

2024



AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Free-Response Questions Set 2

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

3 Questions

Question 1

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

In George Moses Horton’s poem “On Summer,” published in 1829, the author describes multiple aspects of summer in a rural area. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Horton uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the setting.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

On Summer

<p>Esteville¹ fire begins to burn; The auburn fields of harvest rise; The torrid flames again return, <i>Line</i> And thunders roll along the skies.</p> <p>5 Perspiring Cancer² lifts his head, And roars terrific from on high; Whose voice the timid creatures dread; From which they strive with awe to fly.</p> <p>The night-hawk ventures from his cell, <i>10</i> And starts his note in evening air; He feels the heat his bosom swell, Which drives away the gloom of fear.</p> <p>Thou noisy insect, start thy drum; Rise lamp-like bugs to light the train; <i>15</i> And bid sweet Philomela³ come, And sound in front the nightly strain.</p> <p>The bee begins her ceaseless hum, And doth with sweet exertions rise; And with delight she stores her comb, <i>20</i> And well her rising stock supplies.</p>	<p>Let sportive children well beware, While sprightly frisking o’er the green; And carefully avoid the snare, Which lurks beneath the smiling scene.</p> <p>25 The mistress bird assumes her nest, And broods in silence on the tree, Her note to cease, her wings at rest, She patient waits her young to see.</p> <p>The farmer hastens from the heat; <i>30</i> The weary plough-horse droops his head; The cattle all at noon retreat; And ruminates beneath the shade.</p> <p>The burdened ox with dauntless rage, Flies heedless to the liquid flood, <i>35</i> From which he quaffs,⁴ devoid of gauge,⁵ Regardless of his driver’s rod.</p> <p>Pomaceous⁶ orchards now expand Their laden branches o’er the lea; And with their bounty fill the land, <i>40</i> While plenty smiles on every tree.</p>
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On fertile borders, near the stream,
Now gaze with pleasure and delight;
See loaded vines with melons teem—
'Tis paradise to human sight.

- 45 With rapture view the smiling fields,
Adorn the mountain and the plain,
Each, on the eve of Autumn, yields
A large supply of golden grain.

¹ a town in North Carolina

² zodiac constellation associated with midsummer

³ a character in Greek mythology who was transformed
into a nightingale

⁴ drinks

⁵ measure

⁶ of or relating to apples

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Line It had taken him three months to complete the
thirty-six four-by-six-foot panels that would join
together, like a huge puzzle, to form the immense
mural. The last thing he painted, on the final morning,
5 was a third apple—airborne—tossed by a child
 juggler. The apples were like tiny planets, and the
 child, otherwise small and unexceptional, gained
 power through his manipulation of them. Kenneth had
 to break one last egg to paint this, and as he passed it
10 from hand to hand, letting the white drain to the floor,
 and allowing the clean yolk to settle in his palm, he
 looked at this boy—his serene, confident expression,
 the three apples aloft, the face calm with the
 knowledge that they would be kept in the air
15 indefinitely. While Kenneth mixed the yolk with the
 warm shades of ground pigment, he remembered the
 critic telling him to keep things on the picture plane
 flat, two-dimensional, and he smiled as the apple
 became spherical under his brush. When he could
20 imagine the weight of it in his hand, he knew he was
 finished. Then he began to toss brushes, palettes, and
 pigments down to the floor below. There was a drill
 shrieking somewhere in the building. The clatter his
 tools made on landing must have been drowned out by
25 its noise.

Kenneth figured he had broken five thousand eggs,
 more or less, in the making of the mural, and each
 time he broke the shell, he thought of the critic’s head,
 the smooth baldness of the top of it. Humpty-
30 Dumpty,¹ he thought, this wall, and the wall of
 cultural fashion that could keep you out, for a while,
 until the great fall. By now he knew that fashion
 always fell, it failed and fell. He was happy to be free
 of it. And as he used the shell to separate the white

35 from the yolk, he thought about Harding,² a man who
 had never made use of egg tempera. He wondered
 what had become of him. And the woman Harding
 had loved, whether she had ever painted again, and
 whether or not he himself would ever come across a
40 painting by Gentleman.³ The girl in Germany, the
 couple in Italy,⁴ floated by, a sense of them here and
 there in the mural. These narratives fought for space
 in his mind. But the mural itself, he knew, was
 divorced from narrative. As it should be, he whispered
45 to himself, as it should be. *Flight and Its Allegories*.⁵

Once he was on the ground, he rifled through a
 canvas sack until he found the camera he was looking
 for, a Brownie Starflex, with six exposures still
 available. He shot the mural from left to right. Then
50 he walked across the full length of the half-tiled floor.
 This was the last exposure and it would make the
 mural look incredibly small, like a two-inch-long
 piece of ribbon with an unreadable pattern on it. But
 he wanted to show its proportions to a friend and, in
55 any case, the more professional pictures would be
 taken later, after he was gone, when the mural had
 begun to live its own independent life in the presence
 of an audience.

For months now there had been noise, the
60 workmen’s power tools and, in the odd moments
 when those were silent, the roar of the planes arriving
 and departing at the old, soon-to-be abandoned
 terminal. He had seen the passengers, through the
 plate glass of the windows, rivers of them, pouring
65 down the steps that were pushed up to airliners, then
 flowing darkly across the tarmac. What would they
 make of *Flight and Its Allegories*? Would they be
 struck by it? Or would they simply pass it by,

preoccupied by the mysteries of their individual lives
70 as they walked forward or waited in the lounge? He
was not unaware that public art could be—and often
was—ignored. Still, what pleasure he had taken in the
making of it.

¹ Humpty-Dumpty is a nursery-rhyme character, typically depicted as an egg. He falls from a wall, breaks, and cannot be put together again.

² Kenneth’s former art teacher, who cautioned Kenneth against appropriating the ideas, styles, and techniques of other artists

³ Alexander Gentleman, an obscure artist that Harding once knew; another artist later copied his style and gained fame as a result

⁴ “The girl in Germany” and “the couple in Italy” are people Kenneth met while backpacking through Europe.

⁵ Allegories are works of literature or art that express moral or political messages, often through the use of symbols.

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Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 3

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

Many works of literature explore a character’s sense of lacking something important in life. The character perceives an unfulfilled need which may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which such a feeling is explored. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character’s sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Antigone

The Awakening

The Bell Jar

Brave New World

Ceremony

Death of a Salesman

Don Quixote

Fences

Frankenstein

The Goldfinch

The Handmaid’s Tale

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents

Howards End

The Hundred Secret Senses

If Beale Street Could Talk

Invisible Man

Jane Eyre

Kindred

Little Fires Everywhere

Macbeth

Moby-Dick

Native Son

On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous

One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest

Passing

A Raisin in the Sun

Sag Harbor

The Scarlet Letter

The Secret Life of Bees

Song of Solomon

Sweat

Swing Time

The Tempest

There There

A Thousand Splendid Suns

To the Lighthouse

The Visit

When the Emperor Was Divine

White Noise

Wuthering Heights

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STOP

END OF EXAM