

# **MsEffie's List of Prose Essay Prompts for Advanced Placement® English Literature Exams, 1970-2024\***

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Each prose passage is included in the following prompts, printed on separate pages for better use in the classroom. None of the prompts are original to me, but are Advanced Placement® English Literature and Composition Exam prompts. This is my best effort to comply with College Board's use requirements.

# 1970 Prose Passage

Write an essay in which you show how the young woman and the young man in the passage above are made to seem naturally suited for one another. Do not merely repeat information from the multiple-choice questions.

Above green-flashing plunges of a weir,<sup>1</sup> and shaken by the thunder below, lilies, golden and white, were swaying at anchor among the reeds. Meadow-sweet<sup>2</sup> hung from the banks thick with (5) weed and training bramble, and there also hung a daughter of Earth. Her face was shaded by a broad straw-hat with a flexible brim that left her lips and chin in the sun, and sometimes nodding, sent forth a light of promising eyes. Across her (10) shoulders, and behind, flowed large loose curls, brown in shadow, almost golden where the ray touched them. She was simply dressed, befitting decency and the season. On a closer inspection you might see that her lips were stained. This (15) blooming young person was regaling on dewberries.<sup>3</sup> They grew between the bank and the water. Apparently she found the fruit abundant, for her hand was making pretty progress to her mouth. Fastidious youth, which shudders and revolts at woman (20) plumping her exquisite proportions on bread-and-butter, and would (we must suppose) joyfully have her quite scraggy to have her quite poetical, can hardly object to dewberries. Indeed the act of eating them is dainty and induces musing. The (25) dewberry is a sister to the lotos<sup>4</sup> and an innocent sister. You eat; mouth, eye, and hand are occupied and the undrugged mind free to roam. And so it was with the damsel who knelt there. The little skylark went up above her, all song, to the (30) smooth southern cloud lying along the blue; from a dewy copse standing dark over her nodding hat, the blackbird fluted, calling to her with thrice mellow note; the kingfisher flashed emerald out of green osiers;<sup>5</sup> a bow-winged heron traveled (35) aloft, searching solitude; a boat slipped towards her, containing a dreamy youth, and still she plucked the fruit, and ate, and mused, as if no fairy prince were invading her territories, and as if she wished not for one, or knew not her (40) wishes. Surrounded by the green shaven meadows, the pastoral summer buzz, the weir-fall's thundering white, amid the breath and beauty of wildflowers, she was a bit of lovely human life in a

(45) fair setting—a terrible attraction. The Magnetic Youth leaned round to note his proximity to the weir-piles, and beheld the sweet vision. Stiller and stiller grew Nature, as at the meeting of two electric clouds. Her posture was so graceful that, though he was making straight for the weir, he dared not dip a scull. Just then one most (50) enticing dewberry caught her eye. He was floating by unheeded, and saw that her hand stretched low and could not gather what it sought. A stroke from his right brought him beside her. The damsel (55) glanced up dismayed, and her whole shape trembled over the brink. Richard sprang from his boat into the water. Pressing a hand beneath her foot, which she had thrust against the crumbling wet sides of the bank to save herself, he enabled her (60) to recover her balance, and gain safe earth, whither, emboldened by the incident, touching her finger's tip, he followed her.

<sup>1</sup>weir: dam

meadow-sweet: a plant of the rose family

<sup>3</sup>dewberries: blackberries

lotos: lotus, the fruit of which was said to induce drowsiness and forgetfulness

<sup>5</sup>osiers: willows

-- George Meredith, "Ferdinand and Miranda" from *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*:

# 1971 Prose Passage

Directions: Write an essay in which you demonstrate how the speaker establishes his attitude toward the coming of spring.

(5) I mention the spawning of the toads because it is one of the phenomena of spring which most deeply appeal to me, and because the toad, unlike the skylark and the primrose, has never had much of a boost from the poets. But I am aware that many people do not like reptiles or amphibians and I am not suggesting that in order to enjoy the spring you have to take an interest in toads. There are also the crocus, the missel thrush, the cuckoo, (10) the blackthorn, etc. The point is that the pleasures of spring are available to everybody, and cost nothing. Even in the most sordid street the coming of spring will register itself by some sign or other. if It is only a brighter blue between the chimney pots or the vivid green of an elder sprouting on a blitzed site. Indeed it is remarkable how Nature goes on existing unofficially, as it were, in the very heart of London. I have seen a kestrel flying over the Deptford gasworks, and I have heard a (20) first-rate performance by a blackbird in the Euston Road. There must be some hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of birds living inside the four-mile radius, and it is rather a pleasing thought that none of them pays a halfpenny of rent.

(25) As for spring, not even the narrow and gloomy streets round the Bank of England are quite able to exclude it. It comes seeping in everywhere, like one of those new poison gases which pass through all filters. The spring is commonly referred to as "a miracle," and during the past (30) five or six years this worn-out figure of speech has taken on a new lease of life. After the sort

of winters we have had to endure recently the spring does seem miraculous, because it has become gradually harder and harder to believe (35) that it is actually going to happen. Every February since 1940 I have found myself thinking that this time winter is going to be permanent. But Persephone, like the toads, always rises from the dead at about the same moment. Suddenly, towards the (40) end of March, the miracle happens and the decaying slum in which I live is transfigured. Down in the square the sooty privets have turned bright green, the leaves are thickening on the chestnut trees, (45) the daffodils are out, the wallflowers are budding. the policeman's tunic looks positively a pleasant shade of blue, the fishmonger greets his customers with a smile, and even the sparrows are quite a different color, having felt the balminess of the (50) air and nerved themselves to take a bath, their first since last September.

\* A small European falcon

-- George Orwell, "Some Thoughts on the Common Toad"

## 1972 Prose Passage

Write an essay in which you explain how the author prepares his reader for Eveline's final inability or unwillingness to sail to South America with Frank. Consider at least two elements of fiction such as theme, symbol, setting, image, characterization, or any other aspects of the narrative artist's craft.

### EVELINE

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

- (5) Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his foot steps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field
- (10) there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it—not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses
- (15) with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field—the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, how ever, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field
- (20) with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix\* and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a
- (25) long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back
- (30) to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during

(35) all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the

(40) coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

—He is in Melbourne now.

- (45) She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known
- (50) all her life about her. Of course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled

up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad.

- (55) She had always had an edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening.

—Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?

—Look lively, Miss Hill, please.

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

- But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married—she, Eveline. People would treat her
- (65) with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were
- (70) growing up he had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl; but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead
- (75) mother's sake. And now she had nobody to protect her. Ernest was dead and Harry, who was in the church decorating business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the
- (80) invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages—seven shillings—and Harry
- (85) always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard-earned money
- (90) to throw about the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad of a Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do
- (95) her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work—a hard life—but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank.

- (100) Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was
- (105) lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his

## 1972 Analysis of Speakers

Below are five passages which deal with some roles of the younger generation in society.

Write an essay on three of the passages in which you discuss the nature of each speaker, his assumptions about his audience, and the effects he wants to have on them. You should consider the diction and sentence structure of each of the passages you select.

Please indicate at the beginning of your essay which of the passages you will discuss.

- a. They [the young] have money in their pockets, and therefore are more courted, more publicized, and more presumptuous. But the only new factors which seem to me to introduce any real novelty into their situation are the scientific aids, from records to contraceptives, from travel to LSD, which provide both the temptation and the opportunity to satisfy, far more fully than before, the desire for immediate experience which is the source of the young's impatience.
- b. Not better, but very different. I don't get any Brownie points for growing up in the affluent era, and I'm not putting down my own father and mother. Their beautiful. I might have done the same as most parents did if I'd been in their shoes. What matters is that the two generations tend to act in opposite ways.
- c. In contrast, the period of adolescence in Western culture is more complex and more beset by problems. This complexity is due in part to lack of emancipation from parents, vocational dependence and extension of training sex restrictions and taboos, and inferior status. However, it is recognized that the ease or difficulty of the transition from childhood through adolescence into adulthood is a function of the amount of facilitation the culture offers to the individual who is going through the transitional period.
- d. Burning a bank is not the same as putting the banks and their system out of business. To do that, millions of people in this country will first have to wake up to the real source of their misery. The action in Santa Barbara, a community which has seen its environment destroyed by corporate greed, might spark that awakening. If it does, the students who burned the Bank of America in Santa Barbara will have done more to save the environment than all the "Survival Fairs" and "Earth Day Teach-Ins" put together.
- e. All right, I know what your thinking: Another crew-cut apologist for the establishment. Right? Wrong. I've got the kind of long frazzled hair that drives the straights right up against the wall. I'm an art major. And I'm with the movement. I mean, like, the Vietnam Center at Carbondale has got to go. But I'm interested in defending human values and not just out to groove with hostility freaks such as the Weathermen.

bronze. Then they had come to know each other.  
 (110) He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see The Bohemian Girl and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People  
 (115) knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to  
 (120) like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed  
 (125) through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and  
 (130) had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.  
 —I know these sailor chaps, he said.  
 One day he had quarreled with Frank and after that she had to meet her lover secretly.  
 The evening deepened in the avenue. The white  
 (135) of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favourite but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice.  
 (140) Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father  
 (145) putting on her mother's bonnet to make the children laugh.  
 Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cre-  
 (150) tonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She  
 (155) remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered  
 (160) her father strutting back into the sickroom saying:

—Damned Italians! coming over here!

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being—  
 :that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final  
 (165) craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother's voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

---Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!\*

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror.  
 (170) Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would  
 (175) save her.

.....

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The (180) station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold  
 (185) and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist.  
 If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their  
 (190) passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.  
 A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him  
 (195) seize her hand:  
 —Come!  
 All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the  
 (200) iron railing.  
 —Come!  
 No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.  
 (205) --Eveline! Evvy!  
 He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

\*Although it appears to be Gaelic, this mysterious exclamation has not been satisfactorily explained.

## 1973 Prose Passages

**Directions:** Your work on the preceding prose passage [Coketown] has called your attention to some of its details, structures, ideas, and attitudes. Now read the passage below carefully, and reread the Coketown passage on the next page.

Write an essay in which you explain how each author's presentation of details is intended to shape the reader's attitudes toward the place he describes — Coketown and the caves. Give specific attention to the function of word choice, imagery, phrasing, and sentence structure.

### Passage 1

The caves are readily described. A tunnel eight feet long, five feet high, three feet wide, leads to a circular chamber about twenty feet in diameter. The arrangement occurs again and again throughout the group of hills, and this is all, this is a Marabar cave. Having seen one such cave, having seen two, having seen three, four, fourteen,  
5 twenty-four, the visitor returns to Chandrapore uncertain whether he has had an interesting experience or a dull one or any experience at all. He finds it difficult to discuss the caves, or to keep them apart in his mind, for the pattern never varies, and no carving, not even a bees'-nest or a bat distinguishes one from another.

Nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation—for they have one—does  
10 not depend upon human speech. It is as if the surrounding plain or the passing birds have taken upon themselves to exclaim “extraordinary,” and the word has taken root in the air, and been inhaled by mankind.

They are dark caves. Even when they open towards the sun, very little light penetrates down the entrance tunnel into the circular chamber. There is little to see,  
15 and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvelously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot,  
20 because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colours divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, arll the evanescent life of the granite, only here visible. Fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil—here at last is their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than  
25 windless water, more voluptuous than love. The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves.

—E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

## Passage 2

Coketown, to which Messrs. Bounderby and Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs. Gradgrind herself. Let us strike the keynote, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

5 It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling  
10 all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work,  
15 and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how  
20 much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel there—as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done—they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes  
25 (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail,  
30 the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the  
35 lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

--Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

# 1974

Directions: In the opening lines of the passage, we are told that "the new arrangement was inevitably confounding" to Maisie. Some synonyms for "confounding" are "confusing," "unnerving," "perplexing," "puzzling." Write a description or narrative piece which presents a person who is undergoing a new experience that is confounding. Use any techniques of the writer's craft that you feel are appropriate to your subject. Your work should have shape and coherence.

(5) The child was provided for, but the new arrangement was inevitably confounding to a young intelligence intensely aware that something had happened which must matter a good deal and looking anxiously out for the effects of so great a cause. It was to be the fate of this patient little girl to see much more than she at first understood, but also even at first to understand much more than any little girl, however patient, had perhaps ever understood before. Only a drummer-boy in a ballad or a story could have been so in the thick of the fight. She was taken into the confidence of passions on which she fixed just the stare she might have had for images bounding across the wall in the slide of a magic-lantern. Her little world was phantasmagoric—(10) strange shadows dancing on a sheet. It was as if the whole performance had been given for her—a mite of a half-scared infant in a great dim theatre. She was in short introduced to life with a liberality in which the selfishness of others found its account, and there was nothing to avert the sacrifice but the modesty of her youth.

Her first term was with her father, who spared her only in not letting her have the wild letters addressed to her by her mother: he confined himself to holding them up at her and shaking them, while he showed his teeth, and then amusing her by the way he chucked them, across the room, bang into the fire. Even at that moment, however, she had a scared anticipation of fatigue, a guilty sense of not rising to the occasion, feeling the charm of the violence with which the stiff unopened envelopes, whose big monograms—(15) Ida bristled with monograms—she would have liked to see, were made to whizz, like dangerous missiles, through the air. The greatest effect of the great cause was her own greater importance, chiefly revealed to her in the larger freedom with which she was handled, pulled hither and thither and kissed, and the proportionately greater niceness she was obliged to show. Her features had somehow become prominent; they were so perpetually nipped by the gentlemen who came to see her father and the smoke of whose cigarettes went into her face. Some of these gentlemen made her strike matches and light their (20) cigarettes; others, holding her on knees violently jolted, pinched the calves of her legs till she shrieked—her shriek was much admired—and reproached them with being toothpicks. The word stuck in her mind and contributed to her feeling from this time that she was deficient in something that would meet the general desire. She found out what it was; it was a congenital tendency to the production of a substance to which Moddle, her nurse, gave a short ugly name, a name (30) painfully associated at dinner with the part of the joint that she didn't like. She had left behind her the time when she had no desires to meet, none at least save Moddle's, who, in Kensington Gardens, was always on the bench when she came back to see if she had been playing too far. Moddle's desire was merely that she shouldn't do that, and she met it so easily that the only spots in that long brightness were the moments of her wondering what would become of her if, (35) on her rushing back, there should be no Moddle on the bench. They still went to the Gardens, but there was a difference even there; she was impelled perpetually to look at the legs of other children and ask her nurse if they were toothpicks. Moddle was terribly truthful; she always said: "Oh my dear, you'll not find such another pair as your own." It seemed to have to do with something else that Moddle often said: "You feel the strain—that's where it is; and you'll feel it still worse, you know." (40)

Thus from the first Maisie not only felt it, but knew she felt it. A part of it was the consequence of her father's telling her he felt it too, and telling Moddle, in her presence, that she must make a point of driving that home. She was familiar, at the age of six, with the fact that everything had been changed on her account, everything ordered to enable him to give (45) himself up to her. She was to remember always the words in which Moddle impressed upon her that he did so give himself: "Your papa wishes you never to forget, you know, that he has been dreadfully put about." If the skin on Moddle's face had to Maisie the air of being unduly, almost painfully, stretched, it never presented that appearance so much as when she uttered, as she often had occasion to utter, such words. The (50) child wondered if they didn't make it hurt more than usual; but it was only after some time that she was able to attach to the picture of her father's sufferings, and more particularly to her nurse's manner about them, the meaning for which these things had waited. By the time she had grown sharper, as the gentlemen who had criticised her calves used to say, she found in her mind a collection of images and echoes to which meanings were attachable—images and

(55) echoes kept for her in the childish dusk, the dim closet, the high drawers, like games she wasn't yet big enough to play. The great strain meanwhile was that of carrying by the right end the things her father said about her mother—things mostly indeed that Moddle, on a glimpse of them, as if they had been complicated toys or difficult hooks, took out of her hands and put away in the closet. A wonderful assortment of objects of this kind she was to discover there  
(60) later, all tumbled up too with the things, shuffled into the same receptacle, that her mother had said about her father.

She had the knowledge that on a certain occasion which every day brought nearer her mother would be at the door to take her away, and this would have darkened all the days if the ingenious Moddle hadn't written on a paper in very big easy words ever so many pleasures  
(65) that she would enjoy at the other house. These promises ranged from "a mother's fond love" to "a nice poached egg for your tea," and took by the way the prospect of sitting up ever so late to see the lady in question dressed, in silks and velvets and diamonds and pearls, to go out: so that it was a real support to Maisie, at the supreme hour, to feel how, by Moddle's direction, the paper was thrust away in her pocket and there clenched in her fist. The supreme hour  
(70) was to furnish her with a vivid reminiscence, that of a strange outbreak in the drawing-room on the part of Moddle, who, in reply to something her father had just said, cried aloud: "You ought to be perfectly ashamed of yourself—you ought to blush, sir, for the way you go on!" The carriage, with her mother in it, was at the door; a gentleman who was there, who was always there, laughed out very loud; her father, who had her in his arms, said to Moddle:  
(75) "My dear woman, I'll settle you presently!"—after which he repeated, showing his teeth more than ever at Maisie while he hugged her, the words for which her nurse had taken him up. Maisie was not at the moment so fully conscious of them as of the wonder of Moddle's sudden disrespect and crimson face; but she was able to produce them in the course of five minutes when, in the carriage, her mother, all kisses, ribbons, eyes, arms, strange sounds and  
(80) sweet smells, said to her: "And did your beastly papa, my precious angel, send any message to your own loving mamma?" Then it was that she found the words spoken by her beastly papa to be, after all, in her little bewildered ears, from which, at her mother's appeal, they passed, in her clear shrill voice, straight to her little innocent lips, "He said I was to tell you, from him," she faithfully reported, "that you're a nasty horrid pig"

1975

Question 2  
(Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the following short story carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you define and discuss the subject of the story. Direct your remarks to the significance of the events described. Support your argument with specific references to the text.

Father and I

When I was getting on toward ten, I remember, Father took me by the hand one Sunday afternoon, as we were to go out into the woods and listen to the birds singing. Waving good-bye to Mother, (5) who had to stay at home and get the evening meal, we set off briskly in the warm sunshine. We didn't make any great to-do about this going to listen to the birds, as though it were something extra special or wonderful; we were sound, sensible (10) people, Father and I, brought up with nature and used to it. There was nothing to make a fuss about. It was just that it was Sunday afternoon and Father was free. We walked along the railway line, where people were not allowed to go as a rule, but Father (15) worked on the railway and so he had a right to. By doing this we could get straight into the woods, too, without going a round-about way.

Soon the bird song began and all the rest. There was a twittering of finches and willow (20) warblers, thrushes and sparrows in the bushes, the hum that goes on all around you as soon as you enter a wood. The ground was white with wood anemones, the birches had just come out into leaf, and the spruces had fresh shoots; there (25) were scents on all sides, and underfoot the mossy earth lay steaming in the sun. There was noise and movement everywhere; bumblebees came out of their holes, midges swarmed wherever it was marshy, and birds darted out of the bushes to (30) catch them and back again as quickly.

All at once a train came rushing along—and we had to go down onto the embankment. Father hailed the engine driver with two fingers to his Sunday hat and the driver saluted and extended his (35) hand. It all happened quickly; then on we went, taking big strides so as to tread on the sleepers<sup>1</sup> and not in the gravel, which was heavy going and rough on the shoes. The sleepers sweated tar in the heat, everything smelled, grease and meadow-sweet, tar and heather by turns. The rails glistened (40) in the sun. On either side of the line were telegraph poles, which sang as you passed them. Yes, it was a lovely day. The sky was quite clear, not a cloud to be seen, and there couldn't be any, (45) either, on a day like this, from what Father said.

After a while we came to a field of oats to the right of the line, where a crofter<sup>2</sup> we knew had a clearing. The oats had come up close and even. Father scanned them with an expert eye and I (50) could see he was satisfied. I knew very little about such things, having been born in a town. Then we came to the bridge over a stream, which most of the time had no water to speak of but which now was in full spate. We held hands so as not to (55) fall down between the sleepers. After that it is not long before you come to the platelayer's<sup>3</sup> cottage lying embedded in greenery, apple trees and gooseberry bushes. We called in to see them and were offered milk and saw their pig and hens and fruit

(60) trees in blossom; then we went on. We wanted to get to the river, for it was more beautiful there than anywhere else; there was something special about it, as farther upstream it flowed past where Father had lived as a child. We usually liked to (65) come as far as this before we turned back, and today, too, we got there after a good walk. It was near the next station, but we didn't go so far. Father just looked to see that the semaphore was right—he thought of everything.

(70) We stopped by the river, which murmured in the hot sun, broad and friendly. The shady trees hung along the banks and were reflected in the backwater. It was all fresh and light here; a soft breeze was blowing off the small lakes higher up. (75) We climbed down the slope and walked a little way along the bank, Father pointing out the spots for fishing. He had sat here on the stones as a boy, waiting for perch all day long; often there wasn't even a bite, but it was a blissful life. Now he (80) didn't have time. We hung about on the bank for a good while, making a noise, pushing out bits of bark for the current to take, throwing pebbles out into the water to see who could throw farthest; we were both gay and cheerful by nature, Father and (85) I. At last we felt tired and that we had had enough, and we set off for home.

It was beginning to get dark. The woods were changed—it wasn't dark there yet, but almost. We quickened our steps. Mother would be getting (90) anxious and waiting with supper. She was always afraid something was going to happen. But it hadn't; it had been a lovely day, nothing had happened that shouldn't. We were content with everything.

(95) The twilight deepened. The trees were so funny. They stood listening to every step we took, as if they didn't know who we were. Under one of them was a glowworm. It lay down there in the dark staring at us. I squeezed Father's hand, but (100) he didn't see the strange glow, just walked on. Now it was quite dark. We came to the bridge over the stream. It roared down there in the depths, horribly, as though it wanted to swallow us up; the abyss yawned below us. We trod carefully (105) on the sleepers, holding each other tightly by the hand so as not to fall in. I thought Father would carry me across, but he didn't say anything; he probably wanted me to be like him and think nothing of it.

(110) We went on. Father was so calm as he walked there in the darkness, with even strides, not speaking, thinking to himself. I couldn't understand how he could be so calm when it was so murky. I looked all around me in fear. Nothing

1 railroad ties  
2 farmer  
3 railroad worker

(115) but darkness everywhere. I hardly dared take a deep breath, for then you got so much darkness inside you, and that was dangerous. I thought it meant you would soon die. I remember quite well that's what I thought then. The embankment sloped

(120) steeply down, as though into chasms black as night. The telegraph poles rose, ghostly, to the sky. Inside them was a hollow rumble, as though someone was talking deep down in the earth and the white porcelain caps sat huddled fearfully together

(125) listening to it. It was all horrible. Nothing was right, nothing real; it was all so weird.  
 Hugging close to Father I whispered, "Father, why is it so horrible when it's dark?"  
 "No, my boy, it's not horrible," he said, taking

(130) me by the hand.  
 "Yes, Father, it is."  
 "No, my child, you mustn't think that. Not when we know there is a God."  
 I felt so lonely, forsaken. It was so strange

(135) that only I was afraid, not Father, that we didn't think the same. And strange that what he said didn't help me and stop me from being afraid. Not even what he said about God helped me. I thought he too was horrible. It was horrible that

(140) he was everywhere here in the darkness, down under the trees, in the telegraph poles which rumbled—that must be he—everywhere. And yet you could never see him.  
 We walked in silence, each with his own

(145) thoughts. My heart contracted, as though the darkness had got in and was beginning to squeeze it.  
 Then, as we were rounding a bend, we suddenly heard a mighty roar behind us! We were awakened

(150) out of our thoughts in alarm. Father pulled me down onto the embankment, down into the abyss, held me there. Then the train tore past, a black train. All the lights in the carriages were out, and it was going at frantic speed. What sort of

(155) train was it? There wasn't one due now! We gazed at it in terror. The fire blazed in the huge engine as they shoveled in coal; sparks whirled out into the night. It was terrible. The driver stood there in the light of the fire, pale, motionless, his features as though turned to stone.

(160) Father didn't recognize him, didn't know who he was. The man just stared straight ahead, as though intent only on rushing into the darkness, far into the darkness that had no end.

(165) Beside myself with dread, I stood there panting, gazing after the furious vision. It was swallowed up by the night. Father took me up onto the line; we hurried home. He said, "Strange, what train was that? And I didn't recognize the

(170) driver." Then we walked on in silence.  
 But my whole body was shaking. It was for me, for my sake. I sensed what it meant: it was the anguish that was to come, the unknown, all that Father knew nothing about, that he wouldn't be

(175) able to protect me against. That was how this world, this life, would be for me; not like Father's, where everything was secure and certain. It wasn't a real world, a real life. It just hurtled, blazing, into the darkness that had no end.

## 1976 Prose Passage

(Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the following passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you characterize briefly the world and way of life described in the passage, discuss the effect of the passage as a whole, and analyze those elements that achieve this effect. Do not worry about the meaning of unusual words, such as “alchochoden” and “irrupent.”

- Then tall Paidoboron  
stood up, the king of a silent land to the north, where the gray  
Atlantic half the year lay still as slate, and icebergs  
pressed imperceptibly, mournfully, groaning like weird old beasts  
(5) on the dark roads of whales. It was a country known  
to Greeks as the Kingdom of Stone. Strange tales were told of it:  
a barren waste where no house boasted ornaments  
of gold or silver, and no one knew till Jason came  
of stains or dyes or of any color but the dim hues  
(10) on the skins of animals there, or the grays and browns in rocks.  
The towns of that kingdom were few and far between, as rare  
as trees on those dim gray hills, and in the largest towns  
the houses kept, men said; no more than a hundred souls—  
bleak men bearded to the waist and dressed in wolfskins; women  
(15) tall arid stern and beautyless, like stiff, bare pines.  
The houses and barns, the streets, the walls along country roads  
were stone, as gloomy as the sea. They knew no culture there  
but raising sheeplike creatures—winged like eagles, but shy,  
as quick on their feet and as easily frightened as newts. Yet they knew  
(20) the second world to the west, for [they] owned  
great-bellied, stone-filled ships that could sail forever, slow,  
indestructible as the stone rings high in their hills. And they knew  
more surely than all other men, of the turning of planets and stars:  
geometers, learned astronomers, they spent their lives  
(25) shifting and rearing enormous megaliths, age after age,  
the oldest kingdom in the world. They knew the alchochoden  
of every man and tree, knew the earthly afterclap  
of all conjunctions, when to expect the irrupent flash  
of crazily wandering comets, could tell the agonals  
(30) of stars no longer lit, old planets shogged off course  
by accidents aeons old. They came themselves, they claimed,  
from the deeps of space, noctivant beings shackled to earth,  
dark shadows of oaks and stones, for some guilt long forgotten.  
They waited and watched the heavens as a prisoner stares at fields  
(35) beyond his cell's square bars. They studied the wobbling night,  
and if some faraway star went wrong they sacrificed  
an eldest son to it, and made it right.

from Jason and Medeia by John Gardner

## 1978

In a philosophical work, an author named Soame Jenyns once tried to explain or justify human suffering by an analogy. In this analogy, Jenyns argued that just as human beings use animals for pleasure and profit, so some higher order of beings may enjoy or benefit from our suffering.

The following passage was written by Samuel Johnson. In it Johnson discusses Jenyns' argument.

Read the passage carefully and then write an essay in which you analyze Johnson's treatment of the argument and his attitude toward the author, Soame Jenyns.

I [Samuel Johnson] cannot resist the temptation of contemplating this analogy, which, I think, he [Soame Jenyns] might have carried further, very much to the advantage of his argument. He might have shown, that these "hunters, whose game is man," have many sports analogous to our own. As we drown whelps and kittens, they amuse themselves, now and then, with sinking a ship. ... As we shoot a bird flying, they take a man in the middle of his business or pleasure, and knock him down with an apoplexy. Some of them, perhaps, are virtuosi, and delight in the operations of an asthma, as a human philosopher in the effects of the air-pump. ... Many a merry bout have these frolic beings at the vicissitudes of an ague, and good sport it is to see a man tumble with an epilepsy, and revive and tumble again, and all this he knows not why. As they are wiser and more powerful than we, they have more exquisite diversions; for we have no way of procuring any sport so brisk and so lasting, as the paroxysms of the gout and stone, which, undoubtedly, must make high mirth, especially if the play be a little diversified with the blunders and puzzles of the blind and deaf. We know not how far their sphere of observation may extend. Perhaps, now and then, a merry being may place himself in such a situation, as to enjoy, at once, all the varieties of an epidemical disease, or amuse his leisure with the tossings and contortions of every possible pain, exhibited together.

One sport the merry malice of these beings has found means of enjoying, to which we have nothing equal or similar. They now and then catch a mortal, proud of his parts, and flattered either by the submission of those who court his kindness, or the notice of those who suffer him to court theirs. A head, thus prepared for the reception of false opinions, and the projection of vain designs, they easily fill with idle notions, till, in time, they make their plaything an author; their first diversion commonly begins with an ode or an epistle, then rises, perhaps, to a political irony, and is, at last, brought to its height, by a treatise of philosophy. Then begins the poor animal to entangle himself in sophisms, and flounder in absurdity, to talk confidently of the scale of being, and to give solutions which himself confesses impossible to be understood. Sometimes, however, it happens, that their pleasure. is without much mischief. The author :feels no pain, but while they are wondering at the extravagance of his opinion, and pointing him out to one another, as a new example of human folly, he is enjoying his own applause and that of his companions, and, perhaps, is elevated with the hope of standing at the head of a new sect.

Many of the books which now crowd the world, may be justly suspected to be written for the sake of some invisible order Of beings, for surely they are of no use to any of the corporeal inhabitants of [this] world. . . . The only end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it; and how will either of those be put more into our power, by him who tells us, that we are puppets, of which some creature, not much wiser than ourselves, manages the wires! That a set of beings, unseen and unheard, are hovering above us, trying experiments upon our sensibility, putting us in agonies, to see our limbs quiver; torturing us to madness, that they may laugh at our vagaries; sometimes obstructing the bile, that they may see how a man looks, when he is yellow; sometimes breaking a traveller's bones, to try how he will get home; sometimes wasting a man to a skeleton, and sometimes killing him fat, for the greater elegance of his hide. . .

Thus, after having clambered, with great labour, from one step of argumentation to another, instead of rising into the light of knowledge, we are devolved back into the dark ignorance; and all our efforts end in belief, that for the evils of life there is some good reason, and in confession, that the reason cannot be found.

(Samuel Johnson, Review of "A Free Enquiry Into The Nature and Origin of Evil" by Soame Jenyns.)

(Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the following passage from a recent biography. Then write an essay discussing the ways in which the author's style (diction, syntax, tone, selection and presentation of detail, etc.) reveals his feelings about the family he describes.

I must now attempt to say something about the family. Here there is a good deal of uncertainty, of legend, and of scandal.

According to H. A. L. Fisher, the historian, there was at the Court of Versailles during the last years of the old régime a certain Chevalier Antoine de l' Etang; his person was pleasing, his manners courtly, his tastes extravagant and his horsemanship admirable. He was attached to the household of Marie Antoinette—too much attached it is said, and for this he was exiled to Pondicherry where, in 1788, he married a Mile. Blin de Grincourt.

M.de l'Etang entered and died in the service of the Nawab of Oudh; he left three daughters. Adeline, the one with whom we are concerned, married a James Pattle who was, we are told, a quite extravagantly wicked man. He was known as the greatest liar in India; he drank himself to death; he was packed off home in a cask of spirits, which cask, exploding, ejected his unbottled corpse before his widow's eyes, drove her out of her wits, set the ship on fire, and left it stranded in the Hooghly.

The story has been told many times. Some parts of, it may be true. it is certainly true that Mrs. Pattle came to London in 1840 with a bevy of daughters and that these ladies had a reputation for beauty. Four of them should be mentioned in these pages: Virginia, Sarah, Julia, and Maria.

Virginia Pattle, the most beautiful of the sisters, married Charles Somers-Cocks and became Countess Somers; she was a dashing, worldly woman, impulsive, rather eccentric, who lived in great style. Of her daughters, one became Duchess of Bedford; the other, Isabel, married Lord Henry Somerset. This alliance, though grand, was by no means happy. Lord Henry, a charming man it seems, delighted Victorian drawing rooms with his ballads. He was, I believe; the author of One More Passionate Kiss this embrace was reserved, however, not for his beautiful wife but for the second footman. Lady Henry endured his infidelities for a time but presently she could stand no more. She confided in her mother who, allowing her indignation to master her prudence, made a public scandal. The sequel is interesting in as much as it gives a notion of the ethos of the Victorian age and its system of morality.

Lord Henry fled to Italy and there lived happily ever after. His wife discovered that she had been guilty of an unformulated, but very heinous, crime: her name was connected with a scandal. Good society would have nothing more to do with her. She was obliged to retire from the world and decided to devote herself to the reclamation of inebriate women, a task which she undertook with so much good sense and good humor that she won the affection and admiration, not only of men of charity and good will, but even of the women she assisted.

--Quentin Bell on the Woolf family

# 1980 Prose Passage

Question 2. (Suggested time—45 minutes. This question counts one-third of the total essay section score.)

The following passages are eye-witness accounts of two different funerals. Read the two passages carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you compare the different attitudes of the writers by carefully analyzing the diction and choice of details of each account. In your discussion, consider the different effects on the reader of the two accounts.

1. The element of the grotesque was very noticeable to me in the most striking collection of the shabbier English types that I had seen since I came to London. The occasion of my seeing them was the funeral of Mr. George Odger, which befell some four or five weeks before the Easter period. Mr. George Odger, it will be remembered, was an English radical agitator of humble origin, who had distinguished himself by a perverse desire to get into Parliament. He exercised, I believe, the useful profession of shoemaker, and he knocked in vain at the door that opens but to the refined. But he was a useful and honourable man, and his own people gave him an honourable burial. I emerged accidentally into Piccadilly at the moment they were so engaged, and the spectacle was one I should have been sorry to miss. The crowd was enormous, but I managed to squeeze through it and to get into a hansom cab that was drawn up beside the pavement, and here I looked on as from a box at the play. Though it was a funeral that was going on I will not call it a tragedy; but it was a very serious comedy. The day happened to be magnificent—the finest of the year. The funeral had been taken in hand by the classes who are socially unrepresented in Parliament, and it had the character of a great popular “manifestation.” The hearse was followed by very few carriages, but the cortege of pedestrians stretched away in the sunshine, up and down the classic gentility of Piccadilly, on a scale that was highly impressive. Here and there the line was broken by a small brass band—apparently one of those bands of itinerant Germans that play for coppers beneath lodging-house windows; but for the rest it was compactly made up of what the newspapers call the dregs of the population. It was the London rabble, the metropolitan mob, men and women, boys and girls, the decent poor and the indecent, who had scrambled into the ranks as they gathered them up on their passage, and were making a sort of solemn “lark” of it.

by Henry James

2. Looking down, I could see them winding upward in a mass to the muffled sound of drums. Children stopped in their playing on the grass to stare, and nurses at the nearby hospital came out on the roof to watch, their white uniforms glowing in the now unveiled sun like lilies. And crowds approached the park from all directions. The muffled drums, now beating, now steadily rolling, spread a dead silence upon the air...
- Over the park the silence spread from the slow muffled rolling of the drums, the crunching of footsteps on the walks. Then somewhere in the procession an old, plaintive, masculine voice arose in a song, wavering, stumbling in the silence at first alone, until in the band a euphonium horn fumbled for the key and took up the air, one catching and rising above the other and the other pursuing, two black pigeons rising above a skull-white barn to tumble and rise through still blue air. And for a few bars the pure sweet tone of the horn and old man 's husky baritone sang a duet in the hot heavy silence. “There 's Many a Thousand Gone .” And standing high up over the park something fought in my throat. It was a song from the past, the past of the campus and the still earlier past of home. And now some of the older ones in the mass were joining in. I hadn't thought of it as a march before, but now they were marching to its slow-paced rhythm, up the hill. I looked for the euphonium player and saw a slender black man with his face turned toward the sun, singing through the upturned bells of the horn. And several yards behind, marching beside the young men floating the coffin upward, I looked into the face of the old man who had aroused the song and felt a twinge of envy. It was a worn, old, yellow face and his eyes were closed and I could see a knife welt around his upturned neck as his throat threw out the song. He sang with his whole body, his voice rising above all the others, blending with that of the lucid horn. I watched him now, wet-eyed, the sun hot upon my head, and I felt a wonder at the singing mass. It was as though the song had been there all the time and he knew it and aroused it; and I knew that I had known it too and had failed to release it out of a vague, nameless shame or fear. But he had known and aroused it. I looked into that face, trying to plumb its secret, but it told me nothing. I looked at the coffin and the marchers, listening to them, and yet realizing that I was listening to something within myself, and for a second I heard the shattering stroke of my heart.

from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

## 1981 Prose Passage

**Directions:** The following excerpt is taken from a letter by George Bernard Shaw on the death of his mother. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you describe the attitude of the writer toward his mother and her cremation. Using specific references to the text, show how Shaw 's diction and use of detail serve to convey this attitude.

At the passage “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust” there was a little alteration of the words to suit the process. A door opened in the wall: and the violet coffin mysteriously passed out through it and vanished as it closed. People think that door is the door of the furnace:  
5 but it isn't. I went behind the scenes at the end of the service and saw the real thing. People are afraid to see it; but it is wonderful. I found there the violet coffin opposite another door, a real unmistakable furnace door this time: when it lifted there was a plain little chamber of cement and fire-brick. No heat, no noise. No roaring draught. No flame.  
10 No fuel. It looked cool, clean, sunny. You would have walked in or put your hand in without misgiving. Then the violet coffin moved again and went in, feet first. And behold! The feet burst miraculously into streaming ribbons of garnet coloured lovely flame, smokeless and eager, like pentecostal tongues, and as the whole coffin passed in, it sprang  
15 into flame all over; and my mother became that beautiful fire . . . The door fell; well, they said that if we wanted to see it all through to the end, we should come back in an hour and a half. I remembered the wasted little figure with the wonderful face, and said, “Too long” to myself—but off we went. . . When we returned, the end was wildly  
20 funny; Mama would have enjoyed it enormously. We looked down through an opening in the floor. There we saw a roomy kitchen, with a big cement table and two cooks busy at it. They had little tongs in their hands, and they were deftly and busily picking nails and scraps of coffin handles out of Mama's dainty little heap of ashes and samples of bone.  
25 Mama herself being at the moment leaning over beside me, shaking with laughter. Then they swept her up into a sieve and shook her out; so that there was a heap of dust and a heap of bone scraps. And Mama said in my ear, “Which of the two heaps do you suppose is me?” . . . and that merry episode was the end, except for making dust of the bone scraps  
30 and scattering them on a flower bed. . . 0 grave, where is thy victory? . . . And so goodnight, friends who understand about one's mother.

George Bernard Shaw  
from *The Mitre*, Oxford, 22 February 1913

**1982** Read carefully the following statement of veto. In a well-organized essay, analyze the strategies or devices (organization, diction, tone, use of detail) that make Governor Stevenson's argument effective for his audience. Substantiate your observations with specific examples from the text.

To the Honorable, the Members of the Senate of the Sixth-sixth General Assembly:

I herewith return, without my approval, Senate Bill No. 93, entitled, "An Act to Provide Protection to Insectivorous Birds by Restraining Cats." This is the so-called "Cat Bill." I veto and withhold my approval from this Bill for the following reasons:

It would impose fines on owners or keepers who permitted their cats to run at large off their premises. It would permit any person to capture or call upon the police to pick up and imprison, cats at large. It would permit the use of traps. The bill would have statewide application— on farms, in villages, and in metropolitan centers.

This legislation has been introduced in the past several sessions of the Legislature, and it has, over the years, been the source of much comment— not all of which has been in a serious vein. It may be that the General Assembly has now seen fit to refer it to one who can view it with a fresh outlook. Whatever the reasons for passage at this session, I cannot believe there is a widespread public demand for this law or that it could, as a practical matter, be enforced.

Furthermore, I cannot agree that it should be the declared public policy of Illinois that a cat visiting a neighbor's yard or crossing the highway is a public nuisance. It is in the nature of cats to do a certain amount of unescorted roaming. Many live with their owners in apartments or other restricted premises, and I doubt if we want to make their every brief foray an opportunity for a small game hunt by zealous citizens— with traps or otherwise. I am afraid this Bill could only create discord, recrimination and enmity. Also consider the owner's dilemma: To escort a cat abroad on a leash is against the nature of the cat, and to permit it to venture forth for exercise unattended into a night of new dangers is against the nature of the owner. Moreover, cats perform useful service, particularly in rural areas, in combating rodents— work they necessarily perform alone and without regard for property lines.

We are all interested in protecting certain varieties of birds. That cats destroy some birds, I well know, but I believe this legislation would further but little the worthy cause to which its proponents give such unselfish effort. The problem of cat versus bird is as old as time. If we attempt to resolve it by legislation why know but what we may be called upon to take sides as well in the age old problems of dog versus cat, bird versus bird, or even bird versus worm. In my opinion, the State of Illinois and its local governing bodies already have enough to do without trying to control feline delinquency.

For these reasons, and not because I love birds the less or cats the more, I veto and withhold my approval from Senate Bill No. 93.

Respectfully,  
ADLAI E. STEVENSON, Governor

**1983** The writer of the following passage expresses an attitude toward work and in so doing makes certain assumptions about human nature. In a well-written essay, define precisely what that attitude and those assumptions are and analyze how the writer uses language to convince the reader of the rightness of his position.

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean *is* in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. 'Know thyself:' long enough has that poor 'self' of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to 'know' it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, 'an endless significance lies in Work;' a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seedfields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like hell-dogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labour in him, is it not as purifying fire wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a Life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever deepening river there, it runs and flows; - draining off the sour festering water, gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making instead of pestilential swamp a green fruitful meadow, with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and its value be great or small! Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness, - to all knowledge, 'self-knowledge' and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The Knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge, a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. 'Doubt of whatever kind can be ended by Action alone.'

Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (1843)

**1984** Read the following passage carefully. Then write a coherent essay showing how this passage provides a characterization and evaluation of Emma more than of Harriet.

As [Emma] sat one morning, looking forward to exactly such a close of the present day, a note was brought from Mrs. Goddard, requesting, in most respectful terms, to be allowed to bring Miss Smith with her; a most welcome request: for Miss Smith was a girl of seventeen, whom Emma knew very well by sight, and had long felt an interest in, on account of her beauty. A very gracious invitation was returned, and the evening no longer dreaded by the fair mistress of the mansion.

Harriet Smith was the natural daughter of somebody. Somebody had placed her, several years back, at Mrs. Goddard's school, and somebody had lately raised her from the condition of scholar to that of parlour-boarder. This was all that was generally known of her history. She had no visible friends but what had been acquired at Highbury, and was now just returned from a long visit in the country to some young ladies who had been at school there with her.

She was a very pretty girl, and her beauty happened to be of a sort which Emma particularly admired. She was short, plump, and fair, with a fine bloom, blue eyes, light hair, regular features, and a look of great sweetness, and, before the end of the evening, Emma was as much pleased with her manners as her person, and quite determined to continue the acquaintance.

She was not struck by any thing remarkably clever in Miss Smith's conversation, but she found her altogether very engaging--not inconveniently shy, not unwilling to talk--and yet so far from pushing, shewing so proper and becoming a deference, seeming so pleasantly grateful for being admitted to Hartfield, and so artlessly impressed by the appearance of every thing in so superior a style to what she had been used to, that she must have good sense, and deserve encouragement. Encouragement should be given. Those soft blue eyes, and all those natural graces, should not be wasted on the inferior society of Highbury and its connexions. The acquaintance she had already formed were unworthy of her. The friends from whom she had just parted, though very good sort of people, must be doing her harm. They were a family of the name of Martin, whom Emma well knew by character, as renting a large farm of Mr. Knightley, and residing in the parish of Donwell--very creditably, she believed--she knew Mr. Knightley thought highly of them--but they must be coarse and unpolished, and very unfit to be the intimates of a girl who wanted only a little more knowledge and elegance to be quite perfect. She would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and powers.

**1985** The excerpts below represent early and later drafts of a prose passage that records the writer's thoughts on how the experience of war affected his attitude toward language.

Write a well-organized essay in which you discuss the probable reasons for the writer's additions and deletions and the ways in which those revisions change the effect of the paragraph.

#### Early Draft

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them and read them now for a long time and I had seen nothing sacred and the only things glorious had no glory and the sacrifices seemed like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of places were all you could say and mean anything and they meant everything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were a little obscene beside the concrete names of places, the numbers of roads, the numbers of regiments and the dates.

#### Later Draft

I did not say anything. I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them now for a long time, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and we had read them, on posters that were slapped up over other posters. There were many words that you could not stand to hear, and finally only the names of places had dignity. Beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates, abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene. I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the number of regiments and the dates.

**1986** The passage below is the opening of a novel. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you define the narrator's attitude toward the characters and show how he directs the reader's perceptions of those characters through his use of such stylistic devices as imagery, diction, narrative structure, and choice of specific details.

## CHARLES DICKENS: DOMBEY AND SON

Dombey sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great arm-chair by the bedside, and Son lay tucked up warm in a little basket bedstead, carefully disposed on a low settee immediately in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age. Son about eight-and-forty minutes. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome well-made man, too stern and pompous in appearance, to be prepossessing. Son was very bald, and very red, and though (of course) an undeniably fine infant, somewhat crushed and spotty in his general effect, as yet. On the brow of Dombey, Time and his brother Care had set some marks, as on a tree that was to come down in good time—remorseless twins they are for striding through their human forests, notching as they go—while the countenance of Son was crossed and recrossed with a thousand little creases, which the same deceitful Time would take delight in smoothing out and wearing away with the flat part of his scythe, as a preparation of the surface for his deeper operations.

Dombey, exulting in the long-looked-for event, jingled and jingled the heavy gold watch-chain that depended from below his trim blue coat, whereof the buttons sparkled phosphorescently in the feeble rays of the distant fire. Son, with his little fists curled up and clenched, seemed, in his feeble way, to be squaring at existence for having come upon him so unexpectedly.

'The house will once again, Mrs. Dombey,' said Mr. Dombey, 'be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son; Dom-bey and Son!'

The words had such a softening influence, that he appended a term of endearment to Mrs. Dombey's name (though not without some hesitation, as being a man but little used to that form of address): and said, 'Mrs. Dombey, my—my dear.'

A transient flush of faint surprise overspread the sick lady's face as she raised her eyes towards him.

'He will be christened Paul, my—Mrs. Dombey—of course.'

She feebly echoed, 'Of course,' or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips, and closed her eyes again.

'His father's name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grandfather's! I wish his grandfather were alive this day!' And again he said 'Dom-bey and Son,' in exactly the same tone as before.

Those three words conveyed the one idea of Mr. Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre. Common abbreviations took new meanings in his eyes, and had sole reference to them: A.D. had no concern with anno Domini, but stood for anno Dombei—and Son.

**1987** In the selection below, George Eliot presents a conception of leisure that has lost its place in the society of her own time. Write an essay in which you describe her views on "old Leisure" and on leisure in the society of her own time and discuss the stylistic devices she uses to convey those views.

Leisure is gone—gone where the spinning-wheels are gone, and the pack-horses, and the slow waggons, and the pedlars who brought bargains to the door on sunny afternoons. Ingenious philosophers tell you, perhaps, that the great work of the steam-engine is to create leisure for mankind. Do not believe them: it only creates a vacuum for eager thought to rush in. Even idleness is eager now—eager for amusement: prone to excursion trains, art-museums, periodical literature, and exciting novels: prone even to scientific theorising. and cursory peeps through microscopes. Old Leisure was quite a different personage: he only read one newspaper, innocent of leaders, and was free from that periodicity of sensations which we call post-time. He was a contemplative, rather stout gentleman, of excellent digestion,—of quiet perceptions, undiseased by hypothesis: happy in his inability to know the causes of things, preferring the things themselves. He lived chiefly in the country, among pleasant seats and homesteads, and was fond of sauntering by the fruit-tree wall, and scenting the apricots when they were warmed by the morning sunshine, or of sheltering himself under the orchard boughs at noon, when the summer pears were falling. He knew nothing of week-day services, and thought none the worse of the Sunday sermon, if it allowed him to sleep from the text to the blessing,—liking the afternoon service best, because the prayers were the shortest, and not ashamed to say so; for he had an easy, jolly conscience, broad-backed like himself, and able to carry a great deal of beer or port-wine,—not being made squeamish by doubts and qualms and lofty aspirations: life was not a task to him, but a sinecure: he fingered the guineas in his pocket, and ate his dinners, and slept the sleep of the irresponsible; for had he not kept up his charter by going to church on the Sunday afternoons?

Fine old Leisure! Do not be severe upon him, and judge him by our modern standard: he never went to Exeter Hall, or heard a popular preacher, or read *Tracts for the Times* or *Sartor Resartus*.<sup>1</sup>

—George Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 1859

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<sup>1</sup> Religious, political, and philosophical works published between 1833 and 1841

**1988** Below is a complete short story. Read it carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the blend of humor, pathos, and the grotesque in the story.

The last time I saw my father was in Grand Central Station. I was going from my grandmother's in the Adirondacks to a cottage on the Cape that my mother had rented, and I wrote my father that I would be in New York between trains for an hour and a half, and asked if we could have lunch together. His secretary wrote to say that he would meet me at the information booth at noon, and at twelve o'clock sharp I saw him coming through the crowd. He was a stranger to me—my mother divorced him three years ago and I hadn't been with him since—but as soon as I saw him I felt that he was my father, my flesh and blood, my future and my doom. I knew that when I was grown I would be something like him; I would have to plan my campaign within his limitations. He was a big, good-looking man, and I was terribly happy to see him again. He struck me on the back and shook my hand. "Hi, Charlie," he said. "Hi, boy. I'd like to take you up to my club, but it's in the Sixties, and if you have to catch an early train I guess we'd better get something to eat around here." He put his arm around me, and I smelled my father the way my mother sniffs a rose. It was a rich compound of whiskey, after-shave lotion, shoe polish, woolens, and the rankness of a mature male. I hoped that someone would see us together. I wished that we could be photographed. I wanted some record of our having been together.

We went out of the station and up a side street to a restaurant. It was still early, and the place was empty. The bartending was quarrelling with a delivery boy, and there was one very old waiter in a red coat down by the kitchen door. We sat down, and my father hailed the waiter in a loud voice. "*Kellner!*" he shouted. "*Garçon! Cameriere! You!*" His boisterousness in the empty restaurant seemed out of place. "Could we have a little service here!" he shouted. "Chop-chop." Then he clapped his hands. This caught the waiter's attention, and he shuffled over to our table. "Were you clapping your hands at me?" he asked. "Calm down, calm down, *sommelier*," my father said. "If it isn't too much to ask of you—if it wouldn't be too much above and beyond the call of duty, we would like a couple of Beefeater Gibsons."

"I don't like to be clapped at," the waiter said.

"I should have brought my whistle," my father said. "I have a whistle that is audible only to the ears of old waiters. Now, take out your little pad and your little pencil, and see if you can get this straight: two Beefeater Gibsons. Repeat after me: two Beefeater Gibsons."

"I think you'd better go somewhere else," the waiter said quietly.

"That," said my father, "is one of the most brilliant suggestions I have ever heard. Come on, Charlie, let's get the hell out of here."

I followed my father out of that restaurant into another. He was not so boisterous this time. Our drinks came, and he cross-questioned me about the baseball season. He then struck the edge of his empty glass with his knife and began shouting again. "*Garçon! Kellner! Cameriere! You!* Could we trouble you to bring us two more of the same."

“How old is the boy?” the waiter asked.

“That,” my father said, “is none of your Goddamned business.”

“I’m sorry, sir,” the waiter said, “but I won’t serve the boy another drink.”

“Well, I have some news for you,” my father said. “I have some very interesting news for you. This doesn’t happen to be the only restaurant in New York. They’ve opened another on the corner. Come on, Charlie.”

He paid the bill, and I followed him out of that restaurant into another. Here the waiters wore pink jackets like hunting coats, and there was a lot of horse tack on the walls. We sat down, and my father began to shout again. “Master of the hounds! Tallyhoo and all that sort of thing. We’d like a little something in the way of a stirrup cup. Namely, two Bibson Geefeaters.”

“Two Bibson Geefeaters?” the waiter asked, smiling.

“You know damned well what I want,” my father said angrily. “I want two Beefeater Gibsons, and make it snappy. Things have changed in jolly old England. So my friend the duke tells me. Let’s see what England can produce in the way of a cocktail.”

“This isn’t England,” the waiter said.

“Don’t argue with me,” my father said. “Just do as you’re told.”

“I just thought you might like to know where you are,” the waiter said.

“If there is one thing I cannot tolerate,” my father said, “it is an impudent domestic.” Come on, Charlie.”

The fourth place we went to was Italian. “*Buon giorno,*” my father said. “*Per favore, possiamo avere due cocktail americani, forti, forti. Molto gin, poco vermut.*”

“I don’t understand Italian,” the waiter said.

“Oh, come off it,” my father said. “You understand Italian, and you know damned well you do.” *Vogliamo due cocktail americani. Subito.*”

The waiter left us and spoke with the captain, who came over to our table and said, “I’m sorry, sir, but this table is reserved.”

“All right,” my father said. “Get us another table.”

“All the tables are reserved,” the captain said.

“I get it,” my father said. “You don’t desire our patronage. Is that it? Well, the hell with you. *Vada all’inferno*. Let’s go, Charlie.”

“I have to get my train,” I said.

“I’m sorry, sonny,” my father said. “I’m terribly sorry.” He put his arm around me and pressed me against him. “I’ll walk you back to the station. If there had only been time to go up to my club.”

“That’s all right, Daddy,” I said.

“I’ll get you a paper,” he said. “I’ll get you a paper to read on the train.”

Then he went up to a newsstand and said, “Kind sir, will you be good enough to favor me with one of your God-damned, no-good, ten-cent afternoon papers?” The clerk turned away from him and stared at a magazine cover. “Is it asking too much for you to see me one of your disgusting specimens of yellow journalism?”

“I have to go, Daddy,” I said. “It’s late.”

“Now, just wait a second, sonny,” he said. “Just wait a second. I want to get a rise out of this chap.”

“Goodbye, Daddy,” said, and I went down the stairs and got my train, and that was the last time I saw my father.

**1989** Read the following passage carefully. Then write an essay that describes the attitude of the speaker toward Captain MacWhirr and that analyzes the techniques the speaker uses to define the captain's character.

Captain MacWhirr, of the steamer Nan-Shan, had a physiognomy that, in the order of material appearances, was the exact counterpart of his mind: it presented no marked characteristics of firmness or stupidity; it had no pronounced characteristics whatever; it was simply ordinary, irresponsible, and unruffled. ...

Having just enough imagination to carry him through each successive day, and no more, he was tranquilly sure of himself; and from the very same cause he was not in the least conceited. It is your imaginative superior who is touchy, overbearing, and difficult to please; but every ship Captain MacWhirr commanded was the floating abode of harmony and peace. It was, in truth, as impossible for him to take a flight of fancy as it would be for a watchmaker to put together a chronometer with nothing except a two-pound hammer and a whip-saw in the way of tools. Yet the uninteresting lives of men so entirely given to the actuality of the bare existence have their mysterious side. It was impossible in Captain MacWhirr's case, for instance, to understand what under heaven could have induced that perfectly satisfactory son of a petty grocer in Belfast to run away to sea. And yet he had done that very thing at the age of fifteen. It was enough, when you thought it over, to give you the idea of an immense, potent, and invisible hand thrust into the ant-heap of the earth, laying hold of shoulders, knocking heads together, and setting the unconscious faces of the multitude towards inconceivable goals and in undreamt-of directions.

His father never really forgave him for this undutiful stupidity. "We could have got on without him," he used to say later on, "but there's the business. And he an only son, too!" His mother wept very much after his disappearance. As it had never occurred to him to leave word behind, he was mourned over for dead till, after eight months, his first letter arrived from Talcahuano. It was short, and contained the statement: "We had very fine weather on our passage out." But evidently, in the writer's mind, the only important intelligence was to the effect that his captain had, on the very day of writing, entered him regularly on the ship's articles as Ordinary Seaman. "Because I can do the work," he explained. The mother again wept copiously, while the remark, "Tom's an ass," expressed the emotions of the father. He was a corpulent man, with a gift for sly chaffing, which to the end of his life he exercised in his intercourse with his son, a little pityingly, as if upon a half-witted person.

MacWhirr's visits to his home were necessarily rare, and in the course of years he dispatched other letters to his parents, informing them of his successive promotions and of his movements upon the vast earth. In these missives could be found sentences like this: "The heat here is very great." Or: "On Christmas day at 4 P. M. we fell in with some icebergs." The old people ultimately became acquainted with a good many names of ships, and with the names of the skippers who commanded them—with the names of Scots and English shipowners—with the names of seas, oceans, straits, promontories—with outlandish names of lumber-ports, of rice-ports, of cotton-ports—with the names of islands—with the name of their son's young woman. She was called Lucy. It did not suggest itself to him to mention whether he thought the name pretty. And then they died.

**1990** Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the style and tone of the passage below, explaining how they help to express the author's attitudes.

Once, in a dry season, I wrote in large letters across two pages of a notebook that innocence ends when one is stripped of the delusions that one likes oneself. Although now, some years later, I marvel that a mind on the outs with itself should have nonetheless made painstaking record of its every tremor, I recall with embarrassing clarity the flavor of those particular ashes. It was a matter of misplaced self-respect.

I had not been elected to Phi Beta Kappa. This failure could scarcely have been more predictable or less ambiguous (I simply did not have the grades), but I was unnerved by it; I had somehow thought myself a kind of academic Raskolnikov, curiously exempt from the cause-effect relationship which hampered others. Although even the humorless nineteen-year-old that I was must have recognized that the situation lacked real tragic stature, the day that I did not make Phi Beta Kappa nonetheless marked the end of something and innocence may well be the word for it. I lost the conviction that lights would always turn green for me, the pleasant certainty that those rather passive virtues which had won me approval as a child automatically guaranteed me not only Phi Beta Kappa keys but happiness, honor, and the love of a good man; lost a certain touching faith in the totem power of good manners, clean hair, and proven competence on the Stanford-Binet scale. To such doubtful amulets had my self-respect been pinned, and I faced myself that day with the nonplussed apprehension of someone who has come across a vampire and has no crucifix at hand.

Although to be driven back upon oneself is an uneasy affair at best, rather like trying to cross a border with borrowed credentials, it seems to me now the one condition necessary to the beginnings of real self-respect. Most of our platitudes notwithstanding, self-deception remains the most difficult deception. The tricks that work on others count for nothing in that very well-lit back alley where one keeps assignations with oneself: no winning smiles will do here, no prettily drawn lists of good intentions. One shuffles flashily but in vain through one's marked cards—the kindness done for the wrong reason, the apparent triumph which involved no real effort, the seemingly heroic act into which one had been shamed. The dismal fact is that self-respect has nothing to do with the approval of others—who are, after all, deceived easily enough; has nothing to do with reputation, which, as Rhett Butler told Scarlett O'Hara, is something people with courage can do without.

—Joan Didion

**1991** Read the following passage from *The Life of Samuel Johnson* by James Boswell. Then, in a well-organized essay, discuss the ways Boswell differentiates between the writing of Joseph Addison and that of Samuel Johnson. In your essay, analyze Boswell's views of both writers and the devices he uses to convey those views.

It has of late been the fashion to compare the style of Addison and Johnson, and to depreciate, I think very unjustly, the style of Addison as nerveless and feeble, because it has not the strength and energy of that of Johnson. . . . Addison writes with the ease of a gentleman. His readers fancy that a wise and accomplished companion is talking to them; so that he insinuates his sentiments and taste into their minds by an imperceptible influence. Johnson writes like a teacher. He dictates to his readers as if from an academical chair. They attend with awe and admiration; and his precepts are impressed upon them by his commanding eloquence. Addison's style, like a light wine, pleases everybody from the first. Johnson's, like a liquor of more body, seems too strong at first, but, by degrees, is highly relished; and such is the melody of his periods,<sup>1</sup> so much do they captivate the ear, and seize upon the attention, that there is scarcely any writer, however inconsiderable, who does not aim, in some degree, at the same species of excellence.

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<sup>1</sup> sentences

**1992** In the following excerpts from the beginning and ending of Tillie Olsen's short story "I Stand Here Ironing," a mother's reflections are prompted by another person's concern about her daughter. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the narrative techniques and other resources of language Olsen uses to characterize the mother and the mother's attitudes toward her daughter.

## TILLIE OLSEN: I STAND HERE IRONING

I stand here ironing, and what you asked me moves tormented back and forth with the iron.

"I wish you would manage the time to come in and talk with me about your daughter. I'm sure you can help me understand her. She's a youngster who needs help and whom I'm deeply interested in helping."

"Who needs help." .... Even if I came, what good would it do? You think because I am her mother I have a key, or that in some way you could use me as a key? She has lived for nineteen years. There is all that life that has happened outside of me, beyond me.

And when is there time to remember, to sift, to weigh, to estimate, to total? I will start and there will be an interruption and I will have to gather it all together again. Or I will become engulfed with all I did or did not do, with what should have been and what cannot be helped.

She was a beautiful baby. The first and only one of our five that was beautiful at birth. You do not guess how new and uneasy her tenancy in her now-loveliness. You did not know her all those years she was thought homely, or see her poring over her baby pictures, making me tell her over and over how beautiful she had been—and would be, I would tell her—and was now, to the seeing eye. But the seeing eyes were few or nonexistent. Including mine.

I nursed her. They feel that's important nowadays. I nursed all the children, but with her, with all the fierce rigidity of first motherhood, I did like the books then said. Though her cries battered me to trembling and my breasts ached with swollenness, I waited till the clock decreed.

Why do I put that first? I do not even know if it matters, or if it explains anything.

She was a beautiful baby. She blew shining bubbles of sound. She loved motion, loved light, loved color and music and textures. She would lie on the floor in her blue overalls patting the surface so hard in ecstasy her hands and feet would blur. She was a miracle to me, but when she was eight months old I had to leave her daytimes with the woman downstairs to whom she was no miracle at all, for I worked or looked for work and for Emily's father, who "could no longer endure" (he wrote in his good-bye note) "sharing want with us."

I was nineteen. It was the pre-relief, pre-WPA world of the depression. I would start running as soon as I got off the streetcar, running up the stairs, the place smelling sour, and awake or asleep to startle awake, when she saw me she would break into a clogged weeping that could not be comforted, a weeping I can hear yet.

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She is so lovely. Why did you want me to come in at all? Why were you concerned? She will find her way.

She starts up the stairs to bed. “Don’t get me up with the rest in the morning.” “But I thought you were having midterms.” “Oh, those,” she comes back in, kisses me, and says quite lightly, “in a couple of years when we’ll all be atom-dead they won’t matter a bit.”

She has said this before. She *believes* it. But because I have been dredging the past, and all that compounds a human being is so heavy and meaningful in me, I cannot endure it tonight.

I will never total it all. I will never come in to say: She was a child seldom smiled at. Her father left me before she was a year old. I had to work her first six years when there was work, or I sent her home and to his relatives. There were years she had care she hated. She was dark and thin and foreign-looking in a world where the prestige went to bloneness and curly hair and dimples, she was slow where glibness was prized. She was a child of anxious, not proud, love. We were poor and could not afford for her the soil of easy growth. I was a young mother, I was a distracted mother. There were the other children pushing up, demanding. Her younger sister seemed all that she was not. There were years she did not want me to touch her. She kept too much to herself, her life was such she had to keep too much in herself. My wisdom came too late. She has much to her and probably little will come of it. She is a child of her age, of depression, of war, of fear.

Let her be. So all that is in her will not bloom—but in how many does it? There is still enough left to live by. Only help her to know—help make it so there is cause for her to know—that she is more than this dress on the ironing board, helpless before the iron.

**1993** In the following excerpts from an essay, Lytton Strachey presents his conception of Florence Nightingale. In a well-organized essay, define Strachey's view and analyze how he conveys it. Consider such elements as diction, imagery, syntax, and tone.

### LYTTON STRACHEY: EMINENT VICTORIANS

Everyone knows the popular conception of Florence Nightingale.<sup>1</sup> The saintly, self-sacrificing woman, the delicate maiden of high degree who threw aside the pleasures of life of ease to succour the afflicted, the Lady with the Lamp, gliding through the horrors of the hospital at Scutari, and consecrating with the radiance of her goodness the dying soldier's couch—the vision is familiar all. But the truth was different. The Miss Nightingale of fact was as facile fancy painted her. She worked in another fashion, and towards another end; she moved under the stress of an impetus which finds no place in the popular imagination. A Demon possessed her. Now demons, whatever else they may be, are full of interest. And so it happens that in the real Miss Nightingale was more that was interesting than in the legendary one.

...

What was that secret voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards ... she hardly knew what but certainly towards something very different from anything around her? Why, as a child in the nursery, when her sister had shown a healthy pleasure in tearing her dolls to pieces, had *she* shown an almost morbid one in sewing them up again? Why was she driven now to minister to the poor in their cottages, to watch by sick-beds, to put her dog's wounded paw into elaborate splints as if it was a human being? Why was her head filled with queer imaginations of the country house at Embley turned, by some enchantment, into a hospital, with herself as matron moving about among the beds? Why was even her vision of heaven itself filled with suffering patients to whom she was being useful? So she dreamed and wondered, and, taking out her diary, she poured into it the agitations of her soul.

...

A weaker spirit would have been overwhelmed by the load of such distresses—would have yielded or snapped. But this extraordinary young woman held firm, and fought her way to victory. With an amazing persistency, during the eight years that followed her rebuff over Salisbury Hospital, she struggled and worked and planned. While superficially she was carrying on the life of a brilliant girl in high society, while internally she was a prey to the tortures of regret and of remorse, she yet possessed the energy to collect the knowledge and to undergo the experience which alone could enable her to do what she had determined she would do in the end. In secret she devoured the reports of medical commissions, the pamphlets of sanitary authorities, the histories of hospitals and homes. She spent the intervals of the London season in ragged schools and workhouses. When she went abroad with her family, she used her spare time so well that there was hardly a great hospital in Europe with which she was not acquainted, hardly a great city whose slums she had not passed through.

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<sup>1</sup> English nurse and founder of modern nursing (1820 – 1910)

...

Three more years passed, and then at last the pressure of time told; her family seemed to realise that she was old enough and strong enough to have her way; and she became the superintendent of a charitable nursing home in Harley Street. She had gained her independence, though it was in a meagre sphere enough; and her mother was still not quite resigned: surely Florence might at least spend the summer in the country. At times, indeed, among her intimates, Mrs. Nightingale almost wept. "We are ducks," she said with tears in her eyes, "who have hatched a wild swan." But the poor lady was wrong; it was not a swan that they had hatched; it was an eagle.

**1994** Read the following passage carefully. Then write an essay showing how the author dramatizes the young heroine's adventure. Consider such literary elements as diction, imagery, narrative pace, and point of view.

SARAH ORNE JEWETT: A WHITE HERON

Half a mile from home, at the farther edge of the woods, where the land was highest, a great pine-tree stood, the last of its generation. Whether it was left for a boundary mark, or for what reason, no one could say; the woodchoppers who had felled its mates were dead and gone long ago, and a whole forest of sturdy trees, pines and oaks and maples, had grown again. But the stately head of this old pine towered above them all and made a landmark for sea and shore miles and miles away. Sylvia knew it well. She had always believed that whoever climbed to the top of it could see the ocean; and the little girl had often laid her hand on the great rough trunk and looked up wistfully at those dark boughs that the wind always stirred, no matter how hot and still the air might be below. Now she thought of the tree with a new excitement, for why, if one climbed it at break of day, could not one see all the world, and easily discover from whence the white heron flew, and mark the place, and find the hidden nest?

What a spirit of adventure, what wild ambition! What fancied triumph and delight and glory for the later morning when she could make known the secret! It was almost too real and too great for the childish heart to bear.

All night the door of the little house stood open and the whippoorwills came and sang upon the very step. The young sportsman and his old hostess were sound asleep, but Sylvia's great design kept her broad awake and watching. She forgot to think of sleep. The short summer night seemed as long as the winter darkness, and at last when the whippoorwills ceased, and she was afraid the morning would after all come too soon, she stole out of the house and followed the pasture path through the woods, hastening toward the open ground beyond, listening with a sense of comfort and companionship to the drowsy twitter of a half-awakened bird, whose perch she had jarred in passing. Alas, if the great wave of human interest which flooded for the first time this dull little life should sweep away the satisfactions of an existence heart to heart with nature and the dumb life of the forest!

There was the huge tree asleep yet in the paling moonlight, and small and silly Sylvia began with utmost bravery to mount to the top of it, with tingling, eager blood coursing the channels of her whole frame, with her bare feet and fingers, that pinched and held like bird's claws to the monstrous ladder reaching up, up, almost to the sky itself. First she must mount the white oak tree that grew alongside, where she was almost lost among the dark branches and the green leaves heavy and wet with dew; a bird fluttered off its nest, and a red squirrel ran to and fro and scolded pettishly at the harmless housebreaker. Sylvia felt her way easily. She had often climbed there, and knew that higher still one of the oak's upper branches chafed against the pine trunk,

just where its lower boughs were set close together. There, when she made the dangerous pass from one tree to the other, the great enterprise would really begin.

She crept out along the swaying oak limb at last, and took the daring step across into the old pine-tree. The way was harder than she thought; she must reach far and hold fast, the sharp dry twigs caught and held her and scratched her like angry talons, the pitch made her thin little fingers clumsy and stiff as she went round and round the tree's great stem, higher and higher upward. The sparrows and robins in the woods below were beginning to wake and twitter to the dawn, yet it seemed much lighter there aloft in the pine-tree, and the child knew she must hurry if her project were to be of any use.

The tree seemed to lengthen itself out as she went up, and to reach farther and farther upward. It was like a great main-mast to the voyaging earth; it must truly have been amazed that morning through all its ponderous frame as it felt this determined spark of human spirit wending its way from higher branch to branch. Who knows how steadily the least twigs held themselves to advantage this light, weak creature on her way! The old pine must have loved his new dependent. More than all the hawks, and bats, and moths, and even the sweet voiced thrushes, was the brave, beating heart of the solitary gray-eyed child. And the tree stood still and frowned away the winds that June morning while the dawn grew bright in the east.

Sylvia's face was like a pale star, if one had seen it from the ground, when the last thorny bough was past, and she stood trembling and tired but wholly triumphant, high in the tree-top. Yes, there was the sea with the dawning sun making a golden dazzle over it, and toward that glorious east flew two hawks with slow-moving pinions. How low they looked in the air from that height when one had only seen them before far up, and dark against the blue sky. Their gray feathers were as soft as moths; they seemed only a little way from the tree, and Sylvia felt as if she too could go flying away among the clouds. Westward, the woodlands and farms reached miles and miles into the distance; here and there were church steeples, and white villages, truly it was a vast and awesome world

**1995** Read the following short story carefully. Then write an essay analyzing how the author, Sandra Cisneros, uses literary techniques to characterize Rachel.

## SANDRA CISNEROS: ELEVEN

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they never tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are—underneath the year that makes you eleven.

Like some days you might say something stupid, and that's the part of you that's still ten. Or maybe some days you might need to sit on your mama's lap because you're scared, and that's the part of you that's five. And maybe one day when you're all grown up maybe you will need to cry like if you're three, and that's okay. That's what I tell Mama when she's sad and needs to cry. Maybe she's feeling three.

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months before you say Eleven when they ask you. And you don't feel smart eleven, not until you're almost twelve. That's the way it is.

Only today I wish I didn't have only eleven years rattling inside me like pennies in a tin Band-Aid box. Today I wish I was one hundred and two instead of eleven because if I was one hundred and two I'd have known what to say when Mrs. Price put the red sweater on my desk. I would've known how to tell her it wasn't mine instead of just sitting there with that look on my face and nothing coming out of my mouth.

"Whose is this?" Mrs. Price says, and she holds the red sweater up in the air for all the class to see. "Whose? It's been sitting in the coatroom for a month."

"Not mine," says everybody. "Not me."

"It has to belong to somebody," Mrs. Price keeps saying, but nobody can remember. It's an ugly sweater with red plastic buttons and a collar and sleeves all stretched out like you could use it for a jump rope. It's maybe a thousand years old and even if it belonged to me I wouldn't say so.

Maybe because I'm skinny, maybe because she doesn't like me, that stupid Sylvia Saldivar says, "I think it belongs to Rachel." An ugly sweater like that all raggedy and old, but Mrs. Price

believes her. Mrs. Price takes the sweater and puts it right on my desk, but when I open my mouth nothing comes out.

“That’s not, I don’t, you’re not...Not mine.” I finally say in a little voice that was maybe me when I was four.

“Of course it’s yours,” Mrs. Price says. “I remember you wearing it once.” Because she’s older and the teacher, she’s right and I’m not.

Not mine, not mine, not mine, but Mrs. Price is already turning to page thirty-two, and math problem number four. I don’t know why but all of a sudden I’m feeling sick inside, like the part of me that’s three wants to come out of my eyes, only I squeeze them shut tight and bite down on my teeth real hard and try to remember today I am eleven, eleven. Mama is making a cake for me for tonight, and when Papa comes home everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you.

But when the sick feeling goes away and I open my eyes, the red sweater’s still sitting there like a big red mountain. I move the red sweater to the corner of my desk with my ruler. I move my pencil and books and eraser as far from it as possible. I even move my chair a little to the right. Not mine, not mine, not mine. In my head I’m thinking how long till lunchtime, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the schoolyard fence, or leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it in the alley. Except when math period ends Mrs. Price says loud and in front of everybody, “Now, Rachel, that’s enough,” because she sees I’ve shoved the red sweater to the tippy-tip corner of my desk and it’s hanging all over the edge like a waterfall, but I don’t care.

“Rachel,” Mrs. Price says. She says it like she’s getting mad. “You put that sweater on right now and no more nonsense.”

“But it’s not –“

“Now!” Mrs. Price says.

This is when I wish I wasn’t eleven because all the years inside of me—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one—are pushing at the back of my eyes when I put one arm through one sleeve of the sweater that smells like cottage cheese, and then the other arm through the other and stand there with my arms apart like if the sweater hurts me and it does, all itchy and full of germs that aren’t even mine.

That’s when everything I’ve been holding in since this morning, since when Mrs. Price put the sweater on my desk, finally lets go, and all of a sudden I’m crying in front of everybody. I wish I was invisible but I’m not. I’m eleven and it’s my birthday today and I’m crying like I’m three in front of everybody. I put my head down on the desk and bury my face in my stupid clown-sweater arms. My face all hot and spit coming out of my mouth because I can’t stop the little animal noises from coming out of me until there aren’t any more tears left in my eyes, and it’s

just my body shaking like when you have the hiccups, and my whole head hurts like when you drink milk too fast.

But the worst part is right before the bell rings for lunch. That stupid Phyllis Lopez, who is even dumber than Sylvia Saldivar, says she remembers the red sweater is hers. I take it off right away and give it to her, only Mrs. Price pretends like everything's okay.

Today I'm eleven. There's a cake Mama's making for tonight and when Papa comes home from work we'll eat it. There'll be candles and presents and everybody will sing Happy birthday, happy birthday to you, Rachel, only it's too late.

I'm eleven today. I'm eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one, but I wish I was one hundred and two. I wish I was anything but eleven. Because I want today to be far away already, far away like a runaway balloon, like a tiny o in the sky, so tiny—tiny you have to close your eyes to see it.

**1996** Read the following passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The House of the Seven Gables*. Then write a careful analysis of how the narrator reveals the character of Judge Pyncheon. You may emphasize whichever devices (e.g. tone, selection of detail, syntax, point of view) you find most significant.

## NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

To apply this train of remark somewhat more closely to Judge Pyncheon.--We might say (without in the least imputing crime to a personage of his eminent respectability) that there was enough of splendid rubbish in his life to cover up and paralyze a more active and subtle conscience than the judge was ever troubled with. The purity of his judicial character, while on the bench; the faithfulness of his public service in subsequent capacities; his devotedness to his party, and the rigid consistency with which he had adhered to its principles, or, at all events, kept pace with its organized movements; his remarkable zeal as president of a Bible society; his unimpeachable integrity as treasurer of a widow's and orphan's fund; his benefits to horticulture, by producing two much-esteemed varieties of the pear, and to agriculture, through the agency of the famous Pyncheon-bull; the cleanliness of his moral deportment, for a great many years past; the severity with which he had frowned upon, and finally cast off, an expensive and dissipated son, delaying forgiveness until within the final quarter of an hour of the young man's life; his prayers at morning and eventide, and graces at meal-time; his efforts in furtherance of the temperance cause; his confining himself, since the last attack of the gout, to five diurnal glasses of old sherry wine; the snowy whiteness of his linen, the polish of his boots, the handsomeness of his gold-headed cane, the square and roomy fashion of his coat, and the fineness of its material, and, in general, the studied propriety of his dress and equipment; the scrupulousness with which he paid public notice, in the street, by a bow, a lifting of the hat, a nod, or a motion of the hand, to all and sundry his acquaintances, rich or poor; the smile of broad benevolence wherewith he made it a point to gladden the whole world;--what room could possibly be found for darker traits, in a portrait made up of lineaments like these? This proper face was what he beheld in the looking-glass. This admirably arranged life was what he was conscious of, in the progress of every day. Then, might not he claim to be its result and sum, and say to himself and the community,--"Behold Judge Pyncheon there"?

And allowing that, many, many years ago, in his early and reckless youth, he had committed some one wrong act, -- or that, even now, the inevitable force of circumstances should occasionally make him do one questionable deed among a thousand praiseworthy, or, at least, blameless ones, -- would you characterize the Judge by that one necessary deed, and that half-forgotten act, and let it overshadow the fair aspect of a lifetime? What is there so ponderous in evil, that a thumb's bigness of it should outweigh the mass of things not evil which were heaped into the other scale! This scale and balance system is a favorite one with people of Judge Pyncheon's brotherhood. A hard, cold man, thus unfortunately situated, seldom or never looking inward, and resolutely taking his idea of himself from what purports to be his image as reflected in the mirror of public opinion, can scarcely arrive at true self-knowledge, except through loss of property and reputation. Sickness will not always help him do it; not always the death-hour!

**1997** Read carefully the following passage from Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, a novel about the relocation of Japanese Canadians to internment camps during the Second World War. Then in a well-organized essay, analyze how changes in perspective and style reflect the narrator's complex attitude toward the past. In your analysis, consider literary elements such as point of view, structure, selection of detail, and figurative language.

## JOY KOGAWA: OBASAN

1942.

We are leaving the B.C. coast -- rain, cloud, mist -- an air overlaid with weeping. Behind us lies a salty sea within which swim our drowning specks of memory -- our small waterlogged eulogies. We are going down to the middle of the earth with pick-axe eyes, tunnelling by train to the Interior, carried along by the momentum of the expulsion into the waiting wilderness.

We are hammers and chisels in the hands of would-be sculptors, battering the spirit of the sleeping mountain. We are the chips and sand, the fragments of fragments that fly like arrows from the heart of the rock. We are the silences that speak from stone. We are the despised rendered voiceless, stripped of car, radio, camera and every means of communication, a trainload of eyes covered with mud and spittle. We are the man in the Gospel of John, born into the world for the sake of the light. We are sent to Siloam, the pool called 'Sent'. We are sent to the sending, that we may bright sight. We are the scholarly and the illiterate, the envied and the ugly, the fierce and the docile. We are those pioneers who cleared the bush and the forest with our hands, the gardeners tending and attending the soil with our tenderness, the fishermen who are flung from the sea to flounder in the dust of the prairies.

We are the Issei and the Nisei and the Sansei, the Japanese Canadians. We disappear into the future undemanding as dew.

The memories are dream images. A pile of luggage in a large hall. Missionaries at the railway station handing out packages of toys. Stephen being carried on board the train, a white cast up to his thigh.

It is three decades ago and I am a small child resting my head in Obasan's lap. I am wearing a wine-coloured dirndl skirt with straps that criss-cross at the back. My white silk blouse has a Peter Pan collar dotted with tiny red flowers. I have a wine-coloured sweater with ivory duck buttons.

Stephen sits sideways on a seat by himself opposite us, his huge white leg like a cocoon.

The train is full of strangers. But even strangers are addressed as "ojisan" and "obasan," meaning uncle or aunt. Not one uncle or aunt, grandfather or grandmother, brother or sister, not one of us on this journey returns home again.

The train smells of oil and soot and orange peels and lurches groggily as we rock our way inland. Along the window ledge, the black soot leaps and settles like insects. Underfoot and in the aisles and beside us on the seats we are surrounded by odd bits of luggage—bags, lunch baskets, pillows. My red umbrella with its knobby clear red handle sticks out of a box like the head of an exotic bird. In the seat behind us is a boy in short gray pants and jacket carrying a wooden slatted box with a tabby kitten inside. He is trying to distract the kitten with his finger but the kitten mews and mews, its mouth opening and closing. I can barely hear its high steady cry in the clackity-clack and steamy hiss of the train.

A few seats in front, one young woman is sitting with her narrow shoulders hunched over a tiny red-faced baby. Her short black hair falls into her birdlike face. She is so young, I would call her “o-nesan,” older sister.

The woman in the aisle seat opposite us leans over and whispers to Obasan with a solemn nodding of her head and a flicker of her eyes indicating the young woman.

Obasan moves her head slowly and gravely in a nod as she listens. “Kawaiso,” she says under her breath. The word is used whenever there is hurt and a need for tenderness.

The young mother, Kuniko-san, came from Saltspring Island, the woman says. Kuniko-san was rushed onto the train from Hastings Park, a few days after giving birth prematurely to her baby.

“She has nothing,” he woman whispers. “Not even diapers.”

Aya Obasan does not respond as she looks steadily at the dirt-covered floor. I lean out into the aisle and I can see the baby’s tiny fist curled tight against its wrinkled face. Its eyes are closed and its mouth is squinched small as a button. Kuniko-san does not lift her eyes at all.

“Kawai,” I whisper to Obasan, meaning that the baby is cute.

Obasan hands me an orange from a wicker basket and gestures towards Kuniko-san, indicating that I should take her the gift. But I pull back.

“For the baby,” Obasan says, urging me.

I withdraw farther into my seat. She shakes open a furoshiki—a square cloth that is used to carry things by tying the corners together—and places a towel and some apples and oranges in it. I watch her lurching from side to side as she walks toward Kuniko-san.

Clutching the top of Kuniko-san’s seat with one hand, Obasan bows and holds the furoshiki out to her. Kuniko-san clutches the baby against her breast and bows forward twice while accepting Obasan’s gift without looking up.

**1998** Read carefully the following passage from George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* (1871). Then write an essay in which you characterize the narrator's attitude toward Dorothea Brooke and analyze the literary techniques used to convey this attitude. Support your analysis with specific references to the passage

## GEORGE ELIOT: MIDDLEMARCH

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible, -- or from one of our elder poets, -- in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper. She was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever, but with the addition that her sister Celia had more common-sense. Nevertheless, Celia wore scarcely more trimmings; and it was only to close observers that her dress differed from her sister's, and had a shade of coquetry in its arrangements; for Miss Brooke's plain dressing was due to mixed conditions, in most of which her sister shared. ...

Dorothea knew many passages of Pascal's *Pensees* and of Jeremy Taylor by heart; and to her the destinies of mankind, seen by the light of Christianity, made the solitudes of feminine fashion appear an occupation for Bedlam. She could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in gimp and artificial protrusions of drapery. Her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there; she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects; likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractations, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it. Certainly such elements in the character of a marriageable girl tended to interfere with her lot, and hinder it from being decided according to custom, by good looks, vanity, and merely canine affection. With all this, she, the elder of the sisters, was not yet twenty, and they had both been educated, since they were about twelve years old and had lost their parents, on plans at once narrow and promiscuous, first in an English family and afterwards in a Swiss family at Lausanne, their bachelor uncle and guardian trying in this way to remedy the disadvantages of their orphaned condition. ...

The rural opinion about the new young ladies, even among the cottagers, was generally in favor of Celia, as being so amiable and innocent-looking, while Miss Brooke's large eyes seemed, like her religion, too unusual and striking. Poor Dorothea! compared with her, the innocent-looking Celia was knowing and worldly-wise; so much subtler is a human mind than the outside tissues which make a sort of blazonry or clock-face for it.

Yet those who approached Dorothea, though prejudiced against her by this alarming hearsay, found that she had a charm unaccountably reconcilable with it. Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air and the various aspects of the country, and when her eyes and cheeks glowed with mingled pleasure she looked very little like a devotee.

Riding was an indulgence which she allowed herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it.

She was open, ardent, and not in the least self- admiring; indeed, it was pretty to see how her imagination adorned her sister Celia with attractions altogether superior to her own, and if any gentleman appeared to come to the Grange from some other motive than that of seeing Mr. Brooke, she concluded that he must be in love with Celia: Sir James Chettam, for example, whom she constantly considered from Celia's point of view, inwardly debating whether it would be good for Celia to accept him. That he should be regarded as a suitor to herself would have seemed to her a ridiculous irrelevance. Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage. She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious Hooker, if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched mistake he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any of the other great men whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure; but an amiable handsome baronet, who said "Exactly" to her remarks even when she expressed uncertainty, --how could he affect her as a lover? The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it.

**1999** In the following passage from Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Crossing* (1994), the narrator describes a dramatic experience. Read the passage carefully. Then in a well-organized essay, show how McCarthy's techniques convey the impact of the experience on the main character.

## CORMAC McCARTHY: THE CROSSING

By the time he reached the first talus<sup>1</sup> slides under the tall escarpments<sup>2</sup> of the Pilates the dawn was not far to come. He reined the horse in a grassy swale and stood down and dropped the reins. His trousers were stiff with blood. He cradled the wolf in his arms and lowered her to the ground and unfolded the sheet. She was stiff and cold and her fur was bristly with the blood dried upon it. He walked the horse back to the creek and left it standing to water and scouted the banks for wood with which to make a fire. Coyotes were yapping along the hills to the south and they were calling from the dark shapes of the rimlands above him where their cries seemed to have no origin other than the night itself.

He got the fire going and lifted the wolf from the sheet and took the sheet to the creek and crouched in the dark and washed the blood out of it and brought it back and he cut forked sticks from a mountain hackberry and drove them into the ground with a rock and hung the sheet on a trestlepole where it steams in the firelight like a burning scrim standing in a wilderness where celebrants of some sacred passion had been carried off by rival sects or perhaps had simply fled in the night at the fear of their own doing. He pulled the blanket about his shoulders and sat shivering in the cold and waiting for the dawn that he could find the place where he would bury the wolf. After a while the horse came up from the creek trailing the wet reins through the leaves and stood at the edge of the fire.

He fell asleep with his hands palm up before him like some dozing penitent. When he woke it was still dark. The fire had died to a few low flames seething over the coals. He took off his hat and fanned the fire with it and coaxed it back and fed the wood he'd gathered. He looked for the horse but could not see it. The coyotes were still calling all along the stone ramparts of the Pilates and it was graying faintly in the east. He squatted over the world and touched her fur. He touched the cold and perfect teeth. The eye turned to the fire and gave back no light and he closed it with his thumb and sat by her and put his hand upon her bloodied forehead and closed his own eyes that he could hear her running in the mountains, running in the starlight where the grass was wet and the sun's coming as yet had not undone the rich matrix of creatures passed in the night before her. Deer and hare and dove and groundvole all richly empaneled on the air for her delight, all nations of the possible world ordained by God of which she was one among and not separate from. Where she ran the cries of the coyotes clapped shut as if a door had closed upon them out of the leaves and held it or he reached to hold what cannot be held, what already ran among the mountains at once terrible and of a great beauty, like flowers that feed on flesh. What blood and bone are made of but can themselves not make on any altar nor by any wound of war.

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<sup>1</sup> A sloping mass of rock debris at the base of a cliff

<sup>2</sup> Steep slopes

What we may well believe has power to cut and shape and hollow out the dark forms of the world surely if wind can, if rain can. But which cannot be held never be held and is no flower but is swift and a huntress and the wind itself is in terror of it and the world cannot lose it.

**2000** In the following passage from *The Spectator* (March 4, 1712), the English satirist Joseph Addison creates a character who keeps a diary. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the language of the passage characterizes the diarist and his society and how the characterization serves Addison's satiric purpose. You may wish to consider such elements as selection of detail, repetition, and tone.

MONDAY, *Eight-o'clock*.—I put on my Clothes and walked into the parlour.  
*Nine o'clock* ditto.—Tied my knee-strings, and washed my hands  
*Hours Ten, Eleven and Twelve*.—Smoked three pipes of Virginia. Read the *Supplement* and *Daily Courant*.—Things go ill in the North. Mr. Nisby's Opinion thereupon.  
*One o'clock in the Afternoon*.—Chid Ralph for mislaying my tobacco-box.  
*Two o'clock*.—Sat down to Dinner. *Mem.* Too many plums, and no suet.  
*From Three to Four*.—Took my Afternoon's Nap.  
*From Four to Six*.—Walked into the Fields. Wind, S. S. E.  
*From Six to Ten*.—At the Club. Mr. Nisby's Opinion about the Peace.  
*Ten o'clock*.—Went to Bed, slept sound.

TUESDAY (*being holiday*), *Eight o'clock*.—Rose as usual.  
*Nine o'clock*.—Washed hands and face, shaved, put on my double-soled shoes  
*Ten, Eleven, Twelve*.—Took a walk to Islington.  
*One*.—Took a pot of Mother Cob's mild.  
*Between Two and Three*.—Return'd, dined on a knuckle of veal and bacon. *Mem.* Sprouts wanting.  
*Three*.—Nap as usual.  
*From Four to Six*.—Coffee-house. Read the news. A dish of twist.<sup>1</sup> Grand Vizier<sup>2</sup> strangled.  
*From Six to Ten*.—At the Club. Mr. Nisby's Account of the Great Turk.  
*Ten*.—Dream of the Grand Vizier. Broken sleep.

WEDNESDAY *Eight o'clock*.—Tongue of my shoe-buckle broke. Hands but not face.  
*Nine*.—Paid off the butcher's bill. *Mem.* To be allowed for the last leg of mutton.  
*Ten, Eleven*.—At the Coffee-house. More work in the North. Stranger in a black wig asked me how stocks went.  
*From Twelve to One*.—Walked in the fields. Wind to the South.  
*From One to Two*.—Smoked a pipe and an half.  
*Two*.—Dined as usual. Stomach good.  
*Three*.—Nap broke by the falling of a pewter dish. *Mem.* Cookmaid in love, and grown careless.  
*From Four to Six*.—At the coffee-house. Advice from Smyrna, that the Grand Vizier was first of all strangled, and afterwards beheaded.  
*Six o'clock in the Evening*.—Was half an hour in the club before anybody else came. Mr. Nisby of opinion that the Grand Vizier was not strangled the sixth instant.

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<sup>1</sup> a beverage

<sup>2</sup> chief administrative officer of the Ottoman Empire

*Ten at Night.*—Went to bed. Slept without waking till nine next morning.

THURSDAY *Nine o'clock.*—Stayed within till two o'clock for Sir Timothy; who did not bring me my annuity according to his promise.

*Two in the Afternoon.*—Sat down to dinner. Loss of appetite. Small beer sour. Beef over-corned.

*Three.*—Could not take my nap.

*Four and Five.*—Gave Ralph a box on the ear. Turned off my cookmaid. Sent a message to Sir Timothy. *Mem.* I did not go to the Club to-night. Went to bed at nine o'clock.

FRIDAY Passed the morning in meditation upon Sir Timothy, who was with me a quarter before twelve.

*Twelve o'clock.*—Bought a new head to my cane, and a tongue to my buckle. Drank a glass of purl<sup>1</sup> to recover appetite.

*Two and Three.*—Dined, and slept well.

*From Four to Six.*—Went to the Coffee-house. Met Mr. Nisby there. Smoked several pipes. Mr. Nisby of opinion that laced Coffee<sup>2</sup> is bad for the head.

*Six o'clock.*—At the Club as steward. Sat late.

*Twelve o'clock.*—Went to bed, dreamt that I drank small beer with the Grand Vizier.

SATURDAY Waked at eleven, walked in the fields. Wind N. E.

*Twelve.*—Caught in a shower.

*One in the Afternoon.*—Returned home, and dried my self.

*Two.*—Mr. Nisby dined with me. First course marrow-bones, Second ox-cheek, with a bottle of Brooks and Hellier.

*Three o'clock.*—Overslept my self.

*Six.*—Went to the Club. Like to have fallen into a Gutter. Grand Vizier certainly dead.  
etc.

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<sup>1</sup> a liquor

<sup>2</sup> coffee containing spirits

**2001** The passage below is taken from the novel *Tom Jones* (1749) by the English novelist and playwright Henry Fielding. In this scene, which occurs early in the novel, Squire Allworthy discovers an infant in his bed. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the techniques that Fielding employs in this scene to characterize Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Deborah Wilkins.

Mr Allworthy ... came to his house very late in the evening, and after a short supper with his sister, retired much fatigued to his chamber. Here, having spent some minutes on his knees--a custom which he never broke through on any account--he was preparing to step into bed, when, upon opening the clothes, to his great surprise he beheld an infant, wrapped up in some coarse linen, in a sweet and profound sleep, between his sheets. He stood some time lost in astonishment at this sight; but, as good nature had always the ascendant in his mind, he soon began to be touched with sentiments of compassion for the little wretch before him. He then rang his bell, and ordered an elderly woman-servant to rise immediately, and come to him; and in the meantime was so eager in contemplating the beauty of innocence, appearing in those lively colours with which infancy and sleep always display it, that his thoughts were too much engaged to reflect that he was in his shirt when the matron came in. She had indeed given her master sufficient time to dress himself; for out of respect to him, and regard to decency, she had spent many minutes in adjusting her hair at the looking-glass, notwithstanding all the hurry in which she had been summoned by the servant, and though her master, for aught she knew, lay expiring in an apoplexy, or in some other fit.

It will not be wondered at that a creature who had so strict a regard to decency in her own person, should be shocked at the least deviation from it in another. She therefore no sooner opened the door, and saw her master standing by the bedside in his shirt, with a candle in his hand, than she started back in a most terrible fright, and might perhaps have swooned away, had he not now recollected his being undressed, and put an end to her terrors by desiring her to stay without the door till he had thrown some clothes over his back, and was become incapable of shocking the pure eyes of Mrs Deborah Wilkins, who, though in the fifty-second year of her age, vowed she had never beheld a man without his coat. ...

When Mrs Deborah returned into the room, and was acquainted by her master with the finding the little infant, her consternation was rather greater than his had been; nor could she refrain from crying out, with great horror of accent as well as look, "My good sir! what's to be done?" Mr Allworthy answered, she must take care of the child that evening, and in the morning he would give orders to provide it a nurse. "Yes, sir," says she; "and I hope your worship will send out your warrant to take up the hussy its mother, for she must be one of the neighbourhood; and I should be glad to see her committed to Bridewell, and whipped at the cart's tail. ... but for my own part, it goes against me to touch these misbegotten wretches, whom I don't look upon as my fellow-creatures. Faugh! how it stinks! ... If I might be so bold to give my advice, I would have it put in a basket, and sent out and laid at the churchwarden's door. It is a good night, only a little rainy and windy; and if it was well wrapped up, and put in a warm basket, it is two to one but it lives till it is found in the morning. But if it should not, we have discharged our duty in taking

proper care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence, than to grow up and imitate their mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them."

There were some strokes in this speech which perhaps would have offended Mr Allworthy, had he strictly attended to it; but he had now got one of his fingers into the infant's hand, which, by its gentle pressure, seeming to implore his assistance, had certainly out-pleaded the eloquence of Mrs Deborah, had it been ten times greater than it was. He now gave Mrs Deborah positive orders to take the child to her own bed, and to call up a maid-servant to provide it pap, and other things, against it waked ...

Such was the discernment of Mrs Wilkins, and such the respect she bore her master, under whom she enjoyed a most excellent place, that her scruples gave way to his peremptory commands; and she took the child under her arms, without any apparent disgust at the illegality of its birth; and declaring it was a sweet little infant, walked off with it to her own chamber.

**2002** In the following excerpt from a recent British novel, the narrator, a young man in his early twenties, is attending a play with his new girlfriend Isabel when she unexpectedly discovers that her parents are in the theater. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author produces a comic effect.

“Oh my God, I think that’s my mum over there,” she gasped.

“Where?”

“By the pillar. Careful, don’t look. What is she *doing* here? And what’s that dress? It looks like a willow tree. Where’s Dad? I hope she didn’t come with one of her gentlemen friends. She’s really too old for that.”

“Did you tell her you were going?”

“No. I mean, I said I wanted to see the play, but I didn’t let on I had tickets for tonight.”

“She’s talking to someone. Can you see?”

“Phew, it’s my dad. He must have gone off to buy programmes. And he’s about to sneeze. Look, there we go, aaahhtchooo. Out comes his red handkerchief. I just hope they don’t spot us and we can escape quickly at the end. With any luck, they’ll be too busy arguing to glance up here. This is prime argument territory for them, Mum will be asking Dad where he put the car park ticket and he’ll get flustered because he’ll just have dropped it into a bin mistake.”

Luck was not on Isabel’s side, for a moment later, Christopher Rogers happened to glance up to the gallery and recognized his eldest daughter, in the midst of trying her best not to recognize him. So that she might cease to dwell in ignorance, Christopher stood up in the middle of the elegantly suited and scented audience, and began making the vigorous hand gestures of a man waving off a departing cruise ship. In case Isabel had not spotted this maniac, her mother was in turn informed of her eldest daughter’s location, and decided that the presence of four hundred people in the auditorium should be no impediment to her desire to shout ‘Isabel’ at top pitch and with all the excitement of a woman recognizing a long-lost friend on the deck on an in-coming cruise ship.

Isabel smiled feebly, turned a beetroot shade and repeated in panicked diction, “I can’t believe this, please let them shut up.

Not a second too soon, Lorca<sup>1</sup> came to the rescue, the lights faded, and Mr. and Mrs. Rogers reluctantly took their seats, pointing ominously to an exit sign by way of interval rendezvous.

An hour and a quarter of Spanish domestic drama later, we found ourselves at the bar.

“What are you doing here, Mum?” asked Isabel.

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<sup>1</sup> Federico Garcia Lorca (1898 -1936), Spanish poet and playwright

“Why shouldn’t I be here? You’re not the only one who does fancy things with your evenings. Your father and I have a right to go out once in a while.”

“I’m sure, I didn’t mean it like that, it’s just I’m surprised at the coincidence.”

“Where did you buy this dress? Is that the one I paid for a Christmas?”

“No, Mum, I got it myself last week.”

“Oh, well, it’s very nice, pity you don’t have more of a cleavage for it, but that’s your father’s fault. You know what all the women in his family are like.”

“How are you, Dad?” Isabel turned to her father, who was looking up at the ceiling with an intent expression.

“Dad?” Isabel repeated.

“Yes, darling, how are you, my bean? Enjoying the show?”

“Yup, and you? What are you staring at up there?”

“I’m looking at the light fixtures they have. They’re new tungsten bulbs, Japanese things, quite wonderful, they use only a small amount of electricity but give off a very nice light.”

“Oh, great, Dad. And, ehm, there’s someone I’d like you to both meet.”

“Delighted,” said Mrs. Rogers, confiding in me almost at once. “She’s a lovely girl, really,” in case my theatre companion had inspired doubts to the contrary.

“Thanks, Mum,” said Isabel wearily, as though the statement were no one-off.

“Don’t mind her, bean, she’s had a hard day.” explained Dad, now looking more horizontally at the world.

“My day would be fine if I wasn’t lumbered with someone who kept losing tickets to the car park,” snapped Mrs. Rogers.

“Dad! You haven’t?”

“Yes, I’m afraid I have. They’re so fiddly these days, they fall right out of one’s hands.”

—Alain de Botton, *Kiss and Tell*

2002 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE  
QUESTIONS (Form B)

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total Time—2 hours

Question I

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

Read carefully the following passage from the beginning of a contemporary novel. Note the author's use of such elements as diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author's use of language generates a vivid impression of Quoyle as a character.

Here is an account of a few years in the life of Quoyle, born in Brooklyn and raised in a shuffle of dreary upstate towns.

Line  
(5) Hive-spangled, gut roaring with gas and cramp, he survived childhood; at the state university, hand clapped over his chin, he camouflaged torment with smiles and silence. Stumbled through his twenties and into his thirties learning to separate his feelings from his life, counting on nothing. He ate prodigiously, liked a ham  
(10) knuckle, buttered spuds.

His jobs: distributor of vending machine candy, all-night clerk in a convenience store, a third-rate newspaperman. At thirty-six, bereft, brimming with grief and thwarted love, Quoyle steered away to  
(15) Newfoundland, the rock that had generated his ancestors, a place he had never been nor thought to go. A watery place. And Quoyle feared water, could not swim. Again and again the father had broken his clenched grip and thrown him into pools, brooks, lakes,  
(20) and surf. Quoyle knew the flavor of brack and waterweed.

From this youngest son's failure to dog-paddle the father saw other failures multiply like an explosion of virulent cells—failure to speak clearly; failure to sit up  
(25) straight; failure to get up in the morning; failure in attitude; failure in ambition and ability; indeed, in everything. His own failure.

Quoyle shambled, a head taller than any child around him, was soft. He knew it. "Ah, you lout," said the  
(30) father. But no pygmy himself. And brother Dick, the father's favorite, pretended to throw up when Quoyle came into a room, hissed "Snotface, Ugly Pig, Warthog, Stupid, Stinkbomb, Greasebag," pummeled and kicked until Quoyle curled, hands over head, sniveling, on the  
(35) linoleum. All stemmed from Quoyle's chief failure, a failure of normal appearance.

A great damp loaf of a body. At six he weighed eighty pounds. At sixteen he was buried under a casement of flesh. Head shaped like a crenshaw,<sup>1</sup> no  
(40) neck, reddish hair ruched<sup>2</sup> back. Features as bunched as

kissed fingertips. Eyes the color of plastic. The monstrous chin, a freakish shelf jutting from the lower face.

Some anomalous gene had fired up at the moment of his begetting as a single spark sometimes leaps from  
(45) banked coals, had given him a giant's chin. As a child he invented stratagems to deflect stares; a smile, down-cast gaze, the right hand darting up to cover the chin.

His earliest sense of self was as a distant figure: there in the foreground was his family; here, at the  
(50) limit of the far view, was he. Until he was fourteen he cherished the idea that he had been given to the wrong family, that somewhere his real people, saddled with the changeling of the Quoyles, longed for him. Then, foraging in a box of excursion mementoes, he found  
(55) photographs of his father beside brothers and sisters at a ship's rail. A girl, somewhat apart from the others, looked toward the sea, eyes squinted, as though she could see the port of destination a thousand miles south. Quoyle recognized himself in their hair, their  
(60) legs, and arms. That sly-looking lump in the shrunken sweater, his father. On the back, scribbled in blue pencil, "Leaving Home, 1946."

At the university he took courses he couldn't understand, humped back and forth without speaking to anyone, went home for weekends of excoriation. At last he  
(65) dropped out of school and looked for a job, kept his hand over his chin.

Nothing was clear to lonesome Quoyle. His thoughts churned like the amorphous thing that ancient sailors, drifting into arctic half-light, called the Sea Lung; a  
(70) heaving sludge of ice under fog where air blurred into water, where liquid was solid, where solids dissolved, where the sky froze and light and dark muddled.

<sup>1</sup> A crenshaw is a variety of winter melon.

<sup>2</sup> A ruche is a pleat or ruffle used for decorating garments.

**2003** The following is an excerpt from “The Other Paris,” a short story by the Canadian writer Mavis Gallant. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, explain how the author uses narrative voice and characterization to provide social commentary.

If anyone had asked Carol at what precise moment she fell in love, or where Howard Mitchell proposed to her, she would have imagined, quite sincerely, a scene that involved all at once the Seine, moonlight, barrows of violets, acacias in flower, and a confused, misty background of the Eiffel tower and the little crooked streets. This was what everyone expected, and she had nearly come to believe it herself.

Actually, he had proposed at lunch, over a tuna-fish salad. He and Carol had known each other less than three weeks, and their conversation, until then, had been limited to their office – an American government agency – and the people in it. Carol was twenty-two; no one had proposed to her before, except an unsuitable medical student with no money eight years’ training still to go. She was under the illusion that in a short time she would be so old no one would ask her again. She accepted at once, and Howard celebrated by ordering an extra bottle of wine. Both would have like champagne, as a more emphatic symbol of the unusual, but each was too diffident to suggest it.

The fact that Carol was not in love with Howard Mitchell did not dismay her in the least. From a series of helpful college lectures on marriage she had learned that a common interest, such as liking Irish setters, was the true basis for happiness, and that the illusion of love was a blight imposed by the film industry, and almost entirely responsible for the high rate of divorce. Similar economic backgrounds, financial security, belonging to the same church – these were the pillars of the married union. By an astonishing coincidence the fathers of Carol and Howard were both attorneys and both had been defeated in their own attempt to get elected a judge. Carol and Howard were both vaguely Protestant, although a serious discussion of religious beliefs would have gravely embarrassed them. And Howard, best of all, was sober, old enough to know his own mind, and absolutely reliable. He was an economist who had sense enough to attach himself to a corporation that continues to pay his salary during his loan to the government. There was no reason for the engagement or the marriage to fail.

Carol, with great efficiency, nearly at once set about the business of falling in love. Love required only the right conditions, like a geranium. It would wither exposed to bad weather or in dismal surroundings; indeed, Carol rates the chances of love in a cottage or a furnished room at zero. Given a good climate, enough money, and a pair of good-natured *intelligent* (her college lectures had stressed this) people, one had only to sit back and watch it grow. All winter, then, she looked for these right conditions in Paris. When, at first, nothing happened, she blamed it on the weather. She was often convinced she would fall deeply in love with Howard if only it would stop raining. Undaunted, she waited for better times.

Howard had no notion of any of this. His sudden proposal to Carol had been quite out of character – he was uncommonly cautious – and he alternated between a state of numbness and a state of self-congratulation. Before his engagement he had sometimes been lonely, a malaise he put down to overwork, and he was discontented with his bachelor households, for he did not enjoy collecting old pottery or making little casserole dishes. Unless he stumbled on a competent housemaid, nothing ever got done. This in itself would not have spurred him into marriage had he not been seriously unsettled by the visit of one of his sisters, who advised him to marry some nice girl before it was too late. “Soon,” she told him, “you’ll just be a person who fills in at dinner.”

Howard saw the picture at once, and was deeply moved by it.

2003 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 2

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

Read the following passage from Joyce Carol Oates's novel *We Were the Mulvaney*s (1996). Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the literary techniques Oates uses to characterize the speaker, Judd Mulvaney. Support your analysis with specific references to the passage.

That time in our lower driveway, by the brook.  
I was straddling my bike staring down into the water.  
Fast-flowing clear water, shallow, shale beneath, and  
lots of leaves. Sky the color of lead and the light  
mostly drained so I couldn't see my face only the  
dark shape of a head that could be anybody's head.  
Hypnotizing myself the way kids do. Lonely kids,  
or kids not realizing they're lonely. The brook was  
flowing below left to right (east to west, though at  
a slant) and I stood immobile leaning on the railing  
(pretty damn rotted: I'd tell Dad it needed to be  
replaced with new planks, we could do it together)  
until it began to happen as it always does the water  
gets slower and slower and you're the one who  
begins to move — oh boy! we-ird! scary and ticklish  
in the groin and I leaned farther and farther over the  
rail staring into the water and I was moving, moving  
helplessly forward, it seemed I was moving somehow  
upward, rising into the air, helpless, in that instant  
aware of my heart beating *ONEtwothree*  
*ONEtwothree!* thinking *Every heartbeat is past and*  
*gone! Every heartbeat is past and gone!* A chill came  
over me, I began to shiver. It wasn't warm weather  
now but might have been late as November, most of  
the leaves blown from the trees. Only the evergreens  
and some of the black birches remaining but it's a fact  
when dry yellow leaves (like on the birches) don't fall  
from a tree the tree is partly dead. A light gritty film  
of snow on the ground, darkest in the crevices where  
you'd expect shadow so it was like a film negative.  
*Every heartbeat is past and gone! Every heartbeat is*  
*past and gone!* in a trance that was like a trance of  
fury, raging hurt *Am I going to die?* because I did not  
believe that Judd Mulvaney could die. (Though on a

35 farm living things are dying, dying, dying all the time,  
and many have been named, and others are born  
taking their places not even knowing that they are  
taking the places of those who have died.) So I knew,  
I wasn't a dope, but I didn't know — not really. Aged  
eleven, or maybe twelve. Leaning over the rotted rail  
gaping at the water hypnotized and scared and  
suddenly there came Dad and Mike in the mud-  
colored Ford pickup (Might as well buy our vehicles  
mud-colored to begin with, saves time, was Dad's  
logic) barreling up the drive, bouncing and rattling.  
On the truck's doors were neat curving white letters  
sweet to see MULVANEY ROOFING (716) 689-8329.  
They'd be passing so close my bike might snag in a  
fender so I grabbed it and hauled it to the side. Mike  
had rolled down his window to lean out and pretend  
to cuff at my head—"Hey Ranger-kid: what's up?"  
Dad at the wheel grinned and laughed and next  
second they were past, the pickup in full throttle  
ascending the drive. And I looked after them, these  
two people so remarkable to me, my dad who was like  
nobody else's dad and my big brother who was —  
well, Mike Mulvaney: "Mule" Mulvaney —and the  
most terrible thought came to me.

*Them, too. All of them. Every heartbeat past and*  
*gone.*

It stayed with me for a long time, maybe forever.  
Not just that I would lose the people I loved, but they  
would lose me — *Judson Andrew Mulvaney*. And they  
knew nothing of it. (Did they?) And I, just a skinny  
kid, the runt of the litter at High Point Farm, would  
have to pretend not to know what I knew.

**2004** The following passage comes from the opening of “The Pupil” (1891), a short story by Henry James. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the author’s description of the three characters and the relationships among them. Pay particular attention to tone and point of view.

The poor young man hesitated and procrastinated: it cost him such an effort to broach the subject of terms, to speak of money to a person who spoke only of feelings and, as it were, of the aristocracy. Yet he was unwilling to take leave, treating his engagement as settled, without some more conventional glance in that direction than he could find an opening for in the manner of the large affable lady who sat there drawing a pair of soiled gants de Suede through a fat jewelled hand and, at once pressing and gliding, repeated over and over everything but the thing he would have liked to hear. He would have liked to hear the figure of his salary; but just as he was nervously about to sound that note the little boy came back the little boy Mrs. Moreen had sent out of the room to fetch her fan. He came back without the fan, only with the casual observation that he couldn’t find it. As he dropped this cynical confession he looked straight and hard at the candidate for the honour of taking his education in hand. This personage reflected somewhat grimly that the thing he should have to teach his little charge would be to appear to address himself to his mother when he spoke to her especially not to make her such an improper answer as that.

When Mrs. Moreen bethought herself of this pretext for getting rid of their companion Pemberton supposed it was precisely to approach the delicate subject of his remuneration. But it had been only to say some things about her son that it was better a boy of eleven shouldn’t catch. They were extravagantly to his advantage save when she lowered her voice to sigh, tapping her left side familiarly, "And all overclouded by THIS, you know; all at the mercy of a weakness !" Pemberton gathered that the weakness was in the region of the heart. He had known the poor child was not robust: this was the basis on which he had been invited to treat, through an English lady, an Oxford acquaintance, then at Nice, who happened to know both his needs and those of the amiable American family looking out for something really superior in the way of a resident tutor.

The young man’s impression of his prospective pupil, who had come into the room as if to see for himself the moment Pemberton was admitted, was not quite the soft solicitation the visitor had taken for granted. Morgan Moreen was somehow sickly without being "delicate," and that he looked intelligent it is true Pemberton wouldn’t have enjoyed his being stupid only added to the suggestion that, as with his big mouth and big ears he really couldn’t be called pretty, he might too utterly fail to please. Pemberton was modest, was even timid; and the chance that his small scholar might prove cleverer than himself had quite figured, to his anxiety, among the dangers of an untried experiment. He reflected, however, that these were risks one had to run when one accepted a position, as it was called, in a private family; when as yet one’s university honours had, pecuniarily speaking, remained barren. At any rate when Mrs. Moreen got up as to intimate that, since it was understood he would enter upon his duties within the week she would let him off now, he succeeded, in spite of the presence of the child, in squeezing out a phrase about the rate of payment. It was not the fault of the conscious smile which seemed a reference to the lady’s expensive identity, it was not the fault of this demonstration, which had, in a sort, both

vagueness and point, if the allusion didn't sound rather vulgar. This was exactly because she became still more gracious to reply: "Oh I can assure you that all that will be quite regular."

Pemberton only wondered, while he took up his hat, what "all that" was to amount to people had such different ideas. Mrs. Moreen's words, however, seemed to commit the family to a pledge definite enough to elicit from the child a strange little comment in the shape of the mocking foreign ejaculation "Oh la-la!"

2004 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

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

The following passage comes from Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), a novel about mill workers living in Manchester, England, in the 1840's. In this scene, George Wilson, one of the workers, goes to the house of Mr. Carson, the mill owner, to request care for a fellow worker dying of typhus. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Gaskell uses elements such as point of view, selection of detail, dialogue, and characterization to make a social commentary.

Wilson had about two miles to walk before he reached Mr Carson's house, which was almost in the country. The streets were not yet bustling and busy. The shop-men were lazily taking down the shutters, although it was near eight o'clock; for the day was long enough for the purchases people made in that quarter of the town, while trade was so flat. One or two miserable-looking women were setting off on their day's begging expedition. But there were few people abroad. Mr Carson's was a good house, and furnished with disregard to expense. But in addition to lavish expenditure, there was much taste shown, and many articles chosen for their beauty and elegance adorned his rooms. As Wilson passed a window which a housemaid had thrown open, he saw pictures and gilding, at which he was tempted to stop and look; but then he thought it would not be respectful. So he hastened on to the kitchen door. The servants seemed very busy with preparations for breakfast; but good-naturedly, though hastily, told him to step in, and they could soon let Mr Carson know he was there. So he was ushered into a kitchen hung round with glittering tins, where a roaring fire burnt merrily, and where numbers of utensils hung round, at whose nature and use Wilson amused himself by guessing. Meanwhile, the servants bustled to and fro; an outdoor man-servant came in for orders, and sat down near Wilson; the cook broiled steaks, and the kitchen-maid toasted bread, and boiled eggs.

30 The coffee steamed upon the fire, and altogether the odours were so mixed and appetizing, that Wilson began to yearn for food to break his fast, which had lasted since dinner<sup>1</sup> the day before. If the servants had known this, they would have willingly given him  
35 meat and bread in abundance; but they were like the rest of us, and not feeling hunger themselves, forgot it was possible another might. So Wilson's craving turned to sickness, while they chattered on, making the kitchen's free and keen remarks upon the parlour.  
40 'How late you were last night, Thomas!'  
'Yes, I was right weary of waiting; they told me to be at the rooms by twelve; and there I was. But it was two o'clock before they called me.'  
'And did you wait all that time in the street?'  
45 asked the housemaid who had done her work for the present, and come into the kitchen for a bit of gossip.  
'My eye as like! you don't think I'm such a fool as to catch my death of cold, and let the horses catch their death too, as we should ha' done if we'd stopped there. No! I put th' horses up in th' stables at th'  
50 Spread Eagle, and went mysel', and got a glass or two by th' fire. They're driving a good custom, them, wi' coachmen. There were five on us, and we'd many a quart o' ale, and gin wi' it, to keep out cold.'  
55 'Mercy on us, Thomas; you'll get a drunkard at last!'

**2005 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**  
**Question 2**

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

Printed below is the complete text of a short story written in 1946 by Katharine Brush. Read the story carefully. Then write an essay in which you show how the author uses literary devices to achieve her purpose.

**Birthday Party**

*Line*

They were a couple in their late thirties, and they looked unmistakably married. They sat on the banquette opposite us in a little narrow restaurant, having dinner. The man had a round, self-satisfied face, with glasses on it; the woman was fadingly pretty, in a big hat. There was nothing conspicuous about them, nothing particularly noticeable, until the end of their meal, when it suddenly became obvious that this was an Occasion—in fact, the husband’s birthday, and the wife had planned a little surprise for him.

It arrived, in the form of a small but glossy birthday cake, with one pink candle burning in the center. The headwaiter brought it in and placed it before the husband, and meanwhile the violin-and-piano orchestra played “Happy Birthday to You,” and the wife beamed with shy pride over her little surprise, and such few people as there were in the restaurant tried to help out with a pattering of applause. It became clear at once that help was needed, because the husband was not pleased. Instead he was hotly embarrassed, and indignant at his wife for embarrassing him.

You looked at him and you saw this and you thought, “Oh, now don’t be like that!” But he was like that, and as soon as the little cake had been deposited on the table, and the orchestra had finished the birthday piece, and the general attention had shifted from the man and the woman, I saw him say something to her under his breath—some punishing thing, quick and curt and unkind. I couldn’t bear to look at the woman then, so I stared at my plate and waited for quite a long time. Not long enough, though. She was still crying when I finally glanced over there again. Crying quietly and heartbrokenly and hopelessly, all to herself, under the gay big brim of her best hat.

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## 2005 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

### Question 2

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

Read the passage below and write an essay discussing how the characterization in the passage reflects the narrator's attitude toward McTeague. In your essay, consider such elements as diction, tone, detail, and syntax.

Line  
5 Then one day at San Francisco had come the news  
of his mother's death; she had left him some money—  
not much, but enough to set him up in business; so he  
had cut loose from the charlatan and had opened his  
"Dental Parlors" on Polk Street, an "accommodation  
street" of small shops in the residence quarter of the  
town. Here he had slowly collected a clientele of  
butcher boys, shop girls, drug clerks, and car  
conductors. He made but few acquaintances. Polk  
10 Street called him the "Doctor" and spoke of his  
enormous strength. For McTeague was a young giant,  
carrying his huge shock of blond hair six feet three  
inches from the ground; moving his immense limbs,  
heavy with ropes of muscle, slowly, ponderously. His  
15 hands were enormous, red, and covered with a fell of  
stiff yellow hair; they were hard as wooden mallets,  
strong as vises, the hands of the old-time car-boy.  
Often he dispensed with forceps and extracted a  
refractory tooth with his thumb and finger. His head  
20 was square-cut, angular; the jaw salient, like that of  
the carnivora.

McTeague's mind was as his body, heavy, slow to  
act, sluggish. Yet there was nothing vicious about the  
man. Altogether he suggested the draught horse,  
25 immensely strong, stupid, docile, obedient.

When he opened his "Dental Parlors," he felt that  
his life was a success, that he could hope for nothing  
better. In spite of the name, there was but one room.  
It was a corner room on the second floor over the  
branch post-office, and faced the street. McTeague  
30 made it do for a bedroom as well, sleeping on the big  
bed-lounge against the wall opposite the window.

35 There was a washstand behind the screen in the corner  
where he manufactured his moulds. In the round bay  
window were his operating chair, his dental engine,  
and the movable rack on which he laid out his instru-  
ments. Three chairs, a bargain at the second-hand  
store, ranged themselves against the wall with  
military precision underneath a steel engraving of the  
40 court of Lorenzo de' Medici, which he had bought  
because there were a great many figures in it for the  
money. Over the bed-lounge hung a rifle manu-  
facturer's advertisement calendar which he never  
used. The other ornaments were a small marble-  
45 topped centre table covered with back numbers of  
"The American System of Dentistry," a stone pug dog  
sitting before the little stove, and a thermometer. A  
stand of shelves occupied one corner, filled with the  
seven volumes of "Allen's Practical Dentist." On the  
50 top shelf McTeague kept his concertina and a bag of  
bird seed for the canary. The whole place exhaled a  
mingled odor of bedding, creosote, and ether.

But for one thing, McTeague would have been  
perfectly contented. Just outside his window was his  
55 signboard—a modest affair—that read: "Doctor  
McTeague. Dental Parlors. Gas Given"; but that was  
all. It was his ambition, his dream, to have projecting  
from that corner window a huge gilded tooth, a molar  
with enormous prongs, something gorgeous and  
60 attractive. He would have it some day, on that he was  
resolved; but as yet such a thing was far beyond his  
means.

2006 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

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

The following passage is an excerpt from *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a play by Oscar Wilde, produced in 1892. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society.

Line DUCHESS OF BERWICK (*shaking hands*). Dear  
Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember  
Agatha,<sup>1</sup> don't you? How do you do, Lord  
Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you  
5 are far too wicked.

LORD DARLINGTON. Don't say that, Duchess.  
As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there  
are lots of people who say I have never really done  
anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of  
10 course they only say it behind my back.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Isn't he dreadful?  
Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't  
believe a word he says. No, no tea, thank you, dear.  
(*Sits on sofa.*) We have just had tea at Lady Markby's.  
15 Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at  
all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha  
is looking forward so much to your ball tonight, dear  
Margaret.

LADY WINDERMERE (*seated*). Oh, you musn't  
20 think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a  
dance in honour of my birthday. A small and early.

LORD DARLINGTON (*standing*). Very small,  
very early, and very select, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Of course it's going  
25 to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about  
*your* house. It is really one of the few houses in  
London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel  
perfectly secure about dear Berwick. I don't know  
what society is coming to. The most dreadful people  
30 seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my  
parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't  
ask them. Really, some one should make a stand  
against it.

LADY WINDERMERE. I will, Duchess. I will  
35 have no one in my house about whom there is any  
scandal.

LORD DARLINGTON. Oh, don't say that, Lady  
Windermere. I should never be admitted. (*Sitting.*)

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, men don't matter.  
40 With women it is different. We're good. Some of us  
are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed  
into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our  
existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time,  
just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right  
45 to do so.

LORD DARLINGTON. It's a curious thing,  
Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the  
way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all  
the honours<sup>2</sup> and invariably lose the odd trick.<sup>3</sup>

50 DUCHESS OF BERWICK. The odd trick? Is that  
the husband, Lord Darlington?

LORD DARLINGTON. It would be rather a good  
name for the modern husband.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear Lord Darlington,  
55 how thoroughly depraved you are!

LADY WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington is trivial.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, don't say that, Lady  
Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. Why do you *talk* so  
60 trivially about life, then?

LORD DARLINGTON. Because I think that life  
is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously  
about it.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. What does he mean?  
65 Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington,  
just explain to me what you really mean.

LORD DARLINGTON. I think I had better not,  
Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found  
out. Good-bye! (*Shakes hands with DUCHESS.*) And  
70 now—Lady Windermere, good-bye. I may come  
tonight, mayn't I? Do let me come.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes, certainly. But you  
are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

LORD DARLINGTON (*smiling*). Ah! you are  
75 beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to  
reform any one, Lady Windermere. (*Bows and exit.*)

<sup>1</sup> the Duchess's daughter

<sup>2</sup> high cards

<sup>3</sup> round of a card game

**2006 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

**Question 2**

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

Read the passage below, which comes from a nineteenth-century novel. Then, in a well-developed essay, discuss how the narrator's style reveals his attitudes toward the people he describes.

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Gentlefolks in general have a very awkward rock ahead in life—the rock ahead of their own idleness. Their lives being, for the most part, passed in looking about them for something to do, it is curious to see—especially when their tastes are of what is called the intellectual sort—how often they drift blindfold into some nasty pursuit. Nine times out of ten they take to torturing something, or to spoiling something—and they firmly believe they are improving their minds, when the plain truth is, they are only making a mess in the house. I have seen them (ladies, I am sorry to say, as well as gentlemen) go out, day after day, for example, with empty pill-boxes, and catch newts, and beetles, and spiders, and frogs, and come home and stick pins through the miserable wretches, or cut them up, without a pang of remorse, into little pieces. You see my young master, or my young mistress, poring over one of the spider's insides with a magnifying-glass; . . . and when you wonder what this cruel nastiness means, you are told that it means a taste in my young master or my young mistress for natural history. Sometimes, again, you see them occupied for hours together in spoiling a pretty flower with pointed instruments, out of a stupid curiosity to know what the flower is made of. Is its colour any prettier, or its scent any sweeter, when you *do* know? But there! the

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poor souls must get through the time, you see—they must get through the time. You dabbled in nasty mud, and made pies, when you were a child; and you dabble in nasty science, and dissect spiders, and spoil flowers, when you grow up. In the one case and in the other, the secret of it is, that you have got nothing to think of in your poor empty head, and nothing to do with your poor idle hands. And so it ends in your spoiling canvas with paints, and making a smell in the house; or in keeping tadpoles in a glass box full of dirty water, and turning everybody's stomach in the house; or in chipping off bits of stone here, there, and everywhere, and dropping grit into all the victuals in the house; or in staining your fingers in the pursuit of photography, and doing justice without mercy on everybody's face in the house. It often falls heavy enough, no doubt, on people who are really obliged to get their living, to be forced to work for the clothes that cover them, the roof that shelters them, and the food that keeps them going. But compare the hardest day's work you ever did with the idleness that splits flowers and pokes its way into spiders' stomachs, and thank your stars that your head has got something it *must* think of, and your hands something that they *must* do.

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**GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.**

## Question 2

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

Read carefully the following passage from Dalton Trumbo's novel *Johnny Got His Gun* (1939). Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Trumbo uses such techniques as point of view, selection of detail, and syntax to characterize the relationship between the young man and his father.

The campfire was built in front of a tent and the tent was under an enormous pine. When you slept inside the tent it seemed always that it was raining outside because the needles from the pine kept falling.

Line 5 Sitting across from him and staring into the fire was his father. Each summer they came to this place which was nine thousand feet high and covered with pine trees and dotted with lakes. They fished in the lakes and when they slept at night the roar of water

10 from the streams which connected the lakes sounded in their ears all night long.

They had been coming to this place ever since he was seven. Now he was fifteen and Bill Harper was going to come tomorrow. He sat in front of the fire and looked across at his father and wondered just how he was going to tell him. It was a very serious thing. Tomorrow for the first time in all their trips together he wanted to go fishing with someone other than his father. On previous trips the idea had never occurred

20 to him. His father had always preferred his company to that of men and he had always preferred his father's company to that of the other guys. But now Bill Harper was coming up tomorrow and he wanted to go fishing with him. He knew it was something that

25 had to happen sometime. Yet he also knew that it was the end of something. It was an ending and a beginning and he wondered just how he should tell his father about it.

So he told him very casually. He said Bill Harper's coming up tomorrow and I thought maybe I'd go out with him. He said Bill Harper doesn't know very much about fishing and I do so I think if you don't

mind I'll get up early in the morning and meet Harper and he and I will go fishing.

35 For a little while his father didn't say a thing. Then he said why sure go along Joe. And then a little later his father said has Bill Harper got a rod? He told his father no Bill hasn't a rod. Well said his father why don't you take my rod and let Bill use yours? I don't

40 want to go fishing tomorrow anyhow. I'm tired and I think I'll rest all day. So you use my rod and let Bill use yours.

It was as simple as that and yet he knew it was a great thing. His father's rod was a very valuable one.

45 It was perhaps the only extravagance his father had had in his whole life. It had amber leaders and beautiful silk windings. Each spring his father sent the rod away to a man in Colorado Springs who was an expert on rods. The man in Colorado Springs

50 carefully scraped the varnish off the rod and rewound it and revarnished it and it came back glistening new each year. There was nothing his father treasured more. He felt a little lump in his throat as he thought that even as he was deserting his father for Bill

55 Harper his father had volunteered the rod.

They went to sleep that night in the bed which lay against a floor of pine needles. They had scooped the needles out to make a little hollow place for their hips. He lay awake quite a while thinking about tomorrow and his father who slept beside him. Then he fell

60 asleep. At six o'clock Bill Harper whispered to him through the tent flap. He got up and gave Bill his rod and took his father's for himself and they went off without awakening his father.

2007 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 2

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

In the following passage, contemporary novelist Seamus Deane reflects on his childhood experiences with books and writing. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Deane conveys the impact those early experiences had on him.

The novel was called *The Shan Van Vocht*, a phonetic rendering of an Irish phrase meaning The Poor Old Woman, a traditional name for Ireland. It was about the great rebellion of 1798, the source of almost half the songs we sang around the August bonfires on the Feast of the Assumption. In the opening pages, people were talking in whispers about the dangers of the rebellion as they sat around a great open-hearth fire on a wild night of winter rain and squall. I read and re-read the opening many times. Outside was the bad weather; inside was the fire, implied danger, a love relationship. There was something exquisite in this blend, as I lay in bed reading while my brothers slept and shifted under the light that shone on their eyelids and made their dreams different. The heroine was called Ann, and the hero was Robert. She was too good for him. When they whispered, she did all the interesting talking. He just kept on about dying and remembering her always, even when she was there in front of him with her dark hair and her deep golden-brown eyes and her olive skin. So I talked to her instead and told her how beautiful she was and how I wouldn't go out on the rebellion at all but just sit there and whisper in her ear and let her know that now was forever and not some time in the future when the shooting and the hacking would be over, when what was left of life would be spent listening to the night wind wailing on graveyards and empty hillsides.

“For Christ’s sake, put off that light. You’re not even reading, you blank gom.”

And Liam would turn over, driving his knees up into my back and muttering curses under his breath. I’d switch off the light, get back in bed, and lie there, the book still open, re-imagining all I had read, the various ways the plot might unravel, the novel opening into endless possibilities in the dark.

The English teacher read out a model essay which had been, to our surprise, written by a country boy. It was an account of his mother setting the table for the

evening meal and then waiting with him until his father came in from the fields. She put out a blue-and-white jug full of milk and a covered dish of potatoes in their jackets and a red-rimmed butter dish with a slab of butter, the shape of a swan dipping its head imprinted on its surface. That was the meal. Everything was so simple, especially the way they waited. She sat with her hands in her lap and talked to him about someone up the road who had had an airmail letter from America. She told him that his father would be tired, but, tired as he was, he wouldn't be without a smile before he washed himself and he wouldn't be so without his manners to forget to say grace before they ate and that he, the boy, should watch the way the father would smile when the books were produced for homework, for learning was a wonder to him, especially the Latin. Then there would be no talking, just the ticking of the clock and the kettle humming and the china dogs on the mantelpiece looking, as ever, across at one another.

“Now that,” said the master, “that’s writing. That’s just telling the truth.”

I felt embarrassed because my own essay had been full of long or strange words I had found in the dictionary—“cerulean,” “azure,” “phantasm” and “implacable”—all of them describing skies and seas I had seen only with the Ann of the novel. I’d never thought such stuff was worth writing about. It was ordinary life—no rebellions or love affairs or dangerous flights across the hills at night. And yet I kept remembering that mother and son waiting in the Dutch interior of that essay, with the jug of milk and the butter on the table, while behind and above them were those wispy, shawly figures from the rebellion, sibilant above the great fire and below the aching, high wind.

(1996)

# 2008 Prose Released Exam

## Question 2

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

The following excerpt from Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) describes Tess Durbeyfield, a young woman who leaves her parents' home to work on a dairy farm. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Hardy's narrator characterizes the relationship between Tess and her new environment.

Tess Durbeyfield, then, in good heart, and full of zest for life, descended the Egdon slopes lower and lower towards the dairy of her pilgrimage.

Line The marked difference, in the final particular,  
5 between the rival vales now showed itself. The secret of Blackmoor was best discovered from the heights around: to read aright the valley before her it was necessary to descend into its midst. When Tess had accomplished this feat she found herself to be  
10 standing on a carpeted level, which stretched to the east and west as far as the eye could reach.

The river had stolen from the higher tracts and brought in particles to the vale all this horizontal land; and now, exhausted, aged, and attenuated, lay  
15 serpentine along through the midst of its former spoils.

Not quite sure of her direction Tess stood still upon the hemmed expanse of verdant flatness, like a fly on a billiard-table of indefinite length, and of no more  
20 consequence to the surroundings than that fly. The sole effect of her presence upon the placid valley so far had been to excite the mind of a solitary heron, which, after descending to the ground not far from her path, stood with neck erect looking at her.

25 Suddenly there arose from all parts of the lowland a prolonged and repeated call: "Waow! waow! waow!" From the furthest east to the furthest west the cries spread as if by contagion, accompanied in some cases by the barking of a dog. It was not the

30 expression of the valley's consciousness that beautiful Tess had arrived, but the ordinary announcement of milking-time, half-past four o'clock, when the dairymen set about getting in the cows.

The red and white herd nearest at hand, which had  
35 been phlegmatically waiting for the call, now trooped towards the stading in the background, their great bags of milk swinging under them as they walked. Tess followed slowly in their rear, and entered the barton by the open gate through which they had  
40 entered before her. Long thatched sheds stretched round the enclosure, their slopes encrusted with vivid green moss, and their eaves supported by wooden posts rubbed to a glassy smoothness by the flanks of infinite cows and calves of bygone years, now passed  
45 to an oblivion almost inconceivable in its profundity. Between the posts were ranged the milchers,\* each exhibiting herself at the present moment to a whimsical eye in the rear as a circle on two stalks, down the centre of which a switch moved pendulum-  
50 wise; while the sun, lowering itself behind this patient row, threw their shadows accurately inwards upon the wall. Thus it threw shadows of these obscure and homely figures every evening with as much care over each contour as if it had been the profile of a court  
55 beauty on a palace wall; copied them as diligently as it had copied Olympian shapes on marble facades long ago; or the outline of Alexander, Caesar, and the Pharaohs.

\* milk cows

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# 2008 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

## Question 2

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

The following passage is taken from *Fasting, Feasting*, a novel published in 1999 by Indian novelist Anita Desai. In the excerpt, Arun, an exchange student from India, joins members of his American host family for an afternoon at the beach. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses such literary devices as speech and point of view to characterize Arun's experience.

Line  
5 It is Saturday. Arun cannot plead work. He stands despondent, and when Melanie comes to the door, dressed in her bathing suit with a big shirt drawn over her shoulders, and stares at him challengingly, he starts wildly to find excuses.  
Mrs. Patton will not hear them. No, she will not. Absolutely not. So she says, with her hands spread out and pressing against the air. 'No, no, no. We're all three of us going. Rod and Daddy have gone sailing on Lake Wyola and we're not going to sit here waiting for them to come home—oh no.'  
Arun must go back upstairs and collect his towel and swimming trunks. Then he follows Melanie to the driveway where Mrs. Patton is waiting with baskets of equipment—oils and lotions, paperbacks and dark glasses, sandwiches and lemonade. With that new and animated prance galvanising her dwindled shanks, she leads the way through a gap in the bushes to one of the woodland paths. Melanie and Arun follow silently. They try to find a way to walk that will not compel them to be side by side or in any way close together. But who is to follow whom? It is an awkward problem. Arun finally stops trying to lag behind her—she can lag even better—and goes ahead to catch up with Mrs. Patton. He ought to help carry those baskets anyway. He takes one from her hands and she throws him a radiant, lipstick smile. Then she swings away and goes confidently forwards.

'Summertime,' he hears her singing, 'when the living is eeh-zee—'  
They make their way along scuffed paths through layers of old soft pine needles. The woods are thrumming with cicadas: they shrill and shrill as if the sun is playing on their sinews, as if they were small harps suspended in the trees. A bird shrieks hoarsely, flies on, shrieks elsewhere, further off—that ugly, jarring note that does not vary. But there are no birds to be seen, nor animals. It is as if they are in hiding, or have fled. Perhaps they have because the houses of Edge Hill do intrude and one can glimpse a bit of wall here or roof there, a washing line hung with sheets or a plastic gnome, finger to nose, enigmatically winking. Arun finds the hair on the back of his neck begin to prickle, as if in warning. He is sweating, and the palms of his hands are becoming puffy and damp. Why must people live in the vicinity of such benighted wilderness and become a part of it? The town may be small and have little to offer, but how passionately he prefers its post office, its shops, its dry-cleaning stores and picture framers to this creeping curtain of insidious green, these grasses stirring with insidious life, and bushes with poisonous berries—so bright or else so pale. Nearly tripping upon a root, he stumbles and has to steady himself so as not to spill the contents of the basket.

**2008 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

**Question 2**

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

Jane Austen’s novel *Northanger Abbey* (1818) opens with the following passage. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the literary techniques Austen uses to characterize Catherine Morland.

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No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be an heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother, her own person and disposition, were all equally against her. Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard, and he had never been handsome. He had a considerable independence besides two good livings,<sup>1</sup> and he was not in the least addicted to locking up his daughters. Her mother was a woman of useful plain sense, with a good temper, and, what is more remarkable, with a good constitution. She had three sons before Catherine was born; and, instead of dying in bringing the latter into the world, as anybody might expect, she still lived on—lived to have six children more—to see them growing up around her, and to enjoy excellent health herself. A family of ten children will be always called a fine family, where there are heads, and arms, and legs enough for the number; but the Morlands had little other right to the word, for they were in general very plain, and Catherine, for many years of her life, as plain as any. She had a thin awkward figure, a sallow skin without colour, dark lank hair, and strong features; so much for her person, and not less unpropitious for heroism seemed her mind. She was fond of all boys’ play and greatly preferred cricket, not merely to dolls, but to the more heroic enjoyments of infancy, nursing a dormouse, feeding a canary-bird, or watering a rose-bush. Indeed she had no taste for a garden, and if she gathered flowers at all, it was chiefly for the pleasure of mischief, at least so it was conjectured from her always preferring those which she was forbidden to take. Such were her propensities; her abilities were quite as extraordinary. She never could learn or understand anything before she was taught, and sometimes not even then, for she was

40 often inattentive, and occasionally stupid. Her mother was three months in teaching her only to repeat the “Beggar’s Petition,” and, after all, her next sister Sally could say it better than she did. Not that Catherine was always stupid; by no means; she learnt the fable of “The Hare and many Friends,” as quickly as any girl in England. Her mother wished her to learn music; and Catherine was sure she should like it, for she was very fond of tinkling the keys of the old forlorn spinnet,<sup>2</sup> so at eight years old she began. She learnt a year and could not bear it; and Mrs. Morland, who did not insist on her daughters being accomplished in spite of incapacity or distaste, allowed her to leave off. The day which dismissed the music-master was one of the happiest of Catherine’s life. Her taste for drawing was not superior; though whenever she could obtain the outside of a letter from her mother, or seize upon any other odd piece of paper, she did what she could in that way by drawing houses and trees, hens and chickens, all very much like one another. Writing and accounts she was taught by her father; French by her mother. Her proficiency in either was not remarkable, and she shirked her lessons in both whenever she could. What a strange unaccountable character! for with all these symptoms of profligacy at ten years old, she had neither a bad heart nor a bad temper, was seldom stubborn, scarcely ever quarrelsome, and very kind to the little ones, with few interruptions of tyranny. She was, moreover, noisy and wild, hated confinement and cleanliness, and loved nothing so well in the world as rolling down the green slope at the back of the house.

<sup>1</sup> Incomes or endowments

<sup>2</sup> Piano

# 2009 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

## Question 2

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

The following selection is the opening of Ann Petry's 1946 novel, *The Street*. Read the selection carefully and then write an essay analyzing how Petry establishes Lutie Johnson's relationship to the urban setting through the use of such literary devices as imagery, personification, selection of detail, and figurative language.

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There was a cold November wind blowing through 116th Street. It rattled the tops of garbage cans, sucked window shades out through the top of opened windows and set them flapping back against the windows; and it drove most of the people off the street in the block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues except for a few hurried pedestrians who bent double in an effort to offer the least possible exposed surface to its violent assault.

It found every scrap of paper along the street— theater throwaways, announcements of dances and lodge meetings, the heavy waxed paper that loaves of bread had been wrapped in, the thinner waxed paper that had enclosed sandwiches, old envelopes, newspapers. Fingering its way along the curb, the wind set the bits of paper to dancing high in the air, so that a barrage of paper swirled into the faces of the people on the street. It even took time to rush into doorways and areaways and find chicken bones and pork-chop bones and pushed them along the curb.

It did everything it could to discourage the people walking along the street. It found all the dirt and dust and grime on the sidewalk and lifted it up so that the dirt got into their noses, making it difficult to breathe; the dust got into their eyes and blinded them; and the grit stung their skins. It wrapped newspaper around their feet entangling them until the people cursed deep in their throats, stamped their feet, kicked at the paper. The wind blew it back again and again until they were forced to stoop and dislodge the paper with their hands. And then the wind grabbed their hats,

pried their scarves from around their necks, stuck its fingers inside their coat collars, blew their coats away from their bodies.

35 The wind lifted Lutie Johnson's hair away from the back of her neck so that she felt suddenly naked and bald, for her hair had been resting softly and warmly against her skin. She shivered as the cold fingers of the wind touched the back of her neck, explored the sides of her head. It even blew her eyelashes away from her eyes so that her eyeballs were bathed in a rush of coldness and she had to blink in order to read the words on the sign swaying back and forth over her head.

45 Each time she thought she had the sign in focus, the wind pushed it away from her so that she wasn't certain whether it said three rooms or two rooms. If it was three, why, she would go in and ask to see it, but if it said two—why, there wasn't any point. Even with the wind twisting the sign away from her, she could see that it had been there for a long time because its original coat of white paint was streaked with rust where years of rain and snow had finally eaten the paint off down to the metal and the metal had slowly rusted, making a dark red stain like blood.

55 It was three rooms. The wind held it still for an instant in front of her and then swooped it away until it was standing at an impossible angle on the rod that suspended it from the building. She read it rapidly.

60 Three rooms, steam heat, parquet floors, respectable tenants. Reasonable.

**2009 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

**Question 2**

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

The passage below is the opening of *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948), a novel written by Zora Neale Hurston. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the literary techniques Hurston uses to describe Sawley and to characterize the people who live there.

Line      Sawley, the town, is in west Florida, on the famous  
Suwanee River. It is flanked on the south by the  
curving course of the river which Stephen Foster\*  
5      made famous without ever having looked upon its  
waters, running swift and deep through the primitive  
forests, and reddened by the chemicals leached out  
of drinking roots. On the north, the town is flanked  
by cultivated fields planted to corn, cane, potatoes,  
tobacco and small patches of cotton.  
10      However, few of these fields were intensively  
cultivated. For the most part they were scratchy  
plantings, the people being mostly occupied in  
the production of turpentine and lumber. The life  
of Sawley streamed out from the sawmill and the  
15      “teppertime ‘still.” Then too, there was ignorance  
and poverty, and the ever-present hookworm. The  
farms and the scanty flowers in front yards and in  
tin cans and buckets looked like the people. Trees  
and plants always look like the people they live  
20      with, somehow.  
This was in the first decade of the new century,  
when the automobile was known as the horseless  
carriage, and had not exerted its tremendous influence  
on the roads of the nation. There was then no U.S. 90,  
25      the legendary Old Spanish Trail, stretching straight  
broad concrete from Jacksonville on the Atlantic to  
San Diego on the Pacific. There was the sandy pike,  
deeply rutted by wagon wheels over which the folks  
of Sawley hauled their tobacco to market at Live Oak,  
30      or fresh-killed hogmeat, corn and peanuts to Madison  
or Monticello on the west. Few ever dreamed of  
venturing any farther east nor west.

35      Few were concerned with the past. They had heard  
that the stubbornly resisting Indians had been there  
where they now lived, but they were dead and gone.  
Osceola, Miccanope, Billy Bow-Legs were nothing  
more than names that had even lost their bitter flavor.  
The conquering Spaniards had done their murdering,  
robbing, and raping and had long ago withdrawn from  
40      the Floridas. Few knew and nobody cared that the  
Hidalgos under De Sota had moved westward along  
this very route. The people thought no more of them  
than they did the magnolias and bay and other  
ornamental trees which grew so plentifully in the  
45      swamps along the river, nor the fame of the stream.  
They knew that there were plenty of black bass,  
locally known as trout, in the Suwanee, and bream  
and perch and cat-fish. There were soft-shell turtles  
that made a mighty nice dish when stewed down to  
50      a low gravy, or the “chicken meat” of those same  
turtles fried crisp and brown. Fresh water turtles were  
a mighty fine article of food anyway you looked at it.  
It was commonly said that a turtle had every kind of  
meat on him. The white “chicken meat,” the dark  
55      “beef” and the in-between “pork.” You could stew,  
boil and fry, and none of it cost you a cent. All you  
needed was a strip of white side-meat on the hook,  
and you had you some turtle meat.

\*American songwriter (1826-1864) whose song “Old Folks at Home”  
begins “Way down upon the Swanee River”

## 2010 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Question 2

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

In the following passage from Maria Edgeworth's 1801 novel, *Belinda*, the narrator provides a description of Clarence Hervey, one of the suitors of the novel's protagonist, Belinda Portman. Mrs. Stanhope, Belinda's aunt, hopes to improve her niece's social prospects and therefore has arranged to have Belinda stay with the fashionable Lady Delacour.

Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze Clarence Hervey's complex character as Edgeworth develops it through such literary techniques as tone, point of view, and language.

Clarence Hervey might have been more than a pleasant young man, if he had not been smitten with the desire of being thought superior in every thing, and of being the most admired person in all companies. He had been early flattered with the idea that he was a man of genius; and he imagined that, as such, he was entitled to be imprudent, wild, and eccentric. He affected singularity, in order to establish his claims to genius. He had considerable literary talents, by which he was distinguished at Oxford; but he was so dreadfully afraid of passing for a pedant, that when he came into the company of the idle and the ignorant, he pretended to disdain every species of knowledge. His chameleon character seemed to vary in different lights, and according to the different situations in which he happened to be placed. He could be all things to all men—and to all women. He was supposed to be a favourite with the fair sex; and of all his various excellencies and defects, there was none on which he valued himself so much as on his gallantry. He was not profligate; he had a strong sense of humour, and quick feelings of humanity; but he was so easily led, or rather so easily excited by his companions, and his companions were now of such a sort, that it was probable he would soon become vicious. As to his connexion with Lady Delacour, he would have started with horror at the idea of disturbing the peace of a family; but in her family, he said, there was no peace to disturb; he was vain of having it seen by the world that he was distinguished by a lady of her wit and fashion, and he did not think it incumbent on him to be more scrupulous or more

attentive to appearances than her ladyship. By Lord Delacour's jealousy he was sometimes provoked, sometimes amused, and sometimes flattered. He was constantly of all her ladyship's parties in public and private; consequently he saw Belinda almost every day, and every day he saw her with increasing admiration of her beauty, and with increasing dread of being taken in to marry a niece of 'the *catch-match-maker*,' the name by which Mrs Stanhope was known amongst the men of his acquaintance. Young ladies who have the misfortune to be *conducted* by these artful dames, are always supposed to be partners in all the speculations, though their names may not appear in the firm. If he had not been prejudiced by the character of her aunt, Mr Hervey would have thought Belinda an undesigning, unaffected girl; but now he suspected her of artifice in every word, look, and motion; and even when he felt himself most charmed by her powers of pleasing, he was most inclined to despise her, for what he thought such premature proficiency in scientific coquetry. He had not sufficient resolution to keep beyond the sphere of her attraction; but frequently, when he found himself within it, he cursed his folly, and drew back with sudden terror.

2010 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

Question 2

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

The following passage is taken from the story “Cherry Bomb” by Maxine Clair. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Clair uses literary techniques to characterize the adult narrator’s memories of her fifth-grade summer world.

Line It was two summers before I would put my thin-  
penny bus token in the slot and ride the Fifth Street  
trolley all the way to the end of the line to junior high.  
Life was measured in summers then, and the  
5 expression “I am in this world, but not of it” appealed  
to me. I wasn’t sure what it meant, but it had just the  
right ring for a lofty statement I should adopt. That  
Midwest summer broke records for straight over-one-  
hundred-degree days in July, and Mr. Calhoun still  
10 came around with that-old-thing of an ice truck. Our  
mother still bought a help-him-out block of ice to  
leave in the backyard for us to lick or sit on. It was  
the summer that the Bible’s plague of locusts came.  
Evening sighed its own relief in a locust hum that  
15 swelled from the cattails next to the cemetery, from  
the bridal wreath shrubs and the pickle grass that my  
younger cousin, Bea, combed and braided on our side  
of the alley.

20 I kept a cherry bomb and a locked diary in the  
closet under the back steps where Bea, restrained by  
my suggestion that the Hairy Man hid there, wouldn’t  
try to find them. It was an established, Daddy-said-so  
fact that at night the Hairy Man went anywhere he  
wanted to go but in the daytime he stayed inside the  
25 yellow house on Sherman Avenue near our school.  
During the school year if we were so late that the  
patrol boys had gone inside, we would see him in his  
fenced-in yard, wooly-headed and bearded, hollering  
things we dared not repeat until a nurse kind of  
30 woman in a bandanna came out and took him back  
inside the house with the windows painted light blue,  
which my mother said was a peaceful color for  
somebody shell-shocked.

If you parted the heavy coats between the raggedy  
35 mouton that once belonged to my father’s mother,  
who, my father said, was his Heart when she died, and  
the putrid-colored jacket my father wore when he got  
shipped out to the dot in the Pacific Ocean where, he  
said, the women wore one piece of cloth and looked  
40 as fine as wine in the summertime, you would find  
yourself right in the middle of our cave-dark closet.  
Then, if you closed your eyes, held your hands up  
over your head, placed one foot in front of the other,  
walked until the tips of your fingers touched the  
45 smooth cool of slanted plaster all the way down to  
where you had to slue your feet and walk squat-  
legged, fell to your knees and felt around on the floor  
—then you would hit the strong-smelling cigar box.  
My box of private things.

50 From time to time my cousins Bea and Eddy stayed  
with us, and on the Fourth of July the year before,  
Eddy had lit a cherry bomb in a Libby’s corn can and  
tried to lob it over the house into the alley. Before it  
reached the top of the porch it went off, and a piece  
55 of tin shot God-is-whipping-you straight for Eddy’s  
eye. By the time school started that year, Eddy had a  
keloid\* like a piece of twine down the side of his face  
and a black patch he had to wear until he got his glass  
eye that stared in a fixed angle at the sky. Nick,  
60 Eddy’s friend, began calling Eddy “Black-Eyed Pea.”

After Eddy’s accident, he gave me a cherry bomb.  
His last. I kept it in my cigar box as a sort of memento  
of good times. Even if I had wanted to explode it, my  
mother had threatened to do worse to us if we so  
65 much as looked at fireworks again. Except for  
Christmas presents, it was the first thing anybody  
ever gave me.

\* a thick scar

## Question 2

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

The following passage is from the novel *Middlemarch* by George Eliot, the pen name of Mary Ann Evans (1819–1880). In the passage, Rosamond and Tertius Lydgate, a recently married couple, confront financial difficulties.

Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Eliot portrays these two characters and their complex relationship as husband and wife. You may wish to consider such literary devices as narrative perspective and selection of detail.

Rosamond coloured deeply. “Have you not asked Papa for money?” she said as soon as she could speak.

“No.”

Line “Then I must ask him!” she said, releasing her  
5 hands from Lydgate’s and rising to stand at two yards’ distance from him.

“No, Rosy,” said Lydgate decisively. “It is too late to do that. The inventory will be begun tomorrow. Remember it is a mere security; it will make no  
10 difference; it is a temporary affair. I insist upon it that your father shall not know unless I choose to tell him,” added Lydgate with a more peremptory emphasis.

This certainly was unkind, but Rosamond had  
15 thrown him back on evil expectation as to what she would do in the way of quiet, steady disobedience. The unkindness seemed unpardonable to her; she was not given to weeping and disliked it, but now her chin and lips began to tremble and the tears welled up.  
20 Perhaps it was not possible for Lydgate, under the double stress of outward material difficulty and of his own proud resistance to humiliating consequences, to imagine fully what this sudden trial was to a young creature who had known nothing but indulgence and  
25 whose dreams had all been of new indulgence, more exactly to her taste. But he did wish to spare her as much as he could, and her tears cut him to the heart. He could not speak again immediately, but Rosamond did not go on sobbing; she tried to conquer her  
30 agitation and wiped away her tears, continuing to look before her at the mantelpiece.

“Try not to grieve, darling,” said Lydgate, turning his eyes up towards her. That she had chosen to move away from him in this moment of her trouble made  
35 everything harder to say, but he must absolutely go on. “We must brace ourselves to do what is necessary. It is I who have been in fault; I ought to have seen that I could not afford to live in this way. But many things have told against me in my practice, and it really just  
40 now has ebbed to a low point. I may recover it, but in the meantime we must pull up—we must change our

way of living. We shall weather it. When I have given this security I shall have time to look about me; and you are so clever that if you turn your mind to  
45 managing you will school me into carefulness. I have been a thoughtless rascal about squaring prices—but come, dear, sit down and forgive me.”

Lydgate was bowing his neck under the yoke like a creature who had talons but who had reason too,  
50 which often reduces us to meekness. When he had spoken the last words in an imploring tone, Rosamond returned to the chair by his side. His self-blame gave her some hope that he would attend to her opinion, and she said, “Why can you not put off having the inventory made? You can send the men away  
55 tomorrow when they come.”

“I shall not send them away,” said Lydgate, the peremptoriness rising again. Was it of any use to explain?

60 “If we left Middlemarch, there would of course be a sale, and that would do as well.”

“But we are not going to leave Middlemarch.”

“I am sure, Tertius, it would be much better to do so. Why can we not go to London? Or near Durham,  
65 where your family is known?”

“We can go nowhere without money, Rosamond.”

“Your friends would not wish you to be without money. And surely these odious tradesmen might be made to understand that and to wait if you would  
70 make proper representations to them.”

“This is idle, Rosamond,” said Lydgate angrily. “You must learn to take my judgement on questions you don’t understand. I have made necessary  
75 arrangements, and they must be carried out. As to friends, I have no expectations whatever from them and shall not ask them for anything.”

Rosamond sat perfectly still. The thought in her mind was that if she had known how Lydgate would behave, she would never have married him.

80 “We have no time to waste now on unnecessary words, dear,” said Lydgate, trying to be gentle again. “There are some details that I want to consider with

**2011 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)**

**Question 2**

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

The following passage is the opening of the novel *Kiss of the Fur Queen* (1998) by the Cree novelist and playwright Tomson Highway. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Highway uses literary devices to dramatize Okimasis' experience.

Line  
5  
10  
15  
20  
25

“Mush!” the hunter cried into the wind. Through the rising vapour of a northern Manitoba February, so crisp, so dry, the snow creaked underfoot, the caribou hunter Abraham Okimasis drove his sled and team of eight grey huskies through the orange-rose-tinted dusk. His left hand gripping handlebar of sled, his right snapping moose-hide whip above his head, Abraham Okimasis was urging his huskies forward.

“Mush!” he cried, “mush.” The desperation in his voice, like a man about to sob, surprised him. Abraham Okimasis could see, or thought he could, the finish line a mile away. He could also see other mushers, three, maybe four. Which meant forty more behind him. But what did these forty matter? What mattered was that, so close to the end, he was not leading. What mattered was that he was not going to win the race.

And he was so tired, his dogs beyond tired, so tired they would have collapsed if he was to relent.

“Mush!” the sole word left that could feed them, dogs and master both, with the will to travel on. Three days. One hundred and fifty miles of low-treed tundra, ice-covered lakes, all blanketed with at least two feet of snow—fifty miles per day—a hundred and fifty miles of freezing temperatures and freezing winds. And the finish line mere yards ahead.

The shafts of vapour rising from the dogs' panting mouths, the curls of mist emerging from their undulating backs, made them look like insubstantial wisps of air.

“Mush!” the hunter cried to his lead dog. “Tiger-Tiger, mush.”

He had sworn to his dear wife, Mariesis Okimasis, on pain of separation and divorce, unthinkable for a Roman Catholic in the year of our Lord 1951, that he would win the world championship just for her: the silver cup, that holy chalice was to be his twenty-first-anniversary gift to her. With these thoughts racing through his fevered mind, Abraham Okimasis edged past musher number 54—Jean-Baptiste Ducharme of Cranberry Portage. Still not good enough.

Half a mile to the finish line—he could see the banner now, a silvery white with bold black lettering, though he couldn't make out the words.

Mushers numbers 32 and 17, so close, so far: Douglas Ballantyne of Moosogoot, Saskatchewan, at least twenty yards ahead, and Jackson Butler of Flin Flon, Manitoba, another ten ahead of that.

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**2011 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

you. Dover says he will take a good deal of the plate  
back again, and any of the jewellery we like. He  
85 really behaves very well.”  
“Are we to go without spoons and forks then?” said  
Rosamond, whose very lips seemed to get thinner  
with the thinness of her utterance. She was  
determined to make no further resistance or  
90 suggestions.

# 2012 Released Exam Prose

## Question 2

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

The following passage is the opening of Kiran Desai’s novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Desai establishes a particular mood and setting through the use of such elements as selection of detail and figurative language.

Line All day, the colors had been those of dusk, mist  
5 moving like a water creature across the great flanks of  
mountains possessed of ocean shadows and depths.  
Briefly visible above the vapor, Kanchenjunga was a  
far peak whittled out of ice, gathering the last of the  
light, a plume of snow blown high by the storms at its  
summit.

10 Sai, sitting on the veranda, was reading an article  
about giant squid in an old *National Geographic*.  
Every now and then she looked up at Kanchenjunga,  
observed its wizard phosphorescence with a shiver.  
The judge sat at the far corner with his chessboard,  
playing against himself. Stuffed under his chair where  
she felt safe was Mutt the dog, snoring gently in her  
15 sleep. A single bald lightbulb dangled on a wire  
above. It was cold, but inside the house, it was still  
colder, the dark, the freeze, contained by stone walls  
several feet deep.

20 Here, at the back, inside the cavernous kitchen, was  
the cook, trying to light the damp wood. He fingered  
the kindling gingerly for fear of the community of  
scorpions living, loving, reproducing in the pile. Once  
he’d found a mother, plump with poison, fourteen  
babies on her back.

25 Eventually the fire caught and he placed his kettle  
on top, as battered, as encrusted as something dug up  
by an archeological team, and waited for it to boil.  
The walls were singed and sodden, garlic hung by  
muddy stems from the charred beams, thickets of soot  
30 clumped batlike upon the ceiling. The flame cast a  
mosaic of shiny orange across the cook’s face, and  
his top half grew hot, but a mean gust tortured his  
arthritic knees.

35 Up through the chimney and out, the smoke  
mingled with the mist that was gathering speed,  
sweeping in thicker and thicker, obscuring things in  
parts—half a hill, then the other half. The trees turned  
into silhouettes, loomed forth, were submerged again.  
Gradually the vapor replaced everything with itself,  
40 solid objects with shadow, and nothing remained that  
did not seem molded from or inspired by it. Sai’s  
breath flew from her nostrils in drifts, and the  
diagram of a giant squid constructed from scraps  
of information, scientists’ dreams, sank entirely into  
45 the murk.

50 She shut the magazine and walked out into the  
garden. The forest was old and thick at the edge of the  
lawn; the bamboo thickets rose thirty feet into the  
gloom; the trees were moss-slung giants, bunioned  
and misshapen, tentacled with the roots of orchids.  
The caress of the mist through her hair seemed  
human, and when she held her fingers out, the vapor  
took them gently into its mouth. She thought of Gyan,  
the mathematics tutor, who should have arrived an  
55 hour ago with his algebra book.

But it was 4:30 already and she excused him with  
the thickening mist.

60 When she looked back, the house was gone; when  
she climbed the steps back to the veranda, the garden  
vanished. The judge had fallen asleep and gravity  
acting upon the slack muscles, pulling on the line of  
his mouth, dragging on his cheeks, showed Sai  
exactly what he would look like if he were dead.

65 “Where is the tea?” he woke and demanded of her.  
“He’s late,” said the judge, meaning the cook with the  
tea, not Gyan.

“I’ll get it,” she offered.

70 The gray had permeated inside, as well, settling on  
the silverware, nosing the corners, turning the mirror  
in the passageway to cloud. Sai, walking to the  
kitchen, caught a glimpse of herself being smothered  
and reached forward to imprint her lips upon the  
surface, a perfectly formed film star kiss. “Hello,”  
she said, half to herself and half to someone else.

75 No human had ever seen an adult giant squid alive,  
and though they had eyes as big as apples to scope the  
dark of the ocean, theirs was a solitude so profound  
they might never encounter another of their tribe. The  
melancholy of this situation washed over Sai.

80 Could fulfillment ever be felt as deeply as loss?  
Romantically she decided that love must surely  
reside in the gap between desire and fulfillment, in the  
lack, not the contentment. Love was the ache, the  
anticipation, the retreat, everything around it but the  
85 emotion itself.

Excerpt from *The Inheritance of Loss*, copyright © 2006 by Kiran Desai.  
Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc. Any third party use of this  
material, outside of this publication, is prohibited.

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

Carefully read the following excerpt from the novel *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena María Viramontes. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the development of Estrella’s character. In your analysis, you may wish to consider such literary elements as selection of detail, figurative language, and tone.

So what is this?

Line  
5 When Estrella first came upon Perfecto’s red tool chest like a suitcase near the door, she became very angry. So what is this about? She had opened the tool chest and all that jumbled steel inside the box, the iron bars and things with handles, the funny-shaped objects, seemed as confusing and foreign as the alphabet she could not decipher. The tool chest stood guard by the door and she slammed the lid closed on 10 the secret. For days she was silent with rage. The mother believed her a victim of the evil eye.

Estrella hated when things were kept from her. The teachers in the schools did the same, never giving her the information she wanted. Estrella would ask over 15 and over, So what is this, and point to the diagonal lines written in chalk on the blackboard with a dirty fingernail. The script A’s had the curlicue of a pry bar, a hammerhead split like a V. The small i’s resembled nails. So tell me. But some of the teachers were more concerned about the dirt under her fingernails. They 20 inspected her head for lice, parting her long hair with ice cream sticks. They scrubbed her fingers with a toothbrush until they were so sore she couldn’t hold a pencil properly. They said good luck to her when the 25 pisca<sup>1</sup> was over, reserving the desks in the back of the classroom for the next batch of migrant children. Estrella often wondered what happened to all the things they boxed away in tool chests and kept to themselves.

30 She remembered how one teacher, Mrs. Horn, who had the face of a crumpled Kleenex and a nose like a hook—she did not imagine this—asked how come her mama never gave her a bath. Until then, it had never occurred to Estrella that she was dirty, that the 35 wet towel wiped on her resistant face each morning, the vigorous brushing and tight braids her mother neatly weaved were not enough for Mrs. Horn. And for the first time, Estrella realized words could become as excruciating as rusted nails piercing the 40 heels of her bare feet.

The curves and tails of the tools made no sense and the shapes were as foreign and meaningless to her as chalky lines on the blackboard. But Perfecto Flores was a man who came with his tool chest and stayed, a 45 man who had no record of his own birth except for the year 1917 which appeared to him in a dream. He had a history that was unspoken, memories that only surfaced in nightmares. No one remembered knowing him before his arrival, but everyone used his name to describe a job well done. 50

He opened up the tool chest, as if bartering for her voice, lifted a chisel and hammer; aquí, pegarle aquí,<sup>2</sup> to take the hinge pins out of the hinge joints when you want to remove a door, start with the lowest hinge, tap 55 the pin here, from the top, tap upwards. When there’s too many layers of paint on the hinges, tap straight in with the screwdriver at the base, here, where the pins widen. If that doesn’t work, because your manitas<sup>3</sup> aren’t strong yet, fasten the vise pliers, these, then 60 twist the pliers with your hammer.

Perfecto Flores taught her the names that went with the tools: a claw hammer, he said with authority, miming its function; screwdrivers, see, holding up various heads and pointing to them; crescent 65 wrenches, looped pliers like scissors for cutting chicken or barbed wire; old wood saw, new hacksaw, a sledgehammer, pry bar, chisel, axe, names that gave meaning to the tools. Tools to build, bury, tear down, rearrange and repair, a box of reasons his hands took pride in. She lifted the pry bar in her hand, felt the 70 coolness of iron and power of function, weighed the significance it awarded her, and soon she came to understand how essential it was to know these things. That was when she began to read.

<sup>1</sup> harvest

<sup>2</sup> here, hit it here

<sup>3</sup> little hands

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## 2013 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Question 2

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

The following passage is from D. H. Lawrence's 1915 novel, *The Rainbow*, which focuses on the lives of the Brangwens, a farming family who lived in rural England during the late nineteenth century. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Lawrence employs literary devices to characterize the woman and capture her situation.

Line  
5  
10  
15  
20  
25  
30

It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrow to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn around.

But the woman wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins.

Looking out, as she must, from the front of her house towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land, she strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to

35 knowledge, she strained to hear how he uttered himself in his conquest, her deepest desire hung on the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown. She also wanted to know, and to be of the fighting host.

40 At home, even so near as Cossethay, was the vicar, who spoke the other, magic language, and had the other, finer bearing, both of which she could perceive, but could never attain to. The vicar moved in worlds beyond where her own menfolk existed. Did she not know her own menfolk; fresh, slow, full-built men, masterful enough, but easy, native to the earth, lacking outwardness and range of motion. Whereas the vicar, dark and dry and small beside her husband, had yet a quickness and a range of being that made

50 Brangwen, in his large geniality, seem dull and local. She knew her husband. But in the vicar's nature was that which passed beyond her knowledge. As Brangwen had power over the cattle so the vicar had power over her husband. What was it in the vicar, that

55 raised him above the common men as man is raised above the beast? She craved to know. She craved to achieve this higher being, if not in herself, then in her children. That which makes a man strong even if he be little and frail in body, just as any man is little and frail beside a bull, and yet stronger than the bull, what

60 was it? It was not money nor power nor position. What power had the vicar over Tom Brangwen—none. Yet strip them and set them on a desert island, and the vicar was the master. His soul was master of

65 the other man's. And why—why? She decided it was a question of knowledge.

## 2013 Alternate

### Question 2

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

Carefully read the following excerpt from the short story “Mammita’s Garden Cove” by Cyril Dabydeen. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Dabydeen uses literary techniques to convey Max’s complex attitudes toward place.

Line  
5  
10  
‘Where d’you come from?’ Max was used to the question; used to being told no as well. He walked away, feet kicking hard ground, telling himself that he must persevere. More than anything else he knew he must find a job before long. In a way being unemployed made him feel prepared for hell itself even though he knew too that somewhere there was a sweet heaven waiting for him. How couldn’t it be? After all he was in Canada. He wanted to laugh all of a sudden.

15  
20  
25  
He continued walking along, thoughts drifting back to the far-gone past. Was it that far-gone? He wasn’t sure . . . yet his thoughts kept going back, to the time he was on the island and how he used to dream about being in Canada, of starting an entirely new life. He remembered those dreams clearly now; remembered too thinking of marrying some sweet island-woman with whom he’d share his life, of having children and later buying a house. Maybe someday he’d even own a cottage on the edge of the city. He wasn’t too sure where one built a cottage, but there had to be a cottage. He’d then be in the middle class; life would be different from the hand-to-mouth existence he was used to.

30  
35  
His heels pressed into the asphalt, walking on. And slowly he began to sense a revulsion for everything around him. Maybe he was really happy on the island — more than he realised. Once more he thought about a job; if he didn’t find one soon he might starve. But as the reality of this dawned on him he began laughing. No! No one starved in Canada; that only happened in such places as India or Africa. But definitely not Canada! A growling in his stomach reminded him of reality. A slight panic. Max stepped quickly, walking, looking around, feeling like a fugitive.

40  
He decided to return home to his room in the ramshackle rooming house. There for a while he’d find solace. He always did, staring at the walls, and thinking.

Christ! Same thing again, day-dreaming. And he remembered his cronies on the island, their faces reappearing, their words clear and fresh in his ears.

45  
‘Max, when you get to that cold-cold place, you’d have ice freezin’ yuh up yuh insides . . . freezin’ yuh, you hear me!’ A burst of loud laughter. Max didn’t reply. And when they started again he laughed loudly too. West Indian laughter was always contagious — how couldn’t it be?

50  
55  
60  
65  
Another, cynically said, ‘Put on some weight, Max. You must, man!’ More laughter. The voice continued, ‘But imagine Max becoming fat though . . .’ The laughter rose louder — in Max’s head now. He pictured the faces of the fellas on the island, still lazing around while they sat in Mammita’s Garden Cove. He remembered how he used to go there, often with a novel in his hand; the others used to call him a ‘bookworm’. Max never minded; he’d only smile and think that he wasn’t really a bookworm. They’d say to him, ‘Hey, bookworm, tell us what yuh readin’ about! What’s goin through that head o’ yours, eh?’ Max would merely smile; he loved reading, loved escaping into the world of fantasy. Mammita’s turn: she’d look at him, then turn to the others, her body shaking as she’d say, ‘At least Max knows where he’s goin’! . . . He’ll get far . . . far I tell yuh!’

70  
Max wished he’d gotten far: and he thought that Mammita would really be surprised to see him living half-starved in a ramshackle rooming house in downtown Toronto with the last few dollars in his pocket and still wondering whether he’d have enough for the next week’s rent. He wished more than anything else that a job would fall into his lap. Oh, how he wished this could happen!

From *Still Close to the Island* by Cyril Dabydeen, copyright © 1980 by Cyril Dabydeen and Commoners’ Publishing. Used by permission of Commoners’ Publishing.

## 2014 Prose

**Directions:** The following passage is from the novel *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the author reveals the character of Moses. In your analysis, you may wish to consider such literary elements as point of view, selection of detail, and imagery.

The evening his master died he worked again well after he ended the day for the other adults, his own wife among them, and sent them back with hunger and tiredness to their cabins. The young ones, his son among them, had been sent out of the fields an hour or so before the adults, to prepare the late supper and, if there was time enough, to play in the few minutes of sun that were left. When he, Moses, finally freed himself of the ancient and brittle harness that connected him to the oldest mule his master owned, all that was left of the sun was a five-inch-long memory of red orange laid out in still waves across the horizon between two mountains on the left and one on the right. He had been in the fields for all of fourteen hours. He paused before leaving the fields as the evening quiet wrapped itself about him. The mule quivered, wanting home and rest. Moses closed his eyes and bent down and took a pinch of the soil and ate it with no more thought than if it were a spot of cornbread. He worked the dirt around in his mouth and swallowed, leaning his head back and opening his eyes in time to see the strip of sun fade to dark blue and then to nothing. He was the only man in the realm, slave or free, who ate dirt, but while the bondage women, particularly *the* pregnant ones, ate it for some incomprehensible need, for that something that ash cakes and apples and fatback did not give their bodies, he ate it not only to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the field, but because the eating of it tied him to the only thing in his small world that meant almost as much as his own life.

This was July, and July dirt tasted even more like sweetened metal than the dirt of June or May. Something in the growing crops unleashed a metallic life that only began to dissipate in mid-August, and by harvest time that life would be gone altogether, replaced by a sour moldiness he associated with the coming of fall and winter, the end of a relationship he had begun with the first taste of dirt back in March, before the first hard spring rain. Now, with the sun gone and no moon and the darkness having taken a nice hold of him, he walked to the end of the row, holding the mule by the tail. In the clearing he dropped the tail and moved around the mule toward the barn.

The mule followed him, and after he had prepared the animal for the night and came out, Moses smelled the coming of rain. He breathed deeply, feeling it surge through him. Believing he was alone, he smiled. He knelt down to be closer to the earth and breathed deeply some more. Finally, when the effect began to dwindle, he stood and turned away, for the third time that week, from the path that led to the narrow lane of the quarters with its people and his own cabin, his woman and his boy. His wife knew enough now not to wait for him to come and eat with them. On a night with the moon he could see some of the smoke rising from the world that was the lane--home and food and rest and what passed in many cabins for the life of family. He turned his head slightly to the right and made out what he thought was the sound of playing children, but when he turned his head back, he could hear far more clearly the last bird of the day as it evening-chirped in the small forest far off to the left.

He went straight ahead, to the farthest edge of the cornfields to a patch of woods that had yielded nothing of value since the day his master bought it from a white man who had gone broke and returned to Ireland. "I did well over there," that man lied to his people back in Ireland, his dying wife standing hunched over beside him, "but I longed for all of you and for the wealth of my homeland." The patch of woods of no more than three acres did yield some soft, blue grass that no animal would touch and many trees that no one could identify. Just before Moses stepped into the woods, the rain began, and as he walked on the rain became heavier. Well into the forest the rain came in torrents through the trees and the mighty summer leaves and after a bit Moses stopped and held out his hands and collected water that he washed over his face. Then he undressed down to his nakedness and lay down. To keep the rain out of his nose, he rolled up his shirt and placed it under his head so that it tilted just enough for the rain to flow down about his face. When he was an old man and rheumatism chained up his body, he would look back and blame the chains on evenings such as these, and on nights when he lost himself completely and fell asleep and didn't come to until morning, covered with dew.

## 2015

**Directions:** The following excerpt is from the opening of *The Beet Queen*, a 1986 novel by Louise Erdrich. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children. You may wish to consider such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view.

### The Branch

Long before they planted beets in Argus and built the highways, there was a railroad. Along the track, which crossed the Dakota-Minnesota border and stretched on to Minneapolis, everything that made the town arrived. All that diminished the town departed by that route, too. On a cold spring morning in 1932, the train brought both an addition and a subtraction. They came by freight. By the time they reached Argus their lips were violet and their feet were so numb that, when they jumped out of the boxcar, they stumbled and scraped their palms and knees through the cinders.

The boy was a tall fourteen, hunched with his sudden growth and very pale. His mouth was sweetly curved, his skin fine and girlish. His sister was only eleven years old, but already she was so short and ordinary that it was obvious she would be this way all her life. Her name was square and practical as the rest of her. Mary. She brushed her coat off and stood in the watery wind. Between the buildings there was only more bare horizon for her to see, and from time to time men crossing it. Wheat was the big crop then, and the topsoil was so newly tilled that it hadn't all blown off yet, the way it had in Kansas. In fact, times were generally much better in eastern North Dakota than in most places, which is why Karl and Mary Adare had come there on the train. Their mother's sister, Fritzie, lived on the eastern edge of town. She ran a butcher shop with her husband.

The two Adares put their hands up their sleeves and started walking. Once they began to move they felt warmer, although they'd been traveling all night and the chill had reached deep. They walked east, down the dirt and planking of the broad main street, reading the signs on each false-front clapboard store they passed, even reading the gilt letters in the window of the brick bank. None of these places was a butcher shop. Abruptly, the stores stopped, and a string of houses, weathered gray or peeling gray paint, with dogs tied to their porch railings, began.

Small trees were planted in the yards of a few of these houses, and one tree, weak, a scratch of light against the gray of everything else, tossed in a film of blossoms. Mary trudged solidly forward, hardly glancing at it, but Karl stopped. The tree drew him with its delicate perfume. His cheeks went pink, he stretched his arms out like a sleepwalker, and in one long transfixed motion he floated to the tree and buried his face in the white petals.

Turning to look for Karl, Mary was frightened by how far back he had fallen and how still he was, his face pressed in the flowers. She shouted, but he did not seem to hear her and only stood, strange and stock-still among the branches. He did not move even when the dog in the yard lunged against its rope and bawled. He did not notice when the door to the house opened and a woman scrambled out. She shouted at Karl too, but he paid her no mind and so she untied her dog. Large and anxious, it flew forward in great bounds. And then, either to protect himself or to seize the blooms, Karl reached out and tore a branch from the tree.

It was such a large branch, from such a small tree, that blight would attack the scar where it was pulled off. The leaves would fall away later on that summer and the sap would sink into the roots. The next spring, when Mary passed in on some errand, she saw that it bore no blossoms and remembered how, when the dog jumped for Karl, he struck out with the branch and the petals dropped around the dog's fierce outstretched body in a sudden snow. Then he yelled, "Run!" and Mary ran east, toward Aunt Fritzie. But Karl ran back to the boxcar and the train.

Louise Erdrich  
*The Beet Queen*

## 2015 Alternate

### Question 2

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

In the following excerpt from the novel *Moon Tiger* (1987) by Penelope Lively, a brother and sister are searching for fossils while their mother waits nearby. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how Lively uses literary devices to dramatize the complex relationship among the three characters.

Line She climbs a little higher, on to another sliding  
shelving plateau of the cliff, and squats searching  
furiously the blue grey fragments of rock around her,  
5 hunting for those enticing curls and ribbed whorls,  
pouncing once with a hiss of triumph—an ammonite,  
almost whole. The beach, now, is quite far below; its  
shrill cries, its barkings, its calls are clear and loud but  
from another world, of no account.

10 And all the time out of the corner of her eye she  
watches Gordon, who is higher yet, tap-tapping at an  
outcrop. He ceases to tap; she can see him examining  
something. What has he got? Suspicion and rivalry  
burn her up. She scrambles through little bushy  
plants, hauls herself over a ledge.

15 ‘This is my bit,’ cries Gordon. ‘You can’t come  
here. I’ve bagged it.’

‘I don’t care,’ yells Claudia. ‘Anyway I’m going up  
higher—it’s much better further up.’ And she hurls  
herself upwards over skinny plants and dry stony soil  
20 that cascades away downwards under her feet, up  
towards a wonderfully promising enticing grey  
expanse she has spotted where surely *Asteroceras* is  
lurking by the hundred.

25 Below, on the beach, unnoticed, figures scurry to  
and fro; faint bird-like cries of alarm waft up.

She must pass Gordon to reach that alluring upper  
shelf. ‘*Mind . . .*’ she says. ‘Move your *leg . . .*’

‘Don’t *shove*,’ he grumbles. ‘Anyway you can’t  
come here. I said this is my bit, you find your own.’

30 ‘Don’t shove yourself. I don’t want your stupid  
bit . . .’

His leg is in her way—it thrashes, she thrusts, and  
a piece of cliff, of the solid world which evidently is  
not so solid after all, shifts under her clutching hands  
35 . . . crumbles . . . and she is falling thwack backwards  
on her shoulders, her head, her outflung arm, she is  
skidding rolling thumping downwards. And comes to  
rest gasping in a thorn bush, hammered by pain, too  
affronted even to yell.

40 He can feel her getting closer, encroaching, she is  
coming here on to his bit, she will take all the best  
fossils. He protests. He sticks a foot to impede. Her  
hot infuriating limbs are mixed up with his.

‘You’re *pushing* me,’ she shrieks.

45 ‘I’m not,’ he snarls. ‘It’s you that’s shoving.  
Anyway this is my place so go somewhere else.’  
‘It’s not your stupid place,’ she says. ‘It’s anyone’s  
place. Anyway I don’t . . .’

50 And suddenly there are awful tearing noises and  
thumps and she is gone, sliding and hurtling down,  
and in horror and satisfaction he stares.

‘He pushed me.’

‘I didn’t. Honestly mother, I didn’t. She slipped.’

‘He pushed me.’

55 And even amid the commotion—the clucking  
mothers and nurses, the improvised sling, the  
proffered smelling salts—Edith Hampton can marvel  
at the furious tenacity of her children.

‘Don’t argue. Keep still, Claudia.’

60 ‘Those are *my* ammonites. Don’t let him get them,  
mother.’

‘I don’t *want* your ammonites.’

‘Gordon, be quiet!’

65 Her head aches; she tries to quell the children and  
respond to advice and sympathy; she blames the  
perilous world, so unreliable, so malevolent. And the  
intransigence of her offspring whose emotions seem  
the loudest sound on the beach.

Excerpt from *Moon Tiger*, copyright © 1987 by Penelope Lively. Used  
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## 2016 AP<sup>®</sup> ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Question 2

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

In this excerpt from Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), Michael Henchard and his daughter Elizabeth-Jane are reunited after years of estrangement. During this separation, Henchard has risen from poor seasonal farmworker to wealthy mayor of a small country town, while Elizabeth has supported herself by waiting on tables at a tavern.

Read the passage carefully. Paying particular attention to tone, word choice, and selection of detail, compose a well-written essay in which you analyze Hardy's portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters.

Of all the enigmas which ever confronted a girl there can have been seldom one like that which followed Henchard's announcement of himself to Elizabeth as her father. He had done it in an ardour and an agitation which had half carried the point of affection with her; yet, behold, from the next morning onwards his manner was constrained as she had never seen it before.

The coldness soon broke out into open chiding. One grievous failing of Elizabeth's was her occasional pretty and picturesque use of dialect words—those terrible marks of the beast to the truly genteel.

It was dinner-time—they never met except at meals—and she happened to say when he was rising from table, wishing to show him something, "If you'll bide where you be a minute, Father, I'll get it."

"Bide where you be," he echoed sharply. "Good God, are you only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough, that ye use such words as those?"

She reddened with shame and sadness. "I meant 'Stay where you are,' Father," she said, in a low, humble voice. "I ought to have been more careful."

He made no reply, and went out of the room.

The sharp reprimand was not lost upon her, and in time it came to pass that for "fay" she said "succeed"; that she no longer spoke of "dumbledores" but of "humble-bees"; no longer said of young men and women that they "walked together," but that they were "engaged"; that she grew to talk of "greggles" as "wild hyacinths"; that when she had not slept she did not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she had been "hag-rid," but that she had "suffered from indigestion."

These improvements, however, are somewhat in advance of the story. Henchard, being uncultivated himself, was the bitterest critic the fair girl could possibly have had of her own lapses—really slight now, for she read omnivorously. A gratuitous ordeal was in store for her in the matter of her handwriting. She was passing the dining-room door one evening, and she had occasion to go in for something. It was not till she had opened the door that she knew the Mayor was there in the company of a man with whom he transacted business.

"Here, Elizabeth-Jane," he said, looking round at her, "just write down what I tell you—a few words of an agreement for me and this gentleman to sign. I am a poor tool with a pen."

"Be jowned, and so be I," said the gentleman. She brought forward blotting-book, paper, and ink, and sat down.

"Now then—An agreement entered into this sixteenth day of October—write that first."

She started the pen in an elephantine march across the sheet. It was a splendid round, bold hand of her own conception, a style that would have stamped a woman as Minerva's own in more recent days. But other ideas reigned then: Henchard's creed was that proper young girls wrote ladies'-hand—nay, he believed that bristling characters were as innate and inseparable a part of refined womanhood as sex itself. Hence when, instead of scribbling like the Princess Ida,

In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East,

Elizabeth-Jane produced a line of chain-shot and sandbags, he reddened in angry shame for her, and, peremptorily saying, "Never mind—I'll finish it," dismissed her there and then.

Her considerate disposition became a pitfall to her now. She was, it must be admitted, sometimes provokingly and unnecessarily willing to saddle herself with manual labors. She would go to the kitchen instead of ringing, "not to make Phoebe come up twice." She went down on her knees, shovel in hand, when the cat overturned the coal-scuttle; moreover, she would persistently thank the parlour-maid for everything, till one day, as soon as the girl was gone from the room, Henchard broke out with, "Good God, why dostn't leave off thanking that girl as if she were a goddess born! Don't I pay her a dozen pound a year to do things for 'ee?" Elizabeth shrank so visibly at the exclamation that he became sorry a few minutes after, and said that he did not mean to be rough.

These domestic exhibitions were the small protruding needle-rocks which suggested rather than revealed what was underneath. But his passion had less terror for her than his coldness. The increasing frequency of the latter mood told her the sad news that he disliked her with a growing dislike. The more interesting that her appearance and manners became under the softening influences which she could now command, and in her wisdom did command, the more she seemed to estrange him.

## 2016 Alternate

### Question 2

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

The following passage is the opening of Kiran Desai’s novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Desai establishes a particular mood and setting through the use of such elements as selection of detail and figurative language.

All day, the colors had been those of dusk, mist moving like a water creature across the great flanks of mountains possessed of ocean shadows and depths.

Line 5 Briefly visible above the vapor, Kanchenjunga was a far peak whittled out of ice, gathering the last of the light, a plume of snow blown high by the storms at its summit.

Sai, sitting on the veranda, was reading an article about giant squid in an old *National Geographic*.

10 Every now and then she looked up at Kanchenjunga, observed its wizard phosphorescence with a shiver. The judge sat at the far corner with his chessboard, playing against himself. Stuffed under his chair where she felt safe was Mutt the dog, snoring gently in her sleep. A single bald lightbulb dangled on a wire above. It was cold, but inside the house, it was still colder, the dark, the freeze, contained by stone walls several feet deep.

20 Here, at the back, inside the cavernous kitchen, was the cook, trying to light the damp wood. He fingered the kindling gingerly for fear of the community of scorpions living, loving, reproducing in the pile. Once he’d found a mother, plump with poison, fourteen babies on her back.

25 Eventually the fire caught and he placed his kettle on top, as battered, as encrusted as something dug up by an archeological team, and waited for it to boil. The walls were singed and sodden, garlic hung by muddy stems from the charred beams, thickets of soot clumped batlike upon the ceiling. The flame cast a mosaic of shiny orange across the cook’s face, and his top half grew hot, but a mean gust tortured his arthritic knees.

35 Up through the chimney and out, the smoke mingled with the mist that was gathering speed, sweeping in thicker and thicker, obscuring things in parts—half a hill, then the other half. The trees turned into silhouettes, loomed forth, were submerged again. Gradually the vapor replaced everything with itself, solid objects with shadow, and nothing remained that did not seem molded from or inspired by it. Sai’s breath flew from her nostrils in drifts, and the diagram of a giant squid constructed from scraps of information, scientists’ dreams, sank entirely into the murk.

50 She shut the magazine and walked out into the garden. The forest was old and thick at the edge of the lawn; the bamboo thickets rose thirty feet into the gloom; the trees were moss-slung giants, bunioned and misshapen, tentacled with the roots of orchids. The caress of the mist through her hair seemed human, and when she held her fingers out, the vapor took them gently into its mouth. She thought of Gyan, the mathematics tutor, who should have arrived an hour ago with his algebra book.

55 But it was 4:30 already and she excused him with the thickening mist.

60 When she looked back, the house was gone; when she climbed the steps back to the veranda, the garden vanished. The judge had fallen asleep and gravity acting upon the slack muscles, pulling on the line of his mouth, dragging on his cheeks, showed Sai exactly what he would look like if he were dead.

65 “Where is the tea?” he woke and demanded of her. “He’s late,” said the judge, meaning the cook with the tea, not Gyan.

“I’ll get it,” she offered.

70 The gray had permeated inside, as well, settling on the silverware, nosing the corners, turning the mirror in the passageway to cloud. Sai, walking to the kitchen, caught a glimpse of herself being smothered and reached forward to imprint her lips upon the surface, a perfectly formed film star kiss. “Hello,” she said, half to herself and half to someone else.

75 No human had ever seen an adult giant squid alive, and though they had eyes as big as apples to scope the dark of the ocean, theirs was a solitude so profound they might never encounter another of their tribe. The melancholy of this situation washed over Sai.

80 Could fulfillment ever be felt as deeply as loss? Romantically she decided that love must surely reside in the gap between desire and fulfillment, in the lack, not the contentment. Love was the ache, the anticipation, the retreat, everything around it but the emotion itself.

85 Excerpt from *The Inheritance of Loss*, copyright © 2006 by Kiran Desai. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc. Any third party use of this material, outside of this publication, is prohibited.

## Question 2

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

In the passage below, from *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) by Tobias Smollett, Mr. Pickle encounters Godfrey Gauntlet, the brother of his beloved Emilia. Consider how the two men confront their own uncontrolled emotions and yet attempt to abide by their social norms. In a well-developed essay, analyze how the author explores the complex interplay between emotions and social propriety in the passage. You may wish to consider such literary techniques as dialogue, narrative pace, and tone.

Line  
5  
10  
15  
20  
25  
30

“Mr. Pickle, you have carried on a correspondence with my sister for some time, and I should be glad to know the nature of it.” To this question our lover replied, “Sir, I should be glad to know what title you have to demand that satisfaction?”—“Sir,” answered the other, “I demand it in the capacity of a brother, jealous of his own honour, as well as of his sister’s reputation; and if your intentions are honourable, you will not refuse it.”—“Sir,” said Peregrine, “I am not at present disposed to appeal to your opinion for the rectitude of my intentions: and I think you assume a little too much importance, in pretending to judge my conduct.”—“Sir,” replied the soldier, “I pretend to judge the conduct of every man who interferes with my concerns, and even to chastise him, if I think he acts amiss.”—“Chastise!” cried the youth, with indignation in his looks, “sure you dare not apply that term to me?”—“You are mistaken,” said Godfrey; “I dare do anything that becomes the character of a gentleman.”—“Gentleman, God wot!” replied the other, looking contemptuously at his equipage,\* which was none of the most superb, “a very pretty gentleman, truly!”

The soldier’s wrath was inflamed by this ironical repetition, the contempt of which his conscious poverty made him feel; and he called his antagonist presumptuous boy, insolent upstart, and with other epithets, which Perry retorted with great bitterness. A formal challenge having passed between them, they alighted at the first inn, and walked into the next field, in order to decide their quarrel by the sword. Having pitched upon the spot, helped to pull off each other’s boots, and laid aside their coats and waistcoats, Mr. Gauntlet told his opponent, that he himself was

35 looked upon in the army as an expert swordsman, and that if Mr. Pickle had not made that science his particular study, they should be upon a more equal footing in using pistols. Peregrine was too much incensed to thank him for his plain dealing, and too confident of his own skill to relish the other’s proposal, which he accordingly rejected: then, drawing his sword, he observed, that were he to treat Mr. Gauntlet according to his deserts, he would order his man to punish his audacity with a horsewhip. 40 Exasperated at this expression, which he considered an indelible affront, he made no reply, but attacked his adversary with equal ferocity and address. The youth parried his first and second thrust, but received the third in the outside of his sword-arm. Though the wound was superficial, he was transported with rage at the sight of his own blood, and returned the assault with such fury and precipitation, that Gauntlet, loath to take advantage of his unguarded heat, stood upon the defensive. In the second lunge, Peregrine’s 45 weapon entering a kind of network in the shell of Godfrey’s sword, the blade snapped in two, and left him at the mercy of the soldier, who, far from making an insolent use of the victory he had gained, put up his Toledo with great deliberation, like a man who had been used to that kind of rencounters, and 50 observed that such a blade as Peregrine’s was not to be trusted with a man’s life: then advising the owner to treat a gentleman in distress with more respect for the future, he slipped on his boots, and with sullen dignity of demeanour stalked back to the inn. 55 60 65

\*carriage and horse

# 2018 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

## Question 2

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

The following interchange, excerpted from an 1852 novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne, occurs when two characters who have been living on the Blithedale farm—a community designed to promote an ideal of equality achieved through communal rural living—are about to part ways. Read the passage carefully. In a well-written essay, analyze how Hawthorne portrays the narrator’s attitude towards Zenobia through the use of literary techniques.

Her manner bewildered me. Literally, moreover, I was dazzled by the brilliancy of the room. A chandelier hung down in the centre, glowing with I know not how many lights; there were separate lamps, also, on two or three tables, and on marble brackets, adding their white radiance to that of the chandelier. The furniture was exceedingly rich. Fresh from our old farm-house, with its homely board and benches in the dining-room, and a few wicker chairs in the best parlor, it struck me that here was the fulfillment of every fantasy of an imagination, revelling in various methods of costly self-indulgence and splendid ease. Pictures, marbles, vases; in brief, more shapes of luxury than there could be any object in enumerating, except for an auctioneer’s advertisement—and the whole repeated and doubled by the reflection of a great mirror, which showed me Zenobia’s proud figure, likewise, and my own. It cost me, I acknowledge, a bitter sense of shame, to perceive in myself a positive effort to bear up against the effect which Zenobia sought to impose on me. I reasoned against her, in my secret mind, and strove so to keep my footing. In the gorgeousness with which she had surrounded herself—in the redundance of personal ornament, which the largeness of her physical nature and the rich type of her beauty caused to seem so suitable—I malevolently beheld the true character of the woman, passionate, luxurious, lacking simplicity, not deeply refined, incapable of pure and perfect taste. But, the next instant, she was too powerful for all my opposing struggles. I saw how fit it was that she should make herself as gorgeous as she pleased, and should do a thousand things that would have been ridiculous in the poor, thin, weakly characters of other women. To this day, however, I hardly know whether I then beheld Zenobia in her truest attitude, or whether that were the truer one in which she had presented herself at Blithedale. In both, there was something like the illusion which a great actress flings around her.

“Have you given up Blithedale forever?” I inquired.

“Why should you think so?” asked she.

“I cannot tell,” answered I; “except that it appears all like a dream that we were ever there together.”

“It is not so to me,” said Zenobia. “I should think it

a poor and meagre nature, that is capable of but one set of forms, and must convert all the past into a dream, merely because the present happens to be unlike it. Why should we be content with our homely life of a few months past, to the exclusion of all other modes? It was good; but there are other lives as good or better. Not, you will understand, that I condemn those who give themselves up to it more entirely than I, for myself, should deem it wise to do.”

It irritated me, this self-complacent, condescending, qualified approval and criticism of a system to which many individuals—perhaps as highly endowed as our gorgeous Zenobia—had contributed their all of earthly endeavor, and their loftiest aspirations. I determined to make proof if there were any spell that would exorcise her out of the part which she seemed to be acting. She should be compelled to give me a glimpse of something true; some nature, some passion, no matter whether right or wrong, provided it were real.

“Your allusion to that class of circumscribed characters, who can live in only one mode of life,” remarked I, coolly, “reminds me of our poor friend Hollingsworth.\* Possibly, he was in your thoughts, when you spoke thus. Poor fellow! It is a pity that, by the fault of a narrow education, he should have so completely immolated himself to that one idea of his; especially as the slightest modicum of common-sense would teach him its utter impracticability. Now that I have returned into the world, and can look at his project from a distance, it requires quite all my real regard for this respectable and well-intentioned man to prevent me laughing at him—as, I find, society at large does!”

Zenobia’s eyes darted lightning; her cheeks flushed; the vividness of her expression was like the effect of a powerful light, flaming up suddenly within her. My experiment had fully succeeded. She had shown me the true flesh and blood of her heart, by thus involuntarily resenting my slight, pitying, half-kind, half-scornful mention of the man who was all in all with her. She herself, probably, felt this; for it was hardly a moment before she tranquillized her uneven breath, and seemed as proud and self-possessed as ever.

\* a charismatic member of the Blithedale community who assumes a leadership position

## 2019 AP® ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Question 2

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

Carefully read the following excerpt from William Dean Howells' novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885). Then, in a well-constructed essay, analyze how the author portrays the complex experience of two sisters, Penelope and Irene, within their family and society. You may wish to consider such literary elements as style, tone, and selection of detail.

Line They were not girls who embroidered or  
abandoned themselves to needle-work. Irene spent her  
abundant leisure in shopping for herself and her  
5 mother, of whom both daughters made a kind of idol,  
6 buying her caps and laces out of their pin-money,<sup>1</sup>  
and getting her dresses far beyond her capacity to  
wear. Irene dressed herself very stylishly, and spent  
hours on her toilet<sup>2</sup> every day. Her sister had a  
10 simpler taste, and, if she had done altogether as she  
liked, might even have slighted dress. They all three  
took long naps every day, and sat hours together  
minutely discussing what they saw out of the window.  
In her self-guided search for self-improvement, the  
elder sister went to many church lectures on a vast  
15 variety of secular subjects, and usually came home  
with a comic account of them, and that made more  
matter of talk for the whole family. She could make  
fun of nearly everything; Irene complained that she  
scared away the young men whom they got  
20 acquainted with at the dancing-school sociables.  
They were, perhaps, not the wisest young men.

The girls had learned to dance at Papanti's;<sup>3</sup> but  
they had not belonged to the private classes. They did  
not even know of them, and a great gulf divided them  
25 from those who did. Their father did not like  
company, except such as came informally in their  
way; and their mother had remained too rustic to  
know how to attract it in the sophisticated city  
fashion. None of them had grasped the idea of  
30 European travel; but they had gone about to mountain  
and sea-side resorts, the mother and the two girls,  
where they witnessed the spectacle which such resorts  
present throughout New England, of multitudes of  
girls, lovely, accomplished, exquisitely dressed,  
35 humbly glad of the presence of any sort of young  
man; but the Laphams had no skill or courage to make  
themselves noticed, far less courted by the solitary  
invalid, or clergyman, or artist. They lurked helplessly

40 about in the hotel parlors, looking on and not knowing  
how to put themselves forward. Perhaps they did not  
care a great deal to do so. They had not a conceit of  
themselves, but a sort of content in their own ways  
that one may notice in certain families. The very  
strength of their mutual affection was a barrier to  
45 worldly knowledge; they dressed for one another;  
they equipped their house for their own satisfaction;  
they lived richly to themselves, not because they were  
selfish, but because they did not know how to do  
otherwise. The elder daughter did not care for society,  
50 apparently. The younger, who was but three years  
younger, was not yet quite old enough to be ambitious  
of it. With all her wonderful beauty, she had an  
innocence almost vegetable. When her beauty, which  
in its immaturity was crude and harsh, suddenly  
55 ripened, she bloomed and glowed with the  
unconsciousness of a flower; she not merely did  
not feel herself admired, but hardly knew herself  
discovered. If she dressed well, perhaps too well, it  
was because she had the instinct of dress; but till  
60 she met this young man who was so nice to her at  
Baie St. Joan,<sup>4</sup> she had scarcely lived a detached,  
individual life, so wholly had she depended on her  
mother and her sister for her opinions, almost her  
sensations. She took account of everything he did and  
65 said, pondering it, and trying to make out exactly  
what he meant, to the inflection of a syllable, the  
slightest movement or gesture. In this way she began  
for the first time to form ideas which she had not  
derived from her family, and they were none the  
70 less her own because they were often mistaken.

<sup>1</sup> pin-money: money used for small expenses and incidentals

<sup>2</sup> toilet: dressing and grooming

<sup>3</sup> Papanti's: a fashionable social dance school in nineteenth-century Boston

<sup>4</sup> Baie St. Joan: a Canadian resort

## Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Tim Winton’s novel *Breath*, published in 2008. In this passage, the main character, Bruce Pike, recalls an incident at a nearby river. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Winton uses literary elements and techniques to represent the complex response of the narrator to the incident at the riverbank.

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.

- <sup>1</sup> Owner or manager of a pub
- <sup>2</sup> Smooth-barked trees
- <sup>3</sup> A type of sandal
- <sup>4</sup> Understood or realized
- <sup>5</sup> Angry or tantrum-like

At the first signs of spring giving way to summer townie kids gathered after school near the bridge at the riverbank to dive off the crude springboard. The river was brown with tannin and cold as hell but it was very slow-flowing and safe to swim in. It was there that Loonie and I became friends.

Ivan Loon was twelve and a whole year older than me. He was the publican’s 1son and although we’d been at school together half our lives we never had the remotest thing in common. That is, before we realized that we’d each independently perfected the art of causing riverside panic.

One November afternoon I coasted down to the river on my bike to have a jump off the plank but when I got there four girls and somebody’s mother were slithering up and down the bank, yanking at their own ears and screaming that there was a boy in the water, that he was drowning right beneath them. Naturally they didn’t know *which* boy because they were from out of town, but they knew he was *a* boy for he’d been there a minute ago and simply hadn’t come up from a dive and were there sharks and couldn’t I for God’s sake stop asking questions and just get on with doing something.

Sun blazed down in rods through the big old gums. 2There were dragonflies in the air above us. I saw a towel near the diving plank and beside it a grubby pair of thongs, 3so I had no reason to doubt there was a crisis. Only the sluggish water seemed harmless and these females, who were making a frightful noise, looked so strangely out of place. I should have twigged. 4But I went into action on their behalf. As I bolted out to the sagging end of the springboard the wood was hot and familiar underfoot.

I looked down at the wind-ruffled surface of the river and tried to think. I decided that it would be best to wade in from the bank, to work my way out by feel, and just keep diving and groping in the hope of touching something human. There wasn’t time to go

40 looking for help. I was it. I felt myself rise to the moment—put-upon but taller all of a sudden—and before I could embark upon my mission, or even pull my shirt off, Ivan Loon burst from the water. He came up so close to shore with such a feral shriek the woman fell back on the mud as if shot.

I stood bouncing on the plank while she lay in the muck. Then she reared up on her elbows. Loonie started to laugh, which didn’t really help her mood. I had never in my life seen a woman so angry. She charged into the water, lunging and swiping to no avail, while Loonie just ducked and fainted and giggled. He was a freckly sort of kid but he went so red with pleasure and exertion all his freckles disappeared. The poor woman never got close to him. Her frock ballooned about her. She made tanty noises like a toddler. Loonie sculled himself out of range, bobbed provocatively for a bit, then stroked off to the shadows of the far bank. Left alone with her once again, I realized it was more fun to pull this prank than it was to stand by while someone else did it. I began to feel more guilt than glee. Two Dr. Scholl’s sandals floated upstream in the breeze and I watched until I could bear it no longer and dived dutifully after them. As I snared them and sidestroked back to the bank they clunked together like firewood. It was embarrassing to see this grown woman standing there in her clinging dress with her dimpled knees and chubby legs all muddy.

There’s tree roots down there, I told her. You just dive down and hold on. It’s easy.

She never said a thing, just snatched her shoes and scrambled back to the girls higher up the bank, and while I lay in the water trying to decide how to feel about her she smoothed herself back into some kind of authority and led the others up through the trees and out of sight. I felt sympathy and contempt all at once. Car doors slammed and there was the stammer of a starter motor.

**2021**  
**Question 2**

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

The following excerpt is from Linda Hogan’s novel *People of the Whale*, published in 2008. In this passage, the narrator describes two events that occur in a community: an infant’s birth shortly followed by an octopus’s walking out of the sea. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex characterization of the community.

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 infant Thomas W. Just was born on July 2, 1947, to much happiness and many pictures of his mother smiling down at him. It was the day just  
*Line* before the octopus left the water, walked on all eight  
5 legs across land and into Seal Cave. Sometimes young people made love in that cave. Sometimes boys escaped school and smoked cigarettes there.

But on this day, the day after Thomas was born, the octopus walked out of the sea and they watched it.  
*10* Every one of these ocean people stood back, amazed to see it walk, the eye of it looking at them, each one seen, as if each one were known in all their past, all their future. Its skin paled at the sight of men smoking cigarettes and women in their cardigans pulled tight,  
*15* with their dark windblown hair. One child stepped toward it as if to speak before his mother grabbed his arm and pulled him back to her, claiming him as a land dweller and no communicator or friend of any eight-legged sea creature.

*20* None of them, not even the oldest, had ever seen an octopus do this and their people had lived there for thousands of years. It scared them into silence, then they talked about it. They knew it meant something. They didn’t know what. Four fishermen in dirty  
*25* clothes wanted to kill it and use it for fishing bait. “It’s only practical!” they argued. “It’s the best thing that could happen to us.” They could take it, undigested, out of the stomach of flounder and halibut and use it again. For days they talked about it. They  
*30* quarreled. They cried about how blessed they were. A few wild-haired men, afraid of its potent meaning, wanted to throw kerosene in the cave and burn it.

But one of the powerful women stepped up. She believed it had a purpose for going into the cave and  
*35* that the humans, a small group of lives beside a big

ocean, should leave it alone. Others agreed. Its purpose was a mystery. Or perhaps it was sick or going to give birth. It turned a shade of red as it reached the safety of the cave. And so the people  
*40* thought it was holy and they left gifts outside the entrance to the black rock cave. Some left sage and red cedar. Some offered shining things, glass smoothed by the sea, even their watches. As for the infant Thomas, his mother, whose own infancy was  
*45* fed on whale and seal fat, was one of those who thought it was a holy creature and its presence at the time of his birth granted to Thomas a special life. She came from Thomas’s birth at the place of the old people and stood before the entrance of the octopus  
*50* cave and held her kicking baby up to it, to be seen by it. “Here is my son. You knew his grandfather. Watch over him.” They were poor people. She had little to leave but the pearl she inherited from her father, Witka. She rolled it into the cave. She was convinced  
*55* the octopus would be the spirit-keeper of her son, because she thought like the old people used to think, that such helpers existed and they were benevolent spirits. An older man named Samuel left his silver ring at the entrance to the cave; it was his finest  
*60* possession. Not to have given something they cared about would have been no gift at all, so, following his example, others left sparkling glasses, pieces of gold, beads, all the shining things the octopus people love in their homes beneath water.

*65* For the time it dwelt there, they brought offerings, even the first flowers of morning. The treasures built up like small middens.<sup>1</sup> Even the children didn’t take the treasures, although they did go look at them and marvel at what they found, until their mothers  
*70* grabbed them away. The younger children tasted them

and found them without flavor except the salt from the air.

75 Those who were afraid the octopus was created by magic or called into being by some force on land not benevolent kept an eye on how it stood in the back of the cave. But it sensed their emotions and formed itself to fit beneath a ledge. It could shape itself to fit into anything, a bottle, a basket. That was how they were caught in the old days, by baskets lowered into  
80 the water at night and lifted in the mornings, the creature inside it. Yet, that quality scared people who knew little about them, but had heard much about

shape-shifters and their deceits and witchery on humans, always with poor outcomes for the mortals.

85 Nevertheless, the mother of Thomas, in a plain white dress, took the baby Thomas daily across the sand to the cave when the tide was out.

<sup>1</sup> piles of odds and ends gathered by rodents

From *People of the Whale: A Novel* by Linda Hogan. Copyright © 2008 by Linda Hogan. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

## 2022 Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Linda Hogan’s novel *People of the Whale*, published in 2008. In this passage, the narrator describes two events that occur in a community: an infant’s birth shortly followed by an octopus’s walking out of the sea. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the author uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex characterization of the community.

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# 2023, Set 1

## Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Nisi Shawl’s novel *Everfair*, published in 2016. In this passage, the narrator describes the experience of a young woman, Lisette, as she rides her bicycle through the French countryside in July 1889. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Shawl uses literary elements and techniques to portray Lisette’s complex response to her experience of riding her bicycle.

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.

Line Lisette Toutournier sighed. She breathed in again,  
out, in, the marvelous air smelling of crushed stems,  
green blood bruised and roused by her progress along  
this narrow forest path. Her progress, and that of her  
5 new mechanical friend. Commencing to walk again,  
she pushed it along through underbrush and creepers,  
woodbine and fern giving way before its wheels. Oh,  
how the insects buzzed about her exposed skin, her  
face and hands and wrists and ankles, waiting to bite.  
10 And the vexing heat bid fair to stifle her as she  
climbed the hillside slowly—but the  
scent—intoxicating! And soon, so soon, all this effort  
would be repaid.

15 There! The crest came in sight, the washed-out  
summer sky showing itself through the beech trees’  
old silver trunks. Now her path connected with the  
road, stony, rutted, but still better suited for riding.  
She stood a moment admiring the view: the valley, the  
blurred rows of cultivation curving away smaller and  
20 smaller in the bluing distance, the sky pale overhead,  
the perfect foil for the dark-leaved woods behind her  
and by her sides. Not far off a redwing sang, cold  
water trickling uphill.

25 She had the way of it now: gripping the rubber  
molded around the machine’s metal handlebars, she  
leaned it toward her and swung one skirted leg over  
the drop frame. Upright again, she walked it a few  
more steps forward, aiming straight along the lane, the  
yellow-brown dust bright in the sun. The machine’s  
30 glossy paint shone. Within the wheel’s front rim its  
spokes were a revolving web of intricacy, shadows  
and light chasing one another. Tiny puffs of dust  
spurted from beneath the black rubber tires.

35 She raised her eyes. The vista opened wider, wider.  
The road laid itself down before her.

Up on the creaking leather seat. Legs drawn high,  
boots searching, scraping, finding their places . . . and  
pedal! Push! Feet turning circles like her machine’s  
wheels, *with* those wheels. It was, at first, work. She  
40 pedaled and steered, wobbling just once and catching  
herself. Then going faster, faster! Flying! Freedom!

Saplings, walls, and vines whipped by, flashes of  
greenbrowngreengrey as Lisette on her machine sped  
down the road, down the hill. Wind rushed into her  
45 face, whistled in her ears, filled her nose, her lungs,  
tore her hair loose of its pins to stream behind her.  
She was a wild thing, laughing, jouncing over dry  
watercourses, hanging on for dear, dear life. Lower,  
now, and some few trees arched above, alternately  
50 blocking the hot glare and exposing her to it  
coolwarmcoolwarm, currents of sun and shade  
splashing over her as she careened by. Coasting, at  
last, spilling all velocity till she and the machine came  
to rest beside the river.

55 The river. The comforting smell and sound of it  
rushing away. Out on the Yonne’s broad darkness a  
barge sailed, bound perhaps for Paris, the Seine, the  
sea beyond,<sup>1</sup> carrying casks of wine and other  
valuables. Flushed from her ride, Lisette blushed yet  
60 more deeply, suddenly conscious of the curious stares  
of those around her: Mademoiselle Carduner, the  
schoolmistress; and Monsieur Lutterayne, the  
chemist,<sup>2</sup> out for a promenade during his dinner hour  
or on some errand, seizing a chance to vacate his  
65 stuffy shop. Flustered, she attempted to restrain her  
hair into a proper chignon,<sup>3</sup> but at only sixteen and  
with many pins missing, this was beyond her skill.  
She began furiously to plait<sup>4</sup> her thick blond curls,  
and the others moved away.

70 At last she was alone on the riverbank with her

mechanical friend. She tied her plaits together, though she knew that momentarily they would slither apart. She stroked the machine's still-gleaming handlebars, then leaned to fit her forehead at their center, so.

75 “Dear one,” whispered Lisette. “How can you ever know how much you mean to me? Who would not give all they could, everything they had, in exchange for such happiness as I have found with you?”

<sup>1</sup> The Yonne River in France is a tributary of the Seine River, which passes through the city of Paris toward the Atlantic Ocean.

<sup>2</sup> pharmacist

<sup>3</sup> a hairstyle in which the hair is pinned into a knot at the nape of the neck or at the back of the head

<sup>4</sup> braid

*Everfair* by Nisi Shawl. © 2016, Nisi Shawl.

## 2023, Set 2

### Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Brenda Peynado’s short story “The Rock Eaters,” published in 2021. In this passage, the narrator is one of a group of people who left their home country after developing the ability to fly, an ability that is accepted as realistically possible within the story. Years later, the group returns to that country with their children. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Peynado uses literary elements and techniques to convey the narrator’s complex experience of this return home.

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.

We were the first generation to leave our island country. We were the ones who developed a distinct float to our walk on the day we came of age. Soon  
*Line* enough we were hovering inches above the ground,  
5 then somersaulting with the clouds, finally discovering we could fly as far as we’d ever wanted. And so we left. Decades later, we brought our children back to see our home country. That year, we all decided we were ready to return.

10 We jackknifed through clouds and dodged large birds. We held our children tightly; they had not yet learned to fly. Behind us trailed roped-together lines of suitcases packed with gifts from abroad. We wondered who would remember us.

15 Our parents, those who were still alive, came out to greet us, hands on their brows like visors. Some were expecting us. Others were surprised, terrified at the spectacle of millions of their prodigals<sup>1</sup> blotting the sky with our billowing skirts, our shirts starched for  
20 the arrival. We touched down on our parents’ driveways, skidding to rough landings at their feet, denting cars, squashing flowers, rattling windows.

Our old friends and siblings, the ones we’d left behind, kept their doors locked. They peered through  
25 window blinds at the flattened flowerbeds, the suitcases that had burst and strewn packages all over the yards and streets, our youngest children squealing now that they’d been released, the peace we’d broken by returning. They didn’t trust us, not after our  
30 betrayal decades ago, the whiff of money we’d earned or lost in other countries like a suspect stench. Our parents hugged their grandchildren and brought them inside to houses with no electricity, candles wavering like we were in a séance. “More brownouts,” they told

35 us. “We remember,” we said, recoiling at how little the place fit us anymore. Those first nights we slept in our old beds, our feet hanging over the edges, the noises of the city and the country crowing and honking us awake, music from radios and guitars, celebrations we’d not been invited to.

We dragged our children along to knock on the doors of old friends and siblings, the ones who never developed the ability to fly. They eventually, reluctantly, opened their doors. At first we sat stiffly  
45 on couches and inquired after their health and others we once knew. Then we got them to laugh with us about the time we pulled the nuns’ skirts or put gum in the kink of a rival’s hair, when we caught baby chicks in the village and raised them, or cracked open almonds on the malecón.<sup>2</sup> Then their children came shyly out of their rooms and took ours by the hand. We smiled when we saw them climbing trees together in the patios, their children showing ours how to eat  
50 cajulitos solimán and acerolas<sup>3</sup> from the branch.

We introduced our children to everyone we used to know: at colmados,<sup>4</sup> by the side of the road, at the baseball fields, at country clubs we had to beg to be let back into. We showed our children the flamboyán trees in the parks, blooms of coral red spilling in the dirt. We showed them the granite striated through the rock faces of mountains, the glimmering pebbles under waterfalls, the red dust that stained the seats of their best clothes. We walked past the stray dogs that growled and whined; the most ancient among them  
65 remembered us, wagging their tails when they saw us and running to sniff our offspring. We dunked our children into the rivers we’d once swum. We dug through the banks for the arrowheads that belonged to

the Tainos, who'd been erased after the Spanish came,  
70 their remnants lost in the mud.

*Lost*, the children whispered in awe and fear,  
turning the black, glinting points in their palms,  
testing the hardness of flint between their teeth. Back  
in our foreign homes, we had never talked to them of  
75 history.

We remembered we'd been happy. "We loved this  
land," we said. We forget why we ever left.

<sup>1</sup> children who have left home and then returned

<sup>2</sup> a walkway along a waterfront

<sup>3</sup> Cajulitos solimán and acerolas are types of fruit.

<sup>4</sup> neighborhood stores

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# 2024, Set 1

## Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Mavis Gallant’s short story “One Morning in June,” published in 1952. In this passage, Mike Cahill is in France for one year to explore his talent for art. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Gallant uses literary elements and techniques to convey Mike’s complex experience of studying painting.

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.

Line He had come to France because the words “art”  
and “Paris” were unbreakably joined in his family’s  
imagination, the legend of Trilby’s Bohemia<sup>1</sup>  
persisting long after the truth of it had died. When his  
5 high school art teacher, a young woman whose  
mobiles<sup>2</sup> had been praised, pronounced that his was a  
talent not to be buried under the study of medicine or  
law, his family had decided that a year in Paris would  
show whether or not his natural bent was toward  
10 painting. It was rather like exposing someone to a  
case of measles and watching for spots to break out.

In Paris, Mike had spent the first three weeks  
standing in the wrong queue at the Beaux-Arts,<sup>3</sup> and  
when no one seemed able to direct him to the right  
15 one, he had given up the Beaux-Arts entirely and  
joined a class instructed by an English painter called  
Chitterley, whose poster advertisement he had seen in  
a café. It was Mr. Chitterley’s custom to turn his  
young charges loose on the city and then, once a week  
20 or so, comment on their work in a borrowed studio on  
the Quai d’Anjou.<sup>4</sup> Mike painted with sober patience  
the bridges of the Seine, the rain-soaked lawns of the  
Tuileries, and a head-on view of Notre Dame. His  
paintings were large (Mr. Chitterley was nearsighted),  
25 askew (as he had been taught in the public schools of  
New York), and empty of people (he had never been  
taught to draw, and it was not his nature to take  
chances).

“Very *interesting*,” said Mr. Chitterley of Mike’s  
30 work. Squinting a little, he would add, “Ah! I *see* what  
you were trying to do here!”

“You do?” Mike wished he would be more specific,  
for he sometimes recognized that his pictures were

flat, empty, and the color of cement. At first, he had  
35 blamed the season, for the Paris winter had been  
sunless; later on, he saw that its gray contained every  
shade in a beam of light, but this effect he was unable  
to reproduce. Unnerved by the pressure of time, he  
watched his work all winter, searching for the clue  
40 that would set him on a course. Prodded in the  
direction of art, he now believed in it, enjoying, above  
all, the solitude, the sense of separateness, the  
assembling of parts into something reasonable. He  
might have been equally happy at a quiet table,  
45 gathering into something ticking and ordered the  
scattered wheels of a watch, but this had not been  
suggested, and he had most certainly never given it a  
thought. At last, when the season had rained itself to  
an end (and his family innocently were prepared to  
50 have him exhibit his winter’s harvest in some garret<sup>5</sup>  
of the Left Bank and send home the critics’ clippings),  
he approached Mr. Chitterley and asked what he  
ought to do next.

“Why, go to the country,” said Mr. Chitterley, who  
55 was packing for a holiday with the owner of the Quai  
d’Anjou studio. “Go south. Don’t stop in a hotel but  
live on the land, in a tent, and paint, paint, paint, paint,  
paint!”

“I can’t afford it,” Mike said. “I mean I can’t afford  
60 to buy the tent and stuff. But I can stay over here until  
August, if you think there’s any point. I mean is it  
wasting time for me to paint, paint, paint?”

Mr. Chitterley shot him an offended look and then  
a scornful one, which said, How like an American!  
65 The only measuring rods, time and money. Aloud, he  
suggested Menton.<sup>6</sup> He had stayed there as a child,

and he remembered it as a paradise of lemon ice and sunshine. Mike, for want of a better thought, or even a contrastive one, took the train there a day later.

<sup>1</sup> *Trilby*, a popular 1894 novel by George du Maurier, focuses on the unconventional lifestyles of artists and musicians in 1850s Paris.

<sup>2</sup> suspended decorative sculptures designed to move with air currents

<sup>3</sup> a famous art school in Paris

<sup>4</sup> a neighborhood on the Île Saint-Louis, an island in the Seine river in Paris

<sup>5</sup> a small, dismal attic room

<sup>6</sup> a town on the French Riviera

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## 2024, Set 2

### Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.

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.

Line It had taken him three months to complete the  
thirty-six four-by-six-foot panels that would join  
together, like a huge puzzle, to form the immense  
5 mural. The last thing he painted, on the final morning,  
was a third apple—airborne—tossed by a child  
juggler. The apples were like tiny planets, and the  
child, otherwise small and unexceptional, gained  
power through his manipulation of them. Kenneth had  
to break one last egg to paint this, and as he passed it  
10 from hand to hand, letting the white drain to the floor,  
and allowing the clean yolk to settle in his palm, he  
looked at this boy—his serene, confident expression,  
the three apples aloft, the face calm with the  
knowledge that they would be kept in the air  
15 indefinitely. While Kenneth mixed the yolk with the  
warm shades of ground pigment, he remembered the  
critic telling him to keep things on the picture plane  
flat, two-dimensional, and he smiled as the apple  
became spherical under his brush. When he could  
20 imagine the weight of it in his hand, he knew he was  
finished. Then he began to toss brushes, palettes, and  
pigments down to the floor below. There was a drill  
shrieking somewhere in the building. The clatter his  
tools made on landing must have been drowned out by  
25 its noise.

Kenneth figured he had broken five thousand eggs,  
more or less, in the making of the mural, and each  
time he broke the shell, he thought of the critic’s head,  
the smooth baldness of the top of it. Humpty-  
30 Dumpty,<sup>1</sup> he thought, this wall, and the wall of  
cultural fashion that could keep you out, for a while,  
until the great fall. By now he knew that fashion  
always fell, it failed and fell. He was happy to be free  
of it. And as he used the shell to separate the white

35 from the yolk, he thought about Harding,<sup>2</sup> a man who  
had never made use of egg tempera. He wondered  
what had become of him. And the woman Harding  
had loved, whether she had ever painted again, and  
whether or not he himself would ever come across a  
40 painting by Gentleman.<sup>3</sup> The girl in Germany, the  
couple in Italy,<sup>4</sup> floated by, a sense of them here and  
there in the mural. These narratives fought for space  
in his mind. But the mural itself, he knew, was  
divorced from narrative. As it should be, he whispered  
45 to himself, as it should be. *Flight and Its Allegories*.<sup>5</sup>

Once he was on the ground, he rifled through a  
canvas sack until he found the camera he was looking  
for, a Brownie Starflex, with six exposures still  
available. He shot the mural from left to right. Then  
50 he walked across the full length of the half-tiled floor.  
This was the last exposure and it would make the  
mural look incredibly small, like a two-inch-long  
piece of ribbon with an unreadable pattern on it. But  
he wanted to show its proportions to a friend and, in  
55 any case, the more professional pictures would be  
taken later, after he was gone, when the mural had  
begun to live its own independent life in the presence  
of an audience.

For months now there had been noise, the  
60 workmen’s power tools and, in the odd moments  
when those were silent, the roar of the planes arriving  
and departing at the old, soon-to-be abandoned  
terminal. He had seen the passengers, through the  
plate glass of the windows, rivers of them, pouring  
65 down the steps that were pushed up to airliners, then  
flowing darkly across the tarmac. What would they  
make of *Flight and Its Allegories*? Would they be  
struck by it? Or would they simply pass it by,

preoccupied by the mysteries of their individual lives  
70 as they walked forward or waited in the lounge? He  
was not unaware that public art could be—and often  
was—ignored. Still, what pleasure he had taken in the  
making of it.

<sup>1</sup> Humpty-Dumpty is a nursery-rhyme character, typically depicted as an egg. He falls from a wall, breaks, and cannot be put together again.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth’s former art teacher, who cautioned Kenneth against appropriating the ideas, styles, and techniques of other artists

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Gentleman, an obscure artist that Harding once knew; another artist later copied his style and gained fame as a result

<sup>4</sup> “The girl in Germany” and “the couple in Italy” are people Kenneth met while backpacking through Europe.

<sup>5</sup> Allegories are works of literature or art that express moral or political messages, often through the use of symbols.

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