

# SESSION ONE

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION ONE

**Wednesday, August 16, 2000 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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 about the importance of music and art in people's lives, 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:** Some schools in your region are considering the possibility of cutting arts education programs from the school curriculum for financial reasons. You have decided to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper arguing for the importance of an education in the arts. In preparation for writing your letter, listen to poet Samuel Hazo, speaking to a 1997 statewide meeting of music educators. Then use relevant information from the speech to write your letter.

**Your Task:** Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in which you argue for the importance of an education in the arts. *Write only the body of the letter.*

### Guidelines:

#### Be sure to

- Tell your audience what they need to know to be persuaded of the value of an education in the arts
- Use specific, accurate, and relevant information from the speech to support your argument
- Use a tone and level of language appropriate for a letter to the editor of the local 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.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 The speaker refers to the derivation of the word “economics” to suggest that cutting arts education programs is an example of</p> <p>1 false analogy                      3 family survival<br/>2 poor management                4 local control</p> <p>2 The speaker argues that the purpose of education is to</p> <p>1 nurture the imagination<br/>2 stimulate the economy<br/>3 preserve tradition<br/>4 encourage competition</p> <p>3 The speaker mentions Jefferson, Shakespeare, and Disney to emphasize the</p> <p>1 similarity in their backgrounds<br/>2 differences in their status<br/>3 impact of their contributions<br/>4 source of their creativity</p> | <p>4 According to the speaker, an emphasis on “bottom-line thinking” has the effect of</p> <p>1 strengthening industry<br/>2 focusing education<br/>3 cheapening society<br/>4 reducing unemployment</p> <p>5 The speaker refers to the Constitution to emphasize that the arts have the potential to promote</p> <p>1 reason                                      3 security<br/>2 unity                                        4 individualism</p> <p>6 According to the speaker, the United States is defined by its</p> <p>1 youth                                        3 heroes<br/>2 visitors                                      4 art</p> |
|---|--|

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 for Part A, go to page 5 of your examination booklet and complete Part B.

## Part B

**Directions:** Read the text and study the graphic 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:** Students in your communications class are studying the television ratings system developed by the television industry. For a class debate, your teacher has asked you to write a position paper indicating whether you agree **or** disagree that the ratings system will help parents and guardians monitor their children’s television viewing.

**Your Task:** Using relevant information from **both** documents, write a position paper for your communications class in which you agree **or** disagree that the television ratings system will help parents and guardians monitor their children’s television viewing.

### Guidelines:

#### Be sure to

- Tell your audience what they need to know about the controversy surrounding the television ratings system
- Indicate whether you agree **or** disagree that the ratings system will help parents and guardians monitor their children’s television viewing
- Use specific, accurate, and relevant information from the text **and** the graphic to support your position
- Use a tone and level of language appropriate for a position paper for communications class
- 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

## Television Ratings System

Parents of young children may soon see a familiar sight on television: a bearded, rotund fellow wearing a bright blue coat, surrounded by animals and accompanied by a lanky helper with the improbable name of Mr. Green Jeans.

5 That's right: Captain Kangaroo is back! Four decades of kids grew up with the original Captain. Now, with a new cast, the show is being revived.

"It's a big, wonderful show that you and I grew up watching and that you don't see on TV that much anymore," says Saban Entertainment's Robert Loos, one of the producers of "The All New Captain Kangaroo." "It's entertaining as well as educational, it's kind and gentle, and it keeps you laughing while you learn."

10 The Captain Kangaroo formula had an enviable record of holding audiences and advertisers during its commercial TV run. But the show has an added appeal: producers are designing the series to help commercial TV stations meet the new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirement to provide at least three hours a week of "core educational programming" for children.

15 "This is the first time that there is a clear quantitative guideline on children's programming," says Kathryn Montgomery, president of the Center for Media Education, which led the lobbying drive for the rule. "It's clear that the industry knows it has to respond."

20 The FCC adopted the rule last summer after broadcasters acceded to pressure from a coalition of advocacy groups and a nudge from the White House. Broadcasters, however, say they were already meeting kids' needs for educational shows.

25 "We have done a good job with children's programming," says Dennis Wharton, vice president of media relations for the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). Wharton says the industry "voluntarily agreed" to the adoption of the FCC rule, which put a concrete number on a more generally worded requirement included in the Children's Television Act of 1990.

30 "We've been producing at least three hours a week [of children's programs] ever since we started," says Margaret Loesch, who founded the popular Fox Children's Network (now Fox Kids) in 1990. "We felt [the rule] was appropriate," Loesch says, "because it was an important issue and because we're parents."

In fact, the TV offerings for kids have never been greater or more varied. The seemingly endless cartoon and action shows are supplemented by an assortment of educational offerings and a few teen-oriented dramas.

35 Even longtime critics of children's television are begrudgingly complimentary. "It is getting better, and it will get better," Montgomery says.

40 Children's television is not a charitable enterprise, however, but a business, and a lucrative one. Advertisers spent nearly \$1 billion on children's programming in 1996. Animated programs accounted for about \$688 million, or 76 percent of the total. Educational and instructional programs pulled in just \$1.4 million.

"There's money to be made in kids' entertainment," says Cyma Zarghami, senior vice president of programming and general manager of Nickelodeon, a children's cable network.

45 But young people watch more than children's programs in the 15–20 hours a week they spend watching TV. With the expanding number of broadcast and cable channels—and the expanding number of TV sets in the home—kids can now watch violent adult dramas and sex-tinged situation comedies almost any time of day. As a result, many parents now view TV as a decidedly unwholesome influence in their children's lives.

50 That widespread concern fueled the drive over the past 18 months to persuade the television industry to adopt a ratings system to help parents decide what their children should watch. Initially, an age-based system was devised that mimicked the ratings used for movies. But the system was criticized as inadequate by a coalition that included groups specializing in children's television issues as well as the National  
55 PTA, National Education Association (NEA), and American Medical Association (AMA). They argued that parents needed more specific information about the content of programs—specifically violence, sex, and language.


Those arguments had strong support in official Washington. President Bill Clinton helped persuade the TV industry to agree to a rating system, and Vice  
60 President Al Gore had long paid close attention to children's television issues. On Capitol Hill, lawmakers of both parties were criticizing the amount of sex and violence on television and urging the industry to help parents limit children's intake of inappropriate fare.

Faced with the combination of public and political pressure—and an unenthusiastic public response to the limited ratings system—most of the TV industry agreed  
65 last month to more detailed advisories. The new system will rate programs both by age and by content, as indicated below. The new ratings system begins with the age-based ratings symbols first instituted by the industry and adds a letter when appropriate to denote potentially objectionable content: “V” for violence, “S” for sexual situations, “L” for coarse language, “D” for sexually suggestive dialogue, and “FV”  
70 for fantasy violence in children's programs.


### Ratings for Children's Programs




Programs designed for all children, not expected to frighten younger children.

75  Programs designed for children ages 7 and older. May contain fantasy or comedic violence or may frighten younger children. Programs with more intense or combative fantasy violence will be designated **TV-Y7-FV**.

### Ratings for All Audiences

80  Programs for general audiences that most parents would find suitable for all ages. Little or no violence, sexual situations, or strong language.

 Programs that require parental guidance, containing material that parents might find unsuitable for young children. Programs may also carry V, S, D and/or L designations (for moderate violence, some sexual situations, infrequent coarse language, and some suggestive dialogue), as  
85 appropriate.



Programs with material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under age 14. Parents are urged to monitor these programs, which will also carry V, S, D and/or L designations (for intense violence, intense sexual situations, strong, coarse language, and intensely suggestive dialogue), as appropriate.

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Programs designed to be viewed only by adults (“mature audiences”) and that may be unsuitable for children under age 17, which will carry V, S and/or L designations (for graphic violence, explicit sexual activity and crude, indecent language), as appropriate.

95

“This is designed to be a consumer device,” says Arnold Fege, director of governmental relations for the National PTA, “to give parents more information about programs, similar to the information they get from a nutrition label on the back of food.”

Having been dragged into the change, broadcasters now are taking credit for it. “We’re trying to give parents a little extra tool to monitor what their kids are watching,” says the NAB’s Wharton.

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Some people in the TV industry, however, worry that the rating system will be inherently subjective and necessarily incomplete—with no indication of the context for sexual material or violent scenes. Many writers and producers also worry that watchdog groups could use ratings to galvanize boycotts of programs or advertisers or that skittish network executives could lean on them to tone down programs to the detriment of “the creative process.”

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Those concerns contributed to a decision by one of the broadcast networks, NBC, not to participate in the new rating system. “There is no way that there will be any consistency in application or any consistency in its use,” says Rosalyn Weinman, NBC’s executive vice president for broadcast standards and content. “The system is at best confusing and at worst totally incoherent.”

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From the opposite perspective, some critics of TV programming say even the revised rating system still provides too little information. “Our concern is that without identifying the extent and degree of sex, language, and violence, parents will have little more information than they do now,” says Mark Honig, executive director of the conservative-leaning Parents Television Council.

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Other critics say the rating system has no direct effect on TV sex and violence. “Garbage labeled is still garbage,” says Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Conn.

The new system is designed for use in conjunction with the new “V-chip” (“V” for violence), a computer-encrypted microchip that can screen out objectionable programs. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 requires new TV sets to have V-chips once the rating system has been reviewed by the FCC.

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Even supporters of the new rating system, however, are uncertain how families will use the new TV screening tools or what effects they will have.

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“It may be that nothing happens in terms of programming,” Montgomery says, “but it’s my hope that parents will have a tool they can use to make effective decisions in their own homes.”

— Kenneth Jost, 1997

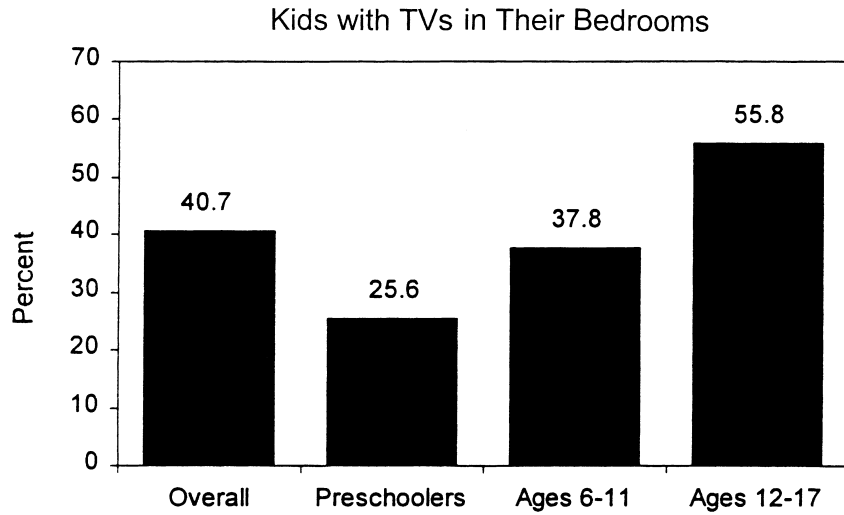


## Graphic

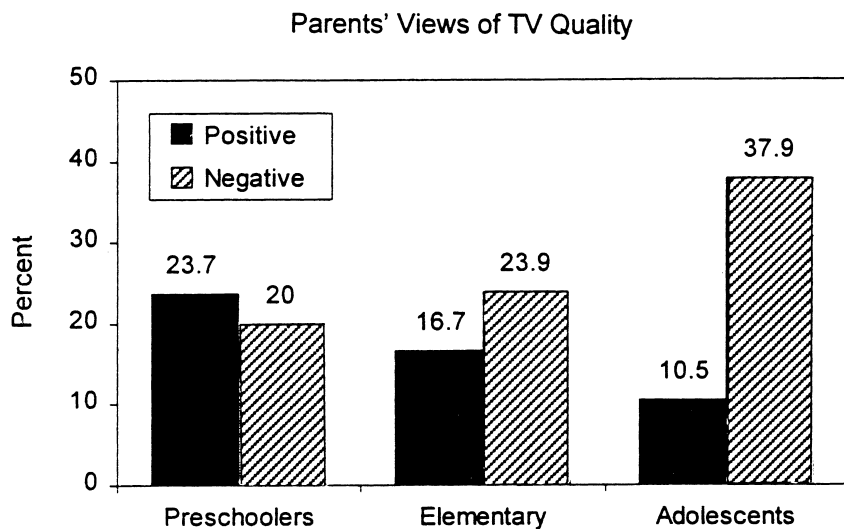
### America's Love Affair With TV

- Average amount of daily TV-watching: 2.1 hours
- Parents who think kids watch too much TV: 21 percent

*a*



*b*



Source: *Television in the Home: The 1997 Survey of Parents & Children*,  
Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania,  
June 6, 1996

## 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 The author refers to the “Captain Kangaroo” show as an example of television programming that is
- 1 outdated
  - 2 economical
  - 3 educational
  - 4 unpopular
- 8 Both the new FCC programming regulation and the ratings system aim to
- 1 restrict children’s access to television advertising
  - 2 limit the time children spend watching television
  - 3 make children’s television programming more entertaining
  - 4 provide control over the quality of children’s television programming
- 9 The first system for rating children’s programs was criticized because it did not provide information about
- 1 alternative programming
  - 2 objectionable content
  - 3 age appropriateness
  - 4 participating networks
- 10 According to the author, some people fear that use of the ratings system will lead to
- 1 censorship
  - 2 greed
  - 3 corruption
  - 4 propaganda
- 11 In line 104, the word “galvanize” most nearly means
- 1 celebrate
  - 2 stimulate
  - 3 oppose
  - 4 interrupt
- 12 According to the author, NBC declined to participate in the new ratings system because the network objected to the
- 1 equipment needed to use the ratings
  - 2 time required to use the ratings
  - 3 groups responsible for assigning ratings
  - 4 method of assigning ratings
- 13 The “V-chip” required by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (lines 119 through 122) allows parents to
- 1 prevent viewing of unsuitable programs
  - 2 observe the ratings symbol directly on the screen
  - 3 record the time children spend watching television
  - 4 remove violent scenes from televised programs
- 14 The main purpose of the text is to
- 1 criticize the use of sex and violence on television
  - 2 persuade people to support the television ratings system
  - 3 inform people about issues surrounding the television ratings system
  - 4 describe children’s views about the quality of television
- 15 According to graph *a*, entitled “Kids with TVs in Their Bedrooms,” what percentage of American children have televisions in their bedrooms?
- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| (1) 25.6% | (3) 40.7% |
| (2) 37.8% | (4) 55.8% |
- 16 Which statement is best supported by the data in graph *b*, entitled “Parents’ Views of TV Quality”?
- 1 Television is a more positive experience for adolescents than for preschoolers.
  - 2 Parents’ opinions of television quality decline as the ages of their children increase.
  - 3 Elementary students have more negative views of television quality than do adolescent students.
  - 4 Parents of adolescents have more positive views of television programming than do parents of preschoolers.

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

Wednesday, August 16, 2000 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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 \_\_\_\_\_

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15 \_\_\_\_\_

16 \_\_\_\_\_

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.

Tear Here

