

# COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

## ENGLISH

**Tuesday, June 11, 2013 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only**

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

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has four parts. Part 1 tests listening skills; you are to answer all eight multiple-choice questions. For Part 2, you are to answer all twelve multiple-choice questions. For Part 3, you are to answer all five multiple-choice questions and the two short constructed-response questions. For Part 4, you are to write one essay response. The two short constructed-response questions and the essay response should be written in pen.

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

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



## NOTES

**DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

## Part 1 (Questions 1–8)

### Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (1–8): Use your notes to answer the following questions about the passage read to you. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

- 1 When her husband emptied out the refrigerator, the speaker was “aghast” because she
    - (1) was not finished eating the food
    - (2) did not know where the food went
    - (3) wanted to decide what food to throw out
    - (4) needed to record the uneaten food
  - 2 The speaker’s comment “at that moment, I may have been the only woman on the planet who was annoyed with her husband for cleaning out the fridge” is an example of
    - (1) simile
    - (2) personification
    - (3) irony
    - (4) foreshadowing
  - 3 The speaker uses the phrases “as kids,” “back on the farm,” and “at dinner not long ago” to indicate
    - (1) a transition
    - (2) an argument
    - (3) an emphasis
    - (4) a definition
  - 4 The reference to large amounts of fresh water and oil highlights which aspect of food production in this country?
    - (1) the amount that is never consumed
    - (2) the problem of careless harvesting
    - (3) the lack of clear nutritional guidelines
    - (4) the dependence on overseas markets
  - 5 According to the account, supermarkets discard food because of
    - (1) overstocked inventory
    - (2) finicky customers
    - (3) economic conditions
    - (4) ineffective storage
  - 6 The speaker’s purpose in referencing the “Three Rs” is to
    - (1) evoke a sentimental response
    - (2) introduce conservation to schools
    - (3) assign responsibility to consumers
    - (4) reveal a new theory
  - 7 The speaker uses the words “confessed” and “lamented” to express feelings of
    - (1) guilt
    - (2) annoyance
    - (3) greed
    - (4) anger
  - 8 According to the speaker, the bulk of food waste occurs as a result of
    - (1) restrictive national and state produce control and price regulations
    - (2) excessive fertilization and pesticide use by farmers to boost profits
    - (3) slow transportation and ineffective refrigeration from farm to consumer
    - (4) careless home and public food preparation and consumption practices
-

## Part 2 (Questions 9–20)

**Directions** (9–20): Below each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

### Reading Comprehension Passage A

...On the days that M'Dear<sup>1</sup> washed her hair, she called them "Days of Beauty." She spent the whole day pampering herself, and she taught me how to pamper myself as well. ...

5 During the wet, cold months that make up a Louisiana winter, M'Dear's hair was so long and thick that drying it could take all day. On those days we'd stay inside, cleaning, ironing, and cooking up huge pots of gumbo. I'd climb up onto the big soft chair next to the fireplace in the kitchen, and shine shoes or sew on buttons or do the other tasks she was teaching me. I'd sit there and watch her work, watch her go in and out of the washroom like a breeze was blowing her in.

10 On hot Days of Beauty, we'd put on our swimsuits and stand outside on the wooden platform of the outdoor shower. It was my happy job to scrub clean buckets and other containers and set them outside to gather rainwater to wash our hair. M'Dear would undo my braid, pour the rainwater on my head, put on a little Breck shampoo, and wash my hair. The sun shone down, my mother's hands touched my head, and her fingers lathered love into me. Never has my hair been so soft. Sometimes I still wash my hair in rainwater, to  
15 remember.

20 After our hair was clean, M'Dear would leave hers down, and, still in our swimsuits, we'd hang clean clothes outside to dry on the line, with me handing her clothespins out of a small apron she had sewn for me out of flower sacks. I have a photo of us by the clothesline, doing this very thing. We were working and smiling, squinting slightly in the sunlight. I was just about to enter first grade, just about to leave behind those mother-daughter days of intimacy, of little maternal baptisms. M'Dear prepared me for that leaving so that it was smooth and felt natural. Not all leavings are that easily prepared for.

25 After finishing chores and when our hair was dry, M'Dear and I would go down to our pier, just before sunset. These memories are so vivid to me that I don't need a photograph to see them. I carry them inside me.

In one memory, it is growing toward twilight. We are sitting on the pier with the La Luna River flowing by. ...

30 And as the sun sparkled off the cocoa-red water and the wind stirred in the tall pines, I stood behind my mother, my legs on either side of her, and brushed her hair. I lifted her long chestnut hair up off her neck, twirled it up on top of her head, then let it fall, watching its weight settle back down and around her shoulders. Then I'd lean my face into her hair and smell it. I can close my eyes and smell it now: sun and vanilla.

35 What I first learned about love, I learned on that dock with M'Dear. The La Luna River flowing by with its river sounds, the riverbanks with their lovely sweet citrus scent of jasmine, the scent of M'Dear's hair, the oils of her scalp, the fullness of her thick, long curls against my hands, our breathing together, the closeness, her love for me—all of this knit my soul together. When the fading sunlight hit the river, it bounced up to form iridescence, like a halo, around M'Dear's head. *She is the most beautiful person in the universe.* ...

—Rebecca Wells

excerpted from *The Crowning Glory of Calla Lily Ponder*, 2009  
HarperCollins Publishers

<sup>1</sup>M'Dear — the narrator's mother

- 9 What kind of mood is reinforced by lines 4 through 8?
- (1) optimistic
  - (2) tranquil
  - (3) concerned
  - (4) unhappy
- 10 What role does the daughter play in the passage?
- (1) narrator
  - (2) antagonist
  - (3) audience
  - (4) hero
- 11 One way M'Dear created "days of intimacy" (line 21) was to
- (1) read stories to her daughter
  - (2) visit family with her daughter
  - (3) involve her daughter in daily routines
  - (4) engage her daughter in decision making
- 12 Lines 28 through 32 are primarily developed through the use of
- (1) sensory details
  - (2) comparison and contrast
  - (3) order of importance
  - (4) rhetorical questions
- 13 What is the setting of the story?
- (1) in a city
  - (2) on a farm
  - (3) near a waterway
  - (4) beside a mountain
- 14 The narrator's conclusion that "all of this knit my soul together" (lines 36 and 37) suggests the
- (1) boredom from chores
  - (2) relationship between characters
  - (3) need for amusement
  - (4) importance of cleanliness
-

## Reading Comprehension Passage B

During her junior year of high school, Candice Backus’s teacher handed her a worksheet and instructed the 17-year-old to map out her future financial life. Backus pretended to buy a car, rent an apartment, and apply for a credit card. Then, she and her classmates played the “stock market game,” investing the hypothetical earnings from their hypothetical jobs in the market in the fateful fall of 2008. “Our pretend investments crashed,” Backus says, still horrified. “We felt what actual shareholders were feeling.”

That pain of earning and losing money is a feeling that public schools increasingly want to teach. Forty states now offer some type of financial instruction at the elementary or high-school level, embedding lessons in balancing checkbooks and buying stock into math and social-studies classes. Though it’s too early to measure the full impact of the Great Recession, anecdotally the interest in personal-finance classes has risen since 2007 when subprime became a four-letter word and bank failures a regular occurrence. Now, a handful of states including Missouri, Utah, and Tennessee require teenagers to take financial-literacy classes to graduate from high school. School districts such as Chicago are boosting their offerings in money-management classes for kids as young as elementary school, and roughly 300 colleges or universities now offer online personal-finance classes for incoming students. “These classes really say, ‘This is how you live independently,’” says Ted Beck, president of National Endowment for Financial Education.

Rather than teach investment strategies or financial wizardry, these courses offer a back-to-the-basics approach to handling money: Don’t spend what you don’t have. Put part of your monthly salary into a savings account, and invest in the stock market for the long-term rather than short-term gains. For Backus, this means dividing her earnings from her part-time job at a fast-food restaurant into separate envelopes for paying bills, spending, and saving. “Money is so hard to make but so easy to spend,” she says one weekday after school. “That was the big takeaway.”

Teaching kids about the value of cash certainly is one of the programs’ goals, but teachers also want students to think hard about their finances long term. It’s easy for teenagers to get riled up about gas prices because many of them drive cars. But the hard part is urging them to put off the instant gratification of buying a new T shirt or an iPod. “Investing and retirement aren’t things teenagers are thinking about. For them, the future is this weekend,” says Gayle Whitefield, a business and marketing teacher at Utah’s Riverton High School. ...

That’s a big goal for these classes: preventing kids from making the same financial missteps their parents did when it comes to saving, spending, and debt. Though the personal savings rate has shot up to 4.2 percent as of July 2009, that’s still a far distance from 1982, when Americans saved 11.2 percent of their incomes. It’s hard for schools to teach strict money-management skills when teenagers go home and watch their parents rack up credit-card debt. It’s like telling your kids not to smoke and then lighting up a cigarette in front of them, Beck says. ...

Even with these challenges, students such as Backus say learning about money in school is worthwhile. After Backus finished her financial-literacy class, she opened up a savings account at her local bank and started to think more about how she and her family would pay for college. “She just has a better understanding of money and how it affects the world,” says her mother, Darleen—and that’s down to the minutiae<sup>1</sup> of how money is spent at-large from taxes to bank bailouts to the federal government’s deficit. All of this talk of money can make Backus worry, she says, but luckily, she feels prepared to face it.

—Nancy Cook  
excerpted from “Getting Schooled About Money”  
[www.newsweek.com](http://www.newsweek.com), September 2, 2009

<sup>1</sup>minutiae — details

- 15 The purpose of the high school class’s “stock market game” (line 4) is to
- (1) introduce a new course
  - (2) encourage personal savings
  - (3) learn about investment
  - (4) teach credit card hazards
- 16 According to the passage, student interest in taking classes on finance has increased because of the
- (1) state of the economy
  - (2) need for employment
  - (3) rate of graduation
  - (4) desire to purchase cars
- 17 According to the passage, taking money-management courses will help young people to
- (1) get accepted by colleges
  - (2) become very wealthy
  - (3) take more vacations
  - (4) prevent going into debt
- 18 According to the passage, from the early 1980s to July 2009, the personal savings rate of Americans shows that
- (1) less money is being set aside
  - (2) new businesses are less secure
  - (3) stores are charging higher prices
  - (4) investments are showing lower yields
- 19 The author’s attitude toward financial literacy classes is one of
- (1) disgust
  - (2) hope
  - (3) fear
  - (4) joy
- 20 According to the passage, one result of Candice Backus’s completing the class about money in school is that she
- (1) is debt free
  - (2) manages the family income
  - (3) will retire early
  - (4) feels more competent
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## Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

**Directions:** On the following pages read Passage I (an excerpt from a short story) and Passage II (a poem) about growing old. You may use the margins to take notes as you read. Answer the multiple-choice questions on the answer sheet provided for you. Then write your response for question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet.

### Passage I

I'm old, they say. The calendar says so, too. But consider me not a humble man, if you wish, the mirror does not say so, and sometimes in my veins I feel youth like a streak of forked lightning. It travels fast, this old youth, and strikes as it never did at twenty or even forty, a little fistful heart of springtime distilled out of all time and no time. Then I feel shot  
5 through with a sudden psalm,<sup>1</sup> and a tiger pursues the field mouse of my pastured old age. All the pictures that once unloosed themselves on my fire-eating brain stop, still as mountains with morning drawn up in their valleys. I walk back across my own history.

I do not say it is all pleasant. There is a saying that what you lose in one place you make up in another, which with the proper forbearance can, I suppose, become a truth. But no  
10 one escapes life, and no one beats it, and every loss is a tear in the heart's tender flesh.

"Give me rain and I will make flowers," my mother said, and she did. But I am a man, an old and impatient one, no doubt, and I resent not being a god, expect too much, weaken with the perfidy<sup>2</sup> of friends and the trickery of the flesh, lost frontiers, blind alleys, the death of dreams, solitude, pain, the heroes climbing up the stairs and flinging back dust  
15 into the eyes.

I was thinking about all this the other evening. It was the hour that belongs to me. You see I have my little bag of tricks too, like any old peddler. It is a foolishness what I do, the last thing, I believe, that anyone would suspect.

The lights have been turned out in my shop (it is really a gallery of pictures) and my  
20 people have gone out into the dusk, and the blind spots of the rooms are washed in a curious game of hide-and-seek before the total darkness. In the blue and lilac the pictures die. I can wander through these rooms alone as a ghost or an actor saying his lines to an empty house. Up the stairs I roam in the scent of turpentine and old fires and dust, through the gilder's<sup>3</sup> room with the laid aside tools and droppings of gold, and down again crossing  
25 the holes of light that once were doors.

It pleases me to do this on certain evenings in the spring when the light spreads out so softly over the town, and I can see a mile outward from my uppermost room. Most of the time, though, I would rather stand, well hidden by the draperies, at an enormous window which fronts the sidewalks and the street. At this hour no one goes by. The traffic has  
30 become a flutter, the pigeons assemble on the cornices, and the tight clang of the daytime bells tolling the hour becomes suddenly as spun of dreams as the party-day sashes of girls adrift in the wind. It is six o'clock. I have become a poet.

<sup>1</sup>psalm — sacred song or poem

<sup>2</sup>perfidy — disloyalty

<sup>3</sup>gilder — one who works with layered gold

35 Who would believe it of me, a man who would not love anything he could not respect,  
honest, bitter as a green lemon, a lover of art and fine merchandise, debunker<sup>4</sup> of man,  
woman, and child, and, though I hate the word, old? This is my secret. I am a poet as wild  
and strange as any, and I own this city by right of common memory. ...

—Phyllis Roberts  
excerpted from “Hero”  
*The Virginia Quarterly Review*, Spring 1959

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<sup>4</sup>debunker — one who exposes falseness

**Passage II**  
**On Our Dog's Birthday**

Throughout the day,  
he'll press his wet nose  
against the floor to ceiling  
window and watch anything  
5 that passes by, now and  
then falling asleep. When  
the cats come in, they'll  
nuzzle their cold faces  
against the soft warmth  
10 of his forehead. We'll  
also look into the day,  
watch the thick gray  
beech trees' branches  
sway in the coming  
15 winter storm. Today  
our dog is ten. When  
we go to another room,  
he'll follow. When later  
we take our walk, he will  
20 wander off after smells  
he finds along the way.  
After we return, if I toss  
his ragged stuffed lion,  
he'll look at me, seem  
25 to want to say, "You  
don't have to play with me.  
I'm fine," then mosey  
over, and take the toy  
back to his spot. Tonight,  
30 if he needs to go out, he  
will sit by the side of the bed,  
my wife and I sleeping deep  
in our marriage, and woof  
softly, clear his throat,  
35 as if he doesn't want to be a bother.

—Jack Ridl  
*Harpur Palate*, Summer 2004

## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (21–25): Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

**Passage I** (the short story excerpt) — Questions 21–23 refer to Passage I.

- 21 The purpose of the word “it” in line 8 is to
- (1) define a historical term
  - (2) connect ideas between paragraphs
  - (3) signal a change in mood
  - (4) introduce opposing arguments
- 22 Lines 11 through 15 reveal how the narrator’s experiences have caused him to feel
- (1) optimism
  - (2) awe
  - (3) boredom
  - (4) disappointment
- 23 The description of the narrator’s behavior in lines 22 and 23 and in lines 27 through 29 suggests the narrator sees himself as
- (1) stressed
  - (2) helpless
  - (3) disconnected
  - (4) intimidating

**Passage II** (the poem) — Questions 24–25 refer to Passage II.

- 24 Lines 22 through 29 suggest that, with age, the dog has become more
- (1) aware of his youthful training
  - (2) conscious of his relationship with his owners
  - (3) fearful of strangers who approach
  - (4) disruptive when his owners leave him
- 25 The form of this poem can best be described as
- (1) a ballad
  - (2) haiku
  - (3) free verse
  - (4) a sonnet

## Short-Response Questions

**Directions** (26–27): Write your responses to question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet. Be sure to answer **both** questions.

26 Write a well-developed paragraph in which you use ideas from **both** Passage I (the short story excerpt) and Passage II (the poem) to establish a controlling idea about growing old. Develop your controlling idea using specific examples and details from **both** Passage I and Passage II.

27 Choose a specific literary element (e.g., theme, characterization, structure, point of view, etc.) or literary technique (e.g., symbolism, irony, figurative language, etc.) used by **one** of the authors. Using specific details from **either** Passage I (the short story excerpt) **or** Passage II (the poem), in a well-developed paragraph, show how the author uses that element or technique to develop the passage.

## Part 4 (Question 28)

### 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 beginning on page 3 of the essay booklet.

### Critical Lens:

“...the greater the difficulty, the greater the glory.”

—Cicero  
*Ethical Writings of Cicero*  
1887 Translation

### 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



