

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

Wednesday, August 13, 2014 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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 The opening description of the 2003 blackout is included to provide a
 - (1) reassurance of national power safety
 - (2) warning of the present grid's vulnerability
 - (3) prediction of uncontrolled power industry prices
 - (4) compliment to the grid's versatility
 - 2 The phrase "domino effect" provides the listener with
 - (1) a sense of the grid's power
 - (2) the sound of the grid's constant activity
 - (3) a visual image of the grid's interconnection
 - (4) the design of the grid's future expansion
 - 3 As revealed in the account, power grids are strained significantly by
 - (1) transportation systems
 - (2) construction regulations
 - (3) political constraints
 - (4) weather conditions
 - 4 Con Edison limited the occurrence of blackouts during the 2010 heat wave in New York City through the use of
 - (1) door-to-door warnings
 - (2) radio signals
 - (3) television advertisements
 - (4) billboard signs
 - 5 Through voluntary programs, smart grid technology allows power companies to
 - (1) regulate home power usage
 - (2) service home appliances
 - (3) schedule equipment replacement
 - (4) increase commercial electrical costs
 - 6 New methods are being developed in Texas that would allow power usage to be managed through
 - (1) economic incentives
 - (2) online control
 - (3) microwave technology
 - (4) megawatt sharing
 - 7 According to the speaker, the availability of smart meters is limited because the technology is
 - (1) expensive
 - (2) new
 - (3) confusing
 - (4) unreliable
 - 8 As a result of the smart energy solutions described in the account, future customers will have the ability to
 - (1) choose various power sources
 - (2) bypass public power companies
 - (3) purchase power company stocks
 - (4) predict annual power bills
-

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

Skippy was the least important occupant of the house. He was loved, but he was never consulted. It was taken for granted that the family’s will was his will, and that he would follow blindly. He was their dog.

5 When the family decided to move, Skippy was not invited to voice his views. They decided quite suddenly, on a day when everything seemed to go wrong. Mrs. Adams watched the first prize go to Mrs. Cranston at the flower show. Mr. Adams came home from the publishing house with a book to read and report on, and Mrs. Adams followed him up to their bedroom, where he had retired to escape the sounds of banging doors, telephones, and dinner preparations.

10 Buzz Adams stormed in cross as sticks because Sally, who lived next door, had given him back his class ring. Chottie Adams drifted in dreamily from her first meeting with a tall, dark and handsome young man. When the Adamses sat down to dinner, they began a round of grievances.

15 Mrs. Adams said, with her mouth beginning to waver again, “It isn’t that Lila Cranston has a better growing hand than I have. It’s because she has a bigger garden. She doesn’t have to crowd things and let them run riot. I don’t know what I wouldn’t give to move to a house with extensive grounds.”

Mr. Adams said vehemently, “I’d like to move, too. I’d like a house big enough to allow me the luxury of a room of my own.”

20 “I wish we lived in a stately house,” said Chottie wistfully. “Every corner in this house is crammed with Daddy’s old books. We live so informally.”

“If I may put my two cents in,” Buzz offered miserably, “I hate this whole neighborhood.”

25 “That’s it!” said Mr. Adams excitedly. “We will move tomorrow, not get out actually, but tomorrow I’ll see the agent for the Thayer place. It’s quite an estate, but I can swing it and the peace is worth the price.”...

Having arrived at this hasty decision to move within a matter of days, the Adamses settled down to their excellent dinner, which they all ate with relish, for each thought that the major problem in his life had just been solved.

30 Except Skippy, who, until this moment, had had no problems. He lay under the table in his accustomed place by Buzz’ feet. Usually his head was up, his ears pointing forward, his mouth ajar to release his eager panting, his tongue extended, and his expression one of sublime expectancy. But as the human voices grew impassioned, Skippy’s keen perception noted the shades of discontent expressed in each. He cocked his head and began to listen intently. ...

35 Skippy loved the house. He had lived in it practically all his life. Actually, you might almost say it was his. For the thing was, the Adamses had bought it because of him. He had been given to Buzz as a birthday surprise when he, Skippy, was three months old. Until then he had lived in a kennel which could not be considered home life. He and Buzz had recognized each other instantly as dog lover and boy worshiper. Two days later the apartment house agent came over to register the complaint of the people downstairs, who could not accustom
40 their ears to the overwhelming sounds of a boy and his dog. The dog, the agent explained regretfully, must go.

They moved to a house in the suburbs as soon as a suitable one could be found. It was a move the elder Adamses had been meaning to make ever since Chottie was born, but one
45 thing and another kept them chained to the city. And 14 years later a little dog led them to the charming white house that might have emerged from their dreams. ...

Now, after five years, as if they had slyly waited until he reached the age when the most obliging dog balks at change and views the moving of his basket from one corner to another as a complete upheaval of his lifetime habits, the Family was preparing to depart. ...

—Dorothy West
excerpted from “Skippy”
Daily News, April 29, 1946

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>9 As revealed in lines 1 through 4, the family’s attitude toward Skippy’s desires is one of</p> <p>(1) indifference (3) inclusion
(2) dislike (4) respect</p> <p>10 The phrase “round of grievances” (lines 12 and 13) refers to the family</p> <p>(1) telling stories
(2) revealing hopes
(3) sharing complaints
(4) planning entertainment</p> <p>11 What bothers Mrs. Adams so much about her current home?</p> <p>(1) the number of bedrooms
(2) the size of the property
(3) the shabbiness of the house
(4) the location of the neighborhood</p> | <p>12 The reasons for each family member’s urge to move reflect</p> <p>(1) individual desires
(2) economic concerns
(3) family goals
(4) political opinions</p> <p>13 Mr. Adams’ decision to move the family tomorrow is best described as</p> <p>(1) selfish (3) spontaneous
(2) sensible (4) sympathetic</p> <p>14 When did the Adams family buy their first home?</p> <p>(1) when they got married
(2) before Chottie was born
(3) when they were set financially
(4) after Skippy was purchased</p> |
|---|--|
-

Reading Comprehension Passage B

Elizabeth Blake suspended three flint blades from a small wooden frame. Holding her cell phone in one hand, she took a piece of antler in the other and gently struck each blade once. Over a bad transatlantic connection, our phone conversation had been difficult, but the tones from the four-inch-long blades came through—clear, sweet, and crystalline.¹ They
5 sounded like hand bells or struck goblets. The blades are replicas of 30,000-year-old artifacts from the sites of Isturitz in the French Pyrenees and Geißenklösterle in southwestern Germany.

Blake, who is the granddaughter of an opera singer and the daughter of a pianist, is an archaeology graduate student at Cambridge University. One of the newest members of a
10 developing sub-discipline, the archaeology of music, she is basing her research on the hypothesis that our earliest ancestors discovered and enjoyed a peculiar property of some stone tools—they rang. ...

The major difficulty that prehistoric musicologists face is that it's so easy to make music without leaving a trace. In addition to dancing and singing, hunter-gatherer cultures used
15 natural materials to create instruments. Native Americans shook rattles made from gourds. Australian aborigines played instruments called didgeridoos fashioned from huge tree limbs or bamboo. The San of southwest Africa plucked the gut strings of their wooden hunting bows. What are the odds these would survive for thousands of years to be found (let alone correctly identified) by an archaeologist? The best anyone can expect to discover is when
20 humans first began to create reliable and durable instruments.

Graeme Lawson, an independent archaeologist in England who heads a multidisciplinary² organization known as Cambridge Music-Archaeological Research believes that some objects now on display in museums may actually be misidentified musical artifacts. One
25 case in point is a medieval “garment clasp” that was made from a pig knuckle. Lawson analyzed the wear patterns and polish around a hole that had been drilled through the center of the bone and showed they were consistent with the patterns found on “buzz bones,” a type of noise maker that was used as a children’s toy in some parts of Europe until a few decades ago. When the knuckle bone was tied to a string and whirled through the air, it would have made an eerie, ghostlike sound.

How many ancient objects now labeled as “garment clasps” were actually used as noise
30 makers? How many flint artifacts doubled as chimes? There’s plenty for an avid music archaeologist to do without ever touching a spade.

The oldest indisputably musical artifacts are flutes (experts call them “pipes”) made from the bones of birds. They come from two sites, Isturitz and Geißenklösterle. The pipes
35 were found in excavation levels associated with Europe’s earliest modern human population, the Aurignacian culture. The people at these sites created jewelry, made paintings, and crafted sculptures that represented human figures, showing that music was just one part of an artistic revolution that started in Africa more than 100,000 years ago and was brought to Europe by anatomically modern humans around 40,000 years ago. ...

What does survive, of course, is stone. It may seem odd to think of stones as musical,
40 but [Ian] Cross [a Cambridge musicologist] points out that so-called lithophones have been documented in many cultures. Musicologists and anthropologists have recorded or described ringing stones and “rock gongs” in India, the Americas, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

When Cross first began to explore the potential of flint blades as lithophones, he
45 considered them as percussion instruments like primitive castanets.³ Touched together,

¹crystalline — bell-like; clear

²multidisciplinary — of or representing several fields of study

³castanets — small finger cymbals

they do make a dull click. It took an archaeologist and a skilled flint-knapper to point out the larger possibilities. Ezra Zubrow of SUNY Buffalo and Frank Cowan of the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History showed Cross that thin, elongated pieces of flint could produce
50 a tone like a chime. You could say that the idea resonated. ...

—Lois Wingerson
excerpted and adapted from “Rock Music”
Archaeology, September/October 2008

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>15 The tones Elizabeth Blake transmitted in her phone call (lines 1 through 5) served to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) emphasize the importance of music(2) introduce the passage’s main idea(3) identify cultural differences(4) present conflicting attitudes <p>16 It is difficult to identify artifacts used to make prehistoric music because these artifacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) are natural objects(2) have harsh sounds(3) are very durable(4) have religious meaning <p>17 The use of rhetorical questions in lines 30 and 31 emphasizes that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) ancient instruments were often banned(2) scholars must examine more archaeological evidence(3) instrument making requires great skill(4) discovered artifacts may have been misinterpreted | <p>18 As used in line 33, the word “indisputably” most probably means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) valuable (3) certain(2) popular (4) crafted <p>19 The use of the word “resonated” in line 50 suggests that the idea of stones creating music is now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) somewhat doubted (3) widely accepted(2) rarely considered (4) openly ridiculed <p>20 The passage strengthens the discussion of prehistoric music through the use of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) quotations from musicians(2) research by archaeologists(3) claims by reporters(4) anecdotes from artists |
|---|---|
-

Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

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

When Mrs. Willesden's parrot escaped it rocketed in a pale-green streak across the sky and settled in the chestnut tree at the foot of the garden, where it became invisible among the branches. Invisible, that is to say, to Maud Pemberty and Eleanor Fitch who stood staring up under their hands into the glare of the morning, until Maud located his head, a vermilion¹ blot borne up and down like a buoy,² slowly, by the undulations³ of a lower layer of the foliage. The chestnut tree blazed all over in the sunshine with candles of wax blossom. The scent of the pollen gave Eleanor Fitch shivers; about the end of May she would pass the tree on any pretext, sighing for something that she could not remember. Maud was in love, and chestnut flowers meant nothing to her; besides, as parlour-maid, she had more to do in the house than Miss Fitch, who was only a companion.

Now they both stood looking up at the parrot piteously, fearfully; Maud who had left the window open and Eleanor who had been cleaning the cage. They advanced towards the tree unconsciously, step by lingering step, as though attracted; still with that mesmeric⁴ upward stare.

The parrot took no notice of them. It wobbled along the branch, peevishly disentangling its wing and tail feathers from the long-fingered leaves. Its tongue was in one corner of its beak; its head turned and its eyes rolled from side to side in a mixture of ecstasy and apprehension. Once or twice it lost its balance and tilted right forward with a muffled squawk until it was hanging nearly upside down. It would recover itself, look reproachfully down at its claws, and totter along further, till another clump of leaves swept down to assault it. It wore an air of silly bravado, and looked what it was, thoroughly idiotic. . . .

Mrs. Willesden loved the parrot and would sit beside it for hours in the afternoons. It was carried into the dining-room to meals, and its cage was placed beside her at the head of the table, on a butler's tray. Eleanor hated the parrot, and used to come down and clean its cage early in the morning before breakfast, so as to get that over. Thus it was that the parrot had escaped at a quarter-past-eight, before Mrs. Willesden was awake, while yellow cotton blinds still unflickeringly sheathed her windows. Mrs. Willesden slept late to-day; one did not care, one did not dare to wake her. Eleanor and Maud stood sodden-footed out in the dew, with now and then a backward glance up at Mrs. Willesden's window, and their hands burnt and their fingers twitched with the desire to grab the parrot by its scaly legs and its wings and thrust it shrieking back into its cage. . . .

"Well, it's no good crying, Miss," said Maud. "It doesn't get us out of anything, what I mean."

"I'm not," said Eleanor quickly. "Poll, pretty Polly-poll, come downsey!"

"Come downsey!" echoed Maud "(Yah, get out of that, you dirty beast!) Well, he doesn't understand, Miss. He's just stupid."

¹vermilion — a vivid red

²buoy — a float, moored in water as a warning of danger or as a marker

³undulations — wavelike movements

⁴mesmeric — hypnotic

“Go into the house and get the cage, Maud. Stick a banana between the bars, so’s he can only get at it from the inside, and put it down on the grass with the door open. Go quickly and —*hush!*”

40 Maud went, and Eleanor stood staring, still mesmerically, up at the parrot while the
imagined eyes of Mrs. Willesden burnt into her back. She stared up at the parrot, but Polly
was preoccupied with his feat of balance and was perpetually in profile. He was not to be
mesmerised and, just as Maud emerged from the house with the cage held at arm’s length
and the door invitingly open, he toppled forward urgently, beat for a moment with his
45 wings, then flopped into the air. He did not rise very high this time, but after describing one
or two lopsided circles, as though with wings unevenly weighted, he skimmed the top of the
garden wall, glittered for a second above it in poised uncertainty, and vanished. ...

—Elizabeth Bowen
excerpted from “The Parrot”
The London Mercury, July 1925

Passage II
Freedom of the Mind

High walls and huge the BODY may confine,
And iron grates obstruct the prisoner's gaze,
And massive bolts may baffle his design,
And vigilant keepers watch his devious ways:
5 Yet scorns th' immortal MIND this base control!
No chains can bind it, and no cell enclose:
Swifter than light, it flies from pole to pole,
And, in a flash, from earth to heaven it goes!
It leaps from mount to mount — from vale to vale
10 It wanders, plucking honeyed fruits and flowers;
It visits home, to hear the fireside tale,
Or in sweet converse pass the joyous hours.
'T is up before the sun, roaming afar,
And, in its watches, wearies every star!

—William Lloyd Garrison
from *Sonnets and Other Poems*
Oliver Johnson, 1843

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

- 21 As used in the passage, “rocketed” (line 1) most nearly means
- (1) signaled (3) sped
(2) scattered (4) splashed
- 22 Maud and Eleanor look at the parrot “piteously, fearfully” (line 11) indicating that they are
- (1) afraid of its temperament
(2) responsible for its release
(3) unaccustomed to its noises
(4) surprised by its actions
- 23 How did Mrs. Willesden show affection for her pet?
- (1) She bought it expensive treats.
(2) She taught it to speak.
(3) She showed it to her friends.
(4) She kept it near her.

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

- 24 References to the prisoner’s “design” (line 3) and “devious ways” (line 4) imply that he
- (1) thinks about escape
(2) has committed a crime
(3) enjoys playing games
(4) has confused the guards
- 25 The most likely purpose of the word “Yet” (line 5) is to
- (1) begin a quotation
(2) signal a contrast
(3) evoke a flashback
(4) define a term

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 short story excerpt) and Passage II (the poem) to establish a controlling idea about liberty. 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 short story 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:

“...ignorance is never better than knowledge.”

— Laura Fermi
Atoms in the Family, 1954

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

