

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

Thursday, June 16, 2016 — 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.

- 1 Kent Carpenter’s comment that “the potential loss of biodiversity is permanent” is important because it
 - (1) poses a scientific question
 - (2) highlights a significant issue
 - (3) disputes a historical trend
 - (4) introduces a relevant solution
 - 2 The speaker contends that the major source of damage to coral reefs is
 - (1) people
 - (2) sunlight
 - (3) ocean currents
 - (4) migratory patterns
 - 3 The speaker describes the effects of using cyanide to catch tropical fish as
 - (1) harmless
 - (2) invisible
 - (3) experimental
 - (4) enduring
 - 4 The speaker believes that fertilizer runoff can
 - (1) often increase mercury levels
 - (2) destroy viruses in coral
 - (3) create damaging algae growths
 - (4) sometimes trigger ocean storms
 - 5 The speaker describes the relationship between coral and algae as “symbiotic” because it is
 - (1) mysterious
 - (2) ongoing
 - (3) unpredictable
 - (4) cooperative
 - 6 Some corals may become “bleached” as a result of an increase in the
 - (1) variety of algae
 - (2) water temperature
 - (3) sunlight hours
 - (4) species of fish
 - 7 The speaker states that increased acidity in seas is caused by
 - (1) unpredicted salt fluctuations
 - (2) cooler air temperatures
 - (3) carbon dioxide changes
 - (4) elevated nitrogen levels
 - 8 A primary purpose of the speaker is to
 - (1) educate the audience
 - (2) challenge a point of view
 - (3) evaluate multiple perspectives
 - (4) question scientific theories
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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

...In summer the highways are dissolved into three wild rivers—the River of Rocks, which issues from the hills; the River of Meadows, which flows from the great lake; and the River of the Way Out, which runs down from their meeting-place to the settlements and the little world. But in winter, when the ice is firm under the snow, and the going is fine,
5 there are no tracks upon the three broad roads except the paths of the caribou, and the footprints of the marten and the mink and the fox, and the narrow trails made by Luke Dubois on his way to and from his cabin by the rivers.

He leaned in the door-way, looking out. Behind him in the shadow, the fire was still snapping in the little stove where he had cooked his breakfast. There was a comforting smell
10 of bacon and venison in the room; the tea-pot stood on the table half-empty. Here in the corner were his rifle and some of his traps. On the wall hung his snowshoes. Under the bunk was a pile of skins. Half-open on the bench lay the book that he had been reading the evening before, while the snow was falling. It was a book of veritable¹ fairy-tales, which told how men had made their way in the world, and achieved great fortunes, and won success,
15 by toiling hard at first, and then by trading and bargaining and getting ahead of other men.

“Well,” said Luke, to himself, as he stood at the door, “I could do that too. Without doubt I also am one of the men who can do things. They did not work any harder than I do. But they got better pay. I am twenty-five. For ten years I have worked hard, and what have I got for it? This!”

He stepped out into the morning, alert and vigorous, deep-chested and straight-hipped. The strength of the hills had gone into him, and his eyes were bright with health. His kingdom was spread before him. There along the River of Meadows were the haunts² of the moose and the caribou where he hunted in the fall; and yonder on the burnt hills around the great lake were the places where he watched for the bears; and up beside the River of
25 Rocks ran his line of traps, swinging back by secret ways to many a nameless pond and hidden beaver-meadow; and all along the streams, when the ice went out in the spring, the great trout would be leaping in rapid and pool. Among the peaks and valleys of that forest-clad kingdom he could find his way as easily as a merchant walks from his house to his office. The secrets of bird and beast were known to him; every season of the year
30 brought him its own tribute;³ the woods were his domain, vast, inexhaustible, free. ...

His hand-sledge⁴ stood beside the door, and against it leaned the axe. He caught it up and began to split wood for the stove. “No!” he cried, throwing down the axe, “I’m tired of this. It has lasted long enough. I’m going out to make my way in the world.”

A couple of hours later, the sledge was packed with camp-gear and bundles of skins. The
35 door of the cabin was shut; a ghostlike wreath of blue smoke curled from the chimney. Luke

¹veritable — authentic

²haunts — places frequented

³tribute — payment

⁴hand-sledge — sled

stood, in his snowshoes, on the white surface of the River of the Way Out. He turned to look back for a moment, and waved his hand.

“Good-bye, old cabin! Good-bye, the rivers! Good-bye, the woods!”

—Henry Van Dyke
excerpted from “Wood-Magic”
The Blue Flower, 1902
Charles Scribner’s Sons

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| <p>9 The first paragraph contributes to the passage by illustrating Luke’s</p> <p>(1) poverty (3) isolation
(2) sadness (4) desperation</p> <p>10 According to lines 8 through 15, Luke’s living quarters may best be described as</p> <p>(1) disorganized (3) insufficient
(2) elegant (4) comfortable</p> <p>11 The “book of veritable fairy-tales” (line 13) contributes to Luke’s realization that he</p> <p>(1) feels lonely and needs companionship
(2) should remain living in the wilderness
(3) deserves more reward for his efforts
(4) understands nature better than most people</p> <p>12 By using the phrase “throwing down the axe” (line 32), the author is conveying Luke’s</p> <p>(1) nervousness (3) indifference
(2) determination (4) satisfaction</p> | <p>13 The main reason why Luke leaves his current location is to</p> <p>(1) purchase more supplies
(2) further his education
(3) meet new people
(4) pursue financial success</p> <p>14 Lines 16 through 38 suggest that Luke’s</p> <p>(1) work contributes to his happiness
(2) solitude holds him back
(3) hobbies help him to socialize
(4) skills limit his opportunities</p> |
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Reading Comprehension Passage B

On the roof of a speeding freight train, a slender woman in a white feather cap and long narrow skirt sits crumpled, cradling her head. Her day's work is done. A minute ago, she leaped onto this train from a towering overpass, pointing out two stowaway thieves to the engineers on duty. As they race to nab the bandits, she doubles over to catch her breath.

5 The men, she knows, can take it from here.

Suddenly, one of the thieves appears on the roof. Fresh from a fistfight with the conductors, the thug tries to rush past her. She scrambles to her feet and lunges at his waist. They wrestle. He tries to shake her. She tackles him, and in an instant, the two are pitched over the side into the river below. As they wade from the water, the wet hat still clinging to her head, she sacks him again, delivering a taste of justice. ...

10 Helen Holmes, the scrappy 20-year-old featured in *The Hazards of Helen*, wasn't the most famous or the most glamorous. But with the women's suffrage movement reaching a fever pitch, her no-nonsense handling of everyday affairs in a man's world turned her into a fan favorite. What made her truly revolutionary—even as she faded into obscurity with the rest of the silent film stars—was what she did behind the scenes.

15 A Chicago-raised tomboy-turned-model, Holmes was more than just the star of *The Hazards of Helen*—she was, in large part, its creator. Holmes landed her first film roles in silent comedies in 1912. Shortly after, she joined forces, personally and professionally, with J.P. "Jack" McGowan, an Australian director who specialized in short action films. He directed her in more than 20 flicks—most of them one- or two-reel railroad dramas. ...

20 "If a photoplay actress wants to achieve real thrills, she must write them into the scenario herself," she once said. "[N]early all scenario writers and authors for the films are men, and men usually won't provide for a girl things they wouldn't do themselves. So if I want really thrilly action, I ask permission to write it myself."

25 Each weekly installment found Helen facing fresh danger—from thieves to runaway trains. In *The Wild Engine* (1915) Helen got a job at a railroad, only to have the superintendent of the company berate the underling who hired her. "Women cannot use their heads in case of emergency, and if you employ her, I shall hold you entirely responsible!" Suffice to say, an emergency soon tests his theory. When an engine goes haywire and sets on a collision course with a passenger train, Helen jumps on a motorcycle and zooms off to stop it. She keeps the trains from colliding, of course, but she also rides the motorcycle off a bridge and into a river to enhance the action. The film ends with the superintendent changing his stance on Helen's hiring—a simplistic story, simplistically told, but one that presents a radical message by 1915 standards.

35 In the pre-Hollywood days of early cinema, moviemaking was defined by a rough-and-tumble DIY [Do It Yourself] aesthetic. Unlike many of her colleagues, Holmes performed many death-defying stunts herself, from swinging onto moving locomotives to crawling across the hoods of speeding cars. She moved with the grace of an athlete. Asked about her stunt work, she remarked that she sought to perform stunts without losing "that air of femininity of which we are all so proud. But by that I do not mean the frail side of woman. I mean the heroic side." ...

—Jake Hinkson
excerpted and adapted from "The Girl at the Switch"
mental_floss, Winter 2013

- 15 The author catches the attention of the reader through the use of
- (1) a peaceful description
 - (2) an upsetting event
 - (3) a personal anecdote
 - (4) an unusual scenario
- 16 The opening paragraphs show Helen, the movie character, to be
- (1) ruthless
 - (2) fearless
 - (3) witty
 - (4) ungrateful
- 17 According to lines 11 through 14, Helen Holmes achieved popularity because she was
- (1) successful in a male-dominated society
 - (2) vulnerable in a dangerous setting
 - (3) modest in a competitive system
 - (4) uncomfortable in an unfamiliar environment
- 18 Helen Holmes believed she had to create her own action scenes because otherwise they would be
- (1) very dangerous
 - (2) too romantic
 - (3) less exciting
 - (4) slightly offensive
- 19 As used in line 27, the word “berate” most nearly means
- (1) reject
 - (2) praise
 - (3) favor
 - (4) scold
- 20 The words of the company superintendent (lines 27 and 28) are important because they
- (1) represent a prejudiced view of women
 - (2) answer a popular question about women
 - (3) signal the end of the silent film era
 - (4) express sympathy for artistic freedom
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Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

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

Walking along, he was nearly always happy.
Coming down a street, he moved
by letting himself go, not quite
boat motion but some way
5 his shoulders (in spite of those boxy suits!)
used to occupy the air in curves.
Other people walk, but my father
sort of gathered as he came,
a natural heavyweight,
10 feet pumping a secret treadle¹
that only he understood, gait² conducted
by the delicate slabs of his hands.
Others move like burglaries
in progress, songs lifting, or street drills,
15 but Daddy walked like hospitality,
like warmth in motion. The sky rippled around him
as he came, so that I really thought
the parted air was somehow changed
because he passed through it, happy.
20 And remembering this, I find myself happy.

—Frank Steele
from *Men of Our Time*, 1992
University of Georgia Press

¹treadle — a pedal

²gait — a particular way of walking

Passage II

...Recently, I went to visit Mrs. Taussig. It was about fifteen years since I'd seen her, and twenty since she'd begun her psychoanalysis practice. I went late, after she finished work; she now received patients from early in the morning until nine or ten at night, five days a week. She was unhesitating at the door, full of exclamation and affection, and she
5 ushered me quickly into a house whose significance in my life I had quite forgotten until this moment. It was here, aged seven or eight, that I had been taught to play staccato¹ by touching the hot Aga² dartingly with my fingers, and here that I had first banged out the children's version of "Ode to Joy" that inaugurated my lifelong love of Beethoven's ninth symphony. All this came flooding back; and yet, returning as an adult, I was amazed that the
10 house's most obvious feature had never struck me during all those childhood visits. Its Central European Jewish lineage: Mrs. Taussig's guttural roll when she pronounced my name, the rich Asiatic carpets and crowded European art, the pursuit of excellence in material and intellectual things, the music, the psychoanalysis, the echoes of so many other places in this corner of a mundanely British town.

15 Her sons had left home—still now, from her harsh, proud anecdotes, the geniuses I remembered from school—and she lived alone; the family room and piano room had both been turned over to consultation. We carried tea and cake up to the attic, which was starkly different from the rest of the house, all steel, leather and glass.

20 "The ground floor is too full of history. My patients' conversations are heavy, so they stay at the bottom. I need to get above it. This is where I rest and listen to music."

While I told the story of the past fifteen years in my life, she closed her eyes in concentration, interrupting occasionally for small clarifications and asking me how all the parts fitted together in my own mind.

25 She seemed intensely happy in herself. She said, "I liked teaching piano to children. But I needed to involve myself with adult concerns. Psychoanalysis gives me both: I deal with adults, but also with the children they have been. And all my musical skills are now used in listening. There are patients who have been talking to me five hours a week for fifteen years, and sometimes I have to make a connection between what they tell me today and a dream they told me years ago. Music prepares you to listen like that. I can hear all the
30 melodies in a narration, and the meaning of all the pauses, all the silence. It comes naturally to a musician."

We talked until one o'clock in the morning, when she protested the need for sleep.

"I have a patient early in the morning and need to be fresh."

35 We gathered plates and tea cups and brought them down to the kitchen. She wrote down her e-mail address while I fingered my car key. She opened the front door and hugged me tightly.

"It is so wonderful to see you again," she said. "Please keep in touch."

"Yes," I replied. "I will."

—Rana Dasgupta
excerpted from "The Piano Teacher"
The Missouri Review, Winter 2006

¹staccato — short, abrupt sounds

²Aga — British brand of kitchen stove

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 poem) — Questions 21–22 refer to Passage I.

- 21 The narrator’s description of his father’s walk relies primarily on the sense of
- (1) hearing
 - (2) seeing
 - (3) smelling
 - (4) touching
- 22 The use of the phrases “Other people” (line 7) and “Others move” (line 13) enables the narrator to
- (1) arrange a chronological sequence
 - (2) introduce a new character
 - (3) summarize a logical argument
 - (4) present a clearer contrast

Passage II (the essay excerpt) — Questions 23–25 refer to Passage II.

- 23 The difference between the attic and the consulting rooms reflects the difference in their
- (1) purpose
 - (2) availability
 - (3) size
 - (4) value
- 24 As Mrs. Taussig listened to the narrator, she displayed
- (1) fatigue from her work
 - (2) confusion over the details
 - (3) interest in the conversation
 - (4) excitement about his future
- 25 As the narrator ends his visit, the tone of his farewell can best be described as
- (1) doubtful
 - (2) disappointed
 - (3) sincere
 - (4) carefree
-

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 poem) and Passage II (the essay excerpt) to establish a controlling idea about contentment. 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 poem) **or** Passage II (the essay excerpt), 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:

“...the greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse.”

—Edmund Burke

Speech on the Middlesex Election, 1771

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

