

# DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

## LISTENING SECTION

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

Wednesday, August 16, 2000—8:30 to 11:30 a.m., only

**BE SURE THAT THE LISTENING SECTION IS ADMINISTERED TO EVERY STUDENT.**

- 1 Before the start of the examination period, say:

**Do not open the examination booklet until you are instructed to do so.**

- 2 Distribute one examination booklet and one essay booklet to each student.

- 3 After each student has received an examination booklet and an essay booklet, say:

**Tear off the answer sheet, which is the last page of the examination booklet, and fill in its heading. Now circle “Session One” and fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet.**

- 4 After the students have filled in all headings on their answer sheets and essay booklets, say:

Look at page 2 of your examination booklet and follow along while I read the **Overview** and **The Situation**.

**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.

Now I will read the passage aloud to you for the first time.

- 5 Now read the passage aloud with appropriate expression, but without added comment.

## Listening Passage

I begin on a personal note. My son majored in music education at Duquesne University and was graduated with a citation as the most outstanding senior in that field. After graduation he went on to teach in two different high school musical education programs. Then I shared with him a grim period when musical education programs in which he was involved both as a teacher and band director were cut back. The question I asked then and ask now is why, when economies are called for, are the arts the first to be targeted? Instead of striking up the bands in our country, why are we determined to strike them down — and all in the name of prudence and fiscal wisdom?

Let us remember that the word “economics” comes from the Greek word meaning “house management.” What kind of good house management is it to deprive a family of that which is central to its cultural life in the name of economics? Above all, why should music be the first to be evicted, for heaven’s sake? Why not science, mathematics, hygiene and so on? Personally I’m against any cuts in education across the board, but I have yet to receive an intelligent explanation that justifies penalizing students by depriving them of an artistic education, especially in music. I think I would be somewhat pacified if those who advocate things like the death of music programs would be willing to drop music from their own lives as totally as they would wish it done in schools — no stereo in the home, no opera, no symphonies, no jazz, no music in the car, no CD’s, no singing in the shower, no music whatever.

The absurdity of this suggestion answers itself. Unless you are a total troglodyte, a life without music is like a life without oxygen. If it is difficult for a normal adult to imagine a life without music, why is not the cutting out of music programs from the educational curriculum regarded with indignation, shock, and even rage? Is it because the so-called practical programs and technology-related studies are regarded as being ultimately more lucrative? Is it not the responsibility of true educators to resist trendy pressures and enticements and stand up for those values that enhance a student’s imaginative and cultural life regardless of what consequences this may have in later life? In other words, does it square with education itself to eliminate what any intelligent educator or administrator would be forced to acknowledge as the heart of education itself, namely, the nurturing of the imagination?

Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, President and founder of the University of Virginia, framer of the Virginia statutes, author of the Declaration of Independence, was also an inventor, a musician and the author of poetry in English, Latin and Greek. He believed that a total education was rooted in memory, reason and imagination. Translated into a curriculum, this means schooling in history, philosophy and the arts. This is not vocational training. This is not the in-servicing of technicians. This is not short-changing people of those disciplines that mark a liberally educated man or woman, but educating them to be aware that dreaming or imagining the world anew and then realizing those imaginings are what makes living a daily and ongoing drama of creation.

As much as I respect history and right reasoning, I must admit that I am partial to the imagination. Why? Because I believe that everything — repeat *everything* — originates there. I referred earlier to the Declaration of Independence. Where did it originate except in Thomas Jefferson’s imagination? Where did Shakespeare’s plays originate except in Shakespeare’s imagination? We can trace Disney World to one man who years ago imagined a cartoon involving a talking mouse named Mickey, who in time created

the whole empire. Where does everything, from the languages we speak or write down to the way we are dressed right now, originate but in the imagination of the many, the few, or you or me? The imagination is the primal source of all that we do. And it is only the arts — dance, painting, poetry, music and so on — that permit the imagination to mature. And yet, amazingly, it is the arts that have been made the undeserved and unexpected enemies of those who believe that saving money by depriving the arts of funding — especially government funding — is simply good bottom-line thinking.

But the bottom line is not everything. There is such a thing as the top line — rarely mentioned but much more important. Without the top line, there would be no bottom line. The top line is concerned with visions, not costs, with what is in the best interest of the young, regardless of the bearable burden it places on their elders. Fathers and mothers who sacrifice for their children would have no argument with this; they would understand its meaning immediately. They know what it is to sacrifice for the good of their children, and they know what the consequences would be if they didn't. Why can we not expect the same spirit from those who are elected and entrusted with the public good? If we educate people "on the cheap," what can we expect but a cheapened adult population in a cheapened society governed by cheapening national policies and attitudes. I, for one, believe that the cheapening of our national values must be reversed. Let those who say that the government should get out of our lives recall the section of the Constitution that stipulates that civic leadership should provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and seek the blessings of peace for ourselves and our posterity. I contend that nothing promotes the general welfare and seeks the blessings of peace better than the arts. And of all the arts, music stands alone as the ultimate unifier.

I think it is regrettable that many who believe in the importance of music in the formal education of students often feel compelled to defend it in terms of how it enhances life in other areas. But music needs no justification for its existence other than that existence itself. Does the beautiful need any other justification outside of itself? The hunger for beauty, like the hunger for music and knowledge, is part of our very natures; it touches us. We don't learn because our learning will someday "pay off." We learn because it fulfills us, satisfies our curiosity, delivers us from ignorance. And that's enough.

I believe that educating students with an appreciation for music or, better yet, with the talent and skill to make music is one of the crowns of learning. Like poetry, music puts us in touch with our feelings. Being in touch with one's self, being capable of being alone and enjoying one's company for a time, being moved to feel what one would not otherwise feel — how can any intelligent parent, teacher or, above all, political representative find fault with this? On the contrary, are these not goals that should be abundantly and continually supported?

Contributing to the arts really is contributing to our national wealth. Not doing so is engaging in a conspiracy against our own greatness. And it is this greatness — past and present — that defines American culture at its best. It is what we have to share with one another and the world. What do we do for those who study here or who merely visit our country, but expose them to the national heroes of our past and present who have created our architecture, our poetry and literature, our fine arts, our music?

Excising arts programs from our educational and cultural life is not only shortsighted. It is suicidal. We are literally killing our spiritual selves if we do so.

6 After reading the passage aloud once, say:

You may take a few minutes to look over **The Situation** and your notes.  
(Pause) Now I will read the passage aloud a second time.

7 Read the passage a second time.

8 After the second reading, say:

Now turn to page 4 of your examination booklet, read the directions, and answer the multiple-choice questions. Be sure to follow all the directions given in your examination booklet and your essay booklet. You may now begin.