

SESSION TWO

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION TWO

Wednesday, June 23, 1999 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

The last page of this booklet is the answer sheet for the multiple-choice questions. Fold the last page along the perforations and, slowly and carefully, tear off the answer sheet. Then fill in the heading of your answer sheet. Now circle "Session Two" and fill in the heading of each page of your essay booklet.

This session of the examination has two parts. For Part A, you are to answer all ten multiple-choice questions and write a response, as directed. For Part B, you are to write a response, as directed.

When you have completed this session of the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the end of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the session and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the session. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.

Part A

Directions: Read the passages on the following pages (an essay and a poem). Write the number of the answer to each multiple-choice question on your answer sheet. Then write the essay in your essay booklet as described in **Your Task**. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

Your Task:

After you have read the passages and answered the multiple-choice questions, write a unified essay about the influence of teachers on the lives of their students, as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about the influence of teachers on the lives of their students. Using evidence from **each** passage, develop your controlling idea and show how the author uses specific literary elements or techniques to convey that idea.

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about the influence of teachers on the lives of their students
- Use specific and relevant evidence from **each** passage to develop your controlling idea
- Show how each author uses specific literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, structure, point of view) or techniques (for example: symbolism, irony, figurative language) to convey the controlling idea
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Use language that communicates ideas effectively
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Passage I

What Miss Hopley said to us we did not know, but we saw in her eyes a warm welcome, and when she took off her glasses and straightened up, she smiled wholeheartedly. We were, of course, saying nothing, only catching the friendliness of her voice and the sparkle in her eyes while she said words we did not understand. She signaled us to the table. Almost tiptoeing across the office, I maneuvered myself to keep my mother between me and the American lady. In a matter of seconds I had to decide whether she was a possible friend or a menace. We sat down.

Then Miss Hopley did a formidable thing. She stood up. Had she been standing when we entered, she would have seemed tall. But rising from her chair, she soared. And what she carried up and up with her was a buxom superstructure, firm shoulders, a straight sharp nose, full cheeks slightly molded by a curved line along the nostrils, thin lips that moved like steel springs and a high forehead topped by hair gathered in a bun. Miss Hopley was not a giant in body, but when she mobilized it to a standing position, she seemed a match for giants. I decided I liked her.

She strode to a door in the far corner of the office, opened it, and called a name. A boy of about ten years appeared in the doorway. He sat down at one end of the table. He was brown like us, a plump kid with shiny black hair combed straight back, neat, cool, and faintly obnoxious.

Miss Hopley joined us with a large book and some papers in her hand. She, too, sat down and the questions and answers began by way of our interpreter. My name was Ernesto. My mother's name was Henriqueta. My birth certificate was in San Blas. Here was my last report card from the *Escuela Municipal Número 3 para Varones* of Mazatlán, and so forth. Miss Hopley put things down in the book, and my mother signed a card.

As long as the questions continued, Doña Henriqueta could stay and I was secure. Now that they were over, Miss Hopley saw her to the door, dismissed our interpreter, and without further ado took me by the hand and strode down the hall to Miss Ryan's first grade.

Miss Ryan took me to a seat at the front of the room, into which I shrank—the better to survey her. She was—to skinny, somewhat runty me—of a withering height when she patrolled the class. And when I least expected it, there she was, crouching by my desk, her blond radiant face level with mine, her voice patiently maneuvering me over the awful idiocies of the English language.

During the next few weeks Miss Ryan overcame my fears of tall, energetic teachers as she bent over my desk to help me with a word in the preprimer. Step by step, she loosened me and my classmates from the safe anchorage of the desks for recitations at the blackboard and consultations at her desk. Frequently she burst into happy announcements to the whole class. "Ito can read a sentence," and Japanese Ito, small and shy, slowly read aloud while the class listened in wonder: "Come, Skipper, come. Come and run." The Korean, Portuguese, Italian, and Polish first graders had similar moments of glory no less shining than mine the day I conquered *butterfly*, which I had been persistently pronouncing in standard Spanish as *boo-ter-flee*. "Children," Miss Ryan called for attention. "Ernesto has learned how to pronounce *butterfly*!" And I proved it with a perfect imitation

of Miss Ryan. From that celebrated success, I was soon able to match Ito's progress as a sentence reader with "Come, butterfly, come fly with me."

50 Like Ito and several other first graders who did not know English, I received private lessons from Miss Ryan in the closet, a narrow hall off the classroom with a door at each end. Next to one of these doors Miss Ryan placed a large chair for herself and a small one for me. Keeping an eye on the class through the open door, she read with me about sheep in the meadow and a frightened chicken going to see the king, coaching me out of my phonetic ruts in words like *pasture*,
55 *bow-wow-wow*, *hay*, and *pretty*, which to my Mexican ear and eye had so many unnecessary sounds and letters. She made me watch her lips and then close my eyes as she repeated words I found hard to read. When we came to know each other better, I tried interrupting to tell Miss Ryan how we said it in Spanish. It didn't work. She only said "oh" and went on with *pasture*, *bow-wow-wow*, and
60 *pretty*. It was as if in that closet we were both discovering together the secrets of the English language and grieving together over the tragedies of Bo-Peep. The main reason I was graduated with honors from the first grade was that I had fallen in love with Miss Ryan. Her radiant, no-nonsense character made us either afraid not to love her or love her so we would not be afraid; I am not sure which. It was
65 not only that we sensed she was with it, but also that she was with us.

Like the first grade, the rest of the Lincoln School was a sampling of the lower part of town where many races made their home. My pals in the second grade were Kazushi, whose parents spoke only Japanese; Matti, a thin Italian boy; and Manuel, a heavy Portuguese who would never get into a fight but wrestled you to
70 the ground and just sat on you. Our assortment of nationalities included Koreans, Yugoslavs, Poles, Irish, and home-grown Americans.

Miss Hopley and her teachers never let us forget why we were at Lincoln: for those who were alien, to become good Americans; for those who were so born, to accept the rest of us. Off the school grounds we traded the same insults we heard
75 from our elders. On the playground we were sure to be marched up to the principal's office for calling someone a bad name. The school was not so much a melting pot as a griddle, where Miss Hopley and her helpers warmed knowledge into us and roasted racial hatreds out of us.

At Lincoln, making us into Americans did not mean scrubbing away what made
80 us originally foreign. The teachers called us as our parents did or as close as they could pronounce our names in Spanish or Japanese. No one was ever scolded or punished for speaking in his native tongue on the playground. Matti told the class about his mother's down quilt, which she had made in Italy with the fine feathers of a thousand geese. Encarnación acted out how boys learned to fish in the
85 Philippines. I astounded the third grade with the story of my travels on a stage-coach, which nobody else in the class had seen except in the museum at Sutter's Fort. After a visit to the Crocker Art Gallery and its collection of heroic paintings of the golden age of California, someone showed a silk scroll with a Chinese painting. Miss Hopley herself had a way of expressing wonder over these matters
90 before a class, her eyes wide open until they popped slightly. It was easy for me to feel that becoming a proud American, as she said we should, did not mean feeling ashamed of being a Mexican.

— Ernesto Gallarzo
from *Barrio Boy*

Passage II

Tornado Drill

In the long afternoon of first
grade we sat in straight rows, eyes
swelling as Mrs. Wells implored us
with her pointer to write the alphabet
5 *neatly*, as the chalkboard models showed.
Thick pencils slithered from our
fingers—we were too tired to learn and too
sleepy to practice t's and d's. The sun blazed
through the venetian blinds and covered us
10 with fabulous stripes. Then the sky
grew heavy and Mrs. Wells stood guard
at the windows. The air tasted blue
and thin, like a sheriff's tin star.
We drowsed lower, as if we could
15 no longer support our weight.
Marion Vlaanderan clutched her ribs.
"I can't breathe!" she whispered, dramatic,
and I knew we were destined for trouble.
A cold darkness swallowed the school.
20 Dollops of rain battered the glass,
and the alarm blared. "A tornado!"
someone shouted. We startled
from our desks like birds. Mrs. Wells caught
Don Davis by the wrist and snapped him to her hip.
25 "It's just a drill," she said, and that was all we
needed—we whipped into two lines,
boys on the left, girls on the right,
just as we'd practiced. The girls shrugged
into the hall and crouched on their haunches,
30 facing the wall. The boys stood behind them
and leaned over, stretching like bridges
to shelter them. Lightning sizzled the stairwell.
The building shuddered. Wild snakes
of wind slithered around us. "Hang on!"
35 Mrs. Wells shouted and as I straddled
Patti Holmes and hung on for dear
life I imagined chunks of concrete
crushing this bridge of boys. The black
wind shunted down, shaking the school
40 and straining our spines and arms—
the bridge wavered and sagged.
And then Mrs. Wells said it was time
to go back and the lights went on
and our bodies glowed with haloes.
45 Wild-eyed, we filed back to the room
where the blinds hung like crazy fan blades.
The floor was spattered with wet tablets

and dirt and broken clay pots and thirty-three
 bean plants with their roots exposed.
 50 Outside the sun was shining and the air
 was already hot. As we crossed
 the rubble we knew we had survived
 only the first mystery of love—this wreck
 was proof that we were all headed
 55 for a long schooling.

— David Martin

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–10): Write your answers to these questions on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about the ideas and information you might want to use in your essay. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

Passage I (the essay) — Questions 1–6 refer to Passage I.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Lines 5 through 8 suggest that the narrator initially viewed Miss Hopley with an attitude of</p> <p>1 enthusiasm 3 hostility
 2 helpfulness 4 suspicion</p> <p>2 The word “formidable” (line 9) most nearly means</p> <p>1 outlandish 3 narrow-minded
 2 awe-inspiring 4 curious</p> <p>3 The purpose of the meeting between Miss Hopley and Doña Henriqueta is to</p> <p>1 determine whether Doña Henriqueta is a good mother
 2 interview Doña Henriqueta for a job
 3 enroll the narrator in school
 4 discuss the narrator’s problems</p> <p>4 Miss Ryan’s announcements to the class (lines 40 through 46) were probably intended to</p> <p>1 instill pride
 2 relieve boredom
 3 eliminate confusion
 4 encourage originality</p> | <p>5 The term “phonetic ruts” (line 54) refers to the narrator’s</p> <p>1 bad moods
 2 poor habits
 3 language difficulties
 4 health problems</p> <p>6 Miss Hopley and her teachers helped the students to “become good Americans” by</p> <p>1 eliminating cultural influences
 2 accepting unusual pronunciations
 3 discouraging their native languages
 4 celebrating their traditions</p> |
|--|--|

Passage II (the poem) — Questions 7–10 refer to Passage II.

7 In lines 6 through 15, the description of the students suggests that the air in the classroom was

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1 oppressive | 3 fragrant |
| 2 chilly | 4 transparent |

8 The teacher's response to the alarm was to

- 1 express anger at one of the students
- 2 follow the students out of the building
- 3 appoint a student to lead the others
- 4 remind the students of a familiar routine

9 The "mystery of love" (line 53) most likely refers to the

- 1 building of the school
- 2 actions of the teacher
- 3 causes of the tornado
- 4 anxiety of the children

10 Who is the narrator of the poem?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1 the teacher | 3 a girl in the class |
| 2 the principal | 4 a boy in the class |

After you have finished these questions, turn to page 2. Review **Your Task** and the **Guidelines**. Use scrap paper to plan your response. Then write your response to Part A, beginning on page 1 in your essay booklet. After you finish your response for Part A, go on to page 8 of your examination booklet and complete Part B.

Part B

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 in Part B, beginning on page 9 of your essay booklet.

Critical Lens:

“In literature, evil often triumphs but never conquers.”

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

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH
SESSION TWO**

Wednesday, June 23, 1999 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

ANSWER SHEET

Student Sex: Male Female

School Grade Teacher

Write your answers for the multiple-choice questions for Part A on this answer sheet.

Part A

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 7 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 8 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 9 _____ |
| 5 _____ | 10 _____ |



**HAND IN THIS ANSWER SHEET WITH YOUR ESSAY BOOKLET,
SCRAP PAPER, AND EXAMINATION BOOKLET.**

Your essay responses for Part A and Part B should be written in the essay booklet.

I do hereby affirm, at the close of this examination, that I had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that I have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination.

Signature

Tear Here

Tear Here