



AP[®] English Literature and Composition 2006 Free-Response Questions

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**2006 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**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.)

Read the following poem carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the poet uses language to describe the scene and to convey mood and meaning.

Evening Hawk

From plane of light to plane, wings dipping through
Geometries and orchids that the sunset builds,
Out of the peak's black angularity of shadow, riding
Line The last tumultuous avalanche of
5 Light above pines and the guttural gorge,
The hawk comes.

His wing
Scythes down another day, his motion
Is that of the honed steel-edge, we hear
The crashless fall of stalks of Time.
10 The head of each stalk is heavy with the gold of our error.

Look! look! he is climbing the last light
Who knows neither Time nor error, and under
Whose eye, unforgiving, the world, unforgiven, swings
Into shadow.

Long now,
15 The last thrush is still, the last bat
Now cruises in his sharp hieroglyphics. His wisdom
Is ancient, too, and immense. The star
Is steady, like Plato,* over the mountain.

If there were no wind we might, we think, hear
20 The earth grind on its axis, or history
Drip in darkness like a leaking pipe in the cellar.

—Robert Penn Warren

*Greek philosopher (427?–347? B.C.)

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Question 2

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

The following passage is an excerpt from *Lady Windermere's Fan*, a play by Oscar Wilde, produced in 1892. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how the playwright reveals the values of the characters and the nature of their society.

Line DUCHESS OF BERWICK (*shaking hands*). Dear
Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember
Agatha,¹ don't you? How do you do, Lord
5 Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you
are far too wicked.

LORD DARLINGTON. Don't say that, Duchess.
As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there
are lots of people who say I have never really done
anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of
10 course they only say it behind my back.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Isn't he dreadful?
Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't
believe a word he says. No, no tea, thank you, dear.
(*Sits on sofa.*) We have just had tea at Lady Markby's.
15 Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at
all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha
is looking forward so much to your ball tonight, dear
Margaret.

LADY WINDERMERE (*seated*). Oh, you musn't
20 think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a
dance in honour of my birthday. A small and early.

LORD DARLINGTON (*standing*). Very small,
very early, and very select, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Of course it's going
25 to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about
your house. It is really one of the few houses in
London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel
perfectly secure about dear Berwick. I don't know
what society is coming to. The most dreadful people
30 seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my
parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't
ask them. Really, some one should make a stand
against it.

LADY WINDERMERE. I will, Duchess. I will
35 have no one in my house about whom there is any
scandal.

LORD DARLINGTON. Oh, don't say that, Lady
Windermere. I should never be admitted. (*Sitting.*)

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, men don't matter.
40 With women it is different. We're good. Some of us
are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed
into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our
existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time,
just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right
45 to do so.

LORD DARLINGTON. It's a curious thing,
Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the
way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all
the honours² and invariably lose the odd trick.³

50 DUCHESS OF BERWICK. The odd trick? Is that
the husband, Lord Darlington?

LORD DARLINGTON. It would be rather a good
name for the modern husband.

55 DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear Lord Darlington,
how thoroughly depraved you are!

LADY WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington is trivial.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, don't say that, Lady
Windermere.

60 LADY WINDERMERE. Why do you *talk* so
trivially about life, then?

LORD DARLINGTON. Because I think that life
is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously
about it.

65 DUCHESS OF BERWICK. What does he mean?
Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington,
just explain to me what you really mean.

LORD DARLINGTON. I think I had better not,
Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found
out. Good-bye! (*Shakes hands with DUCHESS.*) And
70 now—Lady Windermere, good-bye. I may come
tonight, mayn't I? Do let me come.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes, certainly. But you
are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

75 LORD DARLINGTON (*smiling*). Ah! you are
beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to
reform any one, Lady Windermere. (*Bows and exit.*)

¹ the Duchess's daughter

² high cards

³ round of a card game

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Question 3

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

Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. Choose a novel or play in which such a setting plays a significant role. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the country setting functions in the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Adam Bede</i> | <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> |
| <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> | <i>House Made of Dawn</i> |
| <i>All the Pretty Horses</i> | <i>King Lear</i> |
| <i>Anna Karenina</i> | <i>Madame Bovary</i> |
| <i>As I Lay Dying</i> | <i>Mansfield Park</i> |
| <i>As You Like It</i> | <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> |
| <i>The Bear</i> | <i>Obasan</i> |
| <i>Black Boy</i> | <i>O Pioneers!</i> |
| <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> | <i>Out of Africa</i> |
| <i>The Bonesetter's Daughter</i> | <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> |
| <i>Ceremony</i> | <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i> |
| <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> | <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> |
| <i>David Copperfield</i> | <i>A Thousand Acres</i> |
| <i>Don Quixote</i> | <i>Tom Jones</i> |
| <i>East of Eden</i> | <i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i> |
| <i>Ethan Frome</i> | <i>The Way We Live Now</i> |
| <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i> | <i>The Winter's Tale</i> |
| <i>Frankenstein</i> | <i>Wuthering Heights</i> |

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