



## AP English Literature & Composition 1999 Free-Response Questions

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**1999**

The College Board

Advanced Placement Examination

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total Time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

1. Read the following poem carefully, paying particular attention to the physical intensity of the language. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how the poet conveys not just a literal description of picking blackberries but a deeper understanding of the whole experience. You may wish to include analysis of such elements as diction, imagery, metaphor, rhyme, rhythm, and form.

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Unfortunately, we have been denied permission to reprint online the poem that accompanies Question 1 of the 1999 AP English Literature free-response question. The poem in question is "Blackberry-Picking" from *SELECTED POEMS (1966-1987)* by Seamus Heaney.

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# 1999 ENGLISH LITERATURE

## Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

2. In the following passage from Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Crossing* (1994), the narrator describes a dramatic experience. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-organized essay, show how McCarthy's techniques convey the impact of the experience on the main character.

(35)

By the time he reached the first talus<sup>1</sup> slides under the tall escarpments<sup>2</sup> of the Pilares the dawn was not far to come. He reined the horse in a grassy swale and stood down and dropped the reins. His trousers were  
(5) stiff with blood. He cradled the wolf in his arms and lowered her to the ground and unfolded the sheet. She was stiff and cold and her fur was bristly with the blood dried upon it. He walked the horse back to the creek and left it standing to water and scouted the  
(10) banks for wood with which to make a fire. Coyotes were yapping along the hills to the south and they were calling from the dark shapes of the rimlands above him where their cries seemed to have no origin other than the night itself.

(15) He got the fire going and lifted the wolf from the sheet and took the sheet to the creek and crouched in the dark and washed the blood out of it and brought it back and he cut forked sticks from a mountain hackberry and drove them into the ground with a rock and  
(20) hung the sheet on a trestlepole where it steamed in the firelight like a burning scrim standing in a wilder-ness where celebrants of some sacred passion had been carried off by rival sects or perhaps had simply fled in the night at the fear of their own doing. He pulled the  
(25) blanket about his shoulders and sat shiver-ing in the cold and waiting for the dawn that he could find the place where he would bury the wolf. After a while the horse came up from the creek trailing the wet reins through the leaves and stood at the edge of the fire.

(30) He fell asleep with his hands palm up before him like some dozing penitent. When he woke it was still dark. The fire had died to a few low flames seething over the coals. He took off his hat and fanned the fire

with it and coaxed it back and fed the wood he'd gathered. He looked for the horse but could not see it. The coyotes were still calling all along the stone  
(40) ramparts of the Pilares and it was graying faintly in the east. He squatted over the wolf and touched her fur. He touched the cold and perfect teeth. The eye turned to the fire gave back no light and he closed it with his thumb and sat by her and put his hand upon her bloodied forehead and closed his own eyes that  
(45) he could see her running in the mountains, running in the starlight where the grass was wet and the sun's coming as yet had not undone the rich matrix of creatures passed in the night before her. Deer and hare and dove and groundvole all richly empaneled  
(50) on the air for her delight, all nations of the possible world ordained by God of which she was one among and not separate from. Where she ran the cries of the coyotes clapped shut as if a door had closed upon them and all was fear and marvel. He took up her stiff head  
(55) out of the leaves and held it or he reached to hold what cannot be held, what already ran among the mountains at once terrible and of a great beauty, like flowers that feed on flesh. What blood and bone are made of but can themselves not make on any altar nor by any  
(60) wound of war. What we may well believe has power to cut and shape and hollow out the dark form of the world surely if wind can, if rain can. But which cannot be held never be held and is no flower but is swift and a huntress and the wind itself is in terror of it and the world cannot lose it.

<sup>1</sup> A sloping mass of rock debris at the base of a cliff

<sup>2</sup> Steep slopes

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## 1999 ENGLISH LITERATURE

### Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, “No body, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man’s mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time.”

From a novel or play choose a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict within one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. You may use one of the novels or plays listed below or another novel or play of similar literary quality.

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
*Anna Karenina*  
*Antigone*  
*The Awakening*  
*Beloved*  
*Billy Budd*  
*Ceremony*  
*Crime and Punishment*  
*Dr. Faustus*  
*An Enemy of the People*  
*Equus*  
*A Farewell to Arms*  
*The Glass Menagerie*  
*Hamlet*  
*Heart of Darkness*  
*Jane Eyre*  
*Jasmine*  
*Light in August*  
*A Lesson Before Dying*  
*Macbeth*  
*The Mayor of Casterbridge*  
*Native Speaker*  
*The Piano Lesson*  
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*  
*A Raisin in the Sun*  
*The Scarlet Letter*  
*Wuthering Heights*

END OF EXAMINATION