

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

# COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

# ENGLISH

**Tuesday, January 11, 2011 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only**

Check to make sure that the answer sheet that has been given to you has your name and student ID entered on it. If the information has not been pre-entered, you must do so now. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it.

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.

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

## 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, using a No. 2 pencil, on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

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|--|---|
| <p>1 As stated by the speaker, letter writing presented Abigail Adams with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) an unexpected friendship</li><li>(2) a trivial pastime</li><li>(3) an emotional release</li><li>(4) a displeasing chore</li></ul> <p>2 For the speaker, the “journey” through Abigail Adams’ many letters proved to be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) revealing                      (3) humorous</li><li>(2) sorrowful                      (4) tedious</li></ul> <p>3 Which issue of world concern may have been influenced by Abigail Adams’ letters?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) medical policies              (3) land expansion</li><li>(2) free trade                      (4) military actions</li></ul> <p>4 By stating that Abigail Adams “reached beyond the kitchen and the nursery,” the speaker suggests that Abigail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) suffered from boredom</li><li>(2) broke with tradition</li><li>(3) sought new friends</li><li>(4) traveled the country</li></ul> | <p>5 Abigail Adams advised her husband to create laws that would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) protect women              (3) enforce treaties</li><li>(2) promote commerce        (4) supply troops</li></ul> <p>6 According to the account, the comparison of Abigail Adams to a “guiding planet around which all revolved” suggests her ability to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) isolate individuals</li><li>(2) encourage conformity</li><li>(3) initiate action</li><li>(4) criticize others</li></ul> <p>7 In recognizing that she was a “woman in a man’s world,” Abigail Adams reveals her</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) desire for fame              (3) sense of humor</li><li>(2) financial ability              (4) political awareness</li></ul> <p>8 The speaker’s tone in the account can be described as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) harsh                              (3) sarcastic</li><li>(2) respectful                      (4) objective</li></ul> |
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## Part 2

**Directions** (9–20): Below each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer, using a No. 2 pencil, on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

### Reading Comprehension Passage A

...It was late in December, the last busy days of the year. But the seven or eight boys on the windy beach were as lighthearted and free as ever. The eldest was twelve, the youngest nine. They were gathered beneath a dune in lively discussion. Some were standing. Others sat. One rested his chin in his hands, elbows dug deep in the sand. As they  
5 talked, the sun went down in the west.

Their talking now over, the boys galloped off along the water's edge. From inlet to inlet each ran as he pleased. The group was quickly dispersed. One by one they retrieved what the storm had brought two nights before and the ebb tide had left behind: rotted boards, a chipped bowl, bamboo slivers, chunks of wood, an old ladle with the handle torn off. The  
10 boys heaped them up on a dry patch of sand away from the lapping waves. All that they gathered was soaking wet. ...

The spoils of their hunt they had gathered for burning. With the red flames, wild joy would be theirs. Running and leaping across, they would prove their courage. And now from the dunes they gathered dry grass. The eldest stepped forward and touched it with  
15 fire. They stood in a circle and waited to hear the crack of bamboo split by the flames. But only the grass burned. It caught and died, caught and died. A few puffs of smoke floated up, nothing more. The wood, the bamboo were untouched. The mirror frame only was charred here and there. With a weird hiss, steam shot out from the end of the pole. One after another the boys dropped to the sand and blew at the pile as hard as they could. But  
20 instead of flames, smoke arose, stinging their eyes. Their cheeks were stained with tears. ...

Look, look, one boy shouted, the Izu hill fires! If their fires burn, then why shouldn't ours? All leaped to their feet, looking out towards the water. Far across the great Bay of Sagami two fires flickered and trembled, so feeble they might be just will-o'-the-wisps. Now that harvest is over, the farmers of Izu must be burning the chaff of their fields in the hills.  
25 Surely these are the fires that bring tears to the eyes of winter travellers. Their distant beams tell only of the long, dark road ahead.

The boys danced wildly and clapped and sang. The hills are burning, the hills are burning. Their innocent voices rang through the dusk, down the long, lonely beach. The whispering of the waves blended with their voices. The waves rushed in from the southern  
30 tip of the inlet in foaming white lines. The tide was beginning to rise. ...

Still vexed by their failure, the eldest boy looked back at the pile as he ran. One more time he looked back from the top of the dune before running down the far side. It has caught, he shouted, Our fire has caught, when he saw the flames on the beach. The others, amazed, climbed back to the top. They stood in a row and looked down.

It was true. The stubborn bits of wood, fanned by the wind, had caught fire. Smoke billowed up and red tongues of flame shot out, disappeared and shot out again. The sharp crack of bamboo joints splitting in the fire, the shower of sparks with each report.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the fire had caught. But the boys stood their ground, clapped and shouted with joy, then turned and raced down the hill for home.

<sup>1</sup>report — an explosive noise

40 Now the ocean was dark and from the beach, too, the sun was gone. All that was left was the winter night's loneliness. And on the desolate beach the fire burned, alone, untended. ...

— Kunikida Doppo  
excerpted from “The Bonfire”  
*Monumenta Nipponica: Studies in Japanese Culture*, 1970  
The Voyagers’ Press

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|--|---|
| 9 The word “But” (line 1) emphasizes the contrast between<br>(1) season and activity      (3) calmness and anger<br>(2) age and experience      (4) bravery and fear | 12 The repetition used in line 16 emphasizes the<br>(1) sand’s power              (3) boys’ hopes<br>(2) wind’s speed              (4) ocean’s beauty           |
| 10 The actions of the boys in lines 6 and 7 suggest a mood of<br>(1) fear                          (3) sadness<br>(2) excitement                (4) peacefulness     | 13 In line 31, “vexed” most nearly means<br>(1) scared                      (3) embarrassed<br>(2) threatened                (4) frustrated                     |
| 11 In line 12, “The spoils of their hunt” refers to<br>(1) large clams                (3) horseshoe crabs<br>(2) colorful rocks            (4) beach debris          | 14 The purpose of lines 40 through 42 is to<br>(1) personify the Sun<br>(2) describe the setting<br>(3) characterize the narrator<br>(4) demonstrate the action |
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## Reading Comprehension Passage B

Handcycling was developed in the 1980s by people working to create alternate types of human-powered vehicles. So it was almost by accident that a new world of cycling was opened to people with disabilities. ...

5 “The disabled community picked up on it right away,” said Ian Lawless, Colorado regional director and cycling director for Adaptive Adventures. Even people with one working arm can handcycle with some modifications made to the equipment, said Lawless. “Just about anyone can do it. It’s an accessible sport. It’s not just for racing; it’s also for recreational riding. It’s a barrier breaker that allows a disabled rider to participate in cycling with friends and families who may be riding conventional bicycles.”

10 In the 25 years since its development, handcycling has continued to grow in popularity. It’s been part of the IPC [International Paralympic Committee] cycling program since 1998, and the 2004 Paralympics included handcycling racing for the first time. Today, thousands of people, able-bodied and those with disabilities, have turned to handcycling as a means to improve their cardiovascular health, increase upper-body strength, compete, and ride with friends and family. ...

15 An upright handcycle is an entry-level bike for those who are new to the sport, who just want exercise or recreation, or who don’t want to ride very long distances or go very fast. Because of their higher center of gravity, upright handcycles aren’t suitable for speeds higher than 15 mph. The internal gear systems, borrowed from the cycling industry, usually come in a choice of three or seven speeds, which naturally limits the speed to less than 15 mph. They are easy to transfer in and out of from a wheelchair, and have a natural, fork-type steering system.

20 Recumbent<sup>1</sup> handcycles come in a few different variations. There are two steering options: fork-steer and lean-to-steer, and two seating options: one where the rider reclines and the other, a “trunk-power” version, where the rider leans forward. They usually come with 27-gear drivetrains,<sup>2</sup> although they can be purchased with three- or seven-gear drivetrains.

25 The trunk-power handcycle doesn’t have much of a seatback. The cranks are low to the ground and far away from the rider. With this arrangement, riders are able to put the weight of their trunks behind each stroke, allowing them to go faster for longer. The limitation to this type of handcycle, Lawless said, is that the athlete must have control of most or all of his abdominal muscles, so it may not be suitable for all athletes.

30 With the other seating option, the rider sits in a seat with a reclined back. The cranks are higher and closer, allowing the rider to use the seatback for leverage to rotate the cranks. ...

35 The lean-to-steer version has a two-piece frame where the top frame swivels over the bottom frame. The front wheel turns along with the seat. The rider initiates the turn by leaning his whole body. There is a bit of a learning curve with this type, but many riders prefer this type because they have a feel similar to monoskiing.<sup>3</sup> They’re used primarily, but not exclusively, by people with lower-level disabilities. Lawless said there’s no advantage of one type of steering over the other. It’s primarily a matter of the athlete’s preference. ...

— Disabled Sports USA  
excerpted from “Handcycling 101”  
*Challenge Magazine*, Spring 2005  
<http://www.dsusa.org>

<sup>1</sup>recumbent — reclining

<sup>2</sup>drivetrain — pedal connected to the gears to make the bike move forward

<sup>3</sup>monoskiing — one ski for both feet, using the whole body to steer

- 15 The passage includes the quotation about the handcycle being a “barrier breaker” (line 8) in order to stress its
- (1) durability
  - (2) affordability
  - (3) portability
  - (4) accessibility
- 16 The inclusion of handcycling in the 2004 Paralympics demonstrates its
- (1) profitability
  - (2) popularity
  - (3) dependability
  - (4) intensity
- 17 According to the passage, many people have turned to handcycling in order to
- (1) improve their health
  - (2) lower transportation costs
  - (3) reduce stress
  - (4) minimize pollution
- 18 As used in the passage, the phrase “learning curve” (line 38) refers to the
- (1) difficulty of learning a skill
  - (2) responsibility of individual riders
  - (3) braking mechanism
  - (4) safety features
- 19 According to the passage, the type of handcycle one should purchase might depend upon
- (1) unit cost
  - (2) structural defects
  - (3) individual weight
  - (4) physical needs
- 20 In discussing the advantages and disadvantages of various handcycle designs, the author uses which strategy?
- (1) personal anecdote
  - (2) cause and effect
  - (3) comparison and contrast
  - (4) chronological order
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## Part 3

**Directions:** Read the passages on the following pages (an excerpt from an essay and a poem) about work. 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

...My house occupies an average-sized lot in the old courthouse town where I grew up, and where I returned to raise my own children, but it's on a corner, and in winter that makes all the difference. The sidewalk stretches 50 feet across the front of the house, a reasonable assignment for one man and a shovel. But then it turns and unspools for 160 feet along the side of the house, a distance that seems to lengthen as the snow deepens.

5 If I lived in an isolated corner of town, my sidewalk might not beckon me so insistently each snowfall. If I were the only one who needed it to get somewhere, maybe I could let the snow rest undisturbed on it for a while, and admire, at least briefly, the fresh sheet of white billowing out to the curb. But four doors down is the high school, and around  
10 the corner in the other direction is the elementary school. A crossing guard stands out front in the morning. I have obligations.

I first learned about the obligations imposed by snow from my grandfather, long before I had a sidewalk of my own. My grandparents lived in the house behind ours when I was a boy, and they, like us, had the requisite 50 feet of sidewalk to care for. But my grandfather  
15 worked as the custodian at the savings and loan a few doors away, on a busy stretch of Main Street. It was a corner lot, too, maybe twice as wide and deep as my own; its sidewalk felt miles long when I used to help him clear it.

Before they moved into town, my grandparents had lived nearby on a small farm, which my grandmother never missed and my grandfather never quite got over. She had muscled  
20 the farm along while he worked at a factory in town, and she was glad to leave the butchering of chickens behind. But he kept planting fields in his head, and he cultivated his small new patch of land as if it were his sustenance. The white picket fence around his lush backyard garden could barely contain his bountiful crops. He died 25 years ago, but people  
25 in town still stop me to talk about his tomatoes. ...

The farms that once circled my town are all but gone now, including my grandparents', and in many of the housing developments that replaced them there are no sidewalks at all. Nobody travels by foot anywhere, and nobody is responsible for the safe winter passage of the neighbors. Friends of mine who live out there have a different, narrower obligation  
30 when it snows: to shovel their driveways, so their cars can reach the roads.

But children would be walking past my house to school in the morning, and it was my job to make the way clear before they arrived. The snow was feathery, just a couple of inches—nothing like the blizzard that took almost a full day to dig through—and when I  
35 was done, I stood leaning on my shovel for a moment, looking with satisfaction down the long path that stretched to the corner. I can't grow tomatoes anything like my grandfather's, but my shoveling will suffice. I had cleared the way, as he always had, for whoever might follow.

In the morning, news came of a delayed opening for school: two hours. It was a welcome reprieve, because more snow had fallen through the night. I went out and shoveled again. Later I got up from my desk to watch through the window as the morning

40 traffic commenced along my sidewalk, where nothing stopped the children—or anyone else—from wherever they needed to go.

— Kevin Coyne  
excerpted from “Clearing Paths to the Past”  
from *The New York Times*, February 15, 2009

## Passage II

### To be of use

The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.

5 They seem to become natives of that element,  
the black sleek heads of seals  
bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,  
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,  
10 who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,  
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge  
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest  
and work in a row and pass the bags along,  
15 who stand in the line and haul in their places,  
who are not parlor generals and field deserters  
but move in a common rhythm  
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

— Marge Piercy  
from *To Be of Use*, 1973  
Doubleday & Company, Inc.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (21–25): Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer, using a No. 2 pencil, on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

**Passage I** (the essay excerpt) — Questions 21–23 refer to Passage I.

- 21 The author lists the length of his sidewalk in order to
- (1) complain about his neighbors
  - (2) exaggerate his importance
  - (3) emphasize his efforts
  - (4) show off his property
- 22 The author’s feelings about his grandfather can best be described as
- (1) indifferent
  - (2) admiring
  - (3) troubled
  - (4) envious
- 23 The author’s attitude about shoveling can best be summed up by which statement?
- (1) “I have obligations” (line 11)
  - (2) “its sidewalk felt miles long” (lines 16 and 17)
  - (3) “nobody is responsible” (line 27)
  - (4) “It was a welcome reprieve” (lines 37 and 38)

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

- 24 The narrator uses the phrases “who harness” (line 8), “who pull” (line 9), “who strain” (line 10), and “who do” (line 11) to emphasize the
- (1) repetitious nature of labor
  - (2) rewards of hard work
  - (3) perils of farm chores
  - (4) slow pace of rural life
- 25 As used in the poem, the phrase “parlor generals” (line 16) suggests those who
- (1) lead naturally
  - (2) ignore advice
  - (3) follow carefully
  - (4) avoid participation

### Short-Response Questions

**Directions** (26–27): Write your response 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 passages to establish a controlling idea about work. Develop your controlling idea using specific examples and details from each passage.

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 that passage, 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:

“...although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.”  
—Helen Keller  
*Optimism*, 1903

### 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



