

T H E E X A M

Yearly, the AP English Literature Development Committee prepares a three-hour exam that gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the skills and abilities previously described. The AP English Literature and Composition Exam employs multiple-choice questions that test the student's critical reading of selected passages. But the exam also requires writing as a direct measure of the student's ability to read and interpret literature and to use other forms of discourse effectively. Although the skills tested in the exam remain essentially the same from year to year, each year's exam is composed of new questions. The essay is scored by college and AP English teachers using standardized procedures.

Ordinarily, the exam consists of 60 minutes for multiple-choice questions followed by 120 minutes for essay questions. Performance on the essay section of the exam counts for 55 percent of the total grade; performance on the multiple-choice section, 45 percent. Examples of multiple-choice and essay questions from previous exams are presented below and are intended to represent the scope and difficulty of the exam. In the questions reproduced here, the authors of the passages and poems on which the multiple-choice questions are based are Henry Fielding, Elizabeth Bishop, Charlotte Brontë, and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions

Questions 1–13. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

Mr. Jones, of whose personal accomplishments we have hitherto said very little, was, in reality, one of the handsomest young fellows in the world. His face, besides being the picture of health, had in it the most apparent marks of sweetness and good-nature.

Line (5) These qualities were indeed so characteristic in his countenance, that, while the spirit and sensibility in his eyes, though they must have been perceived by an accurate observer, might have escaped the notice of the less discerning, so strongly was this good-nature painted in his look, that it was remarked by
(10) almost every one who saw him.

It was, perhaps, as much owing to this as to a very fine complexion that his face had a delicacy in it almost inexpressible, and which might have given him an air rather too effeminate, had it not been joined to a most masculine person and mien: which latter
(15) had as much in them of the Hercules as the former had of the Adonis. He was besides active, genteel, gay and good-humoured, and had a flow of animal spirits which enlivened every conversation where he was present.

When the reader hath duly reflected on these many charms
(20) which all centered in our hero, and considers at the same time the fresh obligations which Mrs. Waters had to him, it will be a mark more of prudery than candour to entertain a bad opinion of her because she conceived a very good opinion of him.

(25) But, whatever censures may be passed upon her, it is my business to relate matters of fact with veracity. Mrs. Waters had, in truth, not only a good opinion of our hero, but a very great affection for him. To speak out boldly at once, she was in love, according to the present universally received sense of that phrase, by which love is applied indiscriminately to the desirable objects of all our (30) passions, appetites, and senses, and is understood to be that preference which we give to one kind of food rather than to another.

But though the love to these several objects may possibly be one and the same in all cases, its operations, however, must be allowed to be different; for, how much soever we may be in love (35) with an excellent sirloin of beef, or bottle of Burgundy; with a damask rose, or Cremona fiddle; yet do we never smile, nor ogle, nor dress, nor flatter, nor endeavour by any other arts or tricks to gain the affection of the said beef, etc. Sigh indeed we sometimes may; but it is generally in the absence, not in the presence, (40) of the beloved object. . . .

The contrary happens in that love which operates between persons of the same species, but of different sexes. Here we are no sooner in love than it becomes our principal care to engage the affection of the object beloved. For what other purpose, indeed, (45) are our youth instructed in all of the arts of rendering themselves agreeable? If it was not with a view to this love, I question whether any of those trades which deal in setting off and adorning the human person would procure a livelihood. Nay, those great polishers of our manners, who are by some thought to teach what (50) principally distinguishes us from the brute creation, even dancing-masters themselves, might possibly find no place in society. In short, all the graces which young ladies and young gentlemen too learn from others, and the many improvements which, by the help of a looking-glass, they add of their own, are in reality those (55) very *spicula et faces amoris** so often mentioned by Ovid; or, as they are sometimes called in our own language, the whole artillery of love.

*The spears and flames of love

1. The structure of the sentence beginning in line 5 does which of the following?
 - (A) It stresses the variety of Mr. Jones's personal attributes.
 - (B) It implies that Mr. Jones is a less complicated personality than the speaker suggests.
 - (C) It disguises the prominence of Mr. Jones's sensitive nature and emphasizes his less readily discerned traits.
 - (D) It reflects the failure of some observers to recognize Mr. Jones's spirit and sensibility.
 - (E) It belies the straightforward assertion made in the previous sentence.

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

2. In context, the word “sensibility” (line 6) is best interpreted to mean
 - (A) self-esteem
 - (B) forthright and honest nature
 - (C) capacity to observe accurately
 - (D) ability to ignore the unimportant
 - (E) awareness and responsiveness

3. The first two paragraphs indicate that the speaker assumes that
 - (A) accurate observers of human nature are rare
 - (B) spirited and sensible people are by nature rather effeminate
 - (C) a person’s character can be accurately discerned from his or her outward appearance
 - (D) a correlation exists between an individual’s “personal accomplishments” (line 1) and his or her physical prowess
 - (E) good-naturedness in a person is usually not readily apparent

4. The shift in the speaker’s rhetorical stance from the first sentence of the second paragraph (lines 11–16) to the second sentence (lines 16–18) can best be described as one from
 - (A) subjective to objective
 - (B) speculative to assertive
 - (C) discursive to laconic
 - (D) critical to descriptive
 - (E) literal to figurative

5. The word “former” in line 15 refers to
 - (A) “face” (line 12)
 - (B) “delicacy” (line 12)
 - (C) “air” (line 13)
 - (D) “person” (line 14)
 - (E) “mien” (line 14)

6. The speaker’s allusion to Hercules and Adonis (lines 15–16) serves primarily to
 - (A) imply an undercurrent of aggressiveness in Mr. Jones’s personality
 - (B) suggest the extremes of physical attractiveness represented in Mr. Jones’s appearance
 - (C) assert the enduring significance of mythical beauty
 - (D) symbolize the indescribable nature of Mr. Jones’s countenance
 - (E) emphasize how clearly Mr. Jones’s features reflected his personality

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

7. The use of the phrase “it will be” in line 21 indicates that the speaker
- (A) wishes the reader to arrive at the same conclusion regarding Mrs. Waters as the speaker has
 - (B) believes the presentation of Mr. Jones before this passage to have been predominantly negative
 - (C) expects that the description of Mr. Jones will offend some of the more conservative readers
 - (D) regards Mrs. Waters’ judgment concerning Mr. Jones to be impulsive rather than sincere
 - (E) fears that the readers will be overly lenient in their judgment of Mrs. Waters
8. The style of the third paragraph differs from that of the first and second paragraphs in that it is
- (A) instructive rather than descriptive
 - (B) argumentative rather than expository
 - (C) interpretative rather than metaphorical
 - (D) objective rather than representational
 - (E) conversational rather than analytical
9. In the fourth paragraph, the speaker establishes the predominant tone for the rest of the passage primarily by
- (A) exaggerating the affection Mrs. Waters has for Mr. Jones
 - (B) contrasting the popular understanding of love with the speaker’s own view of love
 - (C) describing candidly the affection Mrs. Waters has for Mr. Jones
 - (D) likening the popular conception of love to people’s physical appetites
 - (E) insisting on the veracity of the speaker’s personal opinions concerning Mrs. Waters
10. The speaker’s attitude toward “dancing-masters” (lines 50–51) might best be described as
- (A) assumed arrogance
 - (B) grudging respect
 - (C) feigned bitterness
 - (D) sarcastic vindictiveness
 - (E) wry disdain

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11. The passage indicates that the speaker believes which of the following to be true of Mr. Jones?
- (A) He is principally concerned with attracting the attention of women.
 - (B) He is naturally suited to engage the affections of women.
 - (C) He has practiced extensively the arts and graces with which youths render themselves agreeable.
 - (D) He is too good-natured to make full use of “the whole artillery of love” (lines 56–57).
 - (E) He has cultivated his good nature and sensibility in order to compete well with other men.
12. The final metaphors of the last paragraph (lines 54–57) suggest that this passage most probably precedes a description of
- (A) the way in which Mr. Jones acquired his manners and good-nature
 - (B) a costume ball at which Mr. Jones and Mrs. Waters meet and dance
 - (C) a scene in which Mr. Jones prepares himself for a meeting with Mrs. Waters
 - (D) an attempt by Mr. Jones to engage the affections of Mrs. Waters with the help of classical love poetry
 - (E) an encounter between Mr. Jones and Mrs. Waters couched in the terminology of war
13. The speaker’s tone in the passage can best be described as which of the following?
- (A) Flippant
 - (B) Whimsical
 - (C) Pretentious
 - (D) Satirical
 - (E) Contemptuous

Questions 14–23. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

Sestina

September rain falls on the house.
In the failing light, the old grandmother
sits in the kitchen with the child
Line beside the Little Marvel Stove,*
(5) reading the jokes from the almanac,
laughing and talking to hide her tears.

She thinks that her equinoctial tears
and the rain that beats on the roof of the house
were both foretold by the almanac,
(10) but only known to a grandmother.
The iron kettle sings on the stove.
She cuts some bread and says to the child,

*Brand name of a wood- or coal-burning stove

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It's time for tea now; but the child
is watching the teakettle's small hard tears
(15) dance like mad on the hot black stove,
the way the rain must dance on the house.
Tidying up, the old grandmother
hangs up the clever almanac

on its string. Birdlike, the almanac
(20) hovers half open above the child,
hovers above the old grandmother
and her teacup full of dark brown tears.
She shivers and says she thinks the house
feels chilly, and puts more wood in the stove.

(25) *It was to be,* says the Marvel Stove.
I know what I know, says the almanac.
With crayons the child draws a rigid house
and a winding pathway. Then the child
puts in a man with buttons like tears
(30) and shows it proudly to the grandmother.

But secretly, while the grandmother
busies herself about the stove,
the little moons fall down like tears
from between the pages of the almanac
(35) into the flower bed the child
has carefully placed in the front of the house.

Time to plant tears, says the almanac.
The grandmother sings to the marvelous stove
and the child draws another inscrutable house.

"Sestina" from THE COMPLETE POEMS 1927–1979 by Elizabeth Bishop. Copyright © 1979, 1983 by Alice Helen Methfessel. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc.

14. The mood of the poem is best described as
- (A) satiric
 - (B) suspenseful
 - (C) reproachful
 - (D) elegiac
 - (E) quizzical
15. In line 10, "known to" is best interpreted as
- (A) imagined by
 - (B) intended for
 - (C) predicted by
 - (D) typified in
 - (E) experienced by

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

16. In line 19, "Birdlike" describes the
- (A) markings on the pages of the almanac
 - (B) whimsicality of the almanac's sayings
 - (C) shape and movement of the almanac
 - (D) child's movements toward the almanac
 - (E) grandmother's movements toward the almanac
17. Between lines 24 and 25 and between lines 32 and 33, there is a shift from
- (A) understatement to hyperbole
 - (B) realism to fantasy
 - (C) optimism to pessimism
 - (D) present events to recalled events
 - (E) formal diction to informal diction
18. The child's attitude is best described as one of
- (A) anxious dismay
 - (B) feigned sympathy
 - (C) absorbed fascination
 - (D) silent remorse
 - (E) fretful boredom
19. All of the following appear to shed tears or be filled with tears EXCEPT the
- (A) child
 - (B) teacup
 - (C) almanac
 - (D) teakettle
 - (E) grandmother
20. The grandmother and the child in the poem are portrayed primarily through descriptions of their
- (A) actions
 - (B) thoughts
 - (C) conversation
 - (D) facial expressions
 - (E) physical characteristics
21. Throughout the poem, the imagery suggests that
- (A) both nature and human beings are animated by similar forces
 - (B) most human activities have more lasting consequences than is commonly realized
 - (C) past events have little influence on activities of the present
 - (D) both natural and artificial creations are highly perishable
 - (E) the optimism of youth differs only slightly from the realism of age

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22. Which of the following literary devices most significantly contributes to the unity of the poem?
- (A) Use of internal rhyme
 - (B) Use of epigrammatic expressions
 - (C) Use of alliteration
 - (D) Repetition of key words
 - (E) Repetition of syntactic patterns
23. The poet's attitude toward the characters in the poem is best described as a combination of
- (A) detachment and understanding
 - (B) disdain and curiosity
 - (C) envy and suspicion
 - (D) approval and amusement
 - (E) respect and resentment

Questions 24–36. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

Of late years an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the North of England: they lie very thick on the hills; every parish has one or more of them; they are young enough to be very active, and ought to be doing a great deal of good. But not of late years
Line (5) are we about to speak. We are going back to the beginning of this century: late years—present years—are dusty, sunburnt, hot, arid. We will evade the noon—forget it in siesta, pass the mid-day in slumber—and dream of dawn.

If you think, from this prelude, that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool, and solid lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning, when all
(15) who have work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto. It is not positively affirmed that you shall not have a taste of the exciting—perhaps towards the middle and close of the meal—but it is resolved that the first dish set upon the table shall be one that a Catholic—ay, even an Anglo-
(20) Catholic—might eat on Good Friday in Passion Week. It shall be cold lentils and vinegar without oil; it shall be unleavened bread with bitter herbs, and no roast lamb.

Of late years, I say, an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the North of England; but at that time that affluent rain
(25) had not descended. Curates were scarce then; there was no Pastoral Aid, no Additional Curates' Society to stretch a helping hand to worn-out old rectors and incumbents, and give them the

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

- wherewithal to pay a vigorous young colleague from Oxford or Cambridge. The present successors of the Apostles, disciples of
- (30) Dr. Pusey and tools of the Propaganda, were at that time being hatched under cradle-blankets or undergoing regeneration by nursery-baptism in wash-hand basins. You could not have guessed by looking at any one of them that the Italian-ironed double frills of its net-cap surrounded the brows of a pre-ordained, specially
- (35) sanctified successor of St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. John; nor could you have foreseen in the folds of its long nightgown the white surplice in which it was hereafter cruelly to exercise the souls of its parishioners, and strangely to nonplus its old-fashioned vicar by flourishing aloft in a pulpit the shirt-like raiment which had
- (40) never before waved higher than the reading-desk.
- Yet even in those days of scarcity there were curates: the precious plant was rare, but it might be found. A certain favored district in the West Riding of Yorkshire could boast three rods of Aaron blossoming within a circuit of twenty miles. You shall see
- (45) them, reader. Step into this neat garden-house on the skirts of Whinbury, walk forward into the little parlor—there they are at dinner. Allow me to introduce them to you: Mr. Donne, curate of Whinbury; Mr. Malone, curate of Briarfield; Mr. Sweeting, curate of Nunnely. These are Mr. Donne’s lodgings, being the habitation
- (50) of one John Gale, a small clothier. Mr. Donne has kindly invited his brethren to regale with him. You and I will join the party, see what is to be seen, and hear what is to be heard. At present, however, they are only eating, and while they eat we will talk aside.

24. In lines 1–4, the primary effect of using clauses that elaborate on one another is to
- (A) establish the eminence of the curates
 - (B) create a precise narrative setting
 - (C) establish an appropriately solemn tone
 - (D) emphasize the sense of abundance being described
 - (E) lull the reader into an impressionable frame of mind
25. The phrase “ought to be doing” in line 4 does which of the following in the opening sentence?
- (A) It shifts the focus from generalities to individual cases.
 - (B) It replaces descriptive prose with imaginative speculation.
 - (C) It presents a judgment on the curates.
 - (D) It emphasizes the theoretical rather than the practical.
 - (E) It proposes a discussion of the spiritual duties of modern curates.

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26. The word “noon” (line 7) refers most directly to the
- (A) period in which the narrative will be set
 - (B) period in which the speaker lives
 - (C) beginning of the century in which the speaker lives
 - (D) central portion of the narrative
 - (E) present proliferation of curates
27. The speaker characterizes a “romance” (line 9) as all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) nostalgic
 - (B) insubstantial
 - (C) fanciful
 - (D) exciting
 - (E) religious
28. The expectation referred to in lines 9–12 is reinforced most strongly by which of the following phrases?
- (A) “an abundant shower of curates” (line 1)
 - (B) “young enough to be very active” (line 3)
 - (C) “But not of late years” (line 4)
 - (D) “going back to the beginning of this century” (lines 5–6)
 - (E) “dream of dawn” (line 8)
29. From the statement “It is not positively affirmed that you shall not have a taste of the exciting” (lines 16–17), the reader may infer that
- (A) suspense is an integral part of the story
 - (B) some drama may enter the story
 - (C) the reader’s expectations will be confirmed by the story
 - (D) the reader’s taste is likely to be changed by the story
 - (E) the story depends on melodrama for its effect
30. In the context of the passage, the phrase “cold lentils and vinegar without oil” (line 21) is used as a metaphor for the
- (A) religiosity of Catholics
 - (B) austerity of curates
 - (C) poverty of the previous era
 - (D) serious state of mind of the narrator
 - (E) beginning episode of the speaker’s story
31. The speaker implies in the second paragraph that the narrative that follows will most likely be a
- (A) vehement attack on a modern institution
 - (B) straightforward account of ordinary events
 - (C) witty criticism of eminent social figures
 - (D) cautionary tale about a degenerate cleric
 - (E) dramatic account of an unexpected occurrence

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

32. The phrases “hatched under cradle-blankets” and “undergoing regeneration by nursery-baptism in wash-hand basins” (lines 31–32) imply a contrast between
- (A) believers and disbelievers
 - (B) disciples and mentors
 - (C) younger clergy and older clergy
 - (D) ministers and their congregations
 - (E) Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics
33. Which of the following aspects of the “disciples of Dr. Pusey” (lines 29–30) is most clearly emphasized by the description of their preaching style in line 39?
- (A) Their humility and moral rectitude
 - (B) Their bizarre behavior in the eyes of tradition-minded clergy
 - (C) The respect they inspire in their congregations
 - (D) The radical nature of the doctrine they preach
 - (E) The success with which Dr. Pusey’s tenets have been promulgated
34. The description of a curate in lines 32–40 has the primary effect of
- (A) augmenting the curate’s own view of himself
 - (B) reflecting the speaker’s religious intensity
 - (C) indicating the important position in society occupied by the curate
 - (D) suggesting the elaborate pretensions of the curate
 - (E) emphasizing the respect accorded the curate by his parishioners
35. The phrase “rods of Aaron” (lines 43–44) refers specifically to
- (A) curates
 - (B) saints
 - (C) trees
 - (D) Apostles
 - (E) gardens
36. The passage as a whole introduces contrasts between all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) young and old
 - (B) present and past
 - (C) plenitude and scarcity
 - (D) romance and realism
 - (E) virtue and vice

Questions 37–46. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

The Habit of Perfection

Elected Silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorled ear,
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Line

(5) Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb:
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shellèd, eyes, with double dark
(10) And find the uncreated light:
This ruck and reel¹ which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hutch of tasty lust,
Desire not to be rinsed with wine:
(15) The can² must be so sweet, the crust
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
Upon the stir and keep of pride,
What relish shall the censers³ send
(20) Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
That want the yield of plushy sward⁴
But you shall walk the golden street
And you unhouse and house the Lord.

(25) And Poverty, be thou the bride
And now the marriage feast begun,
And lily-colored clothes provide
Your spouse not labored-at nor spun.

¹Multitude and commotion

²Vessel for holding liquids

³Vessels for burning incense

⁴Grass-covered land

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37. The importance of “Silence” (line 1) is established by all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) capitalizing the “s”
 - (B) alluding to it throughout the poem
 - (C) describing it as elected
 - (D) imparting to it human qualities
 - (E) placing it at the beginning of the poem
38. In the first stanza, the speaker makes use of paradox by doing which of the following?
- (A) Requesting that he be simultaneously serenaded and assaulted
 - (B) Expressing both a desire and an apprehension
 - (C) Using mere language to depict a religious experience
 - (D) Addressing a presence invisible to the reader
 - (E) Depicting silence as though it were a kind of sound
39. The reference to “curfew” (line 6) indirectly establishes the
- (A) depth of the silence sought by the speaker
 - (B) existence of an ultimate spiritual power
 - (C) disparity between what the speaker seeks and what can actually be attained
 - (D) connection between the speaker’s past and the future he anticipates
 - (E) inability of “lovely-dumb” (line 5) lips to achieve true eloquence
40. Which of the following best conveys the meaning of the word “uncreated” (line 10)?
- (A) Nascent
 - (B) Mortal
 - (C) Internal
 - (D) Imperfect
 - (E) Amorphous
41. Which of the following best paraphrases the meaning of line 12?
- (A) Confounds true vision
 - (B) Delights the spirit
 - (C) Demands visual acuity
 - (D) Emits an intense light
 - (E) Maintains the simplicity of vision
42. In line 13, the word “hutch” suggests the
- (A) lowly animal nature of human appetite
 - (B) personally destructive effects of alcohol
 - (C) finite influence of sensual desires on the spirit
 - (D) ardor associated with abstinence
 - (E) state of poverty sought by the speaker

7. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Novels and plays often include scenes of weddings, funerals, parties, and other social occasions. Such scenes may reveal the values of the characters and the society in which they live. Select a novel or play that includes such a scene and, in a focused essay, discuss the contribution the scene makes to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of literary merit.

The Age of Innocence
The Awakening
The Birthday Party
Bless Me, Ultima
Ceremony
The Color Purple
Daisy Miller
The Dead
Delta Wedding
Dinner at the Homesick
Restaurant
The Glass Menagerie
The Great Gatsby
Hamlet
Invisible Man

Jane Eyre
Julius Caesar
The Joy Luck Club
The Member of the Wedding
Mrs. Dalloway
Much Ado About Nothing
Our Town
Pnin
Pride and Prejudice
Romeo and Juliet
The Shipping News
The Sound and the Fury
Sula
Things Fall Apart
Wuthering Heights

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43. The verb phrase “must be” (line 15) serves primarily to
- (A) suggest that the speaker demands the sensation of sweetness
 - (B) indicate that the speaker has not actually experienced the sweetness
 - (C) importune the reader to share in the sensation of sweetness described
 - (D) modify the tone of emotional intensity established by the previous stanza
 - (E) reflect an attitude of ambivalence on the part of the speaker
44. The words “stir” and “keep” (line 18) convey which of the following?
- (A) Attraction and repulsion
 - (B) Excitement and exploitation
 - (C) Stimulation and sustenance
 - (D) Disruption and confusion
 - (E) Acquisition and refinement
45. What is the subject of “provide” (line 27)?
- (A) “Poverty” (line 25)
 - (B) “bride” (line 25)
 - (C) “marriage feast” (line 26)
 - (D) “lily-colored clothes” (line 27)
 - (E) “spouse” (line 28)
46. The speaker metaphorically likens himself to a
- (A) musician
 - (B) bridegroom
 - (C) laborer
 - (D) gardener
 - (E) soldier

Sample Free-Response Questions

Note: There are more sample questions here than would appear on an actual exam.

1. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

In the following soliloquy from Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part II*, King Henry laments his inability to sleep. In a well-organized essay, briefly summarize the King's thoughts and analyze how the diction, imagery, and syntax help to convey his state of mind.

How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! O sleep! O gentle sleep!
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,
Line That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
(5) And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs¹,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
(10) Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lull'd with sound of sweetest melody?
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile
In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch
A watch-case or a common 'larum-bell?
(15) Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And in the visitation of the winds,
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
(20) Curling their monstrous heads and hanging them
With deaf'ning clamour in the slippery clouds,
That with the hurly death itself awakes?
Canst thou, O partial² sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude,
(25) And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a King? Then, happy low, lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

¹huts

²not impartial

2. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read carefully the following poem by the colonial American poet, Anne Bradstreet. Then write a well-organized essay in which you discuss how the poem's controlling metaphor expresses the complex attitude of the speaker.

The Author to Her Book

Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain,
Who after birth did'st by my side remain,
Til snatched from thence by friends, less wise than true,
Line Who thee abroad exposed to public view;
(5) Made thee in rags, halting, to the press to trudge,
Where errors were not lessened, all may judge.
At thy return my blushing was not small,
My rambling brat (in print) should mother call,
I cast thee by as one unfit for light,
(10) Thy visage was so irksome in my sight;
Yet being mine own, at length affection would
Thy blemishes amend, if so I could.
I washed thy face, but more defects I saw,
And rubbing off a spot, still made a flaw.
(15) I stretched thy joints to make thee even feet,
Yet still thou run'st more hobbling than is meet;
In better dress to trim thee was my mind,
But nought save homespun cloth in the house I find.
In this array, 'mongst vulgars may'st thou roam;
(20) In critics' hands beware thou dost not come;
And take thy way where yet thou are not known.
If for thy Father asked, say thou had'st none;
And for thy Mother, she alas is poor,
Which caused her thus to send thee out of door.

(1678)

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

3. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the following passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The House of the Seven Gables*. Then write a careful analysis of how the narrator reveals the character of Judge Pyncheon. You may emphasize whichever devices (e.g., tone, selection of detail, syntax, point of view) you find most significant.

To apply this train of remark somewhat more closely to Judge Pyncheon! We might say (without, in the least, imputing crime to a personage of his eminent respectability) that there was enough of splendid rubbish in his life to cover up and paralyze a more active and subtle conscience than the Judge was ever troubled with. The purity of his judicial character, while on the bench; the faithfulness of his public service in subsequent capacities; his devotedness to his party, and the rigid consistency with which he had adhered to its principles, or, at all events, kept pace with its organized movements; his remarkable zeal as president of a Bible society; his unimpeachable integrity as treasurer of a Widow's and Orphan's fund; his benefits to horticulture, by producing two much-esteemed varieties of the pear, and to agriculture, through the agency of the famous Pyncheon-bull; the cleanliness of his moral deportment, for a great many years past; the severity with which he had frowned upon, and finally cast off, an expensive and dissipated son, delaying forgiveness until within the final quarter of an hour of the young man's life; his prayers at morning and eventide, and graces at mealtime; his efforts in futherance of the temperance-cause; his confining himself, since the last attack of the gout, to five diurnal glasses of old Sherry wine; the snowy whiteness of his linen, the polish of his boots, the handsomeness of his gold-headed cane, the square and roomy fashion of his coat, and the fineness of its material, and, in general, the studied propriety of his dress and equipment; the scrupulousness with which he paid public notice, in the street, by a bow, a lifting of the hat, a nod, or a motion of the hand, to all and sundry his acquaintances, rich or poor; the smile of broad benevolence wherewith he made it a point to gladden the whole world;—what room could possibly be found for darker traits, in a portrait made up of lineaments like these! This proper face was what he beheld in the looking-glass. This admirably arranged life was what he was conscious of, in the progress of every day. Then, might not he claim to be its result and sum, and say to himself and the community—"Behold Judge Pyncheon, there"?

And, allowing that, many, many years ago, in his early and reckless youth, he had committed some one wrong act or that, even now, the inevitable force of
(45) circumstances should occasionally make him do one questionable deed, among a thousand praiseworthy, or, at least, blameless ones—would you characterize the Judge by that one necessary deed, and that half-forgotten act, and let it overshadow the fair aspect of a
(50) lifetime! What is there so ponderous in evil, that a thumb's bigness of it should outweigh the mass of things not evil, which were heaped into the other scale! This scale and balance system is a favorite one with people of Judge Pyncheon's brotherhood. A hard, cold
(55) man, thus unfortunately situated, seldom or never looking inward, and resolutely taking his idea of himself from what purports to be his image, as reflected in the mirror of public opinion, can scarcely arrive at true self-knowledge, except through loss of property and
(60) reputation. Sicknes will not always help him to it; not always the death-hour!

(1851)

4. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read carefully the following passage from Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, a novel about the relocation of Japanese Canadians to internment camps during the Second World War.

Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how changes in perspective and style reflect the narrator's complex attitude toward the past. In your analysis, consider literary elements such as point of view, structure, selection of detail, and figurative language.

1942.

We are leaving the B.C. coast—rain, cloud, mist—an air overladen with weeping. Behind us lies a salty sea, within which swim our drowning
Line specks of memory—our small waterlogged eulogies. We are going down to
(5) the middle of the Earth with pick-axe eyes, tunneling by train to the interior, carried along by the momentum of the expulsion into the waiting wilderness.

We are hammers and chisels in the hands of would-be sculptors, battering the spirit of the sleeping mountain. We are the chips and sand, the
(10) fragments of fragments that fly like arrows from the heart of the rock. We are the silences that speak from stone. We are the despised rendered voiceless, stripped of car, radio, camera and every means of communication, a trainload of eyes covered with mud and spittle. We are the man in the Gospel of John, born into the world for the sake of the light. We are
(15) sent to Siloam, the pool called “Sent”. We are sent to the sending, that we may bring sight. We are the scholarly and the illiterate, the envied and the ugly, the fierce and the docile. We are those pioneers who cleared the bush and the forest with our hands, the gardeners tending and attending the soil with our tenderness, the fishermen who are flung from the sea to flounder
(20) in the dust of the prairies.

We are the Issei and the Nisei and the Sansei,* the Japanese Canadians. We disappear into the future undemanding as dew.

The memories are dream images. A pile of luggage in a large hall. Missionaries at the railway station handing out packages of toys. Stephen
(25) being carried on board the train, a white cast up to his thigh.

It is three decades ago and I am a small child resting my head in Obasan's lap. I am wearing a wine-coloured dirndl skirt with straps that criss-cross at the back. My white silk blouse has a Peter Pan collar dotted with tiny red flowers. I have a wine-colored sweater with ivory duck buttons.
(30) Stephen sits sideways on a seat by himself opposite us, his huge white leg like a cocoon.

The train is full of strangers. But even strangers are addressed as “ojisan” or “obasan,” meaning uncle or aunt. Not one uncle or aunt, grandfather or grandmother, brother or sister, not one of us on this journey
(35) returns home again.

*The Issei, Nisei, and Sansei are, respectively, first-, second-, and third-generation Japanese Canadians.

- The train smells of oil and soot and orange peels and lurches groggily as we rock our way inland. Along the window ledge, the black soot leaps and settles like insects. Underfoot and in the aisles and beside us on the seats we are surrounded by odd bits of luggage—bags, lunch baskets, blankets,
- (40) pillows. My red umbrella with its knobby clear red handle sticks out of a box like the head of an exotic bird. In the seat behind us is a boy in short gray pants and jacket carrying a wooden slatted box with a tabby kitten inside. He is trying to distract the kitten with his finger but the kitten
- (45) mews and mews, its mouth opening and closing. I can barely hear its high steady cry in the clackity-clack and steamy hiss of the train.
- A few seats in front, one young woman is sitting with her narrow shoulders hunched over a tiny red-faced baby. Her short black hair falls into her birdlike face. She is so young, I would call her “o-nesan,” older sister.
- (50) The woman in the aisle seat opposite us leans over and whispers to Obasan with a solemn nodding of her head and a flicker of her eyes indicating the young woman.
- Obasan moves her head slowly and gravely in a nod as she listens. “Kawaiso,” she says under her breath. The word is used whenever there is hurt and a need for tenderness.
- (55) The young mother, Kuniko-san, came from Saltspring Island, the woman says. Kuniko-san was rushed onto the train from Hastings Park, a few days after giving birth prematurely to her baby.
- “She has nothing,” the woman whispers. “Not even diapers.”
- (60) Aya Obasan does not respond as she looks steadily at the dirt-covered floor. I lean out into the aisle and I can see the baby’s tiny fist curled tight against its wrinkled face. Its eyes are closed and its mouth is squinched small as a button. Kuniko-san does not lift her eyes at all.
- “Kawai,” I whisper to Obasan, meaning that the baby is cute.
- Obasan hands me an orange from a wicker basket and gestures towards
- (65) Kuniko-san, indicating that I should take her the gift. But I pull back.
- “For the baby,” Obasan says urging me.
- I withdraw farther into my seat. She shakes open a furoshiki—a square cloth that is used to carry things by tying the corners together—and places a towel and some apples and oranges in it. I watch her lurching
- (70) from side to side as she walks toward Kuniko-san.
- Clutching the top of Kuniko-san’s seat with one hand, Obasan bows and holds the furoshiki out to her. Kuniko-san clutches the baby against her breast and bows forward twice while accepting Obasan’s gift without looking up.

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

5. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

The British novelist Fay Weldon offers this observation about happy endings:

“The writers, I do believe, who get the best and most lasting response from readers are the writers who offer a happy ending through moral development. By a happy ending, I do not mean mere fortunate events—a marriage or a last-minute rescue from death—but some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation, even with the self, even at death.”

Choose a novel or play that has the kind of ending Weldon describes. In a well-written essay, identify the “spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation” evident in the ending and explain its significance in the work as a whole. You may select a work from the list below or another novel or play of literary merit.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
All the Pretty Horses
Bless Me, Ultima
Candide
Ceremony
The Color Purple
Crime and Punishment
Cry, the Beloved Country
Emma
The Eumenides
Great Expectations
Heart of Darkness
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
King Lear

Major Barbara
Moby-Dick
The Piano Lesson
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
The Portrait of a Lady
Praisesong for the Widow
A Raisin in the Sun
Song of Solomon
The Stone Angel
The Tempest
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Twelfth Night
The Warden
Wuthering Heights

Sample Questions for **English Literature and Composition**

6. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Choose a novel or play that depicts a conflict between a parent (or a parental figure) and a son or daughter. Write an essay in which you analyze the sources of the conflict and explain how the conflict contributes to the meaning of the work.

Avoid plot summary.

You may base your essay on one of the following works or choose another of comparable literary quality.

All My Sons
Antigone
As I Lay Dying
Beloved
The Brothers Karamazov
Fathers and Sons
The Glass Menagerie
Go Tell It on the Mountain
Hard Times
Henry IV
The Homecoming
King Lear
The Little Foxes
Long Day's Journey into Night

The Mill on the Floss
Mrs. Warren's Profession
The Oresteia
Our Mutual Friend
Persuasion
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie
A Raisin in the Sun
Romeo and Juliet
Sons and Lovers
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Tom Jones
Washington Square
Wuthering Heights

46. The speaker metaphorically likens himself to a
- (A) musician
 - (B) bridegroom
 - (C) laborer
 - (D) gardener
 - (E) soldier

II. Sample Essay Questions

Please note that there are more sample essay questions here than would appear on an actual examination.

1. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the following poem carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the speaker uses the varied imagery of the poem to reveal his attitude toward the nature of love.

The Broken Heart

He is stark mad, who ever says,
That he hath been in love an hour,
Yet not that love so soon decays,
Line But that it can ten in less space devour;
(5) Who will believe me, if I swear
That I have had the plague a year?
Who would not laugh at me, if I should say,
I saw a flask of powder burn a day?

Ah, what a trifle is a heart,
(10) If once into love's hands it come!
All other griefs allow a part
To other griefs, and ask themselves but some;
They come to us, but us Love draws,
He swallows us, and never chaws:¹
(15) By him, as by chain'd shot,² whole ranks do die,
He is the tyrant pike, our hearts the fry.³

¹chews

²cannon balls chained together

³small fish that the pike devours

If 'twere not so, what did become
Of my heart, when I first saw thee?
I brought a heart into the room,
(20) But from the room, I carried none with me:
If it had gone to thee, I know
Mine would have taught thine heart to show
More pity unto me: but Love, alas,
At one first blow did shiver it as glass.

(25) Yet nothing can to nothing fall,
Nor any place be empty quite,
Therefore I think my breast hath all
Those pieces still, though they be not unite;
And now as broken glasses⁴ show

(30) A hundred lesser faces, so
My rags of heart can like, wish, and adore,
But after one such love, can love no more.

—John Donne

⁴mirrors

2. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

The following poem was written by a contemporary Irish woman, Eavan Boland. Read the poem carefully and then write an essay in which you analyze how the poem reveals the speaker's complex conception of a "woman's world."

It's a Woman's World

<p>Our way of life has hardly changed since a wheel first whetted a knife.</p> <p><i>Line</i> (5) Well, maybe flame burns more greedily and wheels are steadier but we're the same</p> <p>(10) who milestone our lives with oversights— living by the lights</p> <p>(15) of the loaf left by the cash register, the washing powder paid for and wrapped, the wash left wet. Like most historic peoples we are defined (20) by what we forget, by what we never will be: star-gazers, fire-eaters. It's our alibi (25) for all time that as far as history goes we were never on the scene of the crime.</p>	<p>(30) So when the king's head gored its basket— grim harvest— we were gristing bread or getting the recipe for a good soup (35) to appetize our gossip.</p> <p>And it's still the same: By night our windows moth our children (40) to the flame of hearth not history. And still no page scores the low music of our outrage.</p> <p>(45) But appearances still reassure: That woman there, craned to the starry mystery is merely getting a breath (50) of evening air, while this one here— her mouth a burning plume— she's no fire-eater, (55) just my frosty neighbour coming home.</p> <p>(1982)</p>
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"It's a Woman's World." Copyright © 1982 by Eavan Boland, from AN ORIGIN LIKE WATER: Collected Poems 1967–1987 by Eavan Boland. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

3. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read carefully the following passage from George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* (1871). Then write an essay in which you characterize the narrator's attitude toward Dorothea Brooke and analyze the literary techniques used to convey this attitude. Support your analysis with specific references to the passage.

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed
Line Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature
 (5) and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible,—or from one of our elder poets,—in a paragraph of today's newspaper. She was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever, but with the addition that her sister Celia had more
 (10) common-sense. Nevertheless, Celia wore scarcely more trimmings; and it was only to close observers that her dress differed from her sister's, and had a shade of coquetry in its arrangements; for Miss Brooke's plain dressing was due to mixed conditions, in most of which her sister shared. . . .

Dorothea knew many passages of Pascal's *Pensées* and of Jeremy
 (15) Taylor¹ by heart; and to her the destinies of mankind, seen by the light of Christianity, made the solitudes of feminine fashion appear an occupation for Bedlam. She could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in guimp² and artificial protrusions of drapery. Her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after
 (20) some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there; she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects; likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractions, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it.
 (25) Certainly such elements in the character of a marriageable girl tended to interfere with her lot and hinder it from being decided according to custom, by good looks, vanity, and merely canine affection. With all this, she, the elder of the sisters, was not yet twenty, and they had both been educated, since they were about twelve years old and had lost their parents, on plans
 (30) at once narrow and promiscuous, first in an English family and afterwards in a Swiss family at Lausanne, their bachelor uncle and guardian trying in this way to remedy the disadvantages of their orphaned condition. . . .

¹Blaise Pascal (1623-1662): French philosopher

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1677): English clergyman and writer

²A yoke of lace, embroidery, or other material worn with a dress

The rural opinion about the new young ladies, even among the cottagers, was generally in favour of Celia, as being so amiable and innocent-looking, (35) while Miss Brooke's large eyes seemed like her religion, too unusual and striking. Poor Dorothea! compared with her, the innocent-looking Celia was knowing and worldly-wise; so much subtler is a human mind than the outside tissues which make a sort of blazonry or clock-face for it.

Yet those who approached Dorothea, although prejudiced against her by (40) this alarming hearsay, found that she had a charm unaccountably reconcilable with it. Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air and the various aspects of the country, and when her eyes and cheeks glowed with mingled pleasure she looked very little like a devotee. Riding was an indulgence which she allowed herself in (45) spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it.

She was open, ardent, and not in the least self-admiring; indeed, it was pretty to see how her imagination adorned her sister Celia with attractions altogether superior to her own, and if any gentleman appeared to come to (50) the Grange from some other motive than that of seeing Mr. Brooke, she concluded that he must be in love with Celia: Sir James Chettam, for example, whom she constantly considered from Celia's point of view, inwardly debating whether it would be good for Celia to accept him. That he should be regarded as a suitor to herself would have seemed to her a (55) ridiculous irrelevance. Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage. She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious Hooker,³ if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched mistake he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any of the other great men (60) whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure; but an amiable handsome baronet, who said "Exactly" to her remarks even when she expressed uncertainty,—how could he affect her as a lover? The really delightful marriage must be where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it.

4. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Read carefully the following passage from Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, a novel about the relocation of Japanese Canadians to internment camps during the Second World War.

Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how changes in perspective and style reflect the narrator's complex attitude toward the past. In your analysis, consider literary elements such as point of view, structure, selection of detail, and figurative language.

³Richard Hooker (1554-1600): Oxford theologian

1942.

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(45) A few seats in front, one young woman is sitting with her narrow shoulders hunched over a tiny red-faced baby. Her short black hair falls into her birdlike face. She is so young, I would call her “o-nesan,” older sister.

The woman in the aisle seat opposite us leans over and whispers to
(50) Obasan with a solemn nodding of her head and a flicker of her eyes indicating the young woman.

Obasan moves her head slowly and gravely in a nod as she listens. “Kawaiso,” she says under her breath. The word is used whenever there is hurt and a need for tenderness.

(55) The young mother, Kuniko-san, came from Saltspring Island, the woman says. Kuniko-san was rushed onto the train from Hastings Park, a few days after giving birth prematurely to her baby.

“She has nothing,” the woman whispers. “Not even diapers.”

Aya Obasan does not respond as she looks steadily at the dirt-covered
(60) floor. I lean out into the aisle and I can see the baby’s tiny fist curled tight against its wrinkled face. Its eyes are closed and its mouth is squinched small as a button. Kuniko-san does not lift her eyes at all.

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(70) from side to side as she walks toward Kuniko-san.

Clutching the top of Kuniko-san’s seat with one hand, Obasan bows and holds the furoshiki out to her. Kuniko-san clutches the baby against her breast and bows forward twice while accepting Obasan’s gift without looking up.

5. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

In his essay “Walking,” Henry David Thoreau offers the following assessment of literature:

In literature it is only the wild that attracts us.
Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the
uncivilized free and wild thinking in *Hamlet* and *The Iliad*,
in all scriptures and mythologies, not learned in schools,
that delights us.

From the works you have studied in school, choose a novel, play, or epic poem that you may initially have thought was conventional and tame but that you now value for its “uncivilized free and wild thinking.” Write an essay in which you explain what constitutes its “uncivilized free and wild thinking” and how that thinking is central to the value of the work as a whole. Support your ideas with specific references to the work you choose.

6. (Suggested time—40 minutes)

Writers often highlight the values of a culture or a society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed.

Choose a play or novel in which such a character plays a significant role and show how that character’s alienation reveals the surrounding society’s assumptions and moral values.

You may choose a work from the following list or another suitable play or novel. Do NOT write on a short story, poem, or film.

*The Adventures of Huckleberry
Finn*
America is in the Heart
An American Tragedy
Another Country
The Awakening
The Bluest Eye
Cry, the Beloved Country
The Diviners
A Doll House
The Grapes of Wrath
Great Expectations
House Made of Dawn
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
Jude the Obscure
Light in August
Love Medicine

M. Butterfly
Medea
The Merchant of Venice
Middlemarch
Moll Flanders
Mrs. Warren’s Profession
Murder in the Cathedral
Native Son
No-No Boy
Obasan
Othello
The Power and the Glory
Saint Joan
The Sun Also Rises
Winter in the Blood
Wise Blood
Zoot Suit