

# SESSION ONE

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION ONE

Thursday, June 15, 2000 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

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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 One” and fill in the heading of each page of your essay booklet.

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

**Overview:** For this part of the test, you will listen to a speech by blues musician B. B. King, answer some multiple-choice questions, and write a response based on the situation described below. You will hear the speech twice. You may take notes on the next page anytime you wish during the readings.

**The Situation:** As part of a concert series offered by your local arts council, blues musician B. B. King is scheduled to perform in your community. In anticipation of King's forthcoming concert, the editor of the school newspaper has asked you to prepare a feature article for the newspaper in which you describe how King's early experiences helped to shape King's career as a blues musician. In preparation for writing your feature article, listen to a speech by B. B. King. Then use relevant information from the speech to write your article.

**Your Task:** Write a feature article for your school newspaper describing how B. B. King's early experiences helped to shape his career as a blues musician.

### Guidelines:

#### Be sure to

- Tell your audience what they need to know about B. B. King and how his early experiences helped to shape his career as a blues musician
- Use specific, accurate, and relevant information from the speech to support your discussion
- Use a tone and level of language appropriate for a feature article for a school newspaper
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Indicate any words taken directly from the speech by using quotation marks or referring to the speaker
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

## NOTES

**DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (1–6): Use your notes to answer the following questions about the passage read to you. Select the best suggested answer and write its number in the space provided on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about ideas and information you might use in your writing. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

- 1 According to the speaker, the blues originated in the
  - 1 patterns of mathematics
  - 2 sounds of nature
  - 3 experiences of slaves
  - 4 rhythms of machines
  
- 2 Some of the songs the speaker heard in the fields as a child were intended to
  - 1 soothe troubles
  - 2 instruct children
  - 3 protest injustice
  - 4 establish routines
  
- 3 Where did the speaker’s gospel singing group usually perform?
  - 1 on street corners
  - 2 in local schools
  - 3 in cotton fields
  - 4 in area churches
  
- 4 The speaker describes the 12-bar blues as having
  - 1 a simple structure
  - 2 an unusual rhyme scheme
  - 3 a hidden message
  - 4 an ancient melody
  
- 5 The speaker implies that his experience as a street musician taught him that, compared to singing gospel, singing blues was
  - 1 easier
  - 2 better paying
  - 3 more fun
  - 4 more prestigious
  
- 6 When he refers to the blues as “the grandfather watching over his children,” the narrator means that blues music is
  - 1 more popular than rock, rap, and soul music
  - 2 less sophisticated than rock, rap, and soul music
  - 3 likely to be replaced by rock, rap, and soul music
  - 4 the source of rock, rap, and soul music

After you have finished these questions, turn to page 2. Review **The Situation** and read **Your Task** and the **Guidelines**. Use scrap paper to plan your response. Then write your response in Part A, beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet. After you finish your response to Part A, go to page 5 of your examination booklet and complete Part B.

## Part B

**Directions:** Read the text and study the graph on the following pages, answer the multiple-choice questions, and write a response based on the situation described below. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

**The Situation:** Your community is being considered as a possible site for a new hazardous waste incinerator. As a volunteer reporter for your local newspaper, you have been assigned to research another community's experiences with hazardous waste incineration and write an editorial in which you agree **or** disagree with the idea of building a hazardous waste incinerator in your community.

**Your Task:** Using relevant information from **both** documents, write an editorial for your local newspaper agreeing **or** disagreeing with the proposal to build a hazardous waste incinerator in your community.

### Guidelines:

#### Be sure to

- Tell your audience what they need to know about the controversies surrounding hazardous waste incineration in East Liverpool, Ohio
- Take a position either for **or** against building a hazardous waste incinerator in your community
- Use specific, accurate, and relevant information from the text **and** the graph to support your position
- Use a tone and level of language appropriate for an editorial for your local newspaper
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Indicate any words taken directly from the text by using quotation marks or referring to the author
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

## Hazardous Waste Incineration

With their town falling on hard times, the town officials of East Liverpool, Ohio, were eager to secure new jobs and income for their citizens. In 1981, a company called Waste Technologies, Inc., (WTI) decided to build and operate a hazardous waste incinerator in East Liverpool. The town officials approved the incinerator. Many people in East Liverpool looked forward to the change in the local economy. “It’s been 50 years since a major industry has moved to East Liverpool,” says Michael Parkes of the local Chamber of Commerce. “Having a new industry come here is unheard of.”

Building the incinerator has been easier than using it. The incinerator is the seventh largest in the country. Construction on the incinerator was completed in 1992. However, since the plans for the incinerator were announced in 1981, the incinerator has been a center of controversy.

### The Lesser of Two Evils

The East Liverpool incinerator controversy revolves around possible health risks and the potential threat to the local environment. While town officials at first thought that health risks from the incinerator would be minimal, some East Liverpool citizens did not. Those people who feared the risks of living near the incinerator took the matter to court and held protest rallies. Already these protests have delayed the plant’s opening.

Not everyone fears the incinerator. Some people are quick to point out the benefits of incineration. East Liverpool resident Denny Brennan says he favors the incinerator. He feels that the incinerator is an environmentally sound way to dispose of hazardous wastes. “This installation is safe. Where [else] are you going to dump that stuff? It’s got to go somewhere. I can show you places where the sides of a hill are covered with dumped chemicals,” Brennan says.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that the United States produces at least 240 million metric tons of hazardous wastes each year. Industry is by far the largest source, generating waste as it manufactures the products people expect to use in their everyday lives. The EPA definition of hazardous wastes does not include waste produced by hospitals, small businesses, and households. Nonetheless, paint, oven cleaner, and motor oil are considered hazardous waste when it comes time to throw them away. They too must be disposed of carefully.

### Hard to Handle

In the past, hazardous wastes were commonly dumped on the land, buried in the ground, injected into deep wells, or dumped into the ocean. Sometimes organic chemical compounds, biological wastes, and flammable materials were incinerated.

Each of these disposal methods is a potential threat to public health and to the environment. When hazardous wastes are dumped onto the ground or injected into deep wells, the waste may move into groundwater, poisoning water supplies. Buried containers may leak hazardous wastes, contaminating soil and water. When hazardous wastes are burned in open fires—or in incinerators that don’t have proper pollution controls—the emissions pollute the air.

The EPA has hundreds of documented cases on file describing damage from the improper management of hazardous wastes. The towns of Toone and Teague,

45 Tennessee, are examples. Their water supplies were contaminated with organic  
compounds when water leached from a nearby landfill. When the landfill closed,  
it held some 350,000 drums filled with hazardous wastes. Many of the drums  
were leaking pesticide-related wastes. Today the two towns no longer have local  
access to uncontaminated groundwater.

50 Proper waste management means more than just careful disposal. It also  
means consideration of other options. A small percentage of hazardous wastes are  
stored in EPA-approved, secured landfills. These are specially designed landfills  
that are continually monitored.

55 A smaller percentage of hazardous wastes are currently being incinerated.  
Modern incinerators aren't anything like the smoke-belching, air-polluting ovens  
of a hundred years ago. Today's hazardous waste incinerators are sophisticated,  
high-tech facilities. They are clean and computer-controlled and have many  
safety systems. Incineration destroys organic hazardous substances and reduces  
waste volume. The remaining ash, which contains toxic metals, is then deposited  
in a hazardous waste site.

### **Too Close for Comfort**

60 People who live close to a modern hazardous waste incinerator may worry  
about what is released into the air from the stacks. The people understand that  
the emissions can contain toxic chemicals that can be health hazards. Because the  
pollution is in the air they breathe, people may be exposed to chemicals in their  
homes, schools, and workplaces. Excessive exposure to these toxic chemicals  
65 could lead to birth defects and an increased risk of cancer.

How much of an airborne pollutant is "too much"? The EPA and other public  
and private researchers study the dangers of incinerator emissions. These long-  
term studies report the risk of cancer from incinerator emissions to be no greater  
than 1 person in 100,000. According to the EPA, this is an "acceptable risk."

70 However, many members of the public believe there is no such thing as an  
acceptable risk. They think that if you are exposed to *any* cancer-causing chemi-  
cals you are at risk.

75 WTI argues that the plant in East Liverpool will have little impact on the envi-  
ronment. "We are the best, the safest, the newest," says WTI spokesperson Julia  
Bircher. The incinerator has been redesigned several times during the last twelve  
years. WTI has used the latest incinerator and pollution control technologies. The  
company claims that its incinerator safely destroys 99.99 percent of the waste  
put into it. WTI also says that the plant's air pollution control system will elimi-  
nate nearly everything from its air emissions except for water vapor and carbon  
80 dioxide.

### **A Town Divided**

85 It's the "nearly everything" that has some citizens and environmental groups  
worried. The incinerator has the capability of burning approximately 80,000 tons  
of hazardous waste per year. If 99.99 percent of that waste is destroyed, several  
tons of pollutants may still go up the stacks. Opponents to the incinerator point  
out that people who live in nearby homes will breathe these pollutants. Some  
town residents feel that emissions from the incinerator will be deposited in water  
supplies and on food crops in the region.

90 The incinerator debate has disrupted friendships and families throughout East Liverpool. Sandy Estell lives in a neighborhood next to the incinerator. She says, “There are so many bad feelings, it’s going to be hard to put all this behind us.” Video store owner Vern Shafer, Jr., says, “This town basically has been destroyed. People who were friends for 50 years won’t even talk to each other, just because of a stand taken over WTI.”

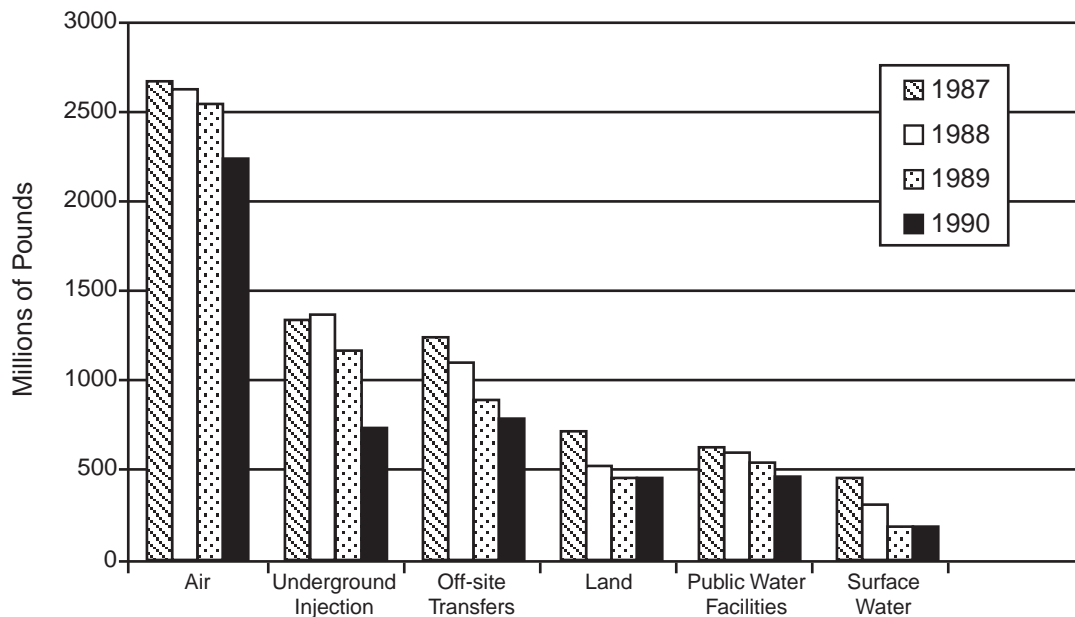
**Standing Idle**

95 In April 1993, the EPA approved limited operation of the incinerator after WTI completed a trial burn. However, additional data later led to the EPA placing further restrictions on how much waste the plant could safely burn. This reopened discussions about the incinerator’s safety. The incinerator will bring jobs and tax revenues to a town in great need of both. Perhaps most importantly, the incinerator will destroy dangerous hazardous wastes that would otherwise  
 100 have to be destroyed or stored elsewhere. How does a town balance the possible health risks from having a hazardous waste incinerator nearby against what some see as the town’s economic survival? There are no easy answers.

— Robert F. Ehrhardt

**GRAPH**

**Disposal Method of Toxic Chemicals by Industry**





## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (7–16): Select the best suggested answer to each question and write its number in the space provided on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about ideas and information you might want to use in your writing. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

- 7 In lines 6 through 8, Michael Parkes implies that locating an incinerator in his community would result in improved
- 1 government efficiency
  - 2 environmental conditions
  - 3 educational facilities
  - 4 economic opportunity
- 8 According to the author, much of the hazardous waste produced by industry is the result of
- 1 inexperienced factory workers
  - 2 normal manufacturing processes
  - 3 unusual energy sources
  - 4 modern medical practices
- 9 The author cites the towns of Toone and Teague in order to demonstrate the effects of waste improperly disposed of in
- 1 deep wells
  - 2 the ocean
  - 3 landfills
  - 4 incinerators
- 10 The author uses the term “acceptable risk” (line 69) to refer to the possibility of
- 1 emission-related disease
  - 2 accident-related injury
  - 3 mechanical breakdown
  - 4 computer failure
- 11 The author implies that although Waste Technologies, Inc., (WTI) claims that “its incinerator safely destroys 99.99 percent of the waste” (line 77), some opponents think this figure
- 1 requires too much energy
  - 2 sets an unreachable goal
  - 3 exposes WTI’s untruthfulness
  - 4 allows too much pollution
- 12 The author implies that some East Liverpool residents feared that food crops would be damaged by
- 1 chemical pesticides
  - 2 airborne pollutants
  - 3 topsoil erosion
  - 4 water shortages
- 13 In lines 91 through 93, the store owner implies that one effect of locating the incinerator in his community has been
- 1 financial loss
  - 2 physical inconvenience
  - 3 social conflict
  - 4 political instability
- 14 The author implies that the role of the EPA concerning the East Liverpool incinerator was to
- 1 operate it
  - 2 build it
  - 3 design it
  - 4 regulate it
- 15 According to the graph, which disposal method was used *least* during the time period shown?
- 1 air
  - 2 underground injection
  - 3 surface water
  - 4 land
- 16 From the years 1987 to 1990, the graph shows an overall decrease in the
- 1 cost of toxic chemical disposal methods
  - 2 weight of toxic chemicals being disposed of
  - 3 number of hazardous waste facilities
  - 4 amount of toxic ash produced by incinerators

After you have finished these questions, turn to page 5. Review **The Situation** and read **Your Task** and the **Guidelines**. Use scrap paper to plan your response. Then write your response to Part B, beginning on page 7 of your essay booklet.



COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

SESSION ONE

Thursday, June 15, 2000 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

ANSWER SHEET

Session One – Essay A \_\_\_\_\_  
Essay B \_\_\_\_\_

Session Two – Essay A \_\_\_\_\_  
Essay B \_\_\_\_\_

Total Essay Score

Session One –  
A–Multiple Choice \_\_\_\_\_  
B–Multiple Choice \_\_\_\_\_

Session Two –  
A–Multiple Choice \_\_\_\_\_

Total Multiple Choice

Final Score

Tear Here

Student ..... Sex:  Male  Female

School ..... Grade ..... Teacher .....

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

- | Part A               | Part B               |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 _____              | 7 _____              |
| 2 _____              | 8 _____              |
| 3 _____              | 9 _____              |
| 4 _____              | 10 _____             |
| 5 _____              | 11 _____             |
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| <input type="text"/> | 13 _____             |
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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

