

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

Wednesday, August 12, 2015 — 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 According to the speaker, why are convenience foods having a “devastating long-term impact” on people?
 - (1) They cost too much.
 - (2) They are connected to obesity-related issues.
 - (3) They encourage increased sodium consumption.
 - (4) They are treated with pesticides.
 - 2 Communities with rural food systems differ from communities with urban food systems because they
 - (1) have fewer grocery stores
 - (2) supplement with processed foods
 - (3) reject locally grown produce
 - (4) rely solely on restaurants
 - 3 In the phrase, in “Iowa, alternative food markets such as farmers’ markets, on-farm sales, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) are proliferating rapidly,” “proliferating” probably means
 - (1) losing revenue
 - (2) becoming outdated
 - (3) fluctuating
 - (4) increasing
 - 4 According to the speaker, people prefer to eat locally grown foods because they are
 - (1) inexpensive
 - (2) more durable
 - (3) tastier
 - (4) ripe sooner
 - 5 People are encouraged to join Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) groups in order to
 - (1) improve personal health
 - (2) learn to grow vegetables
 - (3) lower grocery prices
 - (4) decide which meats to eat
 - 6 Participants in the CSA program are challenged to
 - (1) budget more carefully
 - (2) purchase more prepared foods
 - (3) eat more adventurously
 - (4) listen to healthcare professionals
 - 7 According to the speaker, the concept of “fresh” food has changed since the 1970s because
 - (1) companies are distributing greater quantities of food
 - (2) people are demanding higher quality foods
 - (3) farmers are growing fewer food varieties
 - (4) governments are creating stricter food regulations
 - 8 What organizational technique does the speaker use to end the account?
 - (1) a humorous story
 - (2) a personal anecdote
 - (3) a rhetorical question
 - (4) a clarifying statement
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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 was given a voice. That’s what people said about me. I cultivated my voice, because it would be a shame to waste such a gift. I pictured this voice as a hothouse plant, something luxuriant, with glossy foliage and the word *tuberous* in the name, and a musky scent at night. I made sure the voice was provided with the right temperature, the right degree of humidity,
5 the right ambience.¹ I soothed its fears; I told it not to tremble. I nurtured it, I trained it, I watched it climb up inside my neck like a vine.

The voice bloomed. People said I had grown into my voice. Soon I was sought after, or rather my voice was. We went everywhere together. What people saw was me, what I saw was my voice, ballooning out in front of me like the translucent greenish membrane of a
10 frog in full trill.

My voice was courted. Bouquets were thrown to it. Money was bestowed on it. Men fell on their knees before it. Applause flew around it like flocks of red birds.

Invitations to perform cascaded over us. All the best places wanted us, and all at once, for, as people said—though not to me—my voice would thrive only for a certain term. Then,
15 as voices do, it would begin to shrivel. Finally it would drop off, and I would be left alone, denuded—a dead shrub, a footnote.

It’s begun to happen, the shrivelling. Only I have noticed it so far. There’s the barest pucker in my voice, the barest wrinkle. Fear has entered me, a needleful of ether,² constricting what in someone else would be my heart.

Now it’s evening; the neon lights come on, excitement quickens in the streets. We sit in
20 this hotel room, my voice and I; or rather in this hotel suite, because it’s still nothing but the best for us. We’re gathering our strength together. How much of my life do I have left? Leftover, that is: my voice has used up most of it. I’ve given it all my love, but it’s only a voice, it can never love me in return.

Although it’s begun to decay, my voice is still as greedy as ever. Greedier: it wants more,
25 more and more, more of everything it’s had so far. It won’t let go of me easily.

Soon it will be time for us to go out. We’ll attend a luminous occasion, the two of us, chained together as always. I’ll put on its favourite dress, its favourite necklace. I’ll wind a fur around it, to protect it from the drafts. Then we’ll descend to the foyer, glittering like
30 ice, my voice attached like an invisible vampire to my throat.

—Margaret Atwood
“Voice” from “Seven Love Letters”
The Walrus, July/August 2005

¹ambience — the special atmosphere surrounding a person, place, or thing

²ether — a volatile, highly flammable liquid formerly used as an anesthetic

- 9 When the narrator states “I was given a voice” (line 1), she is referring to
- (1) an acting role
 - (2) a speaking engagement
 - (3) an editorial column
 - (4) a special talent
- 10 The narrator’s references to plants in the first paragraph illustrate her past efforts to
- (1) establish a life of simplicity
 - (2) develop her ability
 - (3) change her location
 - (4) defy expectations of others
- 11 The sentence “We went everywhere together” (line 8) is ironic because the narrator views
- (1) strength and fame as universal
 - (2) speaking and singing as different skills
 - (3) talent and person as separate entities
 - (4) personality and appearance as equal
- 12 Lines 13 through 16 reinforce the idea that the narrator feels her voice has
- (1) become her identity
 - (2) made her immortal
 - (3) kept her isolated
 - (4) destroyed her life
- 13 The statement “Then, as voices do, it would begin to shrivel” (lines 14 and 15) introduces a
- (1) source of inspiration
 - (2) change in focus
 - (3) humorous observation
 - (4) minor obstacle
- 14 A central theme in the passage involves the narrator’s
- (1) love of creating music
 - (2) conflicts with her voice
 - (3) doubts about her training
 - (4) pride in performing shows
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Reading Comprehension Passage B

Glenn Curtiss made his name as an aviator, but he started out his career as a record-setting motorcyclist, reaching the mind-boggling and joint-rattling speed of 136 miles per hour in 1907. Later that year he joined Alexander Graham Bell and three other members of the Aerial Experiment Association to help create ailerons, hinged wing flaps that enable
5 airplanes to bank and turn. Curtiss went on to make America's first exhibition flight, win the first international air-speed prize at Reims, France, in 1909, and design the first practical seaplane.

In World War I he made millions with seaplanes and the Curtiss Jenny, a sturdy, affordable trainer that became the workhorse of barnstormers¹ and airmail pilots after the
10 war. In 1917 he created the Curtiss Autoplane, an unsuccessful hybrid of airplane and car.

In the 1920s the "King of the Air" found that he hankered to get back to his lifelong loves of hunting, fishing, and camping. At 40, he wanted more comfort for his road trips, so he decided to build his own travel trailer and create a new business to do so.

The timing seemed right. The Roaring Twenties saw Detroit's automobile industry
15 running full throttle; Americans flocked to the nation's highways. With so few facilities on the road, many long-distance drivers simply brought their own, sometimes by building trailers for themselves. ...

Curtiss also designed his Aerocar [travel trailer] to free passengers from the tyranny of bad roads. In the words of his patent application, the occupants of normal vehicles "are
20 jolted and jostled about in a most objectionable manner; in fact, so much so that riding becomes irksome, tiresome, and uncomfortable in the extreme." That was not the case for Aerocar passengers, who could lounge in fixed armchairs, enjoying close-set windows that created 10-foot fields of vision on both sides, broken only by window posts. An occupant could also stretch out on the rear-facing divan in the prow, under a built-in Philco radio.
25 A table snapped into place so that passengers might play cards or sit down to a meal created in the galley,² with its two-burner gasoline stove, icebox, and sink. The chemical toilet had its own private compartment.

A privacy curtain turned the galley into a shower. (A drain in the linoleum took care of the water.) Concealed Pullman-type bunks pulled down from the roof, while armchairs
30 folded down to make additional sleeping spaces. Snap-up privacy curtains and individual reading lights added further amenities.

The Aerocar's \$2,600 price tag clearly placed it in the luxury market, which made it difficult to sell during the Depression. Nevertheless, sales of Aerocars managed to weather the hard times, even surviving Curtiss's unexpected death in 1930 at age 52. ...

In the Depression year of 1936, the New York Times estimated that 100,000 trailers of all sorts were already on the road, while buyers were prepared to snap up another
35 300,000—more than six times what the country's estimated 300 manufacturers expected to produce in a year. "A new industry is rapidly coming to the front," the paper said. "It is not an uncommon sight these days to drive past a factory making trailers and find it operating
40 full blast in the middle of the night. Many plants are running twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week." At the National Automobile Show later that year, dealers displayed 50 different models, ranging in price from \$275 to \$12,000. ...

—Kirk W. House
excerpted and adapted from "Modern Transportation"
American Heritage, Fall 2008

¹barnstormers — stunt pilots

²galley — the kitchen of the travel trailer

- 15 The first two paragraphs provide a list of Glenn Curtiss' accomplishments in order to
- (1) highlight his cautiousness
 - (2) record his military service
 - (3) establish his aeronautical experience
 - (4) introduce his closest friends
- 16 Which phrase best reflects Glenn Curtiss' decision to make a travel trailer?
- (1) "his career as a record-setting motorcyclist" (lines 1 and 2)
 - (2) "the Curtiss Jenny, a sturdy, affordable trainer" (lines 8 and 9)
 - (3) "an unsuccessful hybrid of airplane and car" (line 10)
 - (4) "his lifelong loves of hunting, fishing, and camping" (lines 11 and 12)
- 17 In lines 14 through 17, the author creates an image of America as a nation that is
- (1) cautious
 - (2) superior
 - (3) inventive
 - (4) conservative
- 18 As used in the passage, the word "amenities" (line 31) most nearly means
- (1) conveniences
 - (2) decorations
 - (3) expenses
 - (4) adjustments
- 19 According to the passage, why was the Aerocar "difficult to sell during the Depression" (line 33)?
- (1) It was an expensive purchase.
 - (2) It was hard to find a dealership.
 - (3) There were few licensed drivers.
 - (4) There were few qualified mechanics.
- 20 The use of the words "Nevertheless" (line 33) and "even" (line 34) highlights a
- (1) decision
 - (2) failure
 - (3) contrast
 - (4) mistake
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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 family relationships. 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

Two things changed my life: my mother and a white, plastic, daisy bike basket. I have thought long and hard about it and it's true. I would be a different person if my mom hadn't turned a silly bicycle accessory into a life lesson I carry with me today. ...

5 My mother and father were united in their parenting philosophy, but it mostly fell to my mother to enforce it. Looking back, I honestly don't know how she did it. Swimming upstream against strong, green currents of Ben Franklins¹ must have been a Herculean task, but she made it look effortless. If we complained about not having what another kid did, we'd hear something like, "I don't care what [so-and-so] got for his birthday, you are not getting a TV in your room/a car for your birthday/a lavish sweet-16 party." Grown-ups
10 were addressed as Mister and Missus, not by first names. We shook hands and looked in eyes. We had to earn our allowance by doing chores around the house. We didn't have a housekeeper; together WE were the housekeeper. I can still remember how long it took to rub brass polish into the legs of our coffee table and buff them shiny. My brothers can no doubt recall hours spent vacuuming or mopping or cleaning out the garage. Like the two
15 little girls growing up at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,² we made our own beds (no one left the house until that was done) and picked up after ourselves. We had to keep track of our belongings, and if something was lost, it was not replaced. These were both non-starters and anomalies.³

20 And so we come full circle. It was summer and, one day, my mother drove me to the bike shop to get a tire fixed — and there it was in the window. White, shiny, plastic and decorated with daisies, the basket winked at me and I knew — I *knew* — I had to have it.

"It's beautiful," my mother said when I pointed it out to her, no doubt knowing where the conversation was heading. "What a neat basket."

25 I bet I tried to hold off at first. I'd like to think I played it cool for a short while. But then I guess I couldn't stand it any longer: "Mom, please can I please, please get it? I'll do extra chores for as long as you say. I'll do anything, but I need that basket. I love that basket. Please, Mom. Please?"

I was desperate.

30 "You know," she said, gently rubbing my back while we both stared at what I believed was the coolest thing ever, "If you save up you could buy this yourself." ...

"By the time I make enough it'll be gone!"

"Maybe Roger here could hold it for you," she smiled at Roger the bike guy.

"For that long?³ He can't hold it for that long, Mom. Someone else will buy it. Please, Mom, please?"

35 "There might be another option," she said.

¹Ben Franklins — a slang term for \$100 bills

²1600 Pennsylvania Avenue — The White House in Washington, D.C.

³anomalies — irregularities, abnormalities

And so our layaway plan unfolded. My mother bought the beautiful basket and tucked it safely out of reach in some hiding place I couldn't find — and trust me, I looked, if only to salivate⁴ over it. Each week I eagerly counted my growing nest egg supplemented by extra work here and there (washing the car, helping my mother make dinner, running small
40 errands on my bike that already looked naked without the basket in front). And then, weeks later maybe, I counted, re-counted and jumped for joy. Oh, happy day! I made it! I finally had the exact amount we'd agreed upon. ...

Days later the unthinkable happened. A neighborhood girl I'd played with millions of times appeared with the exact same basket strapped to her shiny, new bike that already had
45 all the bells and whistles. My eight-year-old feet pedaled hard and fast home to tell my mother about this calamity. This horrible turn of events.

And then came the lesson I've taken with me through my life: "Honey, your basket is extra-special," Mom said, gently wiping away my hot tears. "Your basket is special because you paid for it yourself." ...

—Elizabeth Flock
excerpted from "The Bike Basket:
A Mother's Day Tale"
www.wowowow.com, 2009

⁴salivate — drool

Passage II
Peter and Thunder

Your face when you heard it. How you looked up.
How, crouched over toy parts,
suddenly you stiffened. How then you turned,
how you stared up in the direction
5 of the thunder. *They are at the gates.*
How then you looked at me, as if
I might send them away, as if with a few
low-toned, well-chosen words I could
send the thunder-gangs scuttling back
10 through all the holes in the sky.
As if there were no thunder deep
down in my own bones, no thunder
in yours, little son.

—Michael Dennis Browne
from *You Won't Remember This*, 1992
Carnegie Mellon University Press

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 In lines 2 and 3 the narrator conveys a sense of
(1) loneliness (3) determination
(2) gratitude (4) cleverness
- 22 The language used in lines 5 through 7 helps to convey the mother's difficulty in
(1) managing finances
(2) disciplining children
(3) sharing chores
(4) establishing routines
- 23 The mother's rules, as listed in lines 11 and 12, reveal an expectation of
(1) undeserved privilege
(2) social interaction
(3) personal responsibility
(4) unreasonable standards

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

- 24 The italicized words "*They are at the gates*" in line 5 suggest that the noise is
(1) unknown (3) getting closer
(2) just finishing (4) imaginary
- 25 Lines 6 through 10 reflect the boy's expectations of parental
(1) authority (3) discipline
(2) protection (4) guidance

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 family relationships. 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:

“... there is no ill in the world without a remedy.”

—Jacopo Sannazaro
excerpted from *Arcadia & Piscatorial Eclogues*, 1966
translated by Ralph Nash
Wayne State University Press

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

