

Applied Practice
in

The Mayor of Casterbridge

PRE-AP/AP**

By Thomas Hardy

RESOURCE GUIDE

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APPLIED PRACTICE
Resource Guide
The Mayor of Casterbridge
Pre-AP*/AP* Version

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balanced sentence—a sentence in which words, phrases, or clauses are set off against each other to emphasize a contrast

bathos—insincere or overly sentimental quality of writing/speech intended to evoke pity

chiasmus—a statement consisting of two parallel parts in which the second part is structurally reversed (“Susan walked in, and out rushed Mary”)

cliché—an expression that has been overused to the extent that its freshness has worn off

climax—the point of highest interest in a literary work

colloquialism—informal words or expressions not usually acceptable in formal writing

complex sentence—a sentence with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause

compound sentence—a sentence with two or more coordinate independent clauses, often joined by one or more conjunctions

conceit—a fanciful, particularly clever extended metaphor

concrete details—details that relate to or describe actual, specific things or events

connotation—the implied or associative meaning of a word

cumulative sentence—a sentence in which the main independent clause is elaborated by the successive addition of modifying clauses or phrases

declarative sentence—a sentence that makes a statement or declaration

deductive reasoning—reasoning in which a conclusion is reached by stating a general principle and then applying that principle to a specific case (The sun rises every morning; therefore, the sun will rise on Tuesday morning.)

denotation—the literal meaning of a word

dialect—a variety of speech characterized by its own particular grammar or pronunciation, often associated with a particular geographical region

dialogue—conversation between two or more people

diction—the word choices made by a writer

VOCABULARY LIST FOR *THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE*

Note: Vocabulary from the literary passage is listed first, followed by vocabulary from the questions and answers.

Passage 1

span
hoar
disadvantageous
swarthy
fustian
wimble
desultory
shamble
reciprocity
irksome
taciturnity
nimbus
maelstrom

plodded

Passage 2

penuriousness
grimy
gaze
guineas
affirmation
severally
mirthful
irony
lurid
finality
rustics
feat
terrestrial

bluff
digress

Passage 3

pursuance
substratum
prior
affluence
ornate
benignity
coercive
enervated
piquancy
epithet
amatory
gaunt
castigate
judicial
expounded
carrion
reticulated

repartee
banter

Directions: This part consists of selections from *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question.

Note: Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

Passage 1, Questions 1-8. Read the following passage from Chapter 1 of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* carefully before you choose your answers.

One evening of late summer, before the nineteenth century had reached one-third of its span, a young man and woman, the latter carrying a child, were approaching the large village of
5 Weydon-Priors, in Upper Wessex, on foot. They were plainly but not ill clad, though the thick hoar of dust which had accumulated on their shoes and garments from an obviously long journey lent a disadvantageous shabbiness to their appearance just
10 now.

The man was of fine figure, swarthy, and stern in aspect; and he showed in profile a facial angle so slightly inclined as to be almost perpendicular. He wore a short jacket of brown corduroy, newer than
15 the remainder of his suit, which was a fustian waistcoat with white horn buttons, breeches of the same, tanned leggings, and a straw hat overlaid with black glazed canvas. At his back he carried by a looped strap a rush basket, from which protruded
20 at one end the crutch of a hay-knife, a wimble for hay-bonds being also visible in the aperture. His measured, springless walk was the walk of the skilled countryman as distinct from the desultory shambling of the general labourer; while in the turn
25 and plant of each foot there was, further, a dogged and cynical indifference personal to himself, showing its presence even in the regularly interchanging fustian folds, now in the left leg, now
30 in the right, as he paced along.

What was really peculiar, however, in this couple's progress, and would have attracted the attention of any casual observer otherwise disposed to overlook them, was the perfect silence they preserved. They walked side by side in such a way
35 as to suggest afar off the low, easy, confidential chat of people full of reciprocity; but on closer view it could be discerned that the man was reading, or pretending to read, a ballad sheet which he kept before his eyes with some difficulty by the hand
40 that was passed through the basket strap. Whether this apparent cause were the real cause, or whether it were an assumed one to escape an intercourse that would have been irksome to him, nobody but himself could have said precisely; but his taciturnity
45 was unbroken, and the woman enjoyed no society

whatever from his presence. Virtually she walked the highway alone, save for the child she bore. Sometimes the man's bent elbow almost touched her shoulder, for she kept as close to his side as was
50 possible without actual contact; but she seemed to have no idea of taking his arm, nor he of offering it; and far from exhibiting surprise at his ignoring silence she appeared to receive it as a natural thing. If any word at all were uttered by the little group, it
55 was an occasional whisper of the woman to the child--a tiny girl in short clothes and blue boots of knitted yarn--and the murmured babble of the child in reply.

The chief--almost the only--attraction of the young woman's face was its mobility. When she looked down sideways to the girl she became pretty, and even handsome, particularly that in the action her features caught slantwise the rays of the strongly coloured sun, which made transparencies
60 of her eyelids and nostrils and set fire on her lips. When she plodded on in the shade of the hedge, silently thinking, she had the hard, half-apatetic expression of one who deems anything possible at the hands of Time and Chance except, perhaps, fair
65 play. The first phase was the work of Nature, the second probably of civilization.

That the man and woman were husband and wife, and the parents of the girl in arms, there could be little doubt. No other than such relationship
70 would have accounted for the atmosphere of stale familiarity which the trio carried along with them like a nimbus as they moved down the road.

The wife mostly kept her eyes fixed ahead, though with little interest--the scene for that matter being one that might have been matched at almost
80 any spot in any country in England at this time of the year; a road neither straight nor crooked, neither level nor hilly, bordered by hedges, trees, and other vegetation, which had entered the blackened-green stage of colour that the doomed leaves pass through
85 on their way to dingy, and yellow, and red. The grassy margin of the bank, and the nearest hedgerow boughs, were powdered by the dust that had been stirred over them by hasty vehicles, the same dust as it lay on the road deadening their
90

footfalls like a carpet; and this, with the aforesaid total absence of conversation, allowed every extraneous sound to be heard.

95 For a long time there was none, beyond the voice of a weak bird singing a trite old evening song that might doubtless have been heard on the hill at the same hour, and with the self-same trills, quavers, and breves, at any sunset of that season for centuries untold. But as they approached the
100 village sundry distant shouts and rattles reached their ears from some elevated spot in that direction, as yet screened from view by foliage. When the outlying houses of Weydon-Priors could just be
105 described, the family group was met by a turnip-hoer with his hoe on his shoulder, and his dinner-bag suspended from it. The reader promptly glanced up.

“Any trade doing here?” he asked phlegmatically, designating the village in his van by
110 a wave of the broadsheet. And thinking the labourer did not understand him, he added, “Anything in the hay-trussing line?”

The turnip-hoer had already begun shaking his head. “Why, save the man; what wisdom’s in him
115 that ’a should come to Weydon for a job of that sort this time o’ year?”

“Then is there any house to let—a little small new cottage just a-builded, or such like?” asked the other.

120 The pessimist still maintained a negative. “Pulling down is more the nater of Weydon. There were five houses cleared away last year, and three this; and the volk nowhere to go—no, not so much as a thatched hurdler; that’s the way o’ Weydon-Priors.”

The hay-trusser, which he obviously was, nodded with some superciliousness. Looking towards the village, he continued, “There is something going on here, however, is there not?”

130 “Ay, ’Tis Fair Day. Though what you hear now is little more than the clatter and scurry of getting away the money o’ children and fools, for the real business is done earlier than this. I’ve been working within sound o’t all day, but I didn’t go
135 up—not I. ’Twas no business of mine.”

.....
“I always like furmity; and so does Elizabeth-Jane; and so will you. It is nourishing after a long hard day.”

140 “I’ve never tasted it,” said the man. However, he gave way to her representations, and they entered the furmity booth forthwith.

A rather numerous company appeared within, seated at the long narrow tables that ran down the

145 tent on each side. At the upper end stood a stove, containing a charcoal fire, over which hung a large three-legged crock, sufficiently polished round the rim to show that it was made of bell-metal. A haggish creature of about fifty presided, in a white
150 apron, which, as it threw an air of respectability over her as far as it extended, was made so wide as to reach nearly round her waist. She slowly stirred the contents of the pot. The dull scrape of her large spoon was audible throughout the tent as she thus
155 kept from burning the mixture of corn in the grain, flour, milk, raisins, currants, and what not, that composed the antiquated slop in which she dealt. Vessels holding the separate ingredients stood on a white-clothed table of boards and trestles close by.

160 The young man and woman ordered a basin each of the mixture, steaming hot, and sat down to consume it at leisure. This was very well so far, for furmity, as the woman had said, was nourishing, and as proper a food as could be obtained within the
165 four seas; though, to those not accustomed to it, the grains of wheat swollen as large as lemon-pips, which floated on its surface, might have a deterrent effect at first.

But there was more in that tent than met the
170 cursory glance; and the man, with the instinct of a perverse character, scented it quickly. After a mincing attack on his bowl, he watched the hag’s proceedings from the corner of his eye, and saw the game she played. He winked to her, and passed up
175 his basin in reply to her nod; when she took a bottle from under the table, slyly measured out a quantity of its contents, and tipped the same into the man’s furmity. The liquor poured in was rum. The man as slyly sent back money in payment.

180 He found the concoction, thus strongly laced, much more to his satisfaction than it had been in its natural state. His wife had observed the proceeding with much uneasiness; but he persuaded her to have hers laced also, and she agreed to a milder
185 allowance after some misgiving.

The man finished his basin, and called for another, the rum being signalled for in yet stronger proportion. The effect of it was soon apparent in his manner, and his wife but too sadly perceived that in
190 strenuously steering off the rocks of the licensed liquor-tent she had only got into maelstrom depths here amongst the smugglers.

1. The sentence in lines 34-40 suggests that
 - (A) the couple is actually enjoying themselves
 - (B) the impression of the couple as seen from a distance is deceptive
 - (C) the couple intends to present a false impression to the villagers
 - (D) one can never judge a married couple by first impressions
 - (E) men and women of the era were basically equal in position

2. The description of the wife in lines 67-70 is most likely an example of
 - (A) symbolism
 - (B) sarcasm
 - (C) foreshadowing
 - (D) irony
 - (E) allusion

3. Which phrase best reveals the narrator's impression of the couple's relationship with each other?
 - (A) "cynical indifference" (line 26)
 - (B) "save for the child" (line 47)
 - (C) "a natural thing" (line 53)
 - (D) "plodded on" (line 66)
 - (E) "stale familiarity" (lines 75-76)

4. The description of the couple is consistent with the description of the
 - I. vegetation
 - II. bird
 - III. village of Weydon
 - (A) I only
 - (B) III only
 - (C) I and II only
 - (D) I and III only
 - (E) I, II, and III

5. The description of the furmity woman and her tent (lines 143-168) contains all of the following EXCEPT
 - (A) metaphorical allusion
 - (B) direct narrative comment
 - (C) concrete details
 - (D) alliteration
 - (E) simile

6. The antecedent for "it" in line 171 is
 - (A) "more" (line 169)
 - (B) "tent" (line 169)
 - (C) "glance" (line 170)
 - (D) "man" (line 170)
 - (E) "instinct" (line 170)

7. In the last paragraph, the woman's concern about her husband's drinking is described by means of a(n)
 - (A) simile
 - (B) analogy
 - (C) aphorism
 - (D) homily
 - (E) anecdote

8. From this passage, the narrator's attitude could best be described as
 - (A) objective
 - (B) compassionate
 - (C) sardonic
 - (D) paternal
 - (E) dismissive

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the following passage from Chapter XV of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Then, in a well-organized essay, discuss the author’s attitude toward Elizabeth-Jane in particular, and women in general, and how that attitude is conveyed. You might consider such elements as diction, selection of detail, and tone.

At first Miss Newson’s budding beauty was not regarded with much interest by anybody in Casterbridge. Donald Farfrae’s gaze, it is true, was now attracted by the Mayor’s so-called step-daughter, but he was only one. The truth is that she was but a poor illustrative instance of the prophet Baruch’s sly definition: “The virgin that loveth to go gay.”

When she walked abroad she seemed to be occupied with an inner chamber of ideas, and to have slight need for visible objects. She formed curious resolves on checking gay fancies in the matter of clothes, because it was inconsistent with her past life to blossom gaudily the moment she had become possessed of money. But nothing is more insidious than the evolution of wishes from mere fancies, and of wants from mere wishes. Henchard gave Elizabeth-Jane a box of delicately-tinted gloves one spring day. She wanted to wear them to show her appreciation of his kindness, but she had no bonnet that would harmonize. As an artistic indulgence she thought she would have such a bonnet. When she had a bonnet that would go with the gloves she had no dress that would go with the bonnet. It was now absolutely necessary to finish; she ordered the requisite article, and found that she had no sunshade to go with the dress. In for a penny in for a pound; she bought the sunshade, and the whole structure was at last complete.

Everybody was attracted, and some said that her bygone simplicity was the art that conceals art, the “delicate imposition” of Rochefoucauld; she had produced an effect, a contrast, and it had been done on purpose. As a matter of fact this was not true, but it had its result; for as soon as Casterbridge thought her artful it thought her worth notice. “It is the first time in my life that I have been so much admired,” she said to herself; “though perhaps it is by those whose admiration is not worth having.”

But Donald Farfrae admired her, too; and altogether the time was an exciting one; sex had never before asserted itself in her so strongly, for in former days she had perhaps been too impersonally human to be distinctively feminine. After an

unprecedented success one day she came indoors, went upstairs, and leant upon her bed face downwards, quite forgetting the possible creasing and damage. “Good Heaven,” she whispered, “can it be? Here am I setting up as the town beauty!”

When she had thought it over, her usual fear of exaggerating appearances engendered a deep sadness. “There is something wrong in all this,” she mused. “If they only knew what an unfinished girl I am—that I can’t talk Italian, or use globes, or show any of the accomplishments they learn at boarding-schools, how they would despise me! Better sell all this finery and buy myself grammar-books and dictionaries and a history of all the philosophies!”

ANSWER EXPLANATIONS
PASSAGE 3

16. (D) neither Susan nor Henchard feels great affection for the other. Henchard does not feel affection for Susan, as evidenced by the statement that he was determined to behave with “mechanical rightness” toward her at the expense of “his own sentiments.” That is, he is merely fulfilling an obligation toward Susan. Likewise, Susan has entered into the situation “solely for the sake of her girl’s reputation,” not because of any affection for Henchard.

17. (B) oxymoron. The phrase “rough benignity” joins two contradictory terms to form an oxymoron.

18. (E) paradox. It is seemingly contradictory, yet accurate, that the “masterful, coercive” man has been “captured and enervated” by the “genteel widow.”

19. (B) not liking to be reminded that Susan is a “ghost” from his past. While the boys call Susan “The Ghost” only because of her appearance, Henchard’s violent reaction most likely reflects his awareness that she is indeed a “ghost” from his past, the wife he sold for five guineas.

20. (D) “thorns” (line 91). One of Henchard’s resolves is to punish himself with the “thorns” of his actions, one of “them” being the “lowering of his dignity in public opinion” as a result of marrying Susan.

21. (A) derisive. The narrator scornfully refers to “the special genius” of these men who “expounded the subject according to their lights.” Their conversation that follows shows no evidence of insight or “genius.”

22. (A) swill. Mrs. Cuxsom has referred to her “great hungry family,” and in agreement, Christopher says, “Where the pigs be many the wash runs thin.” That is, where there are many pigs, there is not enough food, or swill, to satisfy their hunger.

23. (C) banter to nostalgia. The conversation begins with bantering about how Mrs. Newson “got another husband to keep her” while Mother Cuxsom has not, and Mrs. Cuxsom’s reply that she does not need another husband to beat her. It progresses to nostalgic reminiscing about Mrs. Cuxsom’s big family and events she and Christopher remember from their youth. “Hostility” (choice D) is too strong a word to describe the beginning of the conversation.