

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION TWO

Wednesday, January 27, 2010 — 1:15 to 4:15 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.

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

On Turning Ten

The whole idea of it makes me feel
like I'm coming down with something,
something worse than any stomach ache
or the headaches I get from reading in bad light—
5 a kind of measles of the spirit,
a mumps of the psyche,
or a disfiguring chicken pox of the soul.

You tell me it is too early to be looking back,
but that is because you have forgotten
10 the perfect simplicity of being one
and the beautiful complexity introduced by two.
But I can lie on my bed and remember every digit.
At four I was an Arabian wizard.
I could make myself invisible
15 by drinking a glass of milk a certain way.
At seven I was a soldier, at nine a prince.

But now I am mostly at the window
watching the late afternoon light.
Back then it never fell so solemnly
20 against the side of my tree house,
and my bicycle never leaned against the garage
as it does today,
all the dark blue speed drained out of it.

This is the beginning of sadness I say to myself
25 as I walk through the universe in my sneakers.
It is time to say good-bye to my imaginary friends,
time to turn the first big number.
It seems only yesterday I used to believe
there was nothing under my skin but light.
30 If you cut me I would shine.
But now when I fall upon the sidewalks of life,
I skin my knees. I bleed.

—Billy Collins
from *The Paris Review*, Winter 1993

Passage II

5 ...The town—a seaside resort with a good harbor, in South Wales—was foreign to me. My home was a long way from the sea, in an Italian hill town, and I had been sent to Wales by my parents for the summer, to stay with friends and to improve my English. I had never been out of Italy before. The outlandish town, the sea, the holidays, the summer, all added to my gaiety. The year, too. It was 1937, and England had begun rearming; there was a sense of awakening in the air. “In Bristol,” I remember the head of the family I was staying with saying in a quiet voice and with a subdued smile, “they are building over a hundred aeroplanes a month.” The threats and taunts and boastings of the fascists were fresh in my ears, and it made me very happy to hear this. Everything made me happy. I watched the seagulls wheeling, wild even as the robins on the lawn seemed tame. In Italy, except for the pigeons in the public squares, birds didn’t come close. I watched the waves thunder against the pier with a violence I had never witnessed, then rebound to meet and quell the onslaught of the next. And I did many things I had never done before—flew kites, went roller-skating, explored caves draped with stalactites, paddled in the pools left by the tide, visited a lighthouse.

10 Visited a lighthouse. I climbed the spiral staircase and knocked on the door up at the top. A man came to open who seemed the image of what a lighthouse-keeper ought to be. He smoked a pipe and had a grayish-white beard. Like a seaman, he wore a thick navy-blue jacket with gold buttons, trousers to match, and boots. Yet he had also something of the land about him—a well-set look, a firmly planted look, and his boots could have been a farmer’s. Bathed by the ocean and buttressed by the rock, the lighthouse and its keeper stood in between, upon the thin, long fringe of land and sea—belonged to both and neither.

15 “Come in, come in,” he said, and immediately, with that strange power some people have to put you at ease, he made me feel at home in the lighthouse. He seemed to consider it most natural that a boy should come and visit his lighthouse. Of course a boy my age would want to see it, his whole manner seemed to say—there should be more people interested in it, and more visits. He practically made me feel he was there to show the place to strangers, almost as if that lighthouse were a museum or a tower of historical importance. ...

20 He had a large telescope—its brass well polished—set on a pedestal and pointed at the sea. He said I could look through it. I watched a ship going down the Bristol Channel, a wave breaking far away—the splash it made, the spray—and distant cliffs, and seagulls flying. Some were so close they were swift shadows over the field of vision; others, far away, seemed hardly to be moving, as though they were resting in the air. I rested with them. Still others, flying a straight course, winging their way steadfastly, made scarcely any progress across the little circle, so wide was the circle of sky that it encompassed.

25 “And this,” he said, “is a barometer. When the hand dips, a storm is in the air. Small boats better take heed. Now it points to ‘Variable.’ That means it doesn’t really know what is going to happen—just like us. And that,” he added, like someone who is leaving the best thing for the last, “is the lantern.”

30 I looked up at the immense lens with its many-thousand-candlepower bulb inside.

35 “And this is how I switch it on, at dusk.” He went to a control box near the wall and put his hand on a lever.

50 I didn't think he'd really switch it on just for me, but he did, and the light came on, slowly and powerfully, as strong lights do. I could feel its heat above me, like the sun's. I glowed appreciatively, and he looked satisfied. "I say! That's jolly good. Super!" I exclaimed, and I strung out all the new laudatory words that I had learned—the old ones, too, of course, like "beautiful" and "lovely." ...

55 "Now, would you like a cup of tea?" he said. He took a blue-and-white cup and saucer out of a cupboard and poured the tea. Then he gave me a biscuit. "You must come and see the light after dark sometime," he said.

Late one evening, I went there again. The lantern's flash lit up a vast stretch of the sea, the boats, the boardwalk, and the dark that followed seemed more than ever dark. So dark, so all pervading, and so everlasting that the lantern's flashing, powerful as it was, seemed not much stronger than a firefly's, and almost as ephemeral.¹

65 At the end of the summer, I went home to Italy. For Christmas, I bought a *panforte*—a sort of fruitcake, the specialty of the town I lived in—and sent it to the lighthouse-keeper. I didn't think I would see him again, but the very next year I was back in Wales—not on a holiday this time but as a refugee. One morning soon after I arrived, I went to the lighthouse, only to find the old man had retired.

"He still comes, though," the much younger man who had taken over said. "You'll find him sitting outside here every afternoon, weather permitting."

70 I returned after lunch, and there, sitting on a ledge of the lighthouse beside the door, smoking his pipe, was my lighthouse-keeper, with a little dog. He seemed heavier than the year before, not because he had gained weight but because he looked as though he had been set on the ledge and would not easily get off it without help.

"Hello," I said. "Do you remember me? I came to see you last year."

75 "Where are you from?"

"From Italy."

"Oh, I used to know a boy from Italy. An awfully nice boy. Sent me a fruitcake for Christmas."

"That was me."

80 "Oh, he was a fine boy."

"I was the one who sent it."

"Yes, he came from Italy—an awfully nice boy."

"Me, me, that was me," I insisted.

85 He looked straight into my eyes for a moment. His eyes discounted me. I felt like an intruder, someone who was trying to take somebody else's place without having a right to it. "Ay, he was an awfully nice boy," he repeated, as though the visitor he saw now could never match last year's.

90 And seeing that he had such a nice memory of me, I didn't insist further; I didn't want to spoil the picture. I was at that time of life when suddenly boys turn gauche, lose what can never be regained—a budding look, a certain early freshness—and enter an unwonted² stage in which a hundred things contrive to mar the grace of their performance. I couldn't see this change, this awkward period in myself, of course, but, standing before him, I felt I never could—never could possibly—be as nice as I had been a year before.

95 "Ay, he was an awfully nice boy," the lighthouse-keeper said again, and he

¹ephemeral — anything short-lived, such as certain insects

²unwonted — unusual

looked lost in thought.

“Was he?” I said, as if I were talking of someone whom I didn’t know.

—Arturo Vivante
excerpted from “The Lighthouse”
English Stories, 1975
Street Fiction 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 poem) — Questions 1–5 refer to Passage I.

- 1 The first stanza demonstrates the speaker's
 - (1) anxiety about the future
 - (2) fear of childhood illness
 - (3) interest in books
 - (4) fondness for family

- 2 What transforming power of childhood is shown in lines 13 through 16?
 - (1) ambition
 - (2) independence
 - (3) friendship
 - (4) imagination

- 3 The poet uses the imagery in lines 21 through 23 to
 - (1) suggest a familiar routine
 - (2) summon a sense of loss
 - (3) express a fascination
 - (4) convey a firm conviction

- 4 For the speaker, the “first big number” (line 27) represents
 - (1) an important milestone
 - (2) a happy memory
 - (3) an informed prediction
 - (4) a complex understanding

- 5 The language of the final stanza suggests that compared to childhood, the future can sometimes be
 - (1) powerful
 - (2) difficult
 - (3) inspiring
 - (4) exhausting

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

- 6 The purpose of lines 1 through 7 is to establish the passage's
 - (1) conflict
 - (2) theme
 - (3) setting
 - (4) antagonist

- 7 The “keeper” in the passage invites the boy to
 - (1) visit a museum
 - (2) signal the passing ships
 - (3) discuss historical events
 - (4) explore the lighthouse

- 8 The narrator returns to Wales the following summer to
 - (1) vacation abroad
 - (2) seek shelter
 - (3) visit family
 - (4) study English

- 9 The author develops the passage through
 - (1) argument
 - (2) humor
 - (3) dialogue
 - (4) example

Question 10 refers to both passages.

- 10 In both passages children begin to understand
 - (1) the effects of time passing
 - (2) the frailty of their elders
 - (3) their significance in the world
 - (4) their dependence on other people

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 8 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:

“Whosoever does wrong, wrongs himself...”

—Marcus Aurelius

The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, 1944

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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SESSION TWO**

Wednesday, January 27, 2010 — 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., only

ANSWER SHEET

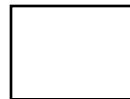
Student Sex: Male Female

School Grade Teacher

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

Part A

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 7 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 8 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 9 _____ |
| 5 _____ | 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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Tear Here

Tear Here