

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION TWO

Wednesday, August 17, 2005 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., only

The last page of this booklet is the answer sheet for the multiple-choice questions. Fold the last page along the perforations and, slowly and carefully, tear off the answer sheet. Then fill in the heading of your answer sheet. Now circle “Session Two” and fill in the heading of each page of your essay booklet.

This session of the examination has two parts. For Part A, you are to answer all ten multiple-choice questions and write a response, as directed. For Part B, you are to write a response, as directed.

When you have completed this session of the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the end of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the session and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the session. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

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

DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.

Part A

Directions: Read the passages on the following pages (an excerpt from a short story and a poem). Write the number of the answer to each multiple-choice question on your answer sheet. Then write the essay in your essay booklet as described in **Your Task**. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

Your Task:

After you have read the passages and answered the multiple-choice questions, write a unified essay about opportunities for learning as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about opportunities for learning. Using evidence from **each** passage, develop your controlling idea and show how the author uses specific literary elements or techniques to convey that idea.

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about opportunities for learning
- Use specific and relevant evidence from **each** passage to develop your controlling idea
- Show how each author uses specific literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, structure, point of view) or techniques (for example: symbolism, irony, figurative language) to convey the controlling idea
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Use language that communicates ideas effectively
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Passage I

I was very late for school that morning, and I was terribly afraid of being scolded, especially as Monsieur Hamel had told us that he should examine us on participles, and I did not know the first thing about them. For a moment I thought of staying away from school and wandering about the fields. It was such
5 a warm, lovely day. I could hear the blackbirds whistling on the edge of the wood, and in the Rippert field, behind the sawmill, the Prussians going through their drill. All that was much more tempting to me than the rules concerning participles; but I had the strength to resist, and I ran as fast as I could to school.

As I passed the mayor's office, I saw that there were people gathered about
10 the little board on which notices were posted. For two years all our bad news had come from that board—battles lost, conscriptions, orders from headquarters; and I thought without stopping:

“What can it be now?”

Then, as I ran across the square, Wachter the blacksmith, who stood there
15 with his apprentice, reading the placard, called out to me:

“Don't hurry so, my boy; you'll get to your school soon enough!”

I thought that he was making fun of me, and I ran into Monsieur Hamel's
little yard all out of breath.

Usually, at the beginning of school, there was a great uproar which could be
20 heard in the street, desks opening and closing, lessons repeated aloud in unison, with our ears stuffed in order to learn quicker, and the teacher's stout ruler beating on the desk:

“A little more quiet!”

I counted on all this noise to reach my bench unnoticed; but as it happened,
25 that day everything was quiet, like a Sunday morning. Through the open window I saw my comrades already in their places, and Monsieur Hamel walking back and forth with the terrible iron ruler under his arm. I had to open the door and enter, in the midst of that perfect silence. You can imagine whether I blushed and whether I was afraid!

But no! Monsieur Hamel looked at me with no sign of anger and said very
30 gently:

“Go at once to your seat, my little Frantz; we were going to begin without
you.”

I stepped over the bench and sat down at once at my desk. Not until then,
35 when I partly recovered from my fright, did I notice that our teacher had on his handsome blue coat, his plaited ruff, and the black silk embroidered breeches, which he wore only on days of inspection or of distribution of prizes. Moreover, there was something extraordinary, something solemn about the whole class. But what surprised me most was to see at the back of the room, on the benches which
40 were usually empty, some people from the village sitting, as silent as we were: old Hauser with his three-cornered hat, the ex-mayor, the ex-postman, and others besides. They all seemed depressed; and Hauser had brought an old spelling-book with gnawed edges, which he held wide-open on his knee, with his great spectacles askew.

While I was wondering at all this, Monsieur Hamel had mounted his
45 platform, and in the same gentle and serious voice with which he had welcomed me, he said to us:

“My children, this is the last time that I shall teach you. Orders have come
from Berlin to teach nothing but German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine.

50 The new teacher arrives to-morrow. This is the last class in French, so I beg you to be very attentive.”

Those few words overwhelmed me. Ah! the villains! that was what they had posted at the mayor’s office.

My last class in French!

55 And I barely knew how to write! So I should never learn! I must stop short where I was! How angry I was with myself because of the time I had wasted, the lessons I had missed, running about after nests, or sliding on the Saar! My books, which only a moment before I thought so tiresome, so heavy to carry—my grammar, my sacred history—seemed to me now like old friends, from whom I should be terribly grieved to part. And it was the same about Monsieur Hamel.
60 The thought that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget the punishments, the blows with the ruler.

Poor man! It was in honour of that last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes; and I understood now why those old fellows from the village were sitting at the end of the room. It seemed to mean that they regretted not having come oftener to the school. It was also a way of thanking our teacher for his forty years of faithful service, and of paying their respects to the fatherland which was vanishing....

—Alphonse Daudet

from “The Last Class – The Story of a Little Alsatian”

from *Little French Masterpieces*, 1903

G. P. Putnam’s Sons

Passage II
MORNING GLORY

The faces of the teachers
know we have failed and failed
yet they focus beyond, on the windowsill
the names of distant galaxies
5 and trees.

We have come in dragging.
If someone would give us
a needle and thread, or send us
on a mission to collect something
10 at a store, we could walk for twenty years
sorting it out. How do we open,
when we are so full?

The teachers have more faith than we do.
They have organized into units.
15 We would appreciate units
if we gave them a chance.
Nothing will ever again be so clear.

The teachers look at our papers
when they would rather be looking at
20 a fine scallop of bark
or their fathers and mothers thin as lace,
their own teachers remaining in front
of a class at the back of their minds.
So many seasons of rain, sun, wind
25 have crystallized their teachers.
They shine like something on a beach.
But we don't see that yet.

We're fat with binders and forgetting.
We're shaping the name of a new love
30 on the underside of our thumb.
We're diagnosing rumor and trouble
and fear. We hear the teachers
as if they were far off, speaking
down a tube. Sometimes
35 a whole sentence gets through.

But the teachers don't give up.
They rise, dress, appear before us
crisp and hopeful. They have a plan.
If cranes can fly 1,000 miles
40 or that hummingbird return from Mexico
to find, curled on its crooked fence, a new vine,
surely. We may dip into the sweet
together, if we hover long enough.

—Naomi Shihab Nye
from *Fuel*, 1998
Boa Editions, Ltd.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–10): Select the best suggested answer to each question and write its number in the space provided on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about the ideas and information you might want to use in your essay. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

Passage I (the short story excerpt) — Questions 1–4 refer to Passage I.

- 1 When Frantz is introduced in the first paragraph, his most prominent characteristic is his
 - (1) ability in athletics
 - (2) love of learning
 - (3) fear of punishment
 - (4) knowledge about nature
- 2 When he gets to school, Frantz *first* realizes that something is different when he is
 - (1) made to stand alone
 - (2) greeted with silence
 - (3) praised by Monsieur Hamel
 - (4) escorted to his desk
- 3 Monsieur Hamel’s attire and the presence of the people in the back of the classroom reinforce the
 - (1) significance of the day
 - (2) content of the lesson
 - (3) need of attention
 - (4) atmosphere of celebration
- 4 What does Frantz conclude from the news that Monsieur Hamel is leaving?
 - (1) Frantz will no longer be punished.
 - (2) Frantz has used too much time studying.
 - (3) Frantz will not be allowed back in school.
 - (4) Frantz has a new perspective on school.

Passage II (the poem) — Questions 5–10 refer to Passage II.

- 5 According to the poet, a characteristic displayed by teachers is
 - (1) happiness
 - (2) pessimism
 - (3) determination
 - (4) inattention
- 6 The word “dragging” (line 6) suggests that the students are
 - (1) reluctant
 - (2) afraid
 - (3) angry
 - (4) disgusted
- 7 The poet uses the word “open” (line 11) to indicate becoming
 - (1) eligible
 - (2) receptive
 - (3) employable
 - (4) satisfied
- 8 According to the poet, teachers in the classroom model their educational practices on
 - (1) recent studies
 - (2) their best students
 - (3) their former teachers
 - (4) scientific theories
- 9 Lines 28 through 32 are used to present examples of things that
 - (1) are a basis for lessons
 - (2) keep students in school
 - (3) cause sibling rivalry
 - (4) distract students from learning
- 10 The poet mentions the experience of cranes (line 39) and the hummingbird (line 40) to reinforce the theme that
 - (1) persistence will produce results
 - (2) travel will enhance learning
 - (3) sweetness will improve the environment
 - (4) friendship will promote love

After you have finished these questions, turn to page 2. Review **Your Task** and the **Guidelines**. Use scrap paper to plan your response. Then write your response to Part A, beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet. After you finish your response for Part A, go on to page 7 of your examination booklet and complete Part B.

Part B

Your Task:

Write a critical essay in which you discuss **two** works of literature you have read from the particular perspective of the statement that is provided for you in the **Critical Lens**. In your essay, provide a valid interpretation of the statement, agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it, and support your opinion using specific references to appropriate literary elements from the two works. You may use scrap paper to plan your response. Write your essay in Part B, beginning on page 7 of the essay booklet.

Critical Lens:

“I like flawed characters because somewhere in them I see more of the truth.”

— Nicolas Cage, as quoted in
“His Truth is Out There”
from *Los Angeles Times*,
November 12, 2000

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Provide a valid interpretation of the critical lens that clearly establishes the criteria for analysis
- Indicate whether you agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it
- Choose **two** works you have read that you believe best support your opinion
- Use the criteria suggested by the critical lens to analyze the works you have chosen
- Avoid plot summary. Instead, use specific references to appropriate literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, setting, point of view) to develop your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a unified and coherent manner
- Specify the titles and authors of the literature you choose
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

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ANSWER SHEET

Student Sex: Male Female

School Grade Teacher

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

Part A

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 7 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 8 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 9 _____ |
| 5 _____ | 10 _____ |



**HAND IN THIS ANSWER SHEET WITH YOUR ESSAY BOOKLET,
SCRAP PAPER, AND EXAMINATION BOOKLET.**

Your essay responses for Part A and Part B should be written in the essay booklet.

I do hereby affirm, at the close of this examination, that I had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that I have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination.

_____ Signature

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Tear Here