

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

## ENGLISH

## SESSION TWO

**Friday, August 17, 2007 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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.

The use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

**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 accomplishment as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about accomplishment. 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 accomplishment
- 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

Two days before my first novel was to be published, while I was packing to leave the small Vermont town in which I live to go to New York, the telephone rang, and when I snatched it up irritably and said, “Hello,” a sweet old lady’s voice answered me, “Hello, who’s this?” which is a common enough Vermont telephone greeting.

“This is Shirley Jackson,” I said, a little soothed because my name reminded me of my book.

“Well,” she said vaguely, “is Mrs. Stanley Hyman there, please?”

I waited for a minute and then, “This is Mrs. Hyman,” I said reluctantly.

Her voice brightened. “Mrs. Hyman,” she said, pleased, “This is Mrs. Sheila Lang of the newspaper. I’ve been trying to get in touch with you for *days*.”

“I’m so sorry,” I said. “I’ve been terribly busy—my book, and all.”

“Yes,” she said. “Well, Mrs. Hyman, this is what I wanted. You read the paper, of course?”

“Of course,” I said, “and I’ve been sort of expecting—”

“Well, then, surely, you read the North Village Notes column?”

“Yes, indeed,” I said warmly.

“That’s *my* column,” she said. “I *write* that column.”

“Of course, I’m a North Village resident,” I said, “but I rather thought that for a thing of this importance—”

“Now, what I’m doing is this. I’m calling up a few people in town who I thought might have items of news for me—”

“Certainly,” I said, and reached for one of the numerous copies of the book jacket lying around the house. “The name of the book—”

“*First* of all,” she said, “where exactly in town do you live, Mrs. Hyman?”

“On Prospect Street,” I said. “*The Road Through the Wall*.”

“I see,” she said. “Just let me take that down.”

“That’s the name of the book,” I said.

“Yes,” she said. “Which house would that be, I wonder?”

“The old Elwell place,” I said.

“On the corner of Mechanic? I thought the young Elwells lived there.”

“That’s next door,” I said. “We’re in the *old* Elwell place.”

“The old *Thatcher* place?” she said. “We always call that the old Thatcher place; he built it, you know.”

“That’s the one,” I said. “It’s going to be published the day after tomorrow.”

“I didn’t know *anyone* lived there,” she said. “I thought it was empty.”

“We’ve lived here three years,” I said, a little stiffly.

“I don’t get out much any more,” she said. “Now, what little items of local news do you have for me? Any visitors? Children’s parties?”

“I’m publishing a book next week,” I said. “I am going down to New York for my publication day.”

“Taking your family?” she asked. “Any children, by the way?”

“Two,” I said. “I’m taking them.”

“Isn’t that nice,” she said. “I bet they’re excited.”

“You know,” I said madly, “I’ve been asked to do the Girl Scout column for your paper.”

“Really?” She sounded doubtful. “I’m sure you’ll enjoy it. It’s such an *informal* newspaper.”

“Yes,” I said. “Would you like to hear about my book?”

“I certainly would,” she said. “Anytime you have any little newsy items for

me, you be sure and call me right up. My number's in the book."

"Thank you," I said. "Well, *my* book —"

"I have so much enjoyed our little talk, Mrs. Hyman. Imagine me not knowing anyone was living in the old Thatcher place!"

55 "*The Road Through the Wall*," I said. "Farrar and Straus."

"You know," she said, "now that I don't get out any more, I find that doing this column keeps me in touch with my neighbors. It's social, sort of."

"Two-seventy-five," I said. "It'll be in the local bookstore."

"You'll probably find the same thing with the Girl Scout column," she said.

60 "Thank you so much, Mrs. Hyman. Do call me again soon."

"I started it last winter," I said.

"Goodbye," she said sweetly, and hung up.

I kept the column that appeared as the North Village Notes of the newspaper the next day. Several people remarked on it to me. It was on the last page of the  
65 four!

#### NORTH VILLAGE NOTES

Mrs. Royal Jones of Main Street is ill.

Miss Mary Randall of Waite Street is confined to her home with chicken pox.

One of the hooked rug classes met last evening with Mrs. Ruth Harris.

70 Hurlbut Lang of Troy spent the weekend with his parents in North Village,  
Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Lang.

The food sale of the Baptist Church has been postponed indefinitely due to weather conditions.

75 Mrs. Stanley Hyman has moved into the old Thatcher place on Prospect  
Street. She and her family are visiting Mr. and Mrs. Farrarstraus of New York  
City this week.

Mrs. J. N. Arnold of Burlington spent the weekend in town with Mr. and Mrs.  
Samuel Montague.

80 Little Lola Kittredge of East Road celebrated her fifth birthday on Tuesday.  
Six little friends joined to wish her many happy returns of the day, and ice cream  
and cake were served.

—Shirley Jackson  
"Fame"

from *Writer*, August 1948

## Passage II

### Soybeans

The October air was warm and musky, blowing  
Over brown fields, heavy with the fragrance  
Of freshly combined beans, the breath of harvest.

- He was pulling a truckload onto the scales  
5 At the elevator near the rail siding north of town  
When a big Cadillac drove up. A man stepped out,  
Wearing a three-piece suit and a gold pinky ring.  
The man said he had just invested a hundred grand  
In soybeans and wanted to see what they looked like.
- 10 The farmer stared at the man and was quiet, reaching  
For the tobacco in the rear pocket of his jeans,  
Where he wore *his* only ring, a threadbare circle rubbed  
By working cans of dip and long hours on the backside  
Of a hundred acre run. He scooped up a handful  
15 Of small white beans, the pearls of the prairie, saying:

- Soybeans look like a foot of water on the field in April  
When you're ready to plant and can't get in;  
Like three kids at the kitchen table  
Eating macaroni and cheese five nights in a row;  
20 Or like a broken part on the combine when  
Your credit with the implement dealer is nearly tapped.

- Soybeans look like prayers bouncing off the ceiling  
When prices on the Chicago grain market start to drop;  
Or like your old man's tears when you tell him  
25 How much the land might bring for subdivisions.  
Soybeans look like the first good night of sleep in weeks  
When you unload at the elevator and the kids get Christmas.

- He spat a little juice on the tire of the Cadillac,  
Laughing despite himself and saying to the man:  
30 Now maybe you can tell me what a hundred grand looks like.

—Thomas Alan Orr  
from *Hammers in the Fog*, 1995  
Restoration Press

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

1 According to the passage, the narrator calls herself “Shirley Jackson” on the phone to emphasize pride in her

- (1) marriage
- (2) career
- (3) wealth
- (4) children

2 The caller, Mrs. Lang, is seeking information for a

- (1) brief biography
- (2) neighborhood census
- (3) community database
- (4) newspaper column

3 The passage’s main conflict is based on the characters’

- (1) different motives
- (2) mutual jealousy
- (3) varied education
- (4) similar ages

4 As used in the passage, *The Road Through the Wall* refers to a

- (1) newspaper
- (2) play
- (3) novel
- (4) movie

5 Mrs. Lang’s reference to the builder and original owner of the house (lines 33 and 34) emphasizes her

- (1) respect for historic architecture
- (2) interest in modern literature
- (3) knowledge of town history
- (4) appreciation of local art

6 The passage is primarily developed through the use of

- (1) description
- (2) example
- (3) argument
- (4) dialogue

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

7 The purpose of the first stanza is to

- (1) establish setting
- (2) explore character
- (3) introduce conflict
- (4) create rhyme

8 The description of “a man” (lines 6 through 9) emphasizes the man’s

- (1) humility
- (2) intolerance
- (3) prosperity
- (4) jealousy

9 In stanza 3, the contrast between the farmer and the man is best established by which phrase?

- (1) “reaching for the tobacco” (lines 10 and 11)
- (2) “his only ring” (line 12)
- (3) “a hundred acre run” (line 14)
- (4) “small white beans” (line 15)

10 Stanzas 4 and 5 make the reader aware of the

- (1) size of the family
- (2) struggles of the farmer
- (3) growth of the soybeans
- (4) effects of the drought

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:

“You must take life the way it comes at you and make the best of it.”

—Yann Martel  
*Life of Pi*, 2001

### 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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