

1. ANS: B

1. In this selection, Richard's prison soliloquy from Act V Scene V of *Richard II*, Shakespeare crafts mixed and over-stretched metaphors, weird ideas, and convoluted turns of phrase that "set the word itself against the word" (lines 13,14). Students performed well with a 68 % correct response to question 16, choice B, in 1991. Richard begins by saying he is comparing his prison to the world. His world is solitary, unlike the actual populated world outside of prison. He states that his world is peopled by thoughts and these thoughts are not productive. Students read the literal meaning of the union of the female brain to the male soul, understanding that the brain, the womb, gives birth to a generation of "still breeding" thoughts because the soul, the father of these thoughts, is King Richard's consciousness, feelings, and will. King Richard's emotional turmoil produces the useless or ineffectual thought. The better thoughts "of things divine" but are mingled with doubts that cause him to remain puzzled. Only the female brain can conceive making all the other distracters stating the soul to be delicate and intuitive (A, C) wrong choices. This passage is not referring to an artist or the need to be merciful (D, E).

PTS: 1 DIF: Easy MSC: 68% answered correctly

NOT: 1991 #16

2. ANS: C

2. Richard's thoughts "beget" a generation of still-breeding thoughts. Today, beget most often is used to mean the cause of something. In this passage beget is an archaic or biblical term for fathering making C the best choice for the implied metaphor: thoughts are children.

PTS: 1 DIF: Easy MSC: 71% answered correctly

NOT: 1991 #17

3. ANS: B

3. In Lines 10-11, students saw a literal answer “of dissatisfied and temperamental” (B) with a direct reference to the line observation: “For no thought is contented.” Thoughts are like people because they are dissatisfied and temperamental in disposition. This question is a contextual reference that his thoughts people his mind making choices A, C, D, and E invalid.

PTS: 1 DIF: Easy MSC: 73% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #18

4. ANS: B

4. The correct choice of this identification question comes from understand that Western culture’s allusions come from the Bible, mythology, and traditional literature. Richard says his thoughts are as confusing as the two biblical quotes that give mixed messages by “set[ting] the word itself against the word” as in the biblical invitation to “Come, little ones” which contradicts the task that “it is as hard to come as for a camel to thread the postern of a needle’s eye.” Choice B is the only definition that is correct as the quotes are not conceits, understatement, oxymoron, or self-parody, choices A, C, D, and E. The quotes have a few characteristics that you can look at the paradoxical nature, but they are simply well recognized allusions. Conceits are a comparison that is extreme or far-fetched, oxymoron consists of two self-contradictory words, and a parody typically distorts or misrepresents the original piece.

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 56% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #19

5. ANS: A

5. Richard says his thoughts are as confusing as the two biblical quotes that give him mixed messages by “set[ting] the word itself against the word” as in the biblical invitation to “Come, little ones” which contradicts the task that “it is as hard to come as for a camel to thread the postern of a needle’s eye.” These quotations are not in Richard’s case comforting, absurd, trite, or clever, choices B, C, D, and E, just incongruous offering divergent messages that all are invited as children of God differing from it will be as hard to achieve as a cumbersome camel entering a small space.

PTS: 1 DIF: Easy MSC: 67% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #20

6. ANS: A

6. “Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot/Unlikely wonders; how these vain weak nails/May tear a passage through the flinty ribs of this hard world, my ragged prison walls;/And, for they cannot, die in their own pride” propose an impossible task because nails cannot tear though prison walls. These thoughts die of their own pride (lines 18-21). Choice A identifies this impossible task, not B, C, D, or E. These thoughts tend to ambition of plot; they do not recount a problem, foretell another outlook, constitute a criminal act, or present any solution to the very real problem of being in prison.

PTS: 1 DIF: Easy MSC: 66% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #21

7. ANS: C

7. Richard sees his condition as a similar situation to all who content themselves “like silly beggars” and to all who flatter themselves that they are not the first to have bad fortune while being punished and harbor their shame. The best answer choice is C where finding some ease in bearing his own misfortune of back of others who have had the same misfortune.

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 57% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #22

8. ANS: B

8. This question about “this thought” contextually refers to the silly beggars whose plight is part of being subject to being fortune’s slave, choice B. This predicament, this plight, is follies human condition of those who have gone before him who have suffered the same. Choice E is a good distracter because of “And in this thought they find a kind of ease” which is a faulty inference based upon the demonstrative pronoun this thought that is explained by “many have and others must sit there” like the silly beggars. Choices D, C, and A have no contextual reference.

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 42% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #23

9. ANS: D

9. With only 42% of the students correctly answering this question and question 23, look back at the beginning of the sentence where “Then I am king’d again” to understand the meaning. In the first of that sentence (line 31) Richard says “Thus play I in one person many people,/ and none contented: sometimes am I king; /Then treason makes me wish myself a beggar.../ Persuades me I was better when a king/Then am I king’d again...” Richard plays the character role in his head, once again, of being King, Choice D. He is not dead, not dethroned, as A and B suggest. He has not discovered new insights of the value of kingship nor is concerned with the trapping of the court, C and E.

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 42% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #24

10. ANS: E

10. The word straight has several contextual possibilities. The best choice is E, immediately. Substitute the word into the sentence quoted in line 38: “And [immediately] I am nothing. The only other choice that could possibly work is the adverb clearly, choice C. The other word choices do not make sense in the sentence. Choose an adverb form to modify the verb “am” from this list such as: directly, immediately, or instantly. The second contextual choice would include a list such as: level, upright, even, or in line. These words do not make sense when substituted into the sentence. Context questions are easier to answer if the word choice is substituted into the sentence and it makes grammatical sense.

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 45% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #25

11. ANS: D

11. Only 26 % answered restated this quote “Nor I nor any man that but [what] man is/With noting shall be please’d, till he be eas’d/With being nothing.” Only after death can a mere mortal be satisfied with having nothing—no material possessions or relationships. Choice D is the best restatement. Many students would have justified the answer B because of the implication that Richard has lost all his kingdom or E because the king is fighting his thoughts and trying to reason or find comfort. Neither answer is the best choice for the meaning of this sentence. To keep the meter, Shakespeare elides (omits) the letter *e* from eased. Eased becomes a transitive verb and means to enable something to take place as in death.

PTS: 1 DIF: Hard MSC: 26% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #26

12. ANS: A

12. King Richard uses language in this passage to “compare/This prison where I live unto the world...I’ll hammer it out.” In hammering it out (line5), he considers his plight and arrives at the conclusion that he won’t be satisfied until he dies. Choice A is the best answer. His conscious is not soothed or justified (B and C). His doesn’t recreate the past or attack his enemies (D and E), he reasons through his contradictory thoughts trying to understand his position.

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 56% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #27

13. ANS: E

13. This is another type of “time bandit” question with the word EXCEPT causing a negative approach to the answer. It’s simply a true and false question. It’s true that King Richard reflects on religion in the Biblical allusions, others’ misfortunes as the beggar, escape tearing out of the prison, and his deposition of being removed from this office or power, choices A, B, C, and D. He does not talk about taking revenge on Bolingbroke, choice E is correct by process of elimination.

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 62% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #28

14. ANS: B

14. This character question asks you to identify what you know about King Richard from the passage itself. In the passage, King Richard exhibits verbal and rhetorical facility, choice B, demonstrating the ability to use metaphoric language to express his state of mind. He is neither single minded nor narrow minded (C and D) in his concentration to explain himself because he explores all his concerns in his soliloquy. If he had been politically astute, he would probably not been in prison (A) and his judgment wavered in going back and forth between possibilities of being King’d and Unking’d and contradictory thoughts (E).

PTS: 1 DIF: Medium MSC: 42% answered correctly
NOT: 1991 #29