

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

Friday, June 15, 2012 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

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.

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

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 purpose of the sequence presented at the beginning of the speech is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) introduce the setting of a story(2) list the steps to accomplish a task(3) relate the speech to the listener’s life(4) contrast the habits of different people <p>2 The use of the phrase “gold standard” emphasizes that, as a regulatory agency, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) symbol of wealth(2) costly enterprise(3) powerful organization(4) model of excellence <p>3 The speaker’s repeated use of the word “we” signals that he is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) asking a question(2) representing a group(3) suggesting a comparison(4) indicating a substitution <p>4 According to the speaker, the function of the FDA has been affected by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) international interdependence(2) financial obligations(3) media pressures(4) changing leadership | <p>5 New technology has affected the FDA by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) reducing the amount of chemical waste(2) speeding communication with other agencies(3) clarifying goals to be achieved(4) increasing the complexity of products <p>6 The speaker concludes that the FDA “can’t simply be ‘guardians at the gate’” to emphasize that the FDA must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) improve domestic economic conditions(2) limit shipment of all imported products(3) monitor the entire production process(4) standardize delivery of medical services <p>7 The speaker’s main purpose is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) inform the listener about his agency’s function(2) persuade the listener to eat safer food(3) entertain the listener with personal anecdotes(4) encourage the listener to study FDA regulations <p>8 What is the predominant organizational pattern of the speech?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) chronological order(2) use of examples(3) spatial order(4) elimination of alternatives |
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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

The forest stretching out before us covers the mountain slopes with splashes of burgundies and yellows. The delicate hues melt into the blue sky like a runny watercolor painting. The colors match our expectations for autumn in the mountains, but the scale is out of kilter. Instead of towering trees, this forest barely reaches our knees.

5 On the tundra of Alaska’s Denali National Park, the short growing season and long winters stunt willow, birch and alder trees into pigmy forests. The abbreviated spring and summer compresses the wildflower bloom into July, and the fall display of colors into the first two weeks of September. At high latitudes and high elevations, the seasons rush past like a downhill skier. We can feel winter in the wind.

10 We first see a grizzly and her two cubs on a far ridge eating blueberries. The driver stops, and we crowd toward the right side of the shuttle bus. The bear slowly makes her way in our direction, the cubs following dutifully. Then one pauses to sniff something. The other takes the opportunity to pounce, and the two roll and wrestle like playful kittens. The clicking cameras sound like approaching thunder.

15 The bears disappear in a woody depression. We wait. Suddenly, they reappear a few yards in front of the bus and cross the road. The 400-pound mother methodically raises a blueberry limb with her powerful claw and delicately nibbles off the ripe fruit while the whimsical cubs entertain us with their antics.

20 “I never dreamed we’d see anything this exciting,” one woman whispers. “I expected incredible scenery and wildlife, but only at a distance. This is like living with the bears.” ...

The bears continue feeding and playing, aware but unconcerned about our presence as long as we stay on the bus. Paradoxically, “staying on the bus” is the best, and perhaps the only, relationship humans can have that preserves the wild. We feel a part of nature the most when our presence affects it the least. ...

25 By the time we reach Eielson Visitors Center, Denali is socked in. As one of life’s ironies, something as ephemeral¹ as water vapor can completely obscure the most majestic peak in North America. The next 30 miles to Kantishna Roadhouse, our overnight lodge, offer unobstructed views of Denali, if only the clouds will lift. They tease us with glimpses, but refuse to unmask the face of the mastiff. ...

30 We arrive just as streams of the September sun break through low clouds and illuminate the tops of the snow-covered peaks. Wisps of clouds hover over Denali like a magician’s cloak, but finally the crest is unveiled. Now I understand why the natives called the mountain “The High One.” The peak looms a mile above its 15,000-foot neighbors.

35 The beauty of the scene transfixes us. As if on cue, a moose wades into the lake to create the perfect picture. The combination of wildlife and mountains epitomizes² the essence of pristine North America. We’re presented with the gift of wilderness personified. ...

In Alaska, night doesn’t fall, it rises. The tide of darkness creeps up the mountains slowly and engulfs the alpenglow³ until only the peaks shine pink. One by one they blink out like fading beacons, until only Denali lights the sky.

¹ephemeral — short-lived

²epitomizes — is a typical example of

³alpenglow — light seen near sunrise or sunset on the summits of mountains

40 Denali is not so much to be seen as felt. Elation from the power of the mountain surges through us. The mountain dwarfs any thoughts we have, any conception we can possess of its grandeur. It was and is and will be, while we mortals are as clouds sweeping past its face. ...

—George Oxford Miller
excerpted from “Denali”

AAA Going Places, September/October 2009

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|---|---|
| <p>9 The purpose of the first two paragraphs is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) introduce a symbol(2) establish a conflict(3) establish a setting(4) introduce an allusion <p>10 The simile in lines 8 and 9 is used to emphasize the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) season’s beautiful colors(2) vast blue sky(3) variety of trees(4) sudden climate changes <p>11 The description of the actions of the cubs in the third paragraph suggests their</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) fearfulness(2) innocence(3) neediness(4) intelligence | <p>12 The narrator’s use of the word “Paradoxically” (line 22) reinforces the key idea that people should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) leave nature alone(2) investigate wildlife(3) keep memories safe(4) support conservation <p>13 The descriptions used in lines 34 through 36 convey a sense of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) comfort(2) safety(3) awe(4) order <p>14 The final phrase “we mortals are as clouds sweeping past its face” is used to emphasize Denali’s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) isolation(2) permanence(3) danger(4) popularity |
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Reading Comprehension Passage B

...The man responsible for the layout and ambience of the modern shopping center was not an American but a Viennese named Victor Gruen, who fled the Austrian Anschluss¹ in 1938 and arrived in America with just \$8 in his pocket. Within twelve years he had become one of the country's leading urban planners. Ironically, Gruen's intention was not to create a new and more efficient way of shopping but to recreate in America something of the unrushed café-society atmosphere of European city centers. Shopping centers—or *shopping towns*, as he preferred to call them—were to be gathering places for the neighborhood, focal points of the community where people could stroll and meet their friends, dally over a coffee or an ice cream, and only incidentally shop. Gruen was convinced that he was designing a system that would slow suburban sprawl and tame the automobile. How wrong he was. ...

Shopping centers didn't just transform towns, they often effectively created them. In the late 1940s, Paramus, New Jersey, was a dying little community with no high school, no downtown to speak of, and almost no industry or offices. Then two shopping centers were built along Route 4—Macy's Garden State Plaza and Allied Stores' Bergen Mall. Within a decade, Paramus's population had more than quadrupled to 25,000 and its retail sales had shot up from \$5 million to \$125 million. Much the same thing happened to Schaumburg, Illinois. In 1956, it had 130 people. Then two things happened: O'Hare became Chicago's main airport and the Woodfield Shopping Center, with over two million square feet of retail space, was opened. By 1978, Schaumburg's population had increased almost four-hundred-fold to fifty thousand and it was on course to become the second-biggest city in Illinois after Chicago by the turn of the century.

As shopping centers blossomed, downtowns began to die. Between 1948 and 1954, at the height of America's postwar economic boom, downtown retailers in America's thirteen largest cities lost on average a quarter of their business. One by one, downtowns grew more lifeless as stores and offices fled to the suburbs. Hudson's Department Store in Detroit closed after watching its annual sales fall from \$153 million in 1953 to \$45 million in 1981, its last year—the victim, ironically of the automobile, the product that had brought Detroit its wealth. Sears closed its flagship store on State Street in Chicago in 1983. All over America, where downtown department stores survived it was as a matter of pride or of tax breaks, and seldom one of commercial logic. ...

Mall shopping had become America's biggest leisure activity. Mall of America of Minneapolis, the country's biggest mall with 4.2 million square feet of consumer-intensive space (still considerably less than the world's biggest, the West Edmonton Mall in Canada, with 5.2 million square feet), was forecast to attract more people than the Grand Canyon in its first year of business. By the early 1990s, Americans were spending on average twelve hours a month in shopping malls, more than they devoted to almost any activity other than sleeping, eating, working, and watching television.

And what of Victor Gruen, the man who had started it all? Appalled at what he had unleashed, he fled back to Vienna, where he died in 1980, a disappointed man.

—Bill Bryson
excerpted from *Made in America*, 1994
William Morrow and Company

¹Austrian Anschluss — the annexation of Austria into Greater Germany by the Nazi regime

- 15 Victor Gruen’s main purpose for creating the shopping center was to provide a public place for
- (1) socializing
 - (2) eating dinner
 - (3) shopping
 - (4) watching movies
- 16 As used in line 9, the word “dally” most likely means
- (1) work
 - (2) read
 - (3) study
 - (4) linger
- 17 The author suggests that areas with new shopping centers actually
- (1) increased their property taxes
 - (2) revitalized their public transportation
 - (3) developed into large townships
 - (4) transformed into recreational centers
- 18 The author demonstrates that by the 1990s shopping malls had changed the way people
- (1) define personal space
 - (2) spend free time
 - (3) learn new skills
 - (4) engage in exercise
- 19 Based on the passage, a reader can infer that Victor Gruen’s disappointment resulted from the
- (1) corruption of his dream
 - (2) small profits he earned
 - (3) downturn in the economy
 - (4) betrayal of his friends
- 20 The events in the passage are arranged primarily in what format?
- (1) order of importance
 - (2) compare and contrast
 - (3) cause and effect
 - (4) question and answer
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Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

Directions: On the following pages read Passage I (an excerpt from a memoir) and Passage II (a poem) about challenges. 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

...Photography demands a high degree of participation, but never have I participated to such an extent as I did when photographing various episodes in the life of Gandhi.

I shall always remember the day we met. I went to see him at his camp, or ashram, in Poona where he was living in the midst of a colony of untouchables. Having thought of
5 Mahatma Gandhi as a symbol of simplicity, I was a bit surprised to find that I had to go through several secretaries to get permission to photograph him. When I reached the last and chief secretary, an earnest man in horn-rimmed spectacles, and dressed entirely in snow-white homespun, I explained my mission. I had come to take photographs of the Mahatma spinning.

10 “Do you know how to spin?” asked Gandhi’s secretary.

“Oh, I didn’t come to spin with the Mahatma. I came to photograph the Mahatma spinning.”

15 “How can you possibly understand the symbolism of Gandhi at his spinning wheel? How can you comprehend the inner meaning of the wheel, the charka, unless you first master the principles of spinning?” He inquired sharply, “Then you are not at all familiar with the workings of the spinning wheel?” ...

I know when I’m licked. “How long does it take to learn to spin?” I asked wearily.

“Ah,” said the secretary, “that depends upon one’s quotient of intelligence.”

I found myself begging for a spinning lesson. ...

20 Somehow I persuaded Gandhi’s secretary that my spinning lesson must start this very afternoon. It embarrassed me to see how clumsy I was at the spinning wheel, constantly entangling myself. It did not help my opinion of my own I.Q. to see how often and how awkwardly I broke the thread. I began to appreciate as never before the machine age, with its ball bearings and steel parts, and maybe an occasional nail. ...

25 I found the inside of the hut even darker than I had anticipated. A single beam of daylight shone from a little high window directly into my lens and into my eyes as well. I could scarcely see to compose the picture, but when my eyes became accustomed to the murky shadows, there sat the Mahatma, cross-legged, a spidery figure with long, wiry legs, a bald head and spectacles. Could this be the man who was leading his people to freedom—
30 the little old man in a loincloth who had kindled the imagination of the world? I was filled with an emotion as close to awe as a photographer can come.

He sat in complete silence on the floor; the only sound was a little rustling from the pile of newspaper clippings he was reading. And beside him was that spinning wheel I had heard so much about. I was grateful that he would not speak to me, for I could see it would take
35 all the attention I had to overcome the halation¹ from that wretched window just over his head.

Gandhi pushed his clippings aside, and pulled his spinning wheel closer. He started to spin, beautifully, rhythmically and with a fine nimble hand. I set off the first of the three flashbulbs. It was quite plain from the span of time from the click of the shutter to the flash

¹halation — a blurring or spreading of light around bright areas on a photographic image

40 of the bulb that my equipment was not synchronizing properly. The heat and moisture of
India had affected all my equipment; nothing seemed to work. I decided to hoard my two
remaining flashbulbs, and take a few time exposures. But this I had to abandon when my
tripod “froze” with one leg at its minimum and two at their maximum length.

Before risking the second flashbulb, I checked the apparatus with the utmost care.
45 When Gandhi made a most beautiful movement as he drew the thread, I pushed the
trigger and was reassured by the sound that everything had worked properly. Then I noticed
that I had forgotten to pull the slide.

I hazarded the third peanut [flashbulb], and it worked. I threw my arms around the
rebellious equipment and stumbled out into the daylight, quite unsold on the machine age.
50 Spinning wheels could take priority over cameras any time. ...

—Margaret Bourke-White
excerpted and adapted from *Portrait of Myself*, 1963
Simon and Schuster

Passage II
Running the 400 Meters

You had to use breath
you didn't have
enough of meanwhile
staying in one lane
5 of cinders¹ running
so far ahead of you
you couldn't believe
you were supposed to
catch up to where
10 it seemed to be going
without you without
the loss of your lungs
your feet no longer
yours your whole body
15 longing for a tape
suspended across a line
you could see but had no sense
you could ever touch
without dying and being
20 transformed into a creature
of a higher lower order
with wings or more legs
than these two shreds
at the ends of you and yours
25 which had almost disappeared.

—David Wagoner
from *The Cincinnati Review*, Winter 2009

¹cinders — fragments of lava paving a track

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 memoir excerpt) — Questions 21–23 refer to Passage I.

- 21 The narrator most likely writes about her photo session with Mahatma Gandhi in order to
- (1) expose Gandhi's ideas to a wider audience
 - (2) describe an interesting experience from the narrator's life
 - (3) teach students how Gandhi used a spinning wheel
 - (4) inform Americans about rural life in India
- 22 As used in the passage, "licked" (line 17) most likely means that the narrator felt
- (1) frightened
 - (2) inquisitive
 - (3) beaten
 - (4) elated

- 23 The difficulties faced by the narrator during the photo shoot were the result of
- (1) Gandhi's attitude
 - (2) political conditions
 - (3) reporters' interference
 - (4) equipment failure

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

- 24 The poem is written in what form?
- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| (1) couplet | (3) sonnet |
| (2) blank verse | (4) free verse |
- 25 The lack of punctuation combined with short lines creates the effect of a
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| (1) runner's fatigue | (3) bird's flight |
| (2) congested cough | (4) vanishing target |

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 memoir excerpt) and Passage II (the poem) to establish a controlling idea about challenges. 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 memoir 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:

“...fear is simply the consequence of every lie.”

— Fyodor Dostoevsky
from *The Brothers Karamazov*
1990 Translation

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

