

The University of the State of New York
REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Tuesday, June 9, 2026 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

Student Name _____

School Name _____

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

Print your name and the name of your school on the lines above.

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has three parts. For **Part 1**, you are to read the texts and answer all 24 multiple-choice questions. For **Part 2**, you are to read the sources and write a source-based argument. For **Part 3**, you are to read the text and write a text-analysis response. The source-based argument and text-analysis response should be written in **black** or **blue ink**. Keep in mind that the language and perspectives in a text may reflect the historical and/or cultural context of the time or place in which it was written.

When you have completed the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the bottom of the front of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination. 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 1

Directions (1–24): Closely read each of the three passages below. After each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you. You may use the margins to take notes as you read.

Reading Comprehension Passage A

“202 Checkmates”¹

In my eleventh year, my father taught me defeat.

I sat with my back pressed on that old, scratchy brown couch. Tom chased Jerry across the television screen and then the image dissolved into a white dot in the center. I turned to see my father holding the remote control in one hand and a crumpled cloth cradled in the
5 crook of his other arm.

What are you doing with that rag, Daddy? I asked.

It’s not a rag, girl, he said. It’s a mat.

He unfurled the dirty checkered mat onto the coffee table and dropped a handful of chipped and faded black chess pieces in front of me. He started setting up the white ones
10 without looking at me. I tilted my head, watching my father curiously.

I tentatively set up mine, following his lead. Each piece looked like a veteran of many battles, with nicks and gashes exposing the wood beneath the paint.

Your queen always starts off on her own color square, he said. She’s a woman like you and your mother. She likes to match. He reversed the positions of my king and queen.

15 When my father explained the rules, I thought I’d never be able to keep them straight, especially the rules about the horse, because he moved like a ballerina, jumping to far-off squares, or rather he galloped. I grabbed hold of a horse and moved him to a vacant square. ...

20 If a pawn makes it to the other side, he told me, it becomes a queen. I imagined a little pawn magically blossoming into royalty on that last square.

It became something I longed to see. Sometimes when all was lost, I’d just inch a pawn forward, but the piece would never make it. The fifty-seventh checkmate was one of those games.

25 We woke early in the morning before I went off to school to continue a game carried over from the night before.

While we played, my father told me that when he was my age he imagined he’d be the first black grandmaster. He was the best chess player in school, winning casual games as easily as drinking a glass of water. He became king of the tournaments.

Yeah, figured one day everyone would call me Grandmaster Rob.

30 What happened?

Just didn’t work out that way, I guess. After a while, I wasn’t worrying about being no grandmaster or nothing like that. You stop thinking about these things at a certain age.

I’m going to be a grandmaster, I said.

My father stared hard at the board.

35 You know, Daddy, it’s never too late.

He chuckled, and in less than two minutes my king stood pinned by a bishop, a rook, and a pawn.

¹checkmates — any game-piece positionings in chess that trap the king, indicating the game is over

Checkmate! ...

Robert, she's eleven years old, my mother said, passing by.

40 The girl ain't too young to learn, he replied. Then he turned to me. Ain't that right?

I nodded, thinking about my loss rather than whatever I was nodding about. My impotent pieces stood meekly, no longer any use.

He stuck his hand out for a victory shake.

45 You cheated me, I said, raising my voice a little, ignoring his hand and frowning, damning him for phantom moves I was sure he had made in my absence. Daddy, you cheated.

Don't blame me because I'm better than you. You gotta start thinking two, three moves ahead. Then you can challenge me. Don't worry about me. Worry about your game. ...

Sometime around the hundred-and-first checkmate, I cut through the park on my way home from a friend's house late in the afternoon. There hung a sharp chill in the air. Around
50 a picnic table stood a silent crowd looking severe and intense. Everybody pulled their jackets closer when the cold breeze blew in, but even as the heat left their bodies the people's eyes stayed fixed on the game. Two guys—an older man with a white Afro and yellowish-brown tobacco stains soiling his white mustache and a younger man with smooth dark skin and thin, trimmed black hairs neatly resting on his upper lip—sat at the picnic table with its black graffiti on flaking maroon paint. The men were face to face, staring at a crumpled board
55 more tattered than my father's. A pale brown time clock sat near them, and after each move one of the men slapped a button atop the timepiece. The elder man had a grizzled face that looked as if it had been punched too many times, while his opponent's was young, strong, and handsome, dimples passing over his cheeks when he flashed a transient² smile. ...

60 From the chatter I learned that the younger man was Manny, his opponent was Chester, and nobody had ever seen anyone defeat either of them.

Eventually Chester pinned Manny's king. He didn't get up and dance. Manny didn't rip the black hairs from his upper lip and storm off in anger. The two slapped hands, complimented each other, and left in opposite directions.

65 When I reached home, I told my father all about the match. Speaking breathlessly, I mixed up parts of the story and corrected myself into an incoherence I knew only my father could understand. And he did make sense of it, even if he had to ask me to slow down a few times.

I heard about them dudes, my father said.

70 We should go out to the park, Daddy. You can beat Chester.

Baby girl, chess ain't about who can beat who; it's about life. He unrolled the board and set up the pieces. Now come let me beat up on you.

75 It wasn't until checkmate one hundred twenty-one, or perhaps one hundred twenty-two, that I convinced my father to come watch the men in the park play. It was a mild day, coming off a string of cold ones, and he agreed that it would be a shame to waste the shining sun and pleasant warmth by playing indoors.

When we got to the park, Chester sat blindfolded at a picnic table. He had three games going at once. He'd make a move and then a woman would guide him to the next table to make another move. The crowd looked on silently.

80 He's just showing off, my father said. ...

My father grabbed my hand and we walked downhill, away from the action, to a maroon picnic table of our own. He unrolled the crumpled mat and set up the chipped pieces. I played with the black ones as usual. He said I could be white when I beat him. My father took one of my knights and taunted me.

²transient — passing or temporary

85 Now, little girl, you know you can do better than that. You gotta protect them pieces, girl.
 I took his queen and laughed at him. He clenched his jaw, and his whole face became tight. Playing my father was no longer as hard as it had once been. I was getting used to his rhythms and seeing weaknesses in the creaky stiffness of his gameplay.
 Now where did you learn a move like that? he asked.

90 Don't worry about me, worry about your game, I replied, which made him laugh.
 We both hunched over the board. There was no world outside the both of us, outside of this game. ...

—Rion Amilcar Scott
 excerpted from “202 Checkmates”
Insurrections, 2016
 The University Press of Kentucky

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|--|---|
| <p>1 The simile in lines 11 and 12 links the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) history of the father’s chess play to the condition of the pieces (2) youth of the narrator to her interest in the game (3) arrangement of the father’s chess pieces to their relative value (4) inexperience of the narrator to the strength of her choices <p>2 It may be inferred from lines 19 through 22 that the narrator’s perspective is influenced by her tendency to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) question judgments (2) demand satisfaction (3) withhold gratitude (4) recognize possibilities <p>3 The narrator’s statements in lines 33 and 35 result in the father’s playing style shifting from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) patient to scornful (2) disrespectful to humble (3) instructive to intense (4) expert to indifferent | <p>4 The narrator’s accusations of cheating (lines 44 and 45) emphasize that she is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) confused by the complicated rules (2) comfortable with her slow progress (3) unaware that her father had been concealing his true talent (4) outraged that her mother had tried to advocate on her behalf <p>5 The behaviors of the crowd in lines 49 through 52 imply the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) unique moves of the players (2) distrust of the spectators (3) impatience of the spectators (4) competitive level of the players <p>6 The descriptions of Chester and Manny (lines 52 through 59) are primarily developed through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) hyperbole (2) contrast (3) symbolism (4) repetition |
|--|---|

- 7 The narrator's observations in lines 60 through 64 suggest she is
- (1) contemplating the purpose of the time clock
 - (2) recognizing the strategies of the players
 - (3) learning about respecting an opponent
 - (4) making assumptions about who will win
- 8 The father's reaction in lines 70 through 72 demonstrates that the narrator
- (1) does not yet fully understand her father's lesson
 - (2) believes her father's gameplay is no longer challenging
 - (3) feels she no longer needs her father's instruction
 - (4) has not yet gained her father's respect for her gameplay
- 9 Based on the father's statement in line 71, the extended metaphor of the "crumpled" chess boards throughout the text suggests that life
- (1) should be spontaneous and strategic
 - (2) does not provide unexpected joys
 - (3) is better with organization and style
 - (4) is not without its imperfections
- 10 The numbering of the checkmates throughout the text illustrates
- (1) missed opportunities resulting in a sense of defeat
 - (2) skills developed from defeats experienced
 - (3) techniques attempted from lessons studied
 - (4) various opponents developing into positive influences
-

Reading Comprehension Passage B

“Combing”

Bending, I bow my head
and lay my hands upon
her hair, combing, and think
how women do this for
5 each other. My daughter’s hair
curls against the comb,
wet and fragrant—orange
parings.¹ Her face, downcast,
is quiet for one so young.

10 I take her place. Beneath
my mother’s hands I feel
the braids drawn up tight
as piano wires and singing,
vinegar-rinsed. Sitting
15 before the oven I hear
the orange coils tick
the early hour before school.

She combed her grandmother
Mathilda’s hair using
20 a comb made out of bone.
Mathilda rocked her oak wood
chair, her face downcast,
intent on tearing rags
in strips to braid a cotton
25 rug from bits of orange
and brown. A simple act.

Preparing hair. Something
women do for each other,
plaiting the generations.

—Gladys Cardiff
“Combing”
from *Voices Under One Sky*, 1994
The Crossing Press

¹parings — peelings

- 11 As used in the first stanza, the words “bending,” “bow,” and “lay my hands” help establish
- (1) a simple amusement women share to pass the time
 - (2) a tedious routine with which women must help one another
 - (3) the power struggle between women of different ages
 - (4) the shared respect women bestow upon one another
- 12 The phrase “I take her place” (line 10) reflects a shift in
- (1) time
 - (2) goals
 - (3) attitude
 - (4) expectations
- 13 As used in line 29, the word “plaiting” most nearly means
- (1) defining
 - (2) intertwining
 - (3) rewarding
 - (4) imitating
- 14 The poem is primarily developed through the use of
- (1) hyperbole
 - (2) allusions
 - (3) parallels
 - (4) paradox
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Reading Comprehension Passage C

“Coyotes Have Expanded Their Range to 49 States —And Show No Signs of Stopping”



CHICAGO—She pops up suddenly from behind a green tarp and trots through the construction site, pausing every so often to swivel her large, triangular ears. The *beep beep* of a cement paver and the deafening roar of buzzsaws are just background noise to 1242.

5 A few weeks ago her mate for life, 1244, was shot near this new high school going up outside Chicago. Now Lauren Ross, a field technician with the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, has pinpointed the radio-collared female’s location with a telemetry unit, the constant ping revealing her exact location. Even so, it’s rare to see urban coyotes during the day, as most have learned to be active at night to avoid people. But 1242 has pups to feed.
10 And in the indefatigable¹ coyote spirit—that same quality that has propelled the predator into every corner of the United States—this lanky single mother is making it work without her partner.

“We consistently underestimate this animal and its ability to adjust and adapt,” says Stan Gehrt, a wildlife ecologist with Ohio State University and the Max McGraw Wildlife
15 Foundation. Gehrt has studied Chicago’s coyotes since 2000, not long after the animals surfaced in the nation’s third biggest city. “They push the boundaries of what we perceive to be constraints,” Gehrt says.

For instance, at the beginning of his research, he thought coyotes would be restricted to parks and green spaces. He was wrong. “Now we have coyotes everywhere—every
20 neighborhood, every suburban city, and downtown. The only place we don’t have them is airports, and that’s because they kill them.”

Native to the western two-thirds of the United States, coyotes began dramatically expanding their range in the early 1900s. They’ve increased their habitat across North America by 40 percent since the 1950s—twice the rate of any other North American
25 carnivore—and now live in every U.S. state but Hawaii. The near-extinction of wolves, the crash of the coyote pelt market, and the explosion of food-rich suburbs fueled their rise, as did their innate tenacity forged by a million years of evolution.

“They have this amazing balance between being bold enough to hunt, attack, and kill something and being shy or savvy enough to avoid being killed themselves,” Gehrt says. And

¹indefatigable — unrelenting

30 they've achieved this dramatic increase despite being one of the most persecuted animals in the U.S. At least 400,000 coyotes are exterminated each year, with the federal government killing around 80,000.

From New York City (one daring individual hopped onto a roof in Queens) to the Florida Keys to the Hollywood Hills, no city or climate seems off limits. Coyotes recently migrated
35 as far south as Panama, where they're now poised to enter South America for the first time.

When will they stop? That's the question that fascinates many urban ecologists. So far coyotes seem to have weathered most traditional population checks, such as disease.

"What's striking is almost all eastern states show exponential growth," says Roland Kays, a zoologist at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and North Carolina State
40 University in Raleigh, who studies how coyotes evolved and spread across the continent. "There's no leveling off in most places."

That's why Gehrt's Urban Coyote Research Project in Chicago—and many similar initiatives² in New York, Vancouver, Los Angeles, Denver, Washington D.C., San Francisco, and elsewhere—are busy trying to figure out how people can best coexist with a predator
45 that's here to stay. ...

Though much is made of coyotes' flexibility, they're rigid in two regards: their monogamy—generally both parents raise a litter of pups together—and in their need for a defined territory. This territorialism, says Gehrt, could be a factor that will limit their spread.

Common sense says that when coyotes run out of room, their population should drop.
50 But that's not what's happening in Chicago. Instead, the animals are carving out niches in the most impractical and dangerous of places, such as busy downtown streets. If a young coyote simply can't find a home, its parents will sometimes cede³ part of their territory, a process called "budding."

The territorial instinct is also why killing coyotes with the goal of reducing their numbers—
55 called lethal control—doesn't usually work. Like the game Whac-a-Mole, killing coyotes only creates a habitat vacuum, giving their competitors a chance to move in. Beyond that, coyote biology is primed for persecution: When the rate of killing goes up, young coyotes mature faster, and females produce larger litters.

Disease is another factor that usually limits wildlife populations, Gehrt notes. Canine distemper, for example, often breaks out among wild coyotes. But except for a few cases of
60 mange and getting hit by cars—their primary cause of death—Chicago's coyotes are oddly healthy, living even longer than rural coyotes.

According to analyses of coyote trapping records in the eastern U.S. by Roland Kays, the North Carolina zoologist, it's possible that coyote populations have reached their limit—
65 called the carrying capacity—in Maine and New Hampshire, the first eastern states they colonized. But it's still too early to say for sure, Kays cautions.

Stewart Breck, a research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Denver, says that the coyote population in that city has remained stable over the past decade, indicating that it has reached carrying capacity.

70 But, he says, "As they continue to expand their distribution on a geographic level [throughout the Americas], what are the limits?"

For some animals with specialized diets, food availability can also restrict population growth. But coyotes are omnivores, often eating fruit and vegetables—both of which are in plentiful supply in the suburbs. Yet most urban coyotes still eat a lot of wild prey—particularly
75 rabbits and squirrels—instead of trash or human food.

²initiatives — programs

³cede — transfer or surrender

Because many coyotes dwell in areas that blur the line between wild and urban, figuring out how to predict their patterns is complex. Busse Woods, [in Chicago] for example, may look natural, but it’s an illusion, Gehrt says. At least 2.5 million people come here every year, and the park is hemmed in by neighborhoods and busy roads.

80 “Even in what you consider the most protected, natural areas, those coyotes are being born and raised around people and dogs.”

So far, reported run-ins with people haven’t increased, even as Chicago’s coyote population continues to grow—there are now up to 4,000 in Cook County alone. But, Gehrt says, “The question is, year after year, generation after generation, will they continue to have that healthy fear of people?” ...

85 Like them or not, coyotes are thriving in our human-dominated era—the Anthropocene—when most species aren’t, Kays notes. “It’s a really interesting evolution story that’s happening right under our noses.” ...

—Christine Dell’Amore

excerpted and adapted from “Coyotes Have Expanded Their Range to 49 States
—And Show No Signs of Stopping”
www.nationalgeographic.com, November 29, 2019

15 A purpose of the anecdote in the first paragraph is to

- (1) introduce opposing views
- (2) arouse reader curiosity
- (3) establish a prediction
- (4) intensify a bias

16 The information presented about coyotes 1244 and 1242 (lines 5 through 9) implies that scientists have been

- (1) trying to relocate the pair
- (2) trying to domesticate the pair
- (3) tracking the pair for study
- (4) tracking the pair for elimination

17 The description of the coyote in lines 10 through 12 exhibits a tone of

- (1) fear of the coyote’s increasing aggressiveness
- (2) respect for the coyote’s resourcefulness
- (3) sentimentality toward the coyote’s offspring
- (4) concern over the coyote’s declining population

18 The primary function of lines 13 through 21 is to

- (1) analyze the methodology of previous coyote studies
- (2) clarify the rationale for coyote eradication efforts
- (3) justify the resources needed to preserve coyote populations
- (4) refute the previous assumptions made about coyote habitats

19 According to lines 22 through 27, the reader can infer that the coyote population has expanded predominately as a result of

- (1) trends in the human community
- (2) patterns in the activities of other predators
- (3) learning to avoid recreational hunters
- (4) choosing to abandon previous habitats

20 The phrase “innate tenacity” (line 27) refers to the coyotes’

- (1) interdependence with rival species
- (2) merging with domesticated populations
- (3) adaptability to changing circumstances
- (4) migration to unprotected areas

- 21 The information in lines 28 through 32 presents
- (1) a foreshadowing of the coyotes' fate
 - (2) a point of view that coyote numbers must be protected
 - (3) an allusion to previous coyote population studies
 - (4) an irony in the coyotes' surging numbers
- 22 Lines 33 through 35 contribute to a central idea that coyotes
- (1) have the ability to avoid public places
 - (2) have the ability to respond to circumstances
 - (3) tend to resist seasonal changes
 - (4) tend to prefer stable conditions
- 23 An effect of the “budding” process (line 53) is that
- (1) larger numbers of coyotes are occupying less space
 - (2) larger hunting territories are attracting more coyotes
 - (3) fewer successful families are led by adult coyotes
 - (4) fewer mated coyotes are reproducing in less space
- 24 Lines 76 through 85 contribute to a central idea by suggesting that
- (1) the identification of habitats for coyotes will be achieved through regulation
 - (2) coyotes will continue to seek areas with smaller human populations
 - (3) the interaction between humans and coyotes is inevitable
 - (4) coyotes will expand to dominate park wildlife
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Part 2

Argument Essay

Topic: Should horse racing be banned?

Directions:

Closely read and analyze each of the four sources provided on pages 14 through 21. Using evidence from at least **three** of these sources, plan and write a well-developed argument regarding whether horse racing should be banned.

Be sure to:

- Establish your claim regarding whether horse racing should be banned.
- Distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims.
- Use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least **three** of the sources to support your argument.
- Cite your evidence by source number and line number(s) or graphic to avoid plagiarism. For example: (Source 1, lines 4–5), or (Source 2, graphic), or equivalent; do **not** simply summarize the sources.
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent essay.
- Maintain an appropriate style and tone, avoiding the use of casual or conversational language, symbols and/or abbreviations, unless quoting directly from a cited source.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation.

Note:

- Use scrap paper and the margins of this test booklet to take notes and plan your essay.
- Write your essay in **black** or **blue ink** beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet.

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Source 1

“Is Horse Racing Good or Bad for Horses?”

...Horse racing is a controversial topic that stirs up emotions in many people. Some see it as an exploitative activity, while others enjoy the sport and find it beneficial for horses and humans alike. In the following paragraphs, I examine both sides. ...

Benefits of Horse Racing for Horses

5 Horse racing, like any other sport, has its pros and cons. One of the major benefits of horse racing for horses is the physical exercise and mental stimulation it provides. Through regular training sessions, horses maintain their fitness levels, build muscle strength, and improve their overall health. The rigorous exercise routine not only keeps them in peak physical condition but also helps to keep their minds sharp and engaged.

10 The competitive environment of horse racing can also be beneficial for horses, as it challenges them to perform at their best. This healthy competition can lead to the development of strong bonds between the horses and their trainers or jockeys, which can be rewarding for both the horses and their human counterparts.

15 Another benefit of horse racing for horses is the quality care and treatment they receive. In the world of racing, expert veterinarians are always on hand to monitor the horses' health and provide them with the necessary care. These professionals are well-versed in equine medicine and are dedicated to ensuring the well-being of these magnificent animals. ...

20 The economic benefits of horse racing are also worth considering. The industry creates numerous job opportunities for those involved in the care, training, and breeding of racehorses. These jobs not only support the livelihoods of many individuals but also help to maintain high standards of horse care, contributing to the overall health and well-being of the horses.

25 Moreover, the money generated through horse racing can be channeled back into the equine industry, providing funding for horse care and breeding programs. These funds help to ensure the continued development of healthy, strong, and well-bred horses that are well-suited for racing and other equestrian activities. ...

The Bad Side of Horse Racing for Horses ...

30 Horse racing, like any high-intensity sport, comes with inherent risks, such as musculoskeletal injuries. Strains, sprains, and fractures can result from the intense physical demands placed on the horses during training and races.

Racehorses may also be involved in accidents on the track, which can lead to severe injuries or even fatalities. Collisions and falls can occur, posing significant risks to both the horses and their jockeys. However, statistically the fatality rate is relatively low, and the number of horses dying in flat horse races is about 1 in every 1000 horses. ...

35 The use of doping and performance-enhancing drugs in horse racing is another serious concern. While these substances may provide short-term gains in speed and endurance, they can have a detrimental impact on the horses' overall health and well-being.

40 The long-term effects of these drugs on racehorses can be devastating, leading to chronic health issues, organ damage, and shortened lifespans. The use of such substances raises significant ethical questions about the treatment of animals in the pursuit of victory and financial gain. ...

The desire to produce winning racehorses can lead to overbreeding and irresponsible breeding practices. This may result in a surplus of horses, many of which may never race or face uncertain futures once their racing careers are over. Additionally, breeding for specific

45 traits can sometimes prioritize speed over health, leading to horses that may be more susceptible to injury.

While many racehorses are well cared for, there are instances of abuse during training and racing. This can include overworking, using harsh training methods, or pushing horses beyond their physical limits. These practices can have serious consequences on the physical and emotional well-being of the horses involved. ...

Do Horses Like Horse Racing?

We cannot and should not assume that horses don't like racing. After all, in the wild, you will see a horse running, jumping, and prancing. It is also a well-known fact that even if a horse — for some reason becomes riderless during a race — it will continue racing. ...

55 Racehorses spend hours each day training with humans. They love the physical touch, strokes, and grooming. They do not hesitate to show their humans that they want to jump and race, and these cues are evident to everyone who knows and works with horses. In short, no evidence shows that racehorses are unwilling participants in races. ...

60 Horses may or may not understand the concept of winning and losing. In the wild, male and female horses run and jump during sexual pursuits, or two males might run and chase each other to 'outdo' each other. In that sense, maybe, a wild horse does understand what it means to win. ...

65 As with so many things in life, there are good and bad sides to horse racing. Racehorses do have risks of injuries, but they are also exceptionally well taken care of. Racehorses live a life of purpose and get well-balanced meals, routine vet and dental checkups, as well as the community bliss of other racehorses. ...

—Miles Henry
excerpted from “Is Horse Racing Good or Bad for Horses?”
<https://horseracingsense.com>, April 25, 2023

Source 2

“Why Horse Racing Is So Dangerous”

Despite its popularity, horse racing is a dangerous sport for both horse and jockey. Last week [June 2, 2023], Churchill Downs—site of the Kentucky Derby—announced it would suspend racing operations for the rest of the spring after 12 horses died in a month. Operations will resume June 10 at Ellis Park in Henderson, Kentucky.

5 In its statement, Churchill Downs said “no single factor has been identified as a potential cause” of the deaths, but nearly all horses were euthanized after suffering serious injuries on the racetrack. During the suspension, investigators plan to conduct a “top-to-bottom review” of all safety protocols, including making sure the surface of the track is safe for racing. ...

10 From 2009 to 2021, more than 7,200 horses died or were euthanized nationwide because of racing-related illness and injuries, according to The Jockey Club, which maintains the Thoroughbred registry.

Historically, many racehorse deaths have resulted from limb injuries, followed by respiratory, digestive, and multiorgan system disorders. In 2019, when a then-unprecedented 42 horses died at Santa Anita Park in California, most were due to limb injuries. ...

15 “The show cannot just go on, and the leadership of the track should hit the pause button for the well-being of the horses and of the industry itself,” Joseph Grove, director of communications for Animal Wellness Action, said by email. ...

Racing Reforms

20 The unprecedented spate¹ of fatalities at Santa Anita in 2019 placed renewed focus on the safety of the sport.

For instance, bipartisan U.S. lawmakers introduced the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act to create a uniform national standard for drug testing racehorses. The bill passed in 2020, and the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority [HISA], which is managed by the Federal Trade Commission, was formed. The horse racing industry was formerly regulated
25 by states.

The Jockey Club supported the bill, saying in 2019 that “it’s time we joined the rest of the world in putting in place the best measures to protect the health and safety of our equine athletes.”

30 Authorities have cracked down on illegal drugging in recent years. In March 2020, federal prosecutors charged 27 trainers, veterinarians, performance-enhancing drug peddlers, and others for taking part in racehorse doping rings, and in February 2022, Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit was stripped of his title after failing a drug test. ...

Deadly Injuries

35 While a broken leg is easily treatable for humans, it’s often a death sentence for horses.

That’s because horses have so little soft tissue in their legs that the bone often tears through skin or cuts off circulation to the rest of the limb, leaving them prone to infection.

In some severe cases, the bone shatters, making it nearly impossible to reassemble.

40 Even if the horse’s bone could be set, it wouldn’t be able to support weight for several weeks. If horses can’t distribute their weight relatively evenly, they risk laminitis, a potentially fatal inflammation of tissue inside the hoof.

In general, if a horse can’t stand on all four legs on its own, it won’t survive and will be euthanized, [former California Horse Racing Board equine medical director, Rick] Arthur says. ...

¹spate — series

The Drug Controversy

45 Trainers have been accused of making an already risky situation worse by drugging horses with performance-enhancing substances or painkillers, animal welfare advocates say.

Such drugs allow horses to run faster and power through the pain. For example, the drug furosemide, popularly known under the brand name Lasix, is a “performance-enhancing drug cloaked as a therapeutic medication,” according to a March 2019 report by the Jockey Club.
50

While it’s prescribed to treat bleeding in the lungs, the medication also causes urination and, consequently, weight loss. Lighter horses run faster, and Lasix has been shown to help horses run three to five lengths faster. Lasix is banned at some races, and Churchill Downs bans its use on all two-year-old horses [on] racing days. ...

55 The Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority is performing a three-year study into whether Lasix is a performance enhancer, and if it’s healthy for horses. The board will then vote, and it’s expected they will choose to entirely ban use on race day, according to Animal Wellness Action.

—Rachel Fobar
excerpted and adapted from “Why Horse Racing Is So Dangerous”
www.nationalgeographic.com, June 9, 2023

Source 3

“Injuries Among Maryland Jockeys During Thoroughbred Racing: 2015–2019”

...Thoroughbred horse racing is one of the most competitive and popular sports worldwide, but it is very physically demanding and not without substantial risk. Jockeys are elite athletes who sit perched atop an animal weighing 10 times their mass while galloping at speeds up to 64 km/h (40 mph). A single misstep or slight error may result in the jockey being thrown from the horse, potentially resulting in catastrophic injury or death. While most reported injuries have been associated with falls, there are also injuries that can result from training activities or simply being in close proximity to a horse. ...

The Maryland Jockey Club is the oldest professional sports organisation in the USA. In 2015, it developed the Horsemen’s Health Program, which implemented primary care sports medicine physicians to provide medical coverage at the racetracks across the state. Maryland racetracks operate year-round, with approximately 160 racing days per year, averaging 200 riders annually, usually between 20–35 jockeys riding per day, throughout the state. Maryland only races one track in the state at any given time. ...

MARYLAND THOROUGHBRED JOCKEY EXPOSURES AND EVENTS, 2015–2019

TABLE A

Risk Exposures	Frequency
Competition Days	590 = Total number of days races were held
Races	5,611 = Total number of races throughout the competition days
Mounts	45,284 = Total number of times a jockey mounted a horse
Jockeys	670 = Total number of jockeys that were included in the study
Events	
Total Incidents ¹	184
*** Incidents resulting in jockey injuries ²	146/184 = 79.3%
Falls ³	131
Falls resulting in injury	100/131 = 76.3%
Injuries	204
Transfers to hospital	20
Transfers to other medical facility	21

¹incidents — any events involving a jockey requiring an evaluation by the racetrack physician and resulting in an injury report

²injuries — any physical complaints sustained by any person resulting from interaction with racehorses or related activities

³falls — riders being dislodged from a horse, regardless of outcome

TABLE B***** Incidents Resulting in Jockey Injuries (146)****Falls**

	Frequency	Percentage
Thrown From Horse	34	23.3%
Horse Reared/Flipped/Spooked	24	16.4%
Horse Breakdown ⁴	24	16.4%
Impact With Gate/Fence/Rail	17	11.6%
Horse Tripped/Stumbled	12	8.2%
Fell Over Fallen Horse	7	4.8%
Clipped Heels ⁵	6	4.1%

 Total

 124
Others

Impact With Horse ⁶	11	7.5%
Pulling Up ⁷ Horse	6	4.1%
Unspecified	3	2.1%
Equipment Failure	1	0.7%
Struck By Object	1	0.7%

 Total

 22

 GRAND TOTAL

 146

 100%
(approx.)

⁴horse breakdown — when a horse can no longer bear its body weight

⁵clipped heels — when a horse steps on the heels of the horse in front of it

⁶impact with horse — of the 11 instances of ‘Impact With Horse,’ six of those injuries were caused by being headbutted by a horse

⁷pulling up — when a jockey brings a horse to a stop during a race

—Kelly Ryan, et al.
 excerpted and adapted from “Injuries Among Maryland Jockeys
 During Thoroughbred Racing: 2015–2019”
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, December 1, 2020

Source 4

“The Impact of Horse Racing on Local Economies: A Galloping Force of Prosperity”

Horse racing, with its centuries-old legacy, not only thrills spectators and enthusiasts but also emerges as a significant economic catalyst for local communities. The thundering hooves, the spirited cheers and the dazzling spectacle of horse racing contribute to an industry that goes beyond the track, shaping the economic landscape of regions that host these events.

5 **Tourism and Hospitality Boost**

Horse racing events attract not only local spectators but also visitors from far and wide. The influx of tourists during race meetings becomes a boon¹ for local hospitality industries, including hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues. Racegoers seeking accommodation, dining options and entertainment contribute to increased economic activity, fostering a vibrant atmosphere in the host community. ...

10 **A Timeless Tradition**

Horse racing’s historical roots run deep, spanning cultures and civilizations. From ancient chariot races in Greece to the modern thoroughbred racing you know today, this sport has stood the test of time. In many regions, horse racing evolved from a mere pastime to a grand tradition that weaves itself into the social fabric and economic tapestry of local communities.

The allure of the racetrack extends beyond the thrill of competition; it encompasses the pageantry, the social gatherings and the economic opportunities that arise from hosting these events. Local economies become intertwined with the equestrian world, creating a symbiotic² relationship that fosters growth, tourism, and community development.

20 **Job Creation and Industry Support**

One of the most direct and immediate impacts of horse racing on local economies is job creation. The industry encompasses a wide array of roles, from stable hands and jockeys to administrative staff and event organizers. Racetracks become hubs of employment, providing livelihoods for individuals with diverse skill sets, from equine experts to marketing professionals.

Beyond the racetrack, the horse racing industry supports ancillary³ businesses, including veterinary services, feed suppliers and equipment manufacturers. The demand for skilled professionals and support services creates a ripple effect that extends far beyond the track, benefiting a myriad of businesses and individuals in the local community. ...

30 **Infrastructure⁴ Development and Investment**

Hosting horse racing events necessitates significant infrastructure, from state-of-the-art racetracks to modern amenities for spectators. The development and maintenance of such facilities require substantial investments, injecting capital into the local economy. Communities that host racing events often see improvements in transportation, accommodation and overall infrastructure, leaving a lasting legacy that benefits residents long after the race has concluded.

¹boon — benefit

²symbiotic — mutual

³ancillary — secondary

⁴infrastructure — underlying systems

40 These infrastructure investments not only enhance the race day experience but also position the community as a desirable location for future events, conferences, and tourism. The continued upkeep of these facilities creates a cycle of ongoing economic benefits for the local economy.

Cultural Impact and Community Spirit

45 Horse racing events, particularly those woven into cultural traditions like Stephens Day racing, become more than just sporting occasions; they become celebrations of local identity and community spirit. The shared experience of attending races fosters a sense of belonging and pride among residents. Local businesses and communities often rally together to organize festivities, parades, and entertainment surrounding these events, creating an inclusive and vibrant atmosphere. ...

Environmental Stewardship and Conservation Efforts

50 Horse racing's influence on local economies also extends to environmental stewardship and conservation efforts. Many racing establishments prioritize sustainable practices, land conservation, and environmental initiatives. From preserving green spaces to implementing eco-friendly measures in facility operations, the racing industry often becomes a catalyst for environmental awareness and conservation in the local community. ...

excerpted from "The Impact of Horse Racing on Local Economies:
A Galloping Force of Prosperity"
<https://businessmondays.co.uk>, December 15, 2023

Part 3

Text-Analysis Response

Directions:

Closely read and analyze the text provided on pages 23 and 24. Plan and write a well-developed, text-based response of at least two paragraphs. In your response, clearly identify a central idea or theme in the text and provide an analysis of one or more writing strategies that develop and support this central idea or theme.

Be sure to:

- Introduce a central idea or theme from the text.
- Analyze how the author uses one or more writing strategies to develop and support the central idea or theme you identified.
 - Examples include: allusion, cause/effect, characterization, conflict, dialogue, irony, language use, metaphor, mood, simile, personification, point of view, setting, structure, symbolism, tone, etc.
- Support your analysis by providing evidence, such as details, quotations, and/or paraphrased information from the text.
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent response.
- Maintain an appropriate style and tone, avoiding the use of casual or conversational language, symbols and/or abbreviations, unless quoting directly from a cited source.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation.

Note:

- Use scrap paper and the margins of this test booklet to take notes and plan your response.
- Write your essay in **black** or **blue ink** beginning on page 7 of your essay booklet.

“The Year of Silence”

The following excerpt is taken from a work of fiction.

5 Shortly after two in the afternoon, on Monday, the sixth of April, a few seconds of silence overtook the city. The rattle of the jackhammers, the boom of the transformers, and the whirl of the ventilation fans all came to a halt. Suddenly there were no car alarms cutting through the air, no trains scraping over their rails, no steam pipes exhaling their fumes, no peddlers shouting into the streets. Even the wind seemed to hesitate.

We waited for the incident to pass, and when it did, we went about our business. None of us foresaw the repercussions.¹

10 That the city’s whole immense carousel of sound should stop at one and the same moment was unusual, of course, but not exactly inexplicable. We had witnessed the same phenomenon on a lesser scale at various cocktail parties and interoffice minglers over the years, when the pauses in the conversations overlapped to produce an air pocket of total silence, making us all feel as if we’d been caught eavesdropping on one another. True, no one could remember such a thing happening to the entire city before, but it was not so hard to believe that it would. ...

15 When two full weeks went by without another incident, our interest in the matter threatened to shrivel away. It might actually have done so had the next episode not occurred the following Sunday, surprising us all in the middle of our church services. There was another silence, more than ten seconds long, just a couple of days later, and a much shorter silence, like a hiccup, the day after that.

20 Every time one of the silences came to an end we felt as though we had passed through a long transparent passageway, a tunnel of sorts, one that made the world into which we emerged appear brighter and cleaner than it had before, less troubled, more humane. The silence siphoned out of the city and into our ears, spilling from there into our dreams and beliefs, our memories and expectations. In the wake of each fresh episode a new feeling flowed through us, full of warmth and a lazy equanimity.² It took us a while to recognize the feeling for what it was: contentment.

25 The truth was that we enjoyed the silence, and more than that, we hungered for it. Sometimes we found ourselves poised in the doorways of our homes in the morning, or on the edges of our car seats as we drove to work, trying to hear something very faint beneath the clatter of sirens and engines. Slowly we realized that what we were waiting for was another incident to take place.

30 There were weeks when we experienced an episode of silence almost every day. One particular Wednesday saw three of them in the span of a single hour. But there were other weeks when what the papers took to calling a “silence drought” descended upon the city, and all our hopes for a cessation³ went in vain. If more than a few days passed without some minor lull to interrupt the cacophony,⁴ we would become irritable and overtender, quick to gnash at one another and then to rebuke⁵ ourselves for our failures of sympathy. On the other hand, a single interlude of silence might generate an aura of fellow feeling that could last for the better part of a day. ...

40 Who was the first person to suggest that we try generating such a silence ourselves, one that would endure until we chose to end it? No one could remember. But the idea took

¹repercussions — impacts

²equanimity — calmness of mind

³cessation — an end

⁴cacophony — clamor

⁵rebuke — scold

hold with an astonishing tenacity. Local magazines published laudatory⁶ cover stories on the Silence Movement. Leaflets with headings like PROMOTE SILENCE and SILENCE = LIFE appeared in our mailboxes. The politicians of both major parties began to champion the cause, and it wasn't long before a measure was passed decreeing that the city would make every possible effort "to muffle all sources of noise within its borders, so as to ensure a continuing silence for its citizens and their families." ...

We were exultant when the roads fell silent, and pleased when the elevators stopped crying out on their cables, but by the time the cell phones and the pagers ceased to chirp, we were faced with a problem of diminishing returns. The greater the number of sounds we extinguished, the more we noticed the ones that remained, until even the slightest tap or ripple began to seem like an assault against the silence. ...

Some eight months after the first incident took place, it had been so long since anyone had noticed one of the episodes that it seemed safe to presume they were finished.

The city was facing an early winter. Every afternoon a snow of soft, fat flakes would drift gently down from the sky, covering the trees and the pavilions, the mailboxes and the parking meters, the streets and the sidewalks. Recalling the way the snow used to soften the noise of the traffic made us experience a flutter of helpless nostalgia. Everything was different now. The sound of our footsteps creaking over the fresh accumulation was like a horde of crickets scraping their wings together in an empty room.

Not until we walked through the snow did we really discover how accustomed we had grown to the silence. ...

It turned out that in spite of everything the silence had brought us, there was a hidden longing for sound in the city. So many of us shared in this desire that a noise club began operating, tucked away in the depths of an abandoned recording studio. The people who went to the club did so for the pure excitement of it, for the way the din set their hearts to beating. Who needed serenity, they wanted to know? Who had ever asked for it? They stood in groups listening to the club's switchboard operator laying sound upon sound in the small enclosed space of the room. The slanting note of a violin. The pulse of an ambulance siren. Gallons of water geysering from an open hydrant. A few thousand football fans cheering at a stadium.

Afterward, when the club's patrons arrived home, they lay on their pillows unable to fall asleep, their minds spinning with joy and exhilaration. ...

—Kevin Brockmeier
excerpted from "The Year of Silence"
Ecotone: Reimagining Place, Issue 5, Vol. #3.1, Fall 2007
University of North Carolina, Wilmington

⁶laudatory — praiseful

