A) the creature’s gentle manner and its violent appearance
- (B) the narrator’s early confidence and his present exhaustion
- (C) features that appear beautiful in isolation and a general effect that is horrifying
- (D) the creature’s physical strength and its mental weakness

- 16.** The sentence "The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature" (lines 18–19) most clearly
- (A) shifts the narrator's attention from himself to people in general
 - (B) presents the narrator's reversal of feeling as an instance of a common human experience
 - (C) apologizes for the narrator's inability to describe the creature
 - (D) contradicts the narrator's earlier claim to have worked hard
- 17.** The narrator's actions in lines 23–26 reveal that he
- (A) intends to protect others from the creature
 - (B) has resolved to destroy what he has made
 - (C) is eager to seek help from his colleagues
 - (D) responds to his creation by fleeing it rather than facing it
- 18.** The dream described in lines 28–35 does each of the following EXCEPT
- (A) extend the narrator's horror into his sleep
 - (B) associate the narrator's act of creation with death and decay
 - (C) show the narrator's affection for Elizabeth turning to dread
 - (D) provide evidence that the creature intends harm to Elizabeth
- 19.** The narrator's statement "He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me" (lines 41–42) most strongly suggests that
- (A) the narrator's account of the creature's intentions is shaped by his fear and may be mistaken
 - (B) the creature is attempting to attack the narrator
 - (C) the narrator is unable to remember the details of the night
 - (D) the creature is unable to move freely
- 20.** The allusion to Dante (lines 51–52) primarily serves to
- (A) suggest that the narrator has been influenced by poetry in his studies
 - (B) compare the creature to a character in a literary work
 - (C) emphasize that the creature's hideousness exceeds even the most terrible imaginings of great literature
 - (D) imply that the narrator's experience resembles a pilgrimage
- 21.** Which of the following does the final paragraph (lines 53–58) convey about the narrator's state after the creature's awakening?
- I. His disappointment is mixed with relief that his labor is complete.
 - II. The hopes that once sustained him are now painful to him.
 - III. His distress affects his body as well as his mind.
- A. I only
 - B. I and III only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
- 22.** A student argues that the narrator's horror stems less from any harm the creature has done than from the collapse of his own ideals. Which quotation would best support this claim?
- (A) "the rain pattered dismally against the panes" (line 5)

- (B) "the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart" (lines 22–23)
(C) "a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered" (lines 35–36)
(D) "listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound" (line 45)

Questions 23–33. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

The following poem was published in 1896.

To an Athlete Dying Young

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.
(5) To-day, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.
Smart lad, to slip betimes away
(10) From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.
Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
(15) And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears.
Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honours out,
Runners whom renown outran
(20) And the name died before the man.
So set, before its echo fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.
(25) And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

betimes (line 9): early

rout (line 17): a disorderly crowd

- 23.** The pronoun "we" (line 2) most clearly establishes the speaker as
(A) a member of the community that has both celebrated and now mourns the athlete
(B) a spokesman for the athlete's family
(C) an official who organizes the town's ceremonies
(D) a rival who resented the athlete's victory

- 24.** The relationship between the first stanza (lines 1–4) and the second stanza (lines 5–8) is best described as
- (A) a cause and its unintended effect
 - (B) a general statement followed by an illustration
 - (C) a repeated action given a reversed meaning
 - (D) a question followed by an answer
- 25.** The phrase “a stiller town” (line 8) refers to
- (A) a quiet village where the athlete will live in retirement
 - (B) the grave, or the community of the dead
 - (C) the speaker’s town after the funeral crowd has gone home
 - (D) the athlete’s hometown in the years before his fame
- 26.** The speaker’s address “Smart lad” (line 9) is best described as
- (A) sneering and resentful
 - (B) tender and nostalgic
 - (C) detached and clinical
 - (D) approving and grimly ironic
- 27.** Lines 11–12 (“And early though the laurel grows / It withers quicker than the rose”) suggest that
- (A) public honor, though quickly won, fades more rapidly than even the most delicate beauty
 - (B) victory is less valuable than romantic love
 - (C) natural beauty lasts longer than athletic skill
 - (D) the town’s praise for the athlete was insincere
- 28.** Lines 13–16 serve primarily to
- (A) express the speaker’s grief at the athlete’s absence
 - (B) criticize the townspeople for ceasing to cheer
 - (C) argue that the loss of public acclaim means nothing to one who is dead
 - (D) recall the sound of the crowd at the athlete’s victory
- 29.** Which of the following best describes the progression of the poem?
- (A) From grief to anger to resignation
 - (B) From nostalgia for the past to hope for the future
 - (C) From a description of the athlete’s skill to a criticism of the town’s values
 - (D) From a contrast of two processions to a consoling argument and finally to an imagined scene among the dead
- 30.** Lines 19–20 (“Runners whom renown outran / And the name died before the man”) suggest that the speaker believes
- (A) fame is less important than personal happiness
 - (B) many athletes suffer the humiliation of outliving their own fame
 - (C) athletes should avoid competition
 - (D) the athlete’s name was not worth remembering
- 31.** The imagery of lines 21–24 (“the sill of shade,” “the low lintel”) presents the grave as
- (A) a doorway where the athlete may keep his triumph intact
 - (B) a barrier that separates him from his glory
 - (C) a prison that confines his talents
 - (D) a finish line he has failed to reach

32. In the final stanza, the “garland” is best understood as a symbol of

- (A) the weakness of the dead who gather around the athlete
- (B) the athlete’s fame, preserved at its height by his early death
- (C) the town’s gratitude to the athlete’s family
- (D) the athlete’s love for a young woman in the town

33. A student argues that the speaker’s praise of early death is complicated by a lingering sense of loss. Which quotation would best support this claim?

- (A) “Smart lad, to slip betimes away” (line 9)
- (B) “Now you will not swell the rout” (line 17)
- (C) “Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead” (line 26)
- (D) “The still-defended challenge-cup” (line 24)

Questions 34–44. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The following scene is from a play written for this practice exam in the style of 1890s problem drama. Henry Calder, a London banker, has opened a letter addressed to his wife, Isabel.

[A morning-room in the Calders’ house in Kensington, late on a wet November afternoon. A fire burns low in the grate. ISOBEL CALDER stands at the writing-table with her back to the door. HENRY CALDER enters, carrying his hat and an opened letter, which he holds as one holds a thing not quite (5) clean.]

CALDER. You are not dressed for the Bellamys’.

ISOBEL. I find I am not going.

CALDER. [Setting down his hat with great care.] In eight years I have never known you to excuse yourself on the day. The carriage is ordered for seven.

10. ISOBEL. Then it may be disordered. [A pause.] You fetched the letters yourself, Henry. You usually leave that to Parker.

CALDER. I met the boy at the gate. One of the letters, I observed, was addressed to my wife in a hand I did not know. [He lays it on the table.] I confess I did not observe that until I had opened it.

15. ISOBEL. You did not observe that the envelope bore my name.

CALDER. I observed that it bore my name also. You have been so good as to share it with me. [He sits.] I have read it twice. It is from a Mrs. Aldous, of Leeds, and it thanks you, in terms I would call ardent, for forty pounds, “the fourth instalment,” which has “kept the roof over Dick’s (20) head another quarter.” I have no acquaintance with a Mrs. Aldous. I have none with a Dick.

ISOBEL. Dick is my brother’s boy.

CALDER. Your brother has been dead since the year we married. You told me there was no one left of your people to be troubled about.

25. ISOBEL. I said that I would not have them troubled. [She turns.] It was true when I said it. Dick was born the winter after.

CALDER. [Rising, quietly.] Forty pounds, four times. One hundred and sixty pounds out of the housekeeping.

ISOBEL. Out of my own allowance. I have not had a new gown since Easter, (30) Henry. You did not notice that either.

CALDER. [Stung.] I notice what is laid before me. It is a poor wife who must be caught before she is candid.

ISOBEL. And a poor husband who reads before he asks. [Silence. The clock strikes.] Is it the money that wounds you? Or that there is a household in (35) Leeds that does not depend upon your good opinion?

CALDER. You make it sound a crime to wish to be told.

ISOBEL. I make it sound as it is. When I came to this house you showed me the rooms, and you said, "Everything here is yours." You did not say that I might own nothing of my own, but you meant it, and I was too young to hear (40) the difference. [She takes up the letter and folds it.] I did not tell you because you would have wished to look into the matter. You would have written to a solicitor. You would have been just, and Dick would have been a case.

CALDER. [After a moment.] And if I say now that I will see to it—that the (45) boy shall be provided for—

ISOBEL. Then you will have been generous, and I shall have been forgiven. I find I do not want to be forgiven. [She puts the letter into the fire; it catches slowly.] There. You have read it. It need not be read again.

CALDER. [Watching it burn.] That is not an answer.

50. ISOBEL. No. It is the first thing I have done in this room without asking leave. [She goes to the door.] Tell Parker the carriage is not wanted. [Exit.]

[CALDER stands alone. He takes up his hat, looks at it, and sets it down again. He draws a chair nearer the fire and sits, his hands open on his (55) knees.]

34. The opening stage direction (lines 1–5) primarily establishes

- (A) a household preparing for a celebration
- (B) the wealth that Calder has inherited
- (C) a domestic setting whose gloom and Calder's distaste for the letter anticipate a confrontation
- (D) Isobel's longing to escape the city

35. The stage direction "Setting down his hat with great care" (line 8) suggests that Calder is

- (A) indifferent to Isobel's decision
- (B) anxious about being late for the Bellamys'
- (C) eager to appease his wife
- (D) controlling his irritation behind a show of composure

36. Calder's remark "You have been so good as to share it with me" (lines 16–17) is best described as

- (A) a sincere expression of gratitude
- (B) a sarcastic assertion of his right to open Isobel's mail
- (C) a confession that he regrets his action
- (D) an admission that he has misread the letter

37. Isobel's reply "You did not observe that the envelope bore my name" (line 15) is notable because it

- (A) calmly exposes the weakness in Calder's claim that he opened the letter innocently
- (B) apologizes for her failure to inform him
- (C) pleads for Calder's forgiveness
- (D) changes the subject to avoid discussing the letter

38. Isobel's recollection in lines 37–40 of Calder's words "Everything here is yours" reveals that she now believes that

- (A) Calder's generosity is the most valuable feature of her marriage
- (B) Calder deceived her about the extent of his wealth
- (C) the house has been a source of comfort to her
- (D) Calder's apparent generosity contained an assumption that he owned and controlled all that the household held

39. Isobel's comment "You would have been just, and Dick would have been a case" (lines 42–43) suggests that she believes Calder

- (A) would have refused to help the boy
- (B) would have responded with impersonal fairness rather than personal compassion
- (C) is too generous to be trusted
- (D) lacks the funds to assist her relatives

40. Isobel's act of burning the letter (lines 47–48) functions primarily as

- (A) an assertion of independence that refuses the forgiveness Calder's offer implies
- (B) an attempt to destroy evidence of wrongdoing
- (C) an expression of anger at Mrs. Aldous
- (D) a sign that she regrets her secrecy

41. The stage direction "Silence. The clock strikes." (lines 33–34) marks a point at which the conversation

- (A) comes to an end
- (B) is interrupted by the arrival of a servant
- (C) turns from the question of the letter to the question of the marriage itself
- (D) shifts from tension to reconciliation

42. The final stage direction (lines 53–55) suggests that by the end of the scene Calder has become

- (A) relieved that the quarrel has ended
- (B) determined to follow Isobel
- (C) angry at Isobel's refusal to explain herself
- (D) subdued and uncertain, no longer in command of a household he assumed was his own

43. Calder's speeches in the scene do each of the following EXCEPT

- (A) express his sense of injury at being deceived
- (B) imply that Isobel has failed in her obligations as a wife
- (C) reduce part of the dispute to a matter of sums
- (D) acknowledge that his own conduct contributed to Isobel's secrecy

44. Which of the following would be the strongest thesis statement for an essay on the scene?

- (A) Through a dispute over a secret payment, the playwright reveals a marriage in which Calder's generosity masks a need for control and Isobel's concealment becomes an act of self-assertion.
- (B) The playwright uses dialogue and stage directions to show that Isobel and Calder disagree about money.
- (C) Calder is a stern husband, and Isobel is a secretive wife.
- (D) The scene shows that secrets damage marriages.

Questions 45–55. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The following passage is from a short story written for this practice exam in the style of early twentieth-century Irish realist fiction.

On Saturday evening the house in Hanover Row smelt of boiled bacon and of the damp that came up through the floorboards in every season but August. I had been in the front room since four o'clock, standing at the window with my forehead against the glass and watching the lamplighter work his way (5) down the street with his pole, like a man fishing in a shallow river. My uncle had promised to be home by six. He had promised it at breakfast, and again at the door, drawing on his gloves with the slow ceremony he brought to every departure, and I had taken the promise and carried it all day like a coin I was afraid to spend.

10. At seven the gas was lit. At half past, my aunt came in and asked whether I meant to wear a hole in the window, and I said I was waiting for my uncle, and she said that in that case I had better learn to wait in the kitchen, where the stove was. I did not move. Across the street the draper's shop was putting up its shutters, and I saw the draper's daughter come to the (15) upper window to draw the blind. She stopped, as she sometimes did, with her hand upon the cord, and looked down into the street at nothing; and I felt, as I had felt a hundred times that month, that her glance had passed through the glass and the dusk and fallen on me, though I knew very well she could not have seen me in the unlit room. It was for her that I wanted (20) the evening. I had said, in a speech I still cannot remember without discomfort, that I would go to the Christmas fair at the Rotunda, which she could not attend because of a sick mother, and that I would bring her something. She had said nothing; she had turned the silver bracelet on her wrist, and then she had said that it was kind in me.
11. At a quarter to nine I heard my uncle's key in the hall door, and then his voice, raised in the cheerful, deliberate manner of a man who has dined, addressing the hat-stand. I went out to him. He looked at me with faint surprise, as at a piece of furniture that has been moved, and it was some moments before he remembered; and when he remembered he laughed, and felt (30) in his waistcoat for a florin, and pressed it into my palm, and said that a lad should never be kept from his pleasures.

I ran the whole way to the tram. The long carriage, when it came, was nearly empty, and it swayed through the dark streets with a loose rattle that seemed to mock the speed I wished it to have. I held the florin in my (35) closed fist until the metal grew warm and then slippery, and I thought of the stalls I should find, the lanterns, the silk, the cluttered glitter, and of myself passing among them with a careless air, choosing.

When I reached the Rotunda it was past ten. The great hall was almost dark. Most of the stalls were shrouded in sheets, and the few that remained lit (40) were being counted out by men in shirtsleeves, who spoke among themselves in the flat, patient voices of tradesmen at the close of a long day. At one of them a young woman was folding ribbons into a drawer, and she looked up and asked whether I wanted anything, in the tone one uses to a child who has come to the wrong house. I looked at the ribbons. They were cheap, and (45) there were a great many of them, and none was the colour I had carried in my mind. I said that I was only looking. She said, without malice, that there was little to look at now; and she shut the drawer.

I stood a moment longer in the middle of the floor with the florin cooling in my hand. High above me a gallery clock struck the quarter, and the sound (50) went about the hall without finding anything to rest upon. It seemed to me that I had been a long time mistaken in something I could not yet name, and that the mistake had been so large, and so carefully tended, that I had never once seen it.

- 45.** The narrator's point of view is best described as
- (A) a young boy's immediate, unreflecting report of events
 - (B) an adult's retrospective account that combines a boy's feelings with a mature awareness
 - (C) an omniscient observer who knows the thoughts of every character
 - (D) an objective recorder who avoids interpretation
- 46.** The details in the opening sentence (lines 1–2) function primarily to
- (A) establish the family's prosperity
 - (B) suggest the narrator's longing for summer
 - (C) convey a cheerless, confining household from which the narrator wishes to escape
 - (D) foreshadow the narrator's illness
- 47.** In lines 8–9, the simile "like a coin I was afraid to spend" suggests that the narrator
- (A) valued his uncle's promise highly and feared losing its worth
 - (B) was reluctant to admit that he needed money
 - (C) doubted that his uncle would keep his word
 - (D) planned to give the promise to the draper's daughter
- 48.** The narrator's account of the draper's daughter in lines 13–24 most strongly suggests that his feelings for her are
- (A) casual and unlikely to last
 - (B) based on long conversation and friendship
 - (C) intense but largely imagined and sustained by small, ambiguous gestures
 - (D) known to and encouraged by the girl
- 49.** The simile "as at a piece of furniture that has been moved" (lines 28–29) emphasizes that the uncle
- (A) is surprised to find the narrator in an unfamiliar place
 - (B) regards the narrator with fond amusement
 - (C) is annoyed at being disturbed
 - (D) treats the narrator as a familiar fixture whose needs he does not usually notice
- 50.** The uncle's remark that "a lad should never be kept from his pleasures" (lines 30–31) is unintentionally ironic because
- (A) the uncle has deliberately withheld permission
 - (B) the uncle himself caused the delay yet speaks as though he were generously granting freedom
 - (C) the narrator has no interest in the fair
 - (D) the narrator's aunt disapproves of the fair
- 51.** The narrator's expectations of the fair differ from what he finds in each of the following ways EXCEPT:
- (A) He imagines himself choosing among many open stalls; he finds that the vendors have not yet begun to close.
 - (B) He imagines "cluttered glitter" (line 36); he finds stalls shrouded in sheets.
 - (C) He imagines himself acting with "a careless air" (line 37); he is treated like "a child who has come to the wrong house" (lines 43–44).
 - (D) He imagines a particular colour of ribbon; he finds none that matches it.
- 52.** The narrator's description of the vendors and the goods in lines 38–47 suggests which of the following?

- I. The vendors are hostile toward the narrator.
- II. The vendors regard the closing of the fair as routine work.
- III. The goods that remain cannot match what the narrator had imagined.

- A. I only
- B. II only
- C. II and III only
- D. I, II, and III

53. The phrase “the sound went about the hall without finding anything to rest upon” (lines 49–50) is best understood as a figure that

- (A) emphasizes the physical size of the hall as the narrator’s main concern
- (B) gives the sound a purposeless search, reflecting the emptiness the narrator feels
- (C) presents the clock as an indifferent observer of the narrator’s embarrassment
- (D) suggests the narrator’s fear of the dark

54. The passage as a whole moves from

- (A) uncertainty about the narrator’s feelings to a resolution of those feelings
- (B) criticism of the uncle’s carelessness to forgiveness
- (C) fear of the dark city to comfort in the lighted fair
- (D) eager anticipation to a dawning, unnamed disillusionment

55. A student claims that the narrator’s disappointment is as much about discovering his own illusions as about the fair itself. Which sentence from the passage best supports this claim?

- (A) “It seemed to me that I had been a long time mistaken in something I could not yet name, and that the mistake had been so large, and so carefully tended, that I had never once seen it.” (lines 50–53)
- (B) “I ran the whole way to the tram.” (line 32)
- (C) “She said, without malice, that there was little to look at now; and she shut the drawer.” (lines 46–47)
- (D) “When I reached the Rotunda it was past ten.” (line 38)

END OF SECTION I

Section II: Free-Response Questions

Total time: 2 hours. Number of questions: 3. The suggested time for each question is 40 minutes. The three questions are weighted equally, and each is scored on a 6-point analytic rubric.

Directions: Write your responses in the space provided or on separate paper. Manage your time carefully: you may work on the questions in any order, but be sure to number each response clearly. Each essay should be a developed argument about the text, not a summary of it. Quotations should be brief and embedded in your own sentences.

Question 1 (Suggested time: 40 minutes)

In the following poem, published in 1842, the speaker, a duke, shows a portrait of his late wife to the representative of a count whose daughter he hopes to marry.

Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Robert Browning uses literary elements and techniques to portray the speaker's complex attitude toward his late wife.

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.

My Last Duchess

Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
(5) Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
(10) The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
(15) Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat": such stuff
(20) Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
(25) Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
(30) Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame

(35) This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
(40) Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
(45) Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
(50) Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
(55) Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Fra Pandolf and Claus of Innsbruck are fictitious artists. "Neptune" refers to a bronze sculpture of the Roman god of the sea.

Question 2 (Suggested time: 40 minutes)

The following passage was written for this practice exam in the style of early twentieth-century American prairie fiction. In this passage, Karin Sundahl, the eldest of four children in a family of Swedish immigrants, walks out onto her family's Nebraska homestead on the morning after her father's burial.

Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author uses literary elements and techniques to portray Karin's complex relationship to the land.

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.

The wind had gone down in the night, and when Karin came out of the sod house at daybreak the whole country lay as still as a plate. She had not slept. Behind her in the one room her mother was breathing evenly, with the heavy, ashamed sleep of the very tired, and the boys were curled together (5) under the buffalo robe like two dogs. Karin shut the door softly and stood on the doorstone with her shawl crossed on her breast.

Nothing had been changed by the burying. That was what she could not at first take in. Yesterday they had put her father down in the corner of the north quarter, where the grass was thickest, and the neighbors had sung the (10) old hymn in Swedish, thin and flat on the open air, and she had thought that surely so great a thing must have altered the look of the land, as a blow alters a face. But the land was just as it had been. The red grass ran off in long swells toward the creek, and beyond the creek rose the divide, and beyond the divide there was nothing at all but the pale color of the (15) sky pressing down upon the pale color of the earth. The windmill her father had raised in the fall stood up black against the east, its wheel not turning. It was the only upright thing for miles, and she saw that it looked, in that light, less like a machine than like a man waiting to be asked a question.

20. She walked out past the stable and the dugout and the broken-backed plow, and she did not hurry. Her father had always hurried. In nine years he had never once been seen to stand with his hands idle in the field, and she remembered how he would stop in the furrow, pushing back his cap, and say that it was a good country, a rich country, that you had only to wait on (25) it—and then, before the sentence was well out, bend again to the handles as if he had been caught in some indecency. He had loved it, she thought, as a man loves a woman who has never said yes. He had given it his strength and his teeth and at last his lungs, and the land had taken them all with the same cool indifference with which it took the rain.
21. Karin stopped at the edge of the plowed ground. The furrows ran away from her very straight, black and shining where the share had turned the sod, and she bent down and took a handful of the earth and held it. It was cold, and it smelled of iron and of something older, like the inside of a cellar. She had hated that smell all through the first winter, when the children (35) had coughed and the snow had come in at the stovepipe. She found that she did not hate it now. She rubbed the soil slowly between her palms until it fell away in a dark powder, and stood looking at her hands, which were her father's hands, square and cracked, with the black rimmed under the nails that no lye would ever take out.
22. A meadowlark rose out of the grass beside her and went up singing, and she lifted her head to follow it. The song fell about her in bright pieces, careless as coins, and for the length of it she was neither a daughter nor a mourner nor the eldest of four, but only a body standing in a great light. Then the bird dropped, and the quiet closed over the place where it (45) had been, and she turned back toward the house, where the smoke was beginning to rise straight from her mother's chimney, a thin gray line that held up the whole sky.

Question 3 (Suggested time: 40 minutes)

Many works of literature feature a setting, such as a house, a town, a landscape, or an institution, that functions almost as a character. Such a setting may shelter, confine, threaten, or define the people who live within it, and it may seem to act upon them with a will of its own.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a setting functions almost as a character. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how that setting shapes a character and how it 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.

Suggested works

Absalom, Absalom!
Americanah
Bleak House
The Bluest Eye
Brooklyn
Ceremony
A Doll's House
Dracula
Ethan Frome
Frankenstein
Gilead
Great Expectations
The Great Gatsby
Hamlet
Heart of Darkness
A House for Mr. Biswas
The House of Mirth
The House on Mango Street
Jane Eyre
Kindred
Little Fires Everywhere
Madame Bovary
Middlemarch
Mrs. Dalloway
My Ántonia
Never Let Me Go
The Nickel Boys
Pedro Páramo
Rebecca
The Remains of the Day
The Road
Season of Migration to the North
The Shipping News
The Sound and the Fury
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Things Fall Apart
To the Lighthouse
The Underground Railroad
Wide Sargasso Sea
Wuthering Heights

You may select a work from the list above or another work of fiction of comparable literary merit.

END OF EXAM

Student Answer Sheet (Section I)

Record your answers here, then check them against the answer key.

Q	ANSWER	Q	ANSWER	Q	ANSWER	Q	ANSWER	Q	ANSWER
1		12		23		34		45	
2		13		24		35		46	
3		14		25		36		47	
4		15		26		37		48	
5		16		27		38		49	
6		17		28		39		50	
7		18		29		40		51	
8		19		30		41		52	
9		20		31		42		53	
10		21		32		43		54	
11		22		33		44		55	

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