

# DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

## LISTENING SECTION

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

Thursday, August 13, 2009 — 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 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.

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

- 5 Now read the passage aloud, including the attribution at the end. Read with appropriate expression, but without added comment.

## Listening Passage

Over sixty percent of the electricity we consume in Tennessee is generated by the burning of coal—which, unfortunately, is the most damaging way to generate it. The burning of coal contributes to global warming, regional haze, acid rain, and ozone pollution, some of which harm us directly and all of which harm the land. But the most immediate harm to the land is the strip mining by which the coal is extracted. Strip mining reduces hills, farms, and forests to bare earth, caked mud, protruding rock, subsiding land, and flowing silt on a geological scale.

The mines are not as bad as they once were. The federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 outlawed some of the worst abuses. Yet strip mining is inherently destructive, even if the law is followed to the letter, and even the best reclamation does not wholly heal the wound. A strip mine begins with a clearcut—more than a clearcut, in fact, since *all* the vegetation is bulldozed down to the bare earth. Then the topsoil is scraped away and (if the mine is well-operated) stored or used separately. This exposes the overburden (subsoil and rocks overlying the coal seam), which is drilled and blasted. The pulverized overburden is removed to expose the coal, which then is fractured by blasting and hauled away. After the coal is gone, dump trucks and bulldozers replace the overburden, then the topsoil. Since the blasting decompacts the overburden, its volume increases, so that the excess must usually be deposited in a fill somewhere else. Finally the topsoil is sowed and replanted.

This entire process causes erosion, even under the best of conditions. Watercourses and aquifers are disturbed or destroyed, and water both on the surface and beneath the ground may be contaminated with acid drainage from sulfur-bearing rocks, or with toxic metals or minerals. Aquatic life may disappear as springs and streams turn red with iron oxide or yellow with iron hydroxide. Nearby wells may become cloudy, dry up, or be poisoned. Residents are sometimes forced to choose between leaving their homes and living with water they can't use—water that looks like apple cider, kills house plants, and burns eyes, nose, and mouth when they take a shower. The blasting and moving of earth may buckle or crack the foundations of buildings. Sometimes this blasting is deadly—and not only to miners. In 1994, a sixteen-year-old boy was killed when rocks and debris from a blast at the Flatwoods Mine in Campbell County hit the car in which he was riding with his family on Interstate 75.

When a mine opens, the land and the people suffer stress, damage, and disease for many years; but, in the end, the mine falls silent, and the land, at least, begins to heal. A few years after replanting, a reclaimed strip mine may look healthy and green, but the land is never the same. The new topsoil may be mixed with less fertile subsoil, decreasing fertility. The activity of beneficial insects and microorganisms, which were killed during the mining, may not be entirely restored. Acid drainage is likely to continue. A 1992 survey of twelve reclaimed sites in the Sewanee coal seam of southeastern Tennessee found indications of continued acid mine drainage at ten of them.

Revegetation of reclaimed strip mines usually involves some tree planting, but to obtain a quick, complete cover, many operators use a seeding mixture dominated by Kentucky-31 fescue. The fescue shades the tree seedlings and competes with them for moisture. After a few years, it forms a thick sod cover that discourages both forest growth and the return of wildlife such as quail and wild turkeys. Moreover, the soil compaction that occurs as the topsoil is hauled in and bulldozed into place can stunt tree growth by more than thirty years.

These damages occur at the best of mines, under conditions of compliance with the law. Unfortunately, some coal companies have enough money and political influence to stave off law enforcement, while others move in quickly, violate the law, and then vanish into a cloud

of legal shenanigans. From the time of its passage in 1977 until 1984, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act was supposed to have been enforced in Tennessee by the state Division of Surface Mining. The enforcement, however, was so lax that in 1984 the federal government stepped in and took over the administration of the state's permitting program. Enforcement, however, has remained inadequate and has often been diverted by political influence.

Thus we get our electricity cheap, but the cost is high.

— from “Strip Mines,”  
*Thoughts on Philosophy and the Environment*  
January 28, 2001

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.

