

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

Thursday, August 16, 2012 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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.

- 1 According to the speaker, Chicago was nicknamed “the Windy City” because of its
 - (1) lakeside location
 - (2) bragging citizens
 - (3) carefree atmosphere
 - (4) winter weather
 - 2 Why did organizers of Chicago’s Columbian Exposition reject all tower designs?
 - (1) They wanted something unique.
 - (2) There was not enough money to fund it.
 - (3) The climate was too harsh.
 - (4) There was not enough time to complete it.
 - 3 The speaker describes the proposed design of the Ferris Wheel as “perhaps even the Eighth Wonder of the World” because it would
 - (1) impress the world as the greatest wheel ever created
 - (2) surprise the world with the longest piece of steel ever forged
 - (3) set the record for the costliest construction in the world
 - (4) take the prize for the tallest structure in the world
 - 4 When the speaker says Ferris “pushed the envelope” on how high moving structures could be built, he means that Ferris’s invention was
 - (1) a simplistic design
 - (2) a nonfunctional idea
 - (3) an engineering innovation
 - (4) an engaging proposal
 - 5 The speaker describes the Ferris Wheel’s size in order to explain why it was so
 - (1) powerful
 - (2) expensive
 - (3) dangerous
 - (4) extraordinary
 - 6 The speaker suggests that some of Ferris’s success could be attributed to his
 - (1) cultural convictions
 - (2) political affiliations
 - (3) financial investments
 - (4) professional connections
 - 7 It can be concluded that the speaker’s main purpose is to
 - (1) describe the impact of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair
 - (2) portray the talent of George Ferris, Jr.
 - (3) explain the failure of the first Ferris Wheel
 - (4) influence the location of future world’s fairs
 - 8 The speaker strengthens the description of the Ferris Wheel through the use of
 - (1) personal anecdotes
 - (2) persuasive arguments
 - (3) historic facts
 - (4) newspaper quotations
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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

I had just passed through Pillar City in South Field Township, Pennsylvania, juking my pickup around the potholes on Market Street. It was crowded with anthracite¹ coalminer shacks lying shoulder-to-shoulder, their front porches a chaos of posts and roofs and wrought iron. Nothing so grand as a pillar adorned them. The town looked like a train wreck
5 someone had forgotten to report, and after two claustrophobic passes down the main drag I turned into a side street and out onto a dirt road, pulling into King George’s Filling Station and Grille. The King looked at my Vermont license plates through the greasy window and wiped his hands on his apron like he might have to reach for something.

I hadn’t expected the place to be so grim, but even the weather had conspired with the
10 shadowless November light. I was studying my road map, trying to find a way back to the interstate without backtracking through town, and I had turned on the dome light so I could see the thin numbered lines when a honey-dew green pickup pulled alongside mine.

A woman in the passenger seat rolled down the window with a dirty squawk, then leaned back in her seat, ramrod straight, as a man leaned over her, head out the window.

15 “You lost?” the man said. The woman sat stiffly, as though he had a foul smell or she had been seized by fear.

“No, just trying to figure out which way to go from here. I know where I am—thanks for asking,” I said. ...

“You must be lost,” he said.

20 So I decided to explain. “I’m looking up my family history—they’re from around here, years ago. Worley’s the name. Know any Worleys?”

“I know Worleys.”

“Oh yeah? Probably distantly related. Think they’d talk to me?” I hadn’t actually planned to look up anyone with the name, but it was a lead.

25 “Talk to anyone,” he said. Now the woman in the seat shifted uncomfortably and glanced quickly at me. Perhaps she knew Worleys too.

I asked him to introduce me to anyone named Worley, someone who might be able to fill in the gaps in my family tree. The day before I had tracked down an ancestor in the county courthouse archives, a many-great grandfather Daniel. There I made a photocopy
30 of his 1836 will, a list of his worldly goods, which were spare and simple: a spinning wheel, a splitting maul, two heifers.² His farm had been in this part of the county, and checking the phone book in the Roman Diner I had found a dozen Worleys listed in Pillar City.

I didn’t explain all of this to the man and woman in the green truck, but they agreed to lead me to a house where some Worleys lived. I followed them down another road, a flat,
35 well-graveled route leading straight toward the Upper Tamark Creek. The road made a sharp bend at the banks of the creek, and the woman in the truck ahead of me stuck her arm out of the window, pointing at a two-story frame house sheathed in gray stone halfway up. A man was in the side yard, weaving a riding lawnmower around stumps, an overturned rowboat, outbuildings, and the carcasses of nameless machines. All the man seemed to be

¹anthracite — a hard coal

²heifers — young cows

40 doing was mulching leaves. I pulled into the horseshoe driveway, a little uneasy that the green truck had not stopped and was now crossing the bridge over the Tamark. ...

—Naton Leslie
excerpted from “Lost”
Marconi’s Dream, 2002
Texas Review Press

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| <p>9 In lines 4 and 5, the narrator describes Pillar City primarily by using</p> <p>(1) alliteration (3) personification
(2) onomatopoeia (4) simile</p> <p>10 The narrator’s reaction to Pillar City could best be described as</p> <p>(1) resentment (3) suspicion
(2) disappointment (4) indifference</p> <p>11 A clue to the narrator’s need for directions was most probably his</p> <p>(1) damaged pickup truck
(2) empty gas tank
(3) open road map
(4) mud-splattered tires</p> | <p>12 Why is the narrator driving through Pillar City?</p> <p>(1) He is looking for employment.
(2) He is planning to settle there.
(3) He is tracing his family tree.
(4) He is going to attend college there.</p> <p>13 Lines 15 through 26 are developed primarily through the use of</p> <p>(1) dialogue (3) figurative language
(2) flashback (4) vivid details</p> <p>14 At the end of the passage, how does the narrator feel as he approaches the Worley house?</p> <p>(1) embarrassed (3) relieved
(2) unwavering (4) apprehensive</p> |
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Reading Comprehension Passage B

The automobile and the motion picture industry are icons of American life. The two became the perfect match for inventor Richard M. Hollingshead Jr. when he combined them and opened the first drive-in movie theater in Camden, New Jersey, in the summer of 1933.

5 Hollingshead somehow knew that this type of movie theater could eventually prove successful, basing his assumption on the fact that a certain segment of the population never attended indoor movie houses. He felt confident that once his concept became a reality, people would love the idea of watching movies from inside their automobiles, and he was right.

10 Families were drawn to drive-in movie theaters due in part to their convenience. More than just a movie was offered to the ticket holder: There was no need to get all dressed up, you didn't have to hire a babysitter, parking was included in the price of the ticket, and dinner was just a quick walk to the concession stand. Drive-ins also became popular with teenagers because it was the ideal place to take a date or socialize with "the gang." What
15 could be better than dinner and a movie under the stars?

Toward the latter part of the 1930s, a depressed economy and a world war were just two of the reasons for the somewhat slow development of drive-in movie theaters. All of that would change by the mid-1940s.

20 After the war, America flourished. With a booming economy, hoards of families flocked to the suburbs. The setting was perfect for the success of drive-ins. There was plenty of affordable, available land and the "car culture" in America was just beginning.

The 1950s was the golden age for drive-in movie theaters. More than 4,600 were opened for business during the prosperous and defining decade of the baby boom. To lure in the family trade, playgrounds were built for children while live bands entertained adults.
25 Never mind that the movies were second-rate as was the sound quality—it was the "drive-in experience" that kept moviegoers coming back for more.

30 As the decade neared an end, so did the popularity of going to the drive-in. By the mid-1960s and well into the 1970s, "the drive-in experience" had become somewhat tiresome. The inferior quality of the movies being shown combined with the antiquated sound system led many customers back to indoor theaters.

During the 1980s more and more drive-ins began closing down for good. Many owners jumped at the chance to sell their lots to land developers as a means of getting out of a sagging business. ...

35 Yet with all its adversity and struggle, the drive-in movie theater has endured. It has withstood the test of time and has become a symbol for a public that is not quite ready to give up on its nostalgic past.

40 Today many drive-ins appear to be enjoying a resurgence in popularity. Owners and operators, taking pride in their establishments, are now offering Dolby sound along with first-run movie releases. What began as the idea of one man in Camden, New Jersey, has become a cultural icon for over half a century. Drive-in movie theaters have been and always will be part of the American landscape.

—Elizabeth McKeon and Linda Everett
excerpted from *Cinema Under the Stars*, 1998
Cumberland House

- 15 Lines 5 through 9 describe Richard M. Hollingshead Jr. as
- (1) a scholar
 - (2) a critic
 - (3) an innovator
 - (4) an eccentric
- 16 Lines 10 through 15 suggest that the initial success of the drive-in theater was based in part on its
- (1) economic appeal
 - (2) use of high quality movies
 - (3) serving of gourmet-style foods
 - (4) quiet atmosphere
- 17 According to the passage, what was one cause of the decline in drive-ins during the 1930s?
- (1) a population decrease
 - (2) stricter movie ratings
 - (3) unusual weather patterns
 - (4) less spending money
- 18 According to the passage, the survival of drive-ins has been assisted by
- (1) media attention
 - (2) pleasant memories
 - (3) new zoning laws
 - (4) tax reductions
- 19 In the final paragraph, the author predicts the future of drive-ins with a tone that can best be described as
- (1) humorous
 - (2) objective
 - (3) questioning
 - (4) optimistic
- 20 The passage is developed primarily through the use of what organizational pattern?
- (1) hierarchical
 - (2) cause and effect
 - (3) chronological
 - (4) comparison and contrast
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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 a short story) about uncertainty. 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 Home Techtonics

Our house is at the crest
of a mountain formed
by a fault line that's still
doing its work. We're up
5 over five thousand feet,
and probably, slowly, the spot

that we sit on is going
to get higher and higher.
So, at some point, the house
10 is coming down, shaken
to bits, I suppose, and what
we're banking on is that
we've chosen the right moment

in geologic time, a sweet
15 spot between cataclysms.¹
And that's what Annie and I
hope for generally,
and what everyone seems
to want—some forgettable

20 moment between great wars
or typhoons or plagues—to have
timed it just right, so we're
in just the right place between
what we read about in history
25 books and the moments after
which history won't matter much.

—John Brantingham
from *Earthshine*, November 2007–December 2009
www.ruminations.us

¹cataclysms — upheavals

Passage II

...It is the latter half of the twenty-first century and there are a dozen Settlements in orbit about the Earth. Each is, in its way, an independent little world. The smallest has ten thousand inhabitants, the largest almost twenty-five thousand. I'm sure that all Earthmen know this, but you people are so entangled in your own giant world, that you rarely think of us except as some little inconsequential¹ objects out in space. Well, *think* of us.

Each Settlement imitates Earth's environment as closely as it can, spinning to produce a pseudo-gravity, allowing sunlight to enter at some times, and not at others, in order to produce a normal day and night. Each is large enough to give the impression of space within, to have farms as well as factories, to have an atmosphere that can give rise to clouds. There are towns, and schools, and athletic fields.

We have some things that Earth has not. The pseudo-gravitational field varies in intensity relative to position within each Settlement. There are areas of low gravity, even zero gravity, where we can outfit ourselves with wings and fly, where we can play three-dimensional tennis, where we can have unusual gymnastic experiences.

We also have a true space culture, for we are used to space. Our chief work, aside from keeping our Settlements running efficiently, is to build structures in space for ourselves and for Earth. We work in space, and to be in a spaceship or a spacesuit is second nature to us. Working at zero gravity is something we have done from childhood.

There are also some things Earth has that we do not. We don't have Earth's weather extremes. In our carefully controlled Settlements, it never gets too hot or too cold. There are no storms and no unarranged precipitation. ...

Each Settlement produces something that other Settlements would like to have, in the matter of food, of art, of ingenious devices. What's more, we must trade with Earth as well, and many Settlers want to visit Earth and see some of the things we don't have in the Settlements. Earthpeople can't realize how exciting it is for us to see a vast blue horizon, or to look out upon a true ocean, or to see an ice-capped mountain.

Therefore, there is a constant coming and going among the Settlements and Earth. But each Settlement has its own ecological balance; and, of course, Earth has, even these days, an ecology that is enormously and impossibly rich by Settlement standards.

We have our insects that are acclimated and under control, but what if strange insects are casually and unintentionally introduced from another Settlement or from Earth? ...

Even worse, what if pathogenic parasites—bacteria, viruses, protozoa—are introduced? What if they produce diseases against which another Settlement and, of course, Earth itself, have developed a certain immunity, but one against which the Settlement that suffers the invasion is helpless. For a while, the entire effort of the Settlement must go into the preparation or importation of sera² designed to confer immunity, or to fight the disease once it is established. Deaths, of course, occur invariably. ...

What's more, rightly or wrongly the inhabitants of the Settlements persist in viewing Earthpeople themselves as particularly dangerous. It is on Earth where the most undesirable

¹inconsequential — unimportant

²sera — plural of serum

40 life-forms and parasites are to be found; it is Earthpeople who are most likely to be infested, and there are parties on all the Settlements who support the notion—sometimes quite vehemently—of breaking all contacts between the Settlements and Earth.

That is the danger of which I want to warn Earthpeople. Distrust—and even hatred—of Earthpeople is constantly growing among the Settlers. ...

—Issac Asimov
excerpted from “Good-bye to Earth”
Gold, 1995
HarperPrism

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 Lines 1 through 11 suggest that the area in which the narrator lives is prone to

- (1) hurricanes
- (2) forest fires
- (3) earthquakes
- (4) mud slides

22 The narrator's attitude towards life's circumstances tends to be based on

- (1) acceptance
- (2) enthusiasm
- (3) rebellion
- (4) regret

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

23 The opening paragraph serves to

- (1) contrast solutions
- (2) emphasize confusion
- (3) list topics
- (4) attract attention

24 The narrator and his people face difficulty in maintaining their land's

- (1) biological balance
- (2) natural beauty
- (3) geological structure
- (4) weather conditions

25 The narrator suggests that the worst threat from Earthpeople is their

- (1) weapons
- (2) germs
- (3) politics
- (4) genes

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 short story excerpt) to establish a controlling idea about uncertainty. 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 short story 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:

“...it is impossible to go through life without trust...”

— Graham Greene
The Ministry of Fear, 1945

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

