

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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Tuesday, August 18, 2026 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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 one 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

How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe

In this excerpt, a man recounts an interaction he had with his father before time travel became possible in their future world.

Once upon a time, I am ten years old and my dad is driving me home from the park. ...

Sitting here in the front next to my dad, he in his uncomfortable-looking blue-gray slacks that he always wears, even on Saturdays, me in soccer shorts, sun beating down on my head, so hot even my hair is hot, my legs stuck to the vinyl seat, trying to concentrate on not letting
5 the melting rivulets of orange-flavored sugar water [Popsicle] run too far down the side of my skinny forearm, squinting through the windshield. I remember this day, I know what happens, and yet I still feel like I don't know what will happen.

"Kids at school say that you," I start to say.

"That I? I'm what?"

10 "That you're, uh."

"Strange?"

"Crazy."

I actually say this. I remember saying this. I remember regretting that I had said it even as I was saying it. I regret it even now. Regret what it started, regret all that came after. ...

15 I ask him if it's true what they say.

He says what's that.

"Do you really think it's possible to travel to the past?"

He's got to be mad now. He doesn't get mad often, but when he does. Not good. I'm sure he's mad, I'm positive, I'm considering how much it would hurt if I opened the car door and just jumped out, but then he just laughs and takes his foot off the gas and pulls into the
20 slow lane. "We're time traveling right now," he says, the cars speeding by and honking in Dopplerized frequencies.¹

And then he pulls completely off the road into the parking lot of a video rental store and shuts off the engine and I am thinking he's doing this to somehow prove his point even
25 further, that he's going to explain to me how even now, completely motionless, we are still time traveling, I am thinking I'm about to get a lecture about how I would understand this if I just kept up with my math homework, but instead, my father turns to me and tells me, in all seriousness, this idea he has had, a secret plan, an *invention*.

My father, the inventor. I had never thought of him that way before that afternoon,
30 although a small part of me felt lifted, opened, as if the world was bigger than I'd imagined, that there were parts of my father I could never have guessed at. I thought of him as old, as someone with a job, as, well, Dad. Not someone with dreams or ideas. My father had ambition. Ambition he had never previously shared with me, and why would he, I was ten, but he also didn't share it with my mother, or anyone else. He kept it inside, in his study, in
35 a box, in himself. ...

¹Dopplerized frequencies — observed changes to a sound's pitch based on relative speed and location

He spilled out his secret theory in an excited rush, and part of me was thrilled that he wanted to tell me this, that I mattered to him, that I was grown-up enough to trust with his idea, with his hope, with his plan, but I couldn't show any of that to him, so I just stared straight ahead, through our grit-coated windshield, at the posters in the window for
40 *Back to the Future* and *Peggy Sue Got Married* and *Terminator*. All of those stories about time travel, they were comforting, and at the same time it bothered me how they always made it seem fun and how everything fit into place, how things could only ever be how they were supposed to be, how the heroes found a way to change the world while still obeying the laws of physics.

45 I remember my mind drifting to the last time our family had gone into the video store, together, how my mom and dad took forever picking a movie and I'd wandered off and found, next to the licorice and cardboard boxes of chocolate-covered raisins, a comic book. The story itself was a trifle, some sort of third-class superhero, a forgettable guy with some useless power. It was something else in the book that caught my attention.

50 Way in the back of the comic, in the advertisement pages, in the lower left-hand quadrant of the second to last page, a little box, there was a rectangular ad, maybe four inches by five, that read at the top, in bold all-caps:

55 **CHRONO-²**
ADVENTURER
SURVIVAL KIT...

The ad said the kit was your only chance for survival in the harsh environment of an alien universe, but what I remember the most was the picture in the ad, not even a picture, but a tiny line drawing of a boy and his father, holding hands, not smiling, just staring out at you from their little box in the text, buried in the corner of the back page of that comic, and the
60 ad didn't say, but it was reasonable to assume, to a ten-year-old me, that they were unlucky enough to have been stranded, but at least they had gotten the kit.

This is what I was thinking about when my father, a little out of breath, finished telling me everything he had kept bottled up inside, when he had finally confessed his most guarded dreams and stopped talking. For a long moment, it was silent in the car, and then he turned
65 to me.

"So," my father said, "what do you think?"

I shrugged and kept my eyes fixed on the families in the window of the video store choosing their movies together, ready for a night of fun and popcorn.

"Dad," I said, "are we poor?"...

70 Even now, to this day, I don't know if I said it because I was thinking about that survival kit, which I knew I couldn't ask him for, although I wasn't sure why, exactly, not this month, maybe for Christmas, or maybe next year. I didn't know why exactly, I just knew not to do it without anyone having to tell me, and that made me sad for my father, but at the same time it made me a little mad.

75 Maybe I just wanted a reaction from the man, who was so often cold and distant with Mom and even sometimes with me, the same man who had just now spoken to me about math and science and science fiction with more passion than I had ever seen him speak about anything. I wanted a reaction and I was sure I'd gotten it. He had to be mad now, I thought, but I was wrong again. He just started the car and backed out without a word.

²Chrono — relating to time

80 I spent the rest of the drive home with a puddle of melted Popsicle juice pooling on the top of my tightly clenched fist, afraid to move, surprised that he didn't even look a little mad. He just looked embarrassed. Or really, he looked crushed.

And in truth, I was half asking and half not-really-asking-but-knowing-the-answer, and I think that mixture of genuinely not understanding and half starting to understand the
85 reality of our family, of my father and his job and his dreams and our car and our neighborhood, it did something to him. It hurt him deeply, but maybe also lit a fire in him, it put a distance between us that would persist for years into the future, and yet it opened up something between us, a channel, an axis, a direct line for honest communication.

—Charles Yu

excerpted and adapted from *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe*, 2010
Pantheon Books

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|---|---|
| <p>1 Lines 6 and 7 emphasize the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) tediousness of the event(2) distance of the past(3) significance of the moment(4) complexity of the present <p>2 The dialogue in lines 8 through 12 demonstrates that the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) father is aware of his reputation(2) son is considerate of his father(3) father is compassionate towards his son(4) son is uninfluenced by his peers <p>3 The use of italics in line 28 emphasizes the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) son's suspicion (3) son's obedience(2) father's excitement (4) father's misgiving <p>4 The statement "He kept it inside, in his study, in a box, in himself" (lines 34 and 35) illustrates the father's understanding that his</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) family is more important than his work(2) failures are being widely condemned(3) invention is likely to inspire others(4) ambitions are likely to face ridicule <p>5 The use of the word "trifle" (line 48) suggests that the story in the comic book is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) unusual (3) unpleasant(2) unbelievable (4) unimportant | <p>6 The son's reaction to his father's inquiry (lines 66 through 69) demonstrates that the father and the son</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) yearn for attention(2) share similar traits(3) have different priorities(4) fear being misunderstood <p>7 The son wants "a reaction" (lines 75 and 78) because the father</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) avoids controversial topics with his family(2) is emotionally removed from his family(3) is frequently away from his family(4) often argues with his family <p>8 The father "looked crushed" (line 82) because he is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) angered by his limitations(2) troubled by his son's indifference(3) humbled by his invention(4) confused by his son's reaction <p>9 In lines 86 through 88, the narrator concludes that he and his father</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) developed an understanding of each other(2) became more combative(3) continued to offend each other(4) nurtured mutual dreams |
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Reading Comprehension Passage B

“Bats and Swallows”

Whatever the difference might be
to one who knows,
we couldn't see
from where we stood in soft shadows
5 any signs that they were swallows
or bats. That there were wings
was without doubt;
you could see small pointed things
swooping out
10 into the gloaming—
and sometimes back.
One seemed almost iridescent¹
as I tried to track
its crescent
15 flight across the hill. The lack
of sound suggested
bats to me;
you strained to see if they nested
somewhere below the
20 terrace, having rested
your case on swallows.
We couldn't be sure
either way—and so it follows
that neither of us knows.
25 But since it is in your nature
always to side one way
or the other, you hold
that they were swallows. I say
the question never gets old,
30 that either, or both, hold sway.

—Erica McAlpine
“Bats and Swallows”
www.theatlantic.com, January/February, 2021

¹iridescent — shimmering

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| <p>10 Lines 1 through 6 introduce the idea that the “we” are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) casual observers of the creatures(2) skilled experts on the creatures(3) unaware of the presence of the creatures(4) unmoved by the behavior of the creatures <p>11 Lines 6 through 9 describe the creatures’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) irregular appearance(2) common features(3) unusual activities(4) consistent communication <p>12 Which phrase contributes to the understanding of the word “gloaming” (line 10)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) “soft shadows” (line 4)(2) “without doubt” (line 7)(3) “pointed things” (line 8)(4) “swooping out” (line 9) | <p>13 The use of imagery in lines 8 through 15 is meant to portray the narrator’s observation as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) an intimidating situation(2) an interesting lesson(3) a beautiful encounter(4) a typical experience <p>14 The use of the phrase “that either, or both, hold sway” (line 30) shows that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) each companion is angry with the other(2) each companion believes the other is mistaken(3) the narrator is choosing to ignore the evidence(4) the narrator believes no firm decision is necessary |
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Reading Comprehension Passage C

The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human

Humans are creatures of Neverland.¹ Neverland is our evolutionary niche,² our special habitat. We are attracted to Neverland because, on the whole, it is good for us. It nourishes our imaginations; it reinforces moral behavior; it gives us safe worlds to practice inside. Story is the glue of human social life — defining groups and holding them together. We live in Neverland because we can't *not* live in Neverland. Neverland is our nature. We are the storytelling animal.

People dream and fantasize, our children romp and dramatize, as much as ever. We are hard-wired to do so. And yet many worry that fiction may be losing its central place in our lives, that we, as a culture, might be leaving Neverland behind. The novel is a young genre, but for a century critics have been writing and rewriting its obituary. If technological changes don't spell its doom, cultural ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder] does. Live theater and poetry are even worse off. Theaters increasingly struggle to make ends meet, and poets trade accusations about who killed poetry. University literature departments are in big trouble, too. English departments have been hemorrhaging³ majors for decades, and the whole field is in the midst of a great and possibly permanent depression, where two-thirds of Ph.D.'s never find full-time, tenure-track⁴ work. ...

But what if the novel were actually to die or just dwindle into true cultural irrelevance? Would that signal the decline of story? For a bookman like me, the end of the novel would be a very sad thing. But, as [novelist] David Shields himself stresses, it would not be the end of *story*. The novel is not an eternal literary form. While the novel has ancient precursors, it rose as a dominating force only in the eighteenth century. We were creatures of story before we had novels, and we will be creatures of story if sawed-off attention spans or technological advances ever render the novel obsolete. Story evolves. Like a biological organism, it continuously adapts itself to the demands of its environment. ...

Along with the fear of things dying, there's a fear of things rising. Video games are a prime example. But do they represent a movement away from story or just a stage in story's evolution? Video games have changed massively from the first arcade games I remember playing as a boy: Asteroids, Pac-Man, Space Invaders. Most hit video games are now intensely story-centric. The gamer controls a virtual character — an avatar (or "mini-me") — who moves through a rich digital Neverland. Pick up a copy of *PC Gamer* magazine, and you will find that—with the exception of sports simulators — most video games are organized around the familiar grammar of problem structure and poetic justice.⁵ Marketed mainly to testosterone-drunk young males, the games are usually narratives of lurid⁶ but heroic violence. Such games don't take their players out of story; they immerse them in a fantasy world where they get to *be* the rock-jawed hero of an action film. ...

These are undeniably nervous times for people who make a living through story. The publishing, film, and television businesses are going through a period of painful change. But the *essence* of story is not changing. The technology of storytelling has evolved from oral tales, to clay tablets, to hand-lettered manuscripts, to printed books, to movies, televisions,

¹Neverland — the island setting of the fantasy fiction works collectively known as "Peter Pan"

²niche — comfort zone

³hemorrhaging — losing blood

⁴tenure-track — a pathway to promotion and job security

⁵poetic justice — when good triumphs and punishes evil

⁶lurid — vivid

40 Kindles, and iPhones. This wreaks havoc⁷ on business models, but it doesn't fundamentally change story. Fiction is as it was and ever will be:

Character + Predicament + Attempted Extrication⁸

45 Futurology is a fool's game, but I think the worry that story is being squeezed out of human life is exactly the wrong one. The future will see an intensification, even a perfection, of what draws us to fiction in the first place. The gravitational pull of story is going to increase manyfold. We will be marooned in cyber-Neverlands, and we will like it that way. As one online gamer put it, "The future looks bleak for reality." ...

50 When you enter a MMORPG ["massively multiplayer online role-playing game"], you not only enter a distinct physical and cultural space; you also enter a story space. In fact, many MMORPGs are based on popular stories, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Trek*, and *Star Wars*. MMORPGs invite us to become characters in classic hero stories. As one player put it, playing a MMORPG is like living "inside a novel as it is being written." Another said, "I'm living inside a medieval saga. I'm one of the characters in the novel, and, at the same time, I'm one of the authors."

55 Take, for example, Blizzard Entertainment's MMORPG, World of Warcraft (WoW). It is hard to describe WoW in this compact space, for the same reason it would be difficult to sum up the physical and cultural concept of Nicaragua or Norway in a few paragraphs. The ambition of WoW is startling. Its developers aren't game makers; they are world makers. (They tellingly refer to their creation not as a role-playing *game*, but as a role-playing *experience*.) WoW's designers are geek gods carving a virtual world out of the void.

60 WoW is an online universe made up of many separate planets, races, factions,⁹ cultures, religions, and mutually incomprehensible languages. Twelve million real people adventure there (meaning that the population of WoW world exceeds Nicaragua's and Norway's put together). The sociologist William Sims Bainbridge, who spent two years in WoW world doing participant-observer research, isn't exaggerating when he writes that the WoW experience is based on a "tapestry of myths as complex as any in the ancient sagas." There are books lying around WoW world, such as *The New Horde*, and *Civil War in the Plaguelands*, which your character can read to learn the lore of the realm. There is a series of novels (stretching to fifteen at this writing) that flesh out WoW's backstory, develop the major characters, and

70 constrain the continuous evolution of the online experience. When you enter WoW world, you become a character in an evolving epic that stretches back to the beginning of time — the first gods, the birth of worlds, and ten thousand years of history charting the rise and fall of races and civilizations. ...

75 Commentators frequently blame MMORPGs for an increasing sense of isolation in modern life. But virtual worlds are less a cause of that isolation than a response to it. Virtual worlds give back what has been scooped out of modern life. The virtual world is in important ways more authentically human than the real world. It gives us back community, a feeling of competence, and a sense of being an important person whom people depend on. ...

80 Humans evolved to crave story. This craving has, on the whole, been a good thing for us. Stories give us pleasure and instruction. They simulate worlds so we can live better in this one. They help bind us into communities and define us as cultures. Stories have been a great boon to our species. ...

⁷wreaks havoc — causes chaos and/or destruction

⁸extrication — rescue

⁹factions — groups

...as digital technology evolves, our stories—ubiquitous,¹⁰ immersive, interactive—may become dangerously attractive. The real threat isn't that story will fade out of human life in the future; it's that story will take it over completely. ...

—Jonathan Gottschall
 excerpted and adapted from *The Storytelling Animal:
 How Stories Make Us Human*, 2013
 Mariner Books

¹⁰ubiquitous — ever-present or universal

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| <p>15 The first paragraph introduces a central idea that fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) hinders the human perception of safety (2) challenges the development of morals (3) is inspired by nature (4) is essential to humanity <p>16 The use of words like “obituary” (line 10) and “hemorrhaging” (line 14) emphasizes the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) inflexibility of a decision (2) severity of a change (3) revision of a belief (4) impact of a group <p>17 The purpose of lines 18 through 23 (“For a bookman like me ... render the novel obsolete”) is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) discredit a professional to justify a position (2) suggest an academic solution to a problem (3) advance an argument by citing other genres (4) oppose a claim by offering a counterpoint <p>18 The statement “Along with the fear of things dying, there’s a fear of things rising” (line 25) denotes that many people are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) uncomfortable with cultural shifts (2) unmindful of gamers’ preferences (3) dissatisfied with modern stories (4) distrustful of publications’ motives <p>19 Lines 36 through 40 demonstrate how storytelling has</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) historically progressed (2) increased in popularity (3) lost its relevance (4) artistically declined | <p>20 The statement “Futurology is a fool’s game” (line 43) can be interpreted as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) learning from the past is beneficial (2) making predictions is unreliable (3) believing in fate is irresponsible (4) being spontaneous is exciting <p>21 The author describes WoW as “startling” (line 58) because of its</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) accessibility (2) expense (3) scope (4) popularity <p>22 The figurative language in line 60 depicts the WoW designers as being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) immortalized for their reproduction of ancient civilizations (2) ingenious for their visions of the development of new worlds (3) inappropriate for their development of stereotypical characters (4) immoral for their means of influencing players <p>23 William Sims Bainbridge’s research findings (lines 64 through 73) support the idea that the WoW world is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) attuned to advancing the diversity of players (2) useful in developing military experience (3) comparable in intricacy to the real world (4) developed to preserve existing rituals <p>24 The final paragraph concludes with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) a cautionary concern (2) a false assumption (3) an optimistic outlook (4) an enthusiastic endorsement |
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Part 2

Argument Essay

Topic: Is it necessary to control invasive species?

Directions:

Closely read and analyze each of the four sources provided on pages 11 through 18. Using evidence from at least **three** of these sources, plan and write a well-developed argument regarding whether it is necessary to control invasive species.

☒ **Be sure to:**

- ☐ Establish your claim regarding whether it is necessary to control invasive species.
- ☐ 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.

Source 1

“Bucking Convention to Track the Upside of Invasive Species”

A little over a decade ago, Jason Gleditsch was removing Asian honeysuckle when he noticed the birds. Robins and gray catbirds flocked around the thickets in autumn, attracted by the fat, ripe fruits. Originally introduced as ornamental plants in the early 20th century, Asian honeysuckle rapidly spread across the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, growing
5 in dense stands that can shade out native plants. Conservationists often destroy these clumps. But Gleditsch, then an undergrad at Pennsylvania State University, noted something interesting: Native bird species seemed more drawn to the honeysuckle patches.

Intrigued, Gleditsch conducted a set of experiments — removing honeysuckle in some places, placing potted native plants in others, and counting birds. Not only did many native
10 bird species adore honeysuckle, he wrote in a 2010 paper, they also consumed the fruits of native plants placed near the thickets at a noticeably higher rate, potentially helping increase the spread of their seeds.

The response was immediate. While some biologists were interested by the findings, Gleditsch said, others dismissed them as unimportant. And angry emails and handwritten
15 letters arrived calling him a hack. “It was kind of difficult, to be honest,” Gleditsch told *Undark* [magazine] in a recent interview. “And it showed how emotionally charged this topic can be.”

Over the last century, biologists have warned of the dire consequences of introducing alien organisms [invasive species] into new ecosystems; a whole field of study, called invasion
20 science, has extensively cataloged the resulting damage. When some researchers, like Gleditsch, have suggested that certain alien species may help ecosystems, they’ve been met with fierce debate from invasion scientists who worry that such studies are a distraction from real damage. Researchers on the other side of the debate, however, argue that the relentless focus on the damage risks missing equally important data, and could lead to management
25 decisions that do more harm than good. ...

The field of invasion science arose in the late 1950s, a time of growing awareness that ecosystems across the world were under serious threat. Introduced species were a kind of natural experiment, said Daniel Simberloff, a prominent invasion biologist now at the University of Tennessee, and the results didn’t look good. Insects like the emerald ash borer
30 and fungi like chestnut blight have devastated American forests. Mesquite took over South African rangeland. Rabbits and cats chewed up flora and fauna in the Australian bush, while feral hogs rooted through farmers’ fields throughout the American South. ...

But while the damage done by some invasives was clear, the notion that they were always an inherent threat to native ecosystems troubled some researchers, said Jens-Christian
35 Svenning, a researcher with the Center for Biodiversity Dynamics in a Changing World at Denmark’s Aarhus University. A few critics of the field saw a heavy, unthinking bias toward nativism¹ and, perhaps, xenophobia.² Others pointed out that ecosystems might be more receptive to some alien species than the field assumed, Svenning said, noting potential biases in how scientists measured damage, and asked whether the benefits alien species might offer
40 were going unstudied. ...

Minor changes to a new ecosystem — an alien plant attracting pollinators to nearby native plants, for example — might help individuals from a native species without boosting their population numbers. A moderate change, such as Pennsylvanian birds thriving on Asian

¹nativism — favoring the interests of native-born or established inhabitants

²xenophobia — fear or prejudice of anything that is strange or foreign

45 honeysuckle fruit, helps grow a native species population. The much rarer major and massive changes occurred when aliens led to native species expanding their territory or being saved from extinction — for example, when introduced ladybugs helped to devour pests afflicting native trees on the island of St. Helena.

50 One issue the study³ has run into, [University of Fribourg Invasion Biologist, Giovanni] Vimercati acknowledged, is a severe lack of data. In general, most introduced species haven't been subjected to close scrutiny. (There are only so many grad students willing to devote a decade to studying an animal that may or may not be a problem, and small things — from insects to microbes — often get short shrift.) And of the papers that do exist, some suggest benefits of invasive species without providing much supporting evidence.

55 But there's also a bit of unconscious bias at play, Vimercati said. For decades, invasion biologists have focused their attention on negative impacts, and as a result, accumulated a lot of data pointing in that direction. Now, he added, "we're reaching a moment where we're considering positive impacts that in the past were simply overlooked." ...

—Asher Elbein
excerpted and adapted from "Bucking Convention to Track the
Upside of Invasive Species"
<https://undark.org>, September 28, 2022

³the study — Giovanni Vimercati and a team of invasion biologists gathered papers on over 100 alien organisms with reported positive impacts to their surroundings

Source 2

“Invasive Species”

An invasive species is an organism that is not indigenous, or native, to a particular area. Invasive species can cause great economic and environmental harm to the new area.

Not all non-native species are invasive. For example, most of the food crops grown in the United States, including popular varieties of wheat, tomatoes, and rice, are not native to the region.

To be invasive, a species must adapt to the new area easily. It must reproduce quickly. It must harm property, the economy, or the native plants and animals of the region. ...

Introduced Species...

Introduced species multiply too quickly and become invasive. For example, in 1949, five cats were brought to Marion Island, a part of South Africa in the southern Indian Ocean. The cats were introduced as pest control for mice. By 1977, about 3,400 cats were living on the island, endangering the local bird population.

Other invasive species descended from pets that escaped or were released into the wild. Many people have released pet Burmese pythons into the Everglades, a swampy area of south Florida. The huge snakes can grow to 6 meters (20 feet) long. Pythons, native to the jungles of southeast Asia, have few natural predators in the Everglades. They feast on many local species, including white ibis and limpkin, two types of wading birds.

Invasive Species and the Local Environment

Many invasive species thrive because they outcompete native species for food. Bighead and silver carp are two large species of fish that escaped from fish farms in the 1990s and are now common in the Missouri River of North America. These fish feed on plankton, tiny organisms floating in the water. Many native fish species, such as paddlefish, also feed on plankton. The feeding cycle of the paddlefish is slower than that of the carp. There are now so many carp in the lower Missouri River that paddlefish do not have enough food. ...

Many invasive species destroy habitat, the places where other plants and animals naturally live. Nutria are large rodents native to South America. Ranchers brought them to North America in the 1900s, hoping to raise them for their fur. Some nutria were released into the wild when the ranchers failed. Today, they are a major pest in the Gulf Coast and Chesapeake Bay regions of the United States. Nutria eat tall grasses and rushes.¹ These plants are vital to the regions' marshy wetlands. They provide food, nesting sites, and shelter for many organisms. They also help secure sediment and soil, preventing the erosion of land. Nutria destroy the area's food web and habitat by consuming the wetland grasses. ...

Eradicating Invasive Species

Officials have used a variety of methods to try to eradicate, or get rid of, invasive species. The cats on Marion Island were infected with a virus, for instance.

Sometimes other species are introduced to help control an invasive species. In Australia, prickly pear cactus, which is native to the Americas, was growing out of control. The cactus was destroying rangeland, where ranchers raised livestock. The government brought in cactus moth caterpillars to eat the cactuses. The caterpillars are natural predators of the cactus.

Introducing insects can be dangerous, however. Sometimes, the insects also damage other plant species — they can become invasive species themselves. Chemicals have also

¹rushes — several different species of flowering plants that grow cylindrical, stem-like leaves

been used to control invasive species, but they can sometimes harm noninvasive plants and animals.

45 Governments are working to educate the public about invasive species. For example, in the United States, international fishing vessels are warned to wash their boats before returning home. This prevents them from accidentally transporting zebra mussels or other species from one body of water to another. ...

—Kim Rutledge, et al.
excerpted from “Invasive Species”
<https://education.nationalgeographic.org>
October 30, 2024

Source 3

Encyclopedia of Biological Invasions

As you read this, thousands of species of plants, animals, fungi, and microbes have been or are being transported by humans to new locations, whether deliberately or inadvertently. This geographic rearrangement of the Earth's biota¹ is one of the great global changes now underway. Of course, species have always managed to spread, even without human assistance, but much less often, much more slowly, and not nearly so far. Over the last 150 years, beginning with the advent of steamships and accelerating with air travel, the rate of movement of some organisms has increased manyfold. Any distance can be quickly spanned by a plane; a hitchhiking seed, spore, or insect can be transported from Asia to South America, or from Africa to Australia, in a day. Although many introduced species fail to establish populations or remain restricted to the immediate vicinity of the new sites they land in, others establish populations and invade new habitats, spreading widely and sometimes well beyond the initial point of introduction. Their interactions, both within native communities and with other introduced species, have been noticed by biologists and, increasingly, by governments and the lay² public.

Ecologists, evolutionists, economists, geneticists, agronomists,³ fisheries and forestry scientists, and many others study biological invasions for a variety of reasons. Some invaders are enormously costly, damaging agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other human endeavors as well as natural areas. Other invaders are pathogens that cause human, animal, or plant disease; yet others are vectors⁴ that carry these pathogens. Many invaders depress populations of native species, and even threaten some with extinction, by preying on them, competing with them, hybridizing with them, infecting them with disease, or changing their habitat. The cost of biological invasions to the economy of the United States alone is estimated at over \$100 billion annually. ...

Biological invasions have attracted attention for other reasons. The variety of impacts of introduced species is astounding. Many invasions have such idiosyncratic⁵ and bizarre effects that they cannot fail to arouse our curiosity simply as fascinating tales of natural history. For example, who would have predicted that introducing kokanee salmon to Flathead Lake, Montana, and, many years later, opossum shrimp to three nearby lakes would ultimately have led to population crashes of grizzly bears and bald eagles through a complicated chain reaction? Or that introducing myxoma virus to Great Britain to control introduced rabbit populations would have led to the extirpation⁶ of the large blue butterfly there? Who would have suggested that introducing a particular grass species would lead to hybridization with a native congener,⁷ subsequent polyploidization,⁸ and origin of a new vigorous invasive species that would change entire intertidal ecosystems? Teasing apart such intriguing causal chains is a scientific accomplishment of the first order. But the variety and idiosyncrasy of invasion effects also challenges attempts of invasion biologists to produce general laws or rules and

¹biota — biological makeup

²lay — untrained

³agronomists — agricultural scientists

⁴vectors — transmitters

⁵idiosyncratic — individualized

⁶extirpation — elimination

⁷congener — relative

⁸polyploidization — the multiplication of a species' chromosome set to create a new species

to be able to explain why some introductions have no major impacts, yet others lead to huge invasions. Being able to predict which species will fall in the latter category if introduced, and which in the former, is the elusive holy grail⁹ of invasion biology. ...

—Daniel Simberloff and Marcel Rejmánek
excerpted from *Encyclopedia of Biological Invasions*, 2011
University of California Press

⁹holy grail — something valuable that is searched for

Source 4

The New Wild: Why Invasive Species Will Be Nature's Salvation

...Excited language, replete¹ with military and xenophobic metaphors, has continued to feature in the everyday discourse of scientists investigating alien species, and it even appears in their research papers. It may not sound very dispassionate or scientific, but it reflects the assumption, widespread since [biologist, Charles] Elton, that foreign species are up to no good and that their being alien means their impacts can be assumed to be bad. [Elton established the theory of invasive species.] They are guilty until proved innocent. In scientific journals, where researchers normally strive to use neutral language, those who call themselves “invasion biologists” stand out. The subjects of their inquiries “explode” on arrival, killing, eradicating, assaulting, and decimating native species, while overrunning, flooding, and devastating their new habitats. They secure beachheads and fight battles. ...

In the past quarter-century, “invasion biology” has become a distinct academic discipline, with its own journals, conferences, research centers, and gurus, such as Elton and [Daniel] Simberloff. But there is growing criticism of its narrow agenda and apparent myopic² focus on demonstrating the hypothesis that aliens are bad. The charge is that invasion biologists have shown systematic bias in their studies. They have started from the presumption that alien species are bad and sought out research topics that confirm their view. Like tabloid editors, they concentrate their studies on the nastiest and most sensational invaders. They have rarely been open to other interpretations and rarely investigate aliens with beneficial or more nuanced impacts on their surroundings. ...

We need some new icons to represent benign aliens. One might be the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), which seems always to have been an unremarked presence across Europe and Asia. It will grow just about anywhere there is sunlight. It traveled everywhere with European imperialists, who believed it had medicinal uses. The British took it to New England, the French to Canada, and the Spaniards to California and Mexico. It likes disturbed land of the kind humans specialize in creating. Its puffballs of seeds easily blow long distances. It provides nectar for bees. Not even the most determined bio-xenophobe has come up with any nasty habits that make the dandelion a bad neighbor. One website I stumbled upon (since deleted) warned that “you can probably find it on any block in America.” Since it does little discernible harm, that sounds like good news. ...

Behind the demonology, what is the truth? One of the most common charges against alien species is that they almost inevitably cause extinctions among their new hosts. They cause a decline in biodiversity. The theory behind this is rooted in ecological thinking about how natural ecosystems are well-oiled machines in which every native species inhabits a unique “niche” with a particular job to do, whether as prey or predator, pollinator, or processor of waste. The ecosystem is “saturated” with species, and there is usually little room for interlopers³ to make much of a contribution. So if a new species takes root, then it will usually supplant⁴ a native. Expelled from the system, that native may become extinct, at least locally. ...

In the past decade or so, a new body of evidence has emerged suggesting that some of the most widely used statistics in the canon of invasion biology do not stand up. When Dov Sax of Brown University conducted a global study of species invasions on oceanic islands, he found

¹replete — complete

²myopic — shortsighted

³interlopers — intruders

⁴supplant — replace

that while the number of birds did sometimes go down after invasions, plant biodiversity usually rose. Typically, such islands now have twice as many plant species as before. That study almost instantly put Sax at the forefront of a quiet revolution in which a new generation
45 of researchers questioned the demonizing of aliens by Simberloff and others. ...

—Fred Pearce
excerpted and adapted from
The New Wild: Why Invasive Species Will Be Nature's Salvation, 2015
Beacon Press

Part 3

Text-Analysis Response

Directions:

Closely read and analyze the text provided on pages 20 and 21. 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, personification, point of view, setting, simile, 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.

“Another April”

In this excerpt from a short story, a young boy contemplates his grandfather going out for his first walk of the spring.

...The way Mom had dressed Grandpa you'd think there was a heavy snow on the ground but there wasn't. April was here instead and the sun was shining on the green hills where the wild plums and the wild crab apples were in bloom enough to make you think there were big snowdrifts sprinkled over the green hills. When I looked at Grandpa and then looked out at the window at the sunshine and the green grass I laughed more. Grandpa laughed with me.

“I'm a-goin' to see my old friend,” Grandpa said just as Mom came down the stairs with his gloves. ...

Mom opened our front door for Grandpa and he stepped out slowly, supporting himself with his big cane in one hand. With the other hand he held to the door facing. Mom let him out of the house just like she used to let me out in the spring. And when Grandpa left the house I wanted to go with him, but Mom wouldn't let me go. I wondered if he would get away from the house — get out of Mom's sight — and pull off his shoes and go barefooted and wade the creeks like I used to do when Mom let me out. Since Mom wouldn't let me go with Grandpa, I watched him as he walked slowly down the path in front of our house. Mom stood there watching Grandpa too. I think she was afraid that he would fall. But Mom was fooled; Grandpa toddled along the path better than my baby brother could. ...

I had heard her say that when she was a girl he'd walk out on the snow and ice barefooted and carry wood in the house and put it on the fire. He had shoes but he wouldn't bother to put them on. And I heard her say that he would cut timber on the coldest days without socks on his feet but with his feet stuck down in cold brogan shoes¹ and he worked stripped above the waist so his arms would have freedom when he swung his double-bitted ax. I had heard her tell how he'd sweat and how the sweat in his beard would be icicles by the time he got home from work on the cold winter days. Now Mom wouldn't let him get out of the house for she wanted him to live a long time. ...

As he toddled up the little path alongside the hog pen he stopped under a blooming dogwood. He pulled a white blossom from a bough that swayed over the path above his head, and he leaned his big bundled body against the dogwood while he tore each petal from the blossom and examined it carefully. There wasn't anything his dim blue eyes missed. He stopped under a redbud tree before he reached the garden to break a tiny spray of redbud blossoms. He took each blossom from the spray and examined it carefully. ...

“Poor Pap,” Mom said, “he's seen a lot of Aprils come and go. He's seen more Aprils than he will ever see again.” ...

Then I knew that this was the first time Mom had let Grandpa out of the house all winter. I knew that Grandpa loved the sunshine and the fresh April air that blew from the redbud and dogwood blossoms. He loved the bumblebees, the hogs, the pine cones, and pine needles. Grandpa didn't miss a thing along his walk. And every day from now on until just before frost Grandpa would take this little walk. He'd stop along and look at everything as he had done summers before. But each year he didn't take as long a walk as he had taken the year before. Now this spring he didn't go down to the lower end of the hog pen as he had done last year. And when I could first remember Grandpa going on his walks he used to go out of sight. He'd go all over the farm. And he'd come to the house and take me on his knee and tell me about all that he had seen. Now Grandpa wasn't getting out of sight. I could see him from the window along all of his walk. ...

¹brogan shoes — a shoe or boot with a high ankle

When Grandpa reached the smokehouse he leaned his cane against the sassafras tree.
45 He let himself down slowly to his knees as he looked carefully at the ground. Grandpa was looking at something and I wondered what it was. I just didn't think or I would have known.
"There you are, my good old friend," Grandpa said.
"Who is his friend, Mom?" I asked.
Mom didn't say anything. Then I saw.
50 "He's playin' with that old terrapin,² Mom," I said.
"I know he is," Mom said.
"The terrapin doesn't mind if Grandpa strokes his head with his hand," I said.
"I know it," Mom said.
"But the old terrapin won't let me do it," I said. "Why does he let Grandpa?" ...
55 "My old friend, how do you like the sunshine?" Grandpa asked the terrapin. ...
"That terrapin has spent the winters under that smokehouse for fifteen years," Mom said. "Pap has been acquainted with him for eleven years. He's been talkin' to that terrapin every spring."
"How does Grandpa know the terrapin is old?" I asked Mom.
60 "It's got 1847 cut on its shell," Mom said. "We know he's ninety-five years old. He's older than that. We don't know how old he was when that date was cut on his back." ...
Then I wondered how a terrapin could get that old and what kind of a looking person he was who cut the date on the terrapin's back. I wondered where it happened — if it happened near where our house stood. I wondered who lived here on this land then, what
65 kind of a house they lived in, and if they had a sassafras with tiny thin April leaves on its top growing in their yard, and if the person that cut the date on the terrapin's back was buried at Plum Grove, if he had farmed these hills where we lived to-day and cut timber like Grandpa had — and if he had seen the Aprils pass like Grandpa had seen them and if he enjoyed them like Grandpa was enjoying this April. I wondered if he had looked at the dogwood blossoms,
70 the redbud blossoms, and talked to this same terrapin. ...

—Jesse Stuart
excerpted from "Another April"
This Is My Best, 1942
The Dial Press

²terrapin — a small turtle species

