

# SESSION TWO

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION TWO

**Thursday, January 24, 2002 — 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 (a poem and an excerpt from a short story). 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 meaning of play as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about the meaning of play. 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 meaning of play
- 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**  
**The Centaur**  
— May Swenson

## Passage II

### The Pebble People

Ben Adam sat outside his grandparents' weathered old loghouse. He liked to sit outside and listen to the sounds of the forest. Especially after one of his grandma's famous chicken-and-dumpling dinners. And he liked to play one of his favorite games—making rocks war dance. So he started looking for different colored pebbles. Some were easily scraped off the surface of the well-worn path to the grandparents' loghouse, others he had to dig and scratch out of the earth.

Finally, he found the ones he wanted—black ones, white ones, red ones, yellow ones, and blue ones. Holding the pebbles on an open palm, Ben Adam talked to them. He spoke to the pebbles for a long time about the respect and discipline they should have while wearing the traditional clothing the Creator had given them. He talked of the symbols the old people said were in their dress. He spoke of how they should all try to conduct themselves with dignity. Ben Adam repeated the words of an uncle who had helped him dress for a war dance many times before.

After several moments of serious meditation, he placed the pebbles on the bottom of an overturned tin bucket, each according to its own size and color. He carefully placed the red, yellow, blue, white, and black pebbles into the circular grooves of the bucket in the formation of a bustle, the middlemost circle being the drum. Under his breath, he sang the ancient words of his favorite war dance song, but he did not drum yet because he did not want the dancers moved.

Ben Adam finished his silent song and again spoke to the pebbles. His message contained a prayer of thanksgiving that his people were alive to see another day and that they had chosen this day to come together in celebration of tribal customs. He thanked all the dancers, drummers, and spectators. He asked the Creator to bestow special blessings upon them throughout the evening and as they traveled back to their homes.

Ben Adam asked for blessings on behalf of people who were sick and could not attend the dance. He prayed for those imprisoned by steel bars and by personal weaknesses. And he asked the people to remember those people who had died since the last time they had gathered. Ben Adam's words were very well selected and delivered for an eight-year-old.

Following a moment of silence, he started singing a warm-up song. He drummed slowly on the bottom ridge of the battered old bucket and watched proudly as the pebbles began to dance. At first they moved slowly about the grooves of the bucket according to the rhythm of the song. "For this slow beat, the traditional dancers should be thankful," Ben Adam said.

The pace quickened. Ben Adam sang louder and drummed faster. The dancers hopped about fervently, like fancy dancers, their thunderous hoofbeats in tune with the drumming and their blurred colors lighting the air. Some of the pebbles began falling off the edge of the bucket to the ground. Ben Adam drummed and sang as long as there were some pebble dancers left.

After only a few were left, Ben Adam announced to them, "This will be a contest song!" He drummed faster and faster, harder and harder, until all the pebbles fell off the bucket. Then, carefully, he picked up those that were the last to fall. "Gee, that was a good contest," he said.

50 He thanked the dancers and said, “One day there will be a big, big contest. Only those who are really good can come and participate in it.” Ben Adam put the winning pebbles into marked jars to save. “The winners of the contest and my favorite dancers, I will take into the house and put away in my fishtank for the winter,” he said to the pebble people.

— Roger Jack

## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (1–10): 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 the ideas and information you might want to use in your essay. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

**Passage I** (the poem) — Questions 1–5 refer to Passage I.

- Lines 2 through 4 suggest that the narrator found her tenth summer to be
  - tedious
  - lonely
  - refreshing
  - memorable
- In line 19, the narrator implies that the dust is “lovely” because it
  - makes her feet resemble hoofs
  - covers her tracks
  - lets her trot faster
  - keeps her toes from hurting
- The verbs used in lines 29 through 44 help establish a feeling of
  - apprehension
  - regret
  - exhilaration
  - relief
- In the last stanza, the poet implies that the narrator had
  - hidden in the field
  - buried her face in clover
  - fought with her brother
  - picked wildflowers
- The title is best reinforced by which line?
  - “I’d go on my two bare feet” (line 9)
  - “I’d straddle and canter him fast” (line 17)
  - “I shied and skittered and reared” (line 33)
  - “I was the horse and the rider” (line 38)

**Passage II** (the short story excerpt) — Questions 6–9 refer to Passage II.

- Lines 19 through 26 suggest that one purpose of Ben’s play is to
  - challenge traditional roles
  - solve personal problems
  - practice social traditions
  - develop survival skills
- In lines 27 through 31, Ben’s prayers reveal a sense of
  - duty
  - compassion
  - courage
  - humility
- Ben selected as winners of the contest those pebble people who had
  - drummed the loudest
  - danced the fastest
  - lasted the longest
  - jumped the highest
- Ben’s attitude toward play can best be described as
  - mischievous
  - courageous
  - innocent
  - thoughtful

**Question 10 refers to both passages.**

- Ben’s action of digging the pebbles from the earth parallels which action in the poem?
  - “cut me a long limber horse” (line 11)
  - “cinched my brother’s belt” (line 15)
  - “tethered him to a paling” (line 50)
  - “filled me a glass of water” (line 57)

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 of your essay booklet. After you finish your response for Part A, go on to page 7 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 7 of the essay booklet.

## Critical Lens:

“All literature is protest. You can’t name a single literary work that isn’t protest.”

— Richard Wright (adapted)

## 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





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ANSWER SHEET

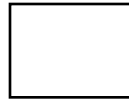
Student ..... Sex:  Male  Female

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

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

Part A

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 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

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