

# COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

## ENGLISH

**Tuesday, January 22, 2013 — 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., only**

The possession or use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you have or use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has four parts. Part 1 tests listening skills; you are to answer all eight multiple-choice questions. For Part 2, you are to answer all twelve multiple-choice questions. For Part 3, you are to answer all five multiple-choice questions and the two short constructed-response questions. For Part 4, you are to write one essay response. The two short constructed-response questions and the essay response should be written in pen.

When you have completed the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the bottom of the front of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

**DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.**



## NOTES

**DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

# Part 1 (Questions 1–8)

## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (1–8): Use your notes to answer the following questions about the passage read to you. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

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| <p>1 The account opens with a characterization of Harpo Marx as someone with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) financial goals</li><li>(2) suspicious behavior</li><li>(3) fleeting fame</li><li>(4) contrasting talents</li></ul> <p>2 In his autobiography, Marx reveals that he considered Harpo the clown on stage as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) a character that he played</li><li>(2) an emotionally liberating experience</li><li>(3) a symbol of modern man</li><li>(4) a physically challenging routine</li></ul> <p>3 By calling Harpo “one of the best ‘ambassadors for the harp’ the world has known,” the speaker means that Marx</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) funded harp lessons for public school children</li><li>(2) introduced the harp to the general public</li><li>(3) arranged popular music for harpists</li><li>(4) founded international competitions for harpists</li></ul> <p>4 According to the speaker, Marx initially learned to play the harp in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) play in a stage orchestra</li><li>(2) master a difficult instrument</li><li>(3) increase his income</li><li>(4) teach his mother</li></ul> | <p>5 The speaker includes information regarding Marx’s relationship with Mildred Dilling to show how Marx</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) interacted with other actors</li><li>(2) mentored younger musicians</li><li>(3) learned to read music</li><li>(4) impressed professional musicians</li></ul> <p>6 By including the description of Marx as not “an intellectual, but ... brilliant,” the speaker implies that Marx was</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) talented, despite a lack of formal education</li><li>(2) brave, despite facing many challenges</li><li>(3) generous, despite a deprived childhood</li><li>(4) private, despite being a movie star</li></ul> <p>7 Benji Samit’s characterization of Marx as “one of the kindest men in show business” is a result of Samit’s experience as a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) family friend</li><li>(2) Harpo Marx historian</li><li>(3) fellow musician</li><li>(4) Marx Brothers’ director</li></ul> <p>8 From the speaker’s point-of-view, Harpo Marx could be best described as a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) successful composer</li><li>(2) concert performer</li><li>(3) dramatic actor</li><li>(4) devoted musician</li></ul> |
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## Part 2 (Questions 9–20)

**Directions** (9–20): Below each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

### Reading Comprehension Passage A

...Despite being overstretched, [Chef] Bugnard [of the Cordon Bleu cooking school] was infinitely kind, a natural if understated showman, and he was tireless in his explanations. He drilled us in his careful standards of doing everything the “right way.” He broke down the steps of a recipe and made them simple. And he did so with a quiet  
5 authority, insisting that we thoroughly analyze texture and flavor: “But how does it *taste*, Madame Scheeld?”

One morning he asked, “Who will make *oeufs brouillés* today?”

The GIs [my fellow students] were silent, so I volunteered for scrambled-egg duty. Bugnard watched intently as I whipped some eggs and cream into a froth, got the frying pan  
10 very hot, and slipped in a pat of butter, which hissed and browned in the pan.

“*Non!*” he said in horror, before I could pour the egg mixture into the pan. “That is absolutely wrong!” ...

With a smile, Chef Bugnard cracked two eggs and added a dash of salt and pepper. “Like *this*,” he said, gently blending the yolks and whites together with a fork. “Not too  
15 much.”

He smeared the bottom and sides of the frying pan with butter, then gently poured the eggs in. Keeping the heat low, he stared intently at the pan. Nothing happened. After a long three minutes, the eggs began to thicken into a custard. Stirring rapidly with the fork, sliding the pan on and off the burner, Bugnard gently pulled the egg curds together—“Keep  
20 them a little bit loose; this is very important,” he instructed. “*Now* the cream or butter,” he said, looking at me with raised eyebrows. “This will stop the cooking, you see?” I nodded, and he turned the scrambled eggs out onto a plate, sprinkled a bit of parsley around, and said, “*Voilà!*” ...

It was a remarkable lesson. No dish, not even the humble scrambled egg, was too much  
25 trouble for him. “You never forget a beautiful thing that you have made,” he said. “Even after you eat it, it stays with you—*always*.” ...

I was in pure, flavorful heaven at the Cordon Bleu. Because I had already established a good basic knowledge of cookery on my own, the classes acted as a catalyst for new ideas, and almost immediately my cooking improved. Before I’d started there, I would  
30 often put too many herbs and spices into my dishes. But now I was learning the French tradition of extracting the full, essential flavors from food—to make, say, a roasted chicken taste really *chickeny*. ...

But not everything was perfect. Madame Brassart [the school’s owner] had crammed too many of us into the class, and Bugnard wasn’t able to give the individual  
35 attention I craved. There were times when I had a penetrating question to ask, or a fine point that burned inside of me, and I simply wasn’t able to make myself heard. All this had the effect of making me work even harder.

I had always been content to live a butterfly life of fun, with hardly a care in the world. But at the Cordon Bleu, and in the markets and restaurants of Paris, I suddenly  
40 discovered that cooking was a rich and layered and endlessly fascinating subject. The best

way to describe it is to say that I fell in love with French food—the tastes, the processes, the history, the endless variations, the rigorous discipline, the creativity, the wonderful people, the equipment, the rituals.

45 I had never taken anything so seriously in my life—my husband and cat excepted—and I could hardly bear to be away from the kitchen. ...

—Julia Child and Alex Prud’homme  
adapted and excerpted from *My Life in France*, 2007  
Anchor Books

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| <p>9 The description of Chef Bugnard as a “natural ... showman” (line 2) indicates that he was a teacher who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) engaged his students</li><li>(2) demanded obedience</li><li>(3) expected success</li><li>(4) discouraged his students</li></ul> <p>10 The reference to Chef Bugnard’s “standards of doing everything the ‘right way’” (line 3) probably means that he required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) compliments                      (3) attention</li><li>(2) payment                              (4) perfection</li></ul> <p>11 The narrator uses the phrase “After a long three minutes” (lines 17 and 18) to emphasize a sense of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) completion                      (3) anticipation</li><li>(2) unreality                              (4) boredom</li></ul> | <p>12 As described in the passage, Madame Brassart’s policies caused the narrator to feel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) overworked by unscheduled assignments</li><li>(2) frustrated by large class sizes</li><li>(3) desperate for financial support</li><li>(4) embarrassed to ask for assistance</li></ul> <p>13 When the narrator describes her previous “butterfly life” (line 38), she implies that she had been</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) casual                                      (3) unhappy</li><li>(2) forgetful                                      (4) fragile</li></ul> <p>14 What is the format in which this passage is organized?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) order of importance</li><li>(2) chronological order</li><li>(3) personal anecdotes</li><li>(4) comparison and contrast</li></ul> |
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## Reading Comprehension Passage B

You never forget your first iceberg.

The mass of drifting ice that dwarfs your ship is so beautiful, yet so improbable looking, that you simply gaze in wonder. It seems that nothing that large could be natural—and then it strikes you that something so enormous could *only* be natural.

5 Another realization soon dawns: These rock-hard floating mountains are dangerous. Think not only of the 1912 *Titanic* disaster but of hundreds of other accidents, most recently the sinking (with no loss of life) of the Antarctic tour ship *Explorer* in November 2007. ...

10 Now, as climate change is raising global temperatures, more icebergs are being born. Antarctica generates far more of them than Greenland, the source of bergs in Arctic waters. Antarctica's are also much larger, sometimes reaching the size of small countries. Recent data show the average atmospheric temperature has increased about 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit in the western Antarctic Peninsula since the 1940s, making the region, along with northwestern North America and Siberia, among the fastest warming on earth. This  
15 jump has been implicated in the recent collapse of major ice shelves along the Antarctic Peninsula, including the Wilkins Ice Shelf in 2008. As a result, thousands of new icebergs have calved, or broken off, from ice shelves into the Southern Ocean at an accelerated rate.

20 Even as more icebergs are being created, scientists are learning that these dangerous beauties are far from sterile, inert masses of ice. In fact, they dramatically alter their environments biologically, chemically, and physically, making them islands of life in the open sea. Knowledge of icebergs' crucial role in the Antarctic ecosystem has come only in recent years. Observers at sea had long remarked that they attract seals, penguins, and seabirds, and divers had noticed that fish are more numerous near them than in the surrounding sea. Now scientists are learning just what the attraction is all about.

25 Depending on their size, location, and the season, icebergs can be nurturers or destroyers. During their existence—typically years from calving from an Antarctic or Greenlandic glacier to their gradual melting as they drift into lower latitudes—they support animals on, around, even *inside* their magnificent ramparts. They fertilize the ocean with nutrients, boosting plankton production. Grounded bergs can shelter areas of the seafloor,  
30 protecting bottom-dwelling creatures from free-floating icebergs, which can be bottom-scouring marauders, furrowing the seabed at depths of more than a thousand feet like gigantic plows, destroying all marine life unable to move out of the way. Large bergs can also trap sea ice, impeding its annual breakup and thus depriving phytoplankton (algae that take their name from the Greek words for “plant” and “wanderer”) of life-giving  
35 sunlight, breaking the food chain at its first link. ...

40 From personal experience, I know that icebergs will continue to astonish and captivate visitors to the polar regions with their size and ethereal<sup>1</sup> beauty. But now—just when these ecosystems are in rapid flux due to global climate change—these frozen masses are taking on a new dimension of wonder as we uncover their critical role in the biology and chemistry of polar seas. No longer can we look at icebergs as mere passive beauties. They are active agents of change, each one an icy oasis trailing a wake of life as it drifts on its inexorable<sup>2</sup> oceanic journey to melting.

—Jeff Rubin  
excerpted from “Life on Ice”  
*Audubon*, January–February 2009

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<sup>1</sup>ethereal — heavenly

<sup>2</sup>inexorable — relentless

- 15 Lines 5 through 8 introduce the concept of  
(1) peril (3) humor  
(2) mystery (4) peacefulness
- 16 By describing icebergs as “being born” (line 9), the author is able to  
(1) explain the scientific importance of icebergs  
(2) measure the water displacement of one iceberg  
(3) show the difference between iceberg sizes  
(4) relate icebergs to human experience
- 17 In comparing the icebergs of Greenland with those of Antarctica, the passage reveals that those of Antarctica are  
(1) less prevalent (3) more massive  
(2) more rounded (4) less attractive
- 18 According to the passage, scientists are now discovering that some icebergs are able to  
(1) provide power (3) warn sailors  
(2) produce echoes (4) sustain life
- 19 The final paragraph indicates that icebergs will continue to be sources of  
(1) superstition (3) pollution  
(2) fascination (4) recreation
- 20 In developing the passage, the author depends heavily upon  
(1) facts and details  
(2) dialogue and stories  
(3) fantasy and humor  
(4) question and answer
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## Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

**Directions:** On the following pages read Passage I (an excerpt from an essay) and Passage II (a poem) about developing a skill. You may use the margins to take notes as you read. Answer the multiple-choice questions on the answer sheet provided for you. Then write your response for question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet.

### Passage I

The yellow mittens I made in seventh-grade home economics proved that I dreamed in color. For the unit on knitting, we were supposed to turn in a pair of mittens. The two hands had to be precisely the same size so that when we held them together, palm to palm, no extra stitches would stick out from the thumb, the tip of the fingers, or the cuff. Somewhere  
5 between making the fourth and the fifth mitten to fulfill this requirement, I dreamed that the ball of yellow yarn in my bag had turned green. Chartreuse, leaf, Granny Smith, lime, neon, acid green. The brightness was electric. I woke up knowing that I was, once again, doomed for a D in home ec. ...

I didn't knit again until graduate school when I met a woman from Germany with a  
10 closet full of beautiful sweaters. Sabina came to our seminar wearing a soft angora cardigan one week, a sturdy fisherman's pullover the next.

"I make all my sweaters," she said. "I can teach you."

I told her about my mitten fiasco.<sup>1</sup>

"Knitting is easy," Sabina insisted. "A sweater's bigger than a mitten but much  
15 simpler."

"The patterns will confuse me."

"You don't need patterns. You can make things up as you go."

Sabina took me to a local yarn store, where I bought skeins<sup>2</sup> of red cotton yarn. Following her instructions, I first knit the body of the sweater: two flat pieces, front and  
20 back, with a few simple decreases to shape the shoulders and the neck. The pieces were surprisingly easy to sew together. Sabina showed me how to pick up the stitches along the arm opening, connect the new yarn, and knit the sleeves, going from the shoulder to the wrist. I finished the sweater in a month. The result was slightly lopsided—one sleeve was half an inch wider than the other around the elbow—but the arms looked more or less even  
25 once I put the sweater on. The small mistakes in a knitted garment disappear when the garment is on the body, where it belongs. That might have been the most important thing I learned from my first sweater. ...

In my first ten years of knitting, I took full advantage of the forgiving quality of yarn and made hats and scarves from patterns that had only five- to ten-sentence directions. For  
30 sweaters, I made three tubes (one big tube for the body, two smaller tubes for the sleeves) and then knitted them together at the yoke and shoulders so I didn't have to sew the pieces together at the end. If, half way through the body or the sleeve, I noticed the piece getting wider faster than I'd expected, I simply stopped increasing stitches; if the piece looked too small, I increased more. It was just as Sabina had told me: I could make things up as I went  
35 along.

<sup>1</sup>fiasco — a complete failure

<sup>2</sup>skeins — a length of thread or yarn wound in a loose coil

40 My favorite project was a hat from a pattern I found in a yarn store on a visit to Portland, Oregon. I bought the thick mohair yarn and extra needles so I could start knitting the first one in my hotel room. The hat, which I finished on the flight home the next day, looked more like a lamp shade; the brim came down to my shoulders. At home, I threw this enormous hat in the washer, set it on hot wash and cold rinse, and ran the cycle twice. Just as the pattern promised, the hat came out shrunk and “felted”: the stitches had contracted till they were invisible, leaving a dense, fuzzy nap. I reshaped the hat on a mixing bowl about the size of my head, and by the time it dried, it looked like a professionally made bowler.<sup>3</sup> ...

—Kyoko Mori  
excerpted from “Yarn”  
*Harvard Review*, Spring 2003

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<sup>3</sup>bowler — a derby hat

**Passage II**  
**Spanish Lessons**

My wife moves room to room,  
touching our humble belongings  
with a wand of new words—  
the iron, the coffee pot, the radio—  
5 making them notice themselves  
for the first time in years.  
In the kitchen, I hear her  
cracking a few round syllables  
into a pan of *agua*,<sup>1</sup> followed soon  
10 by a brisk, guttural<sup>2</sup> bubbling,  
and later she's climbing the stairs  
with an armload of colorful noises,  
dropping a few shaggy petals  
on every other step. She's going  
15 to fill the bathtub now and scatter  
fresh flowers of language  
over the surface, then lie there  
steeping<sup>3</sup> among them, calling out  
the new names for shampoo,  
20 for bath mat, toilet, and toothbrush,  
lying there with her ears just out of  
the water, loving the echoes.

—Ted Kooser  
*The Kenyon Review*, Winter 2008

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<sup>1</sup>agua — Spanish word for water

<sup>2</sup>guttural — throaty

<sup>3</sup>steeping — soaking in

## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (21–25): Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

**Passage I** (the essay excerpt) — Questions 21–23 refer to Passage I.

- 21 The first paragraph suggests that the author’s initial experience with knitting was
- (1) unsuccessful
  - (2) inspiring
  - (3) distracting
  - (4) addictive
- 22 The author was motivated to learn to knit after
- (1) finishing a successful home economics project
  - (2) seeing the beauty of a finished product
  - (3) finding her grandmother’s knitting supplies
  - (4) receiving encouragement from a favorite aunt
- 23 An important lesson learned from Sabina was
- (1) practice is important
  - (2) pay attention in class
  - (3) ignore negative criticism
  - (4) errors can be acceptable

**Passage II** (the poem) — Questions 24–25 refer to Passage II.

- 24 As used in line 3, the word “wand” most nearly means
- (1) resource
  - (2) distrust
  - (3) assortment
  - (4) confusion
- 25 How has learning Spanish affected the narrator’s wife?
- (1) It made her appear rejuvenated.
  - (2) It brought her closer to her heritage.
  - (3) It alienated her from her husband.
  - (4) It caused her problems at work.

## Short-Response Questions

**Directions** (26–27): Write your responses to question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet. Be sure to answer **both** questions.

26 Write a well-developed paragraph in which you use ideas from **both** Passage I (the essay excerpt) and Passage II (the poem) to establish a controlling idea about developing a skill. Develop your controlling idea using specific examples and details from **both** Passage I and Passage II.

27 Choose a specific literary element (e.g., theme, characterization, structure, point of view, etc.) or literary technique (e.g., symbolism, irony, figurative language, etc.) used by **one** of the authors. Using specific details from **either** Passage I (the essay excerpt) **or** Passage II (the poem), in a well-developed paragraph, show how the author uses that element or technique to develop the passage.

## Part 4 (Question 28)

### Your Task:

Write a critical essay in which you discuss **two** works of literature you have read from the particular perspective of the statement that is provided for you in the **Critical Lens**. In your essay, provide a valid interpretation of the statement, agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it, and support your opinion using specific references to appropriate literary elements from the two works. You may use scrap paper to plan your response. Write your essay beginning on page 3 of the essay booklet.

### Critical Lens:

“Circumstances are beyond the control of man; but his conduct is in his own power.”

— Benjamin Disraeli  
*Contarini Fleming*, 1832

### Guidelines:

#### Be sure to

- Provide a valid interpretation of the critical lens that clearly establishes the criteria for analysis
- Indicate whether you agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it
- Choose **two** works you have read that you believe best support your opinion
- Use the criteria suggested by the critical lens to analyze the works you have chosen
- Avoid plot summary. Instead, use specific references to appropriate literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, setting, point of view) to develop your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a unified and coherent manner
- Specify the titles and authors of the literature you choose
- Follow the conventions of standard written English



