SESSION ONE

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION ONE

Thursday, August 13, 2009 — 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 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.

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

Overview: For this part of the test, you will listen to a speech about strip mining, 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:** Your Earth science class has just completed a unit on issues concerning industry and the environment. You have decided to write a presentation for your high school's science fair about the environmental impact of the strip mining of coal. In preparation for writing your presentation, listen to a speech by John Nolt about strip mining. Then use relevant information from the speech to write your presentation.

Your Task: Write a presentation for your school's science fair in which you discuss the environmental impact of the strip mining of coal.

Guidelines:

Be sure to
- Tell your audience what they need to know about strip mining
- Discuss the environmental impact of the strip mining of coal
- Use specific, accurate, and relevant information from the speech to support your discussion
- Use a tone and level of language appropriate for a presentation for your high school science fair
- 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 The speaker's objection to using coal to generate electricity is based on the

   (1) dependence of society on electricity
   (2) need to conserve coal supplies
   (3) process used to obtain the coal
   (4) expense of converting coal to electricity

2 The speaker implies that the primary purpose of the federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 is to

   (1) increase profitability of strip mining
   (2) reduce damage caused by strip mining
   (3) provide alternatives to strip mining
   (4) inform the public about strip mining

3 According to the speaker, wells near strip mines may become contaminated when

   (1) underground water sources are disturbed
   (2) pesticides wash into creeks
   (3) machinery fuel is spilled
   (4) dead plants accumulate on the surface

4 A "reclaimed" strip mine is an area that has been

   (1) zoned for housing developments
   (2) returned to its original owner
   (3) listed as a historical site
   (4) rehabilitated from a poor condition

5 The federal government took over the state of Tennessee's coal mining permit program in 1984 because the state had failed to

   (1) provide funding   (3) enforce regulations
   (2) issue permits   (4) open mines

6 What is the effect of the contradiction in the final sentence of the speech, "we get our electricity cheap, but the cost is high"?

   (1) It emphasizes the negative effects of strip mining.
   (2) It predicts the future of strip mining.
   (3) It adds humor to the discussion of strip mining.
   (4) It reveals the speaker's confusion about strip mining.

> 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 table 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 school district is interested in expanding the use of technology in the high school. You have decided to write a letter to the Board of Education either agreeing *or* disagreeing with the district's proposal to replace textbooks with laptop computers.

Your Task: Using relevant information from **both** documents, write a letter to the Board of Education in which you either agree *or* disagree with the district's proposal to purchase laptop computers for individual students to replace textbooks. ***Write only the body of the letter.***

Guidelines:

Be sure to
- Tell your audience what they need to know to be convinced that laptop computers should *or* should not be purchased for individual students to replace textbooks
- Use specific, accurate, and relevant information from the text **and** the table to support your argument
- Use a tone and level of language appropriate for a letter to the Board of Education
- 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

Text

When teacher Jeremy Gypton was reviewing the Civil War material for his
American history class at Empire High School in Vail, Arizona, he found
something he'd never read before, even though he has a degree in history: the
complete Constitution of the Confederate States of America.

5   A traditional textbook might have made a passing reference to the document.
But there are no textbooks at Empire….

When Empire High School opened in July of last year [2005], students
weren't issued backpack-breaking stacks of textbooks. They were handed an
Apple iBook with a wireless Internet connection, because the school eschews
10   textbooks in favor of laptops and electronic content.

In science class, they don't just discuss cell division. They go online and watch
it in real time. In Michael Frank's first-year biology class, students access their lab
instructions, then organize data and graph the results of their work. Later, they
will correlate the data from the experiment in a PowerPoint presentation. In
15   Melinda Jensen's honors math class, students went online to learn about game
theory when two game-theory researchers won the Nobel Prize in economics. "It
was a great class discussion. You can't do that in a regular classroom," Jensen
notes. "It would have been something you had to plan ahead of time."

Plenty of schools have instituted pilot programs using laptops to supplement
20   their traditional curriculum. But Empire is one of very few in the country —
perhaps the only school — that has eliminated textbooks almost entirely in grades
nine through 12.

"The key to making this work is not having the textbooks," says Calvin Baker,
superintendent of the Vail Unified School District. "You walk in any of the
25   classrooms in this school and it's a different feel, different from a textbook school,
different from a school where kids just happen to have laptops so they're doing
their homework on laptops, but sometimes they use them and sometimes they
don't."

"Laptops are part of the fabric of everything that goes on at Empire. That's
30   the way it should be," he adds. "We all use laptops to gather information, store
information, and distribute information. That's the way the world turns now."

Of course, there are downsides. The computers crash. A few weeks into the
project, students hacked the filters that had prevented them from going to
forbidden places online, though security was soon restored. Some tried to get
35   away with playing games during work time. That didn't last long; teachers can
view what's on any student's screen at any moment and virtually reach out and
throw games in the desktop trash.

"The laptops don't change human nature," Baker says. "Students are always
going to be testing limits."

40   For teachers, it's a matter of monitoring and keeping control, just as always.
"It comes down to teaching skills and classroom management," says Matt
Donaldson, an assistant principal and math teacher. "Whether you're using
computers or a notebook, if the teacher is on top of what's going on in the
classroom, you aren't going to have those problems."

45   Mark Schneiderman, director of education policy for the Software &
Information Industry Association, a Washington, D.C.-based trade association,
says the most recent survey, two years ago, indicated that about 600 school
districts nationwide had pilot programs supplying laptops to individual students.
Henrico County Public Schools in Virginia began using laptops for 23,000 middle
50   and high school students in 2001. The state of Maine opened an ambitious

program to supply more than 30,000 students in 243 middle schools with laptops in January 2002. Legislators later expanded the program to about a third of the state's high school students. But in those schools and others, laptops are used in tandem[1] with old-fashioned textbooks.

55   "My sense is that the situation in the Vail school is relatively unique," Schneiderman says. "There may be a few other, smaller such efforts under way, but it's pretty unique."

That's just what school officials intended when they began planning a new school to alleviate overcrowding in the district. They were already aggressively

60   using technology, linking schools with a wireless system and showing grades and attendance online in real time. They visited a laptop high school in the California Bay Area and talked to Apple about the resources available.

"There was no question students at the laptop school were more engaged," Baker says. "But we were confident we could do it better."

65   The schools the Empire planning team visited were using laptops as frosting, as another layer to traditional instruction. "It wasn't fundamentally changing the structure of what was happening in classrooms, so we had the idea that if you really wanted to change what was happening in school, you had to take away textbooks," Baker says.

70   Empire was a new school without old textbooks. So they simply didn't order any. Making it easier and logical to move away from textbooks, Baker adds, is the national trend of teaching to standards. No longer do teachers start at the beginning of a textbook, make sure they're halfway through by Christmas, and then race through the Vietnam War in May. Even if they use textbooks, they jump

75   back and forth, extracting what they need to meet the standard....

"One of our teachers expressed it well," Baker says. "She said, 'The way I explain it to friends is the difference between teaching in a traditional high school and Empire is the difference between swimming in a pool and swimming in the ocean.' "

80   Students can go as deep as they want into material. "Books can be very limiting," Jensen says. "It's very interesting to work without the boundaries that are created by a book."

Striding outside those boundaries also means students have to evaluate the material they find, something Gypton thinks provides more teaching moments.

85   "I've come to realize that critical thinking may not be a natural thing," Gypton says. "It is a skill that has to be taught. It has to be developed. And you can't develop critical thinking if your material is shallow and only painted in broad brush strokes."

They also didn't anticipate how clueless students were about using the

90   technology. They may know about video games and myspace.com, but the notion that middle school and high school students are digital experts is overstated, Gypton says.

"It's bunk," he says. "I had kids for three or four weeks who didn't know how to work Microsoft Word. When they'd save something they'd look at me with this

95   sad look in their eyes and say, 'Where did it go?' "

Paper does show up, though rarely. Jensen has her students do math problems on paper. And her honors class wanted textbooks so they could work ahead....

It's too early to gauge the effect on learning at Empire. But a study of Maine's

100   laptop initiative by the Maine Education Policy Research Institute at the

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[1]in tandem — in partnership

University of Southern Maine concluded there were numerous advantages. Among them:

- More than four out of five teachers reported students were more engaged in learning.
- More than 70 percent of teachers reported that the laptops more effectively helped them meet curriculum goals and individualize curriculums.
- Students who took the laptops home were more likely to complete class work.
- Students who no longer had laptops reported getting less work done.

At Empire, students like using laptops, though they chafe[2] at the restrictions placed on them — filtering software prevents instant messaging, the teens' communication choice these days, even when they're using the laptop at home. "A lot of people think we should have fewer restrictions when we're at home," says Jason Ash, a 15-year-old sophomore. Ash says he's more organized because everything from assignments to grades is in one place online.

Brad Morse, a 17-year-old junior, liked the fact he could go online and view more illustrations when his class was studying the Continental Congress. "If I don't understand something, I can go on Google and look it up and learn more," he says.

That's typical, Jensen says. "Students come in all the time with websites where they've found helpful resources about what we're learning. It really creates a feeling of community."

Morse and others admit they were initially easily distracted, sometimes using e-mail and playing games during class in the first few weeks. But the school put a stop to that. "Now they have all the teachers monitor us so we're not as easily distracted," says Ashley Coulter, a 15-year-old sophomore.

Jensen, in her fourth year of teaching, is energized daily. "I feel like the kids here are so interesting and so creative and so much fun that every day I look forward to seeing them," she says. "I don't know if they're more interesting because they're more engaged or if we got students who were more willing to think outside the box."

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[2]chafe — to be annoyed

—Jim Morrison
excerpted from "Ending the Paper Chase"
Southwest Airlines Spirit, May 2006

TABLE

Percentage of children in nursery school and students in grades K-12 using the Internet for specific activities, by sex and grade level: 2003

Internet activity	All Students Percent	Sex		Grade level				
		Female Percent	Male Percent	Nursery School Percent	Kindergarten Percent	Grade 1-5 Percent	Grade 6-8 Percent	Grade 9-12 Percent
Completing school assignments	46	48	45	7	10	31	61	73
E-mail or instant messaging	36	39	33	6	8	19	46	64
Playing games	38	37	39	15	21	32	47	49
News/weather/sports	21	20	23	2	4	10	26	41
Find information on products	21	20	22	3	4	9	24	42
Watch/listen to TV, movies, or radio	13	13	13	2	4	6	15	24
Make purchases	8	7	9	1	1	3	7	19
Phone calls	1	1	1	#	1	1	1	2
Taking a course online	1	1	1	#	#	1	1	3
Find government information[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13
Find health information[2]	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.6	9
Find a job[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
Online banking[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Trading stocks[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1

— Not available. Data were not collected.
Rounds to zero.
[1] Questions about noted activities were asked only about persons age 15 and older. Estimates for these activities are for students in grades 9 through 12 who are age 15 or older.
[2] Questions about noted activities were asked only about persons age 12 and older. Estimates for these activities are for students in grades 6 through 12 who are age 12 or older.

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 As used in line 9, the word "eschews" most nearly means

  (1) reduces   (3) censors
  (2) arranges   (4) rejects

8 Empire is different from other high schools in the country because Empire

  (1) has eliminated almost all textbooks
  (2) uses only classroom discussion
  (3) follows a traditional curriculum
  (4) has expanded testing

9 Some early problems with Empire's laptop program were a result of

  (1) inadvertent training errors
  (2) inadequate technical support
  (3) inappropriate computer use
  (4) insufficient budget allocations

10 According to Matt Donaldson (lines 41 through 44), effective use of computers in the classroom is directly related to a teacher's

  (1) knowledge of technology
  (2) skill in supervising students
  (3) ability to evaluate students
  (4) willingness to experiment

11 According to the text, what did Empire hope to achieve with its policy regarding textbooks and laptops?

  (1) increase in textbook use
  (2) improvement of test scores
  (3) uniformity of teaching standards
  (4) changes in instructional techniques

12 When Empire started its laptop program, the computer skills of many students were limited to

  (1) creating documents   (3) watching videos
  (2) playing games   (4) shopping online

13 A conclusion that could be drawn from Maine's "laptop initiative" is that teachers

  (1) found the software troublesome
  (2) preferred using textbooks
  (3) achieved their teaching goals
  (4) paid for computer distribution

14 According to the table, what is one Internet activity that is lower for males than females?

  (1) using e-mail
  (2) reading news
  (3) researching products
  (4) making purchases

15 The table indicates that children in grades 1 through 5 spend most of their Internet time

  (1) doing homework   (3) watching the news
  (2) playing games   (4) listening to music

16 According to the table, the greatest percentage of students who use the Internet for schoolwork are those in

  (1) kindergarten   (3) grades 6–8
  (2) grades 1–5   (4) grades 9–12

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.

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 [ ]

The University of the State of New York

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ANSWER SHEET

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 _____
6 _____	12 _____
[ ]	13 _____
	14 _____
	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.

_____
Signature

Tear Here