

# COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

## ENGLISH

**Wednesday, August 17, 2011 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., only**

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.

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.

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.**



## 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 The speaker begins the account with a description of her home to reveal that she previously viewed paper as a
    - (1) method to contact friends
    - (2) source of craft materials
    - (3) necessity of her job
    - (4) means to keep records
  - 2 The speaker indicates that the key to reducing the amount of home paper products is for each consumer to
    - (1) possess fewer of them
    - (2) choose smaller versions
    - (3) find cheaper brands
    - (4) pick lightweight substitutes
  - 3 The speaker suggests that the production of junk mail contributes to a depletion of
    - (1) wildlife sanctuaries
    - (2) water supplies
    - (3) landfill sites
    - (4) ozone amounts
  - 4 The speaker sought to limit her laser printer output by
    - (1) saving material on her flash drive
    - (2) creating more online files
    - (3) alternating use of paper trays
    - (4) reusing previously printed sheets
  - 5 The speaker uses less paper in her kitchen by purchasing
    - (1) silverware
    - (2) plastic bags
    - (3) sponges
    - (4) pot holders
  - 6 The speaker uses the example of changes in her bill-paying habits to illustrate
    - (1) a misuse of resources
    - (2) an impossible expectation
    - (3) a short-term goal
    - (4) an unexpected benefit
  - 7 When the speaker states that she is “treading that much lighter on the earth,” she means that she has
    - (1) less material to recycle
    - (2) more time to herself
    - (3) less need to exercise
    - (4) more motivation to read
  - 8 The speaker probably shares her experience with reducing and recycling paper in order to
    - (1) start an antilitter campaign
    - (2) inspire others to engage in recycling
    - (3) provide information about a journalist’s life
    - (4) stress the importance of housecleaning
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## 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

To see me backpacking, you'd never know I'm the same woman whose blood pressure rises at the sight of crumbs on her kitchen counter. It's hard to imagine I rage against the dust bunnies and grit on my hardwood floor, when here in Yosemite's backcountry I sleep on dirt, stir it into my oatmeal and shake it from my boots. My hair, skin and clothes  
5 thicken with grime each day. Filthy and blistered, I am happier than I have felt in years.

Perhaps it is the constant exertion that makes me so patient, content. After hauling a pack stuffed with six days of food and gear up mountain passes, down steep ravines, and across meadows, I find myself at sunset, hungry and worn to bliss. It's far from the exhaustion I feel after a grueling day teaching, paying bills, and cooking. No, this is purely  
10 physical. My body aches for sleep, but my mind is as clear as the dusk light on Vogelsang Lake. In this new place, I feel I've come home.

At the first light of dawn, I awake to scurry up rocks to watch the sunrise spread soft pinks, then fiery yellow across the slate sky. In the meadow below me, two deer perk up their heads to scrutinize a sound on the wind. They begin running and I scan the fields  
15 expecting to see a bear, wolf, or other reason for their flight. Seeing no animal, I wonder if they're just running to run, something I rarely do. At home, I'm so busy trying to keep up with my own expectations I'm always running towards something or from something. Here in Yosemite, there is no such pull. Clutched in the palm of these granite cathedrals, I'm in awe, a lithe<sup>1</sup> lupine<sup>2</sup> warming to the sun.

Perhaps this is why dirt in the wilderness never bothers me. I don't need to control it or mop it away. It's not my dirt or my husband's dirt to clean, but the soil for ponderosas, sequoias and tufts of mountain grass. It belongs here—crunching beneath my boots, lining valleys between glacial peaks. Yosemite's dirt doesn't hover behind windows or wait in painted corners to be swept into a plastic bag. It is the ground beneath me.

I pick up a handful of pine needle-saturated soil and imagine hurling it across my living room rug. How much dirt would it take to make my house a home? Could I carry this same mountain peace back to my rectangular plot of driveway and lawn cut into a grid of streets? Sifting soil through my fingers, I'm suddenly confused by the shiny black and white linoleum we installed in our kitchen floor. How did I get so far from this place?

I've spent too many years identifying comfort with the mattress on my bed and the water pressure in my shower. Comfort is also this moment sitting with my butt numb from cold granite, my legs sunburned and caked in dust, my feet blistered and sweating in wool socks. I wonder how I can remember this luxury when I return home to my terry cloth robe? Is sanity ever possible within four walls, or will I always hover like dust in window  
35 sunbeams, restless to be outside again?

—Tonya Ward Singer  
“Dirt”

*In the Mist Magazine*, Issue 1.1  
[www.inthemistmag.com](http://www.inthemistmag.com)

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<sup>1</sup>lithe — graceful

<sup>2</sup>lupine — a flower with an upright spike

- 9 The phrase “worn to bliss” (line 8) indicates that at the end of the hike the narrator feels
- (1) confused and angry
  - (2) sad but hopeful
  - (3) cold and hungry
  - (4) tired but satisfied
- 10 The narrator’s comments about her own expectations in lines 16 and 17 illustrate that she
- (1) performs dangerous tasks
  - (2) feels pressured
  - (3) dislikes her job
  - (4) craves attention
- 11 The wilderness setting in the third paragraph is developed primarily through the use of
- (1) imagery
  - (2) symbolism
  - (3) characterization
  - (4) personification
- 12 The narrator indicates that the dirt in Yosemite does not frustrate her because
- (1) she cleans up her trash
  - (2) no one else is bothered
  - (3) it naturally occurs there
  - (4) it looks unusual
- 13 Throughout the passage, the narrator implies that she
- (1) is afraid of wildlife
  - (2) admires neatly mowed lawns
  - (3) wants to sell her home
  - (4) feels content in the wilderness
- 14 The main purpose of this passage is to
- (1) narrate a personal journey
  - (2) persuade readers to camp
  - (3) describe the value of exercise
  - (4) explain feelings of insecurity
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## Reading Comprehension Passage B

Sure, you know their names, possibly better than you know the name of the street you live on—almost every writer does. When the need comes, these names drip lightly and quickly off our tongues like they were our own brothers. I am thinking about the famed eponymous<sup>1</sup> duo *Webster’s Dictionary* and *Roget’s Thesaurus*.

5 But I dare say, almost none of us can identify the actual person or conjure up anything about him. Don’t report me, but neither did I until I started to write this column.

*Webster’s Dictionary*. Many people can respond immediately: Noah Webster. We are aware that he is the father of the dictionary. But who was he? What did he do for a living? When did he live?

10 Noah was born in 1758, graduated from Yale University in 1778, and subsequently graduated from law school. He produced the first American dictionary in 1806 and published his sentinel work *An American Dictionary of the English Language* in 1828. His interests led him to be a lexicographer,<sup>2</sup> textbook editor, author, Bible translator and spelling reformer. He campaigned for years to secure nationwide copyright privileges for authors, and he succeeded in 1790. His ubiquitous<sup>3</sup> mind produced extensive writings in epidemic diseases, mythology, meteors, and the relationship of European and Asian languages. In addition, he founded the first New York daily newspaper. He died in 1843.

15 Another dictionary eponym almost as well-known is *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. So we have to ask, “Where did Merriam come from? What relationship does Merriam have to Webster?”

20 George and Charles Merriam purchased the right to revise Webster’s dictionary after his death in 1843. They produced several revised and expanded editions, and the “Collegiate” series was begun in 1898. The C. and G. Merriam Company eventually lost its exclusive right to the Webster name and in 1983, the company name changed to Merriam-Webster, Inc. with the publication of *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. The C. and G. Merriam Company has been owned by Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. since 1964.

That brings us to...

*Roget’s Thesaurus*. And it gives us the chance to learn about Roget, the man—Peter Mark Roget. Who? What? When?

30 Englishman Peter Roget, MD, was born in 1779. He studied medicine and mathematics at the University of Edinburgh, entering at age 14 and graduating at age 19. He is acclaimed as the creator of the first-ever thesaurus, a compilation of words and phrases according to meaning rather than alphabetic order. It has been called one of the 3 most important books ever printed, along with the Bible and Webster’s dictionary.

35 He began his monumental work *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* in 1805 but did not release it publicly until 1852 — 47 years later. Meanwhile, he was earning a deserved reputation as a distinguished physician and anatomist.

40 In his lifetime, he became a noted lecturer and writer on anatomy, sewer sanitation, magnetism, bees, geology, and more. He wrote a landmark paper, “Persistence of Vision with Regard to Moving Objects,” which stirred much research and dispute in the scientific and optics community.

<sup>1</sup>eponymous — being the person for whom something is named

<sup>2</sup>lexicographer — author of a dictionary

<sup>3</sup>ubiquitous — being everywhere at the same time

When Roget died in 1869 at age 90, his son, John, took over the Thesaurus and he gradually expanded it.

[Physician and writer—what an interesting combination!]

45 So now you know these men—the “-nyms”<sup>4</sup> in the eponyms. Not enough information? As James Thurber suggested in the title of his 1941 book about baseball, *You Could Look It Up!*

—Arnold Melnick, DO  
“But Do You Know Who They Were?”  
from *AMWA Journal*, 2007

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<sup>4</sup>“-nyms” — names

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|--|--|
| <p>15 The opening paragraph creates a tone of<br/>(1) authority                      (3) familiarity<br/>(2) sympathy                      (4) irony</p> <p>16 The author states that “these names drip lightly ... off our tongues” (lines 2 and 3) in order to suggest that most people<br/>(1) will recognize them<br/>(2) have misquoted them<br/>(3) will respect them<br/>(4) have ignored them</p> <p>17 Phrases such as “When the need comes” (line 2), “Another dictionary eponym” (line 18), and “That brings us to...” (line 27) serve to<br/>(1) introduce theories<br/>(2) define vocabulary<br/>(3) indicate flashbacks<br/>(4) provide transition</p> | <p>18 The use of the dash in “until 1852 — 47 years later” (line 36) emphasizes Roget’s<br/>(1) growing disinterest<br/>(2) personal dedication<br/>(3) poor scholarship<br/>(4) excellent reputation</p> <p>19 According to the passage, Noah Webster and Peter Roget are alike because they both<br/>(1) were physicians<br/>(2) became professors<br/>(3) had multiple interests<br/>(4) established a charity</p> <p>20 The purpose of the final paragraph is to<br/>(1) caution future readers<br/>(2) encourage further research<br/>(3) restate accepted assumptions<br/>(4) provide background information</p> |
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## Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

**Directions:** On the following pages read Passage I (an excerpt from a memoir) and Passage II (a poem) about parting. 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

...In one simple sentence, the letter informed me that I had been admitted into Beijing Language Institute's English department, and that I was expected to report on campus within a month.

I ran home as fast as I could.

5 Mom, Dad, and the whole family were at hand to congratulate me. We studied the letter and the information they had sent about the department and the college. The picture of the college was a treasure.

10 My dream had come true. I would be off to Beijing to study English. I would be the first one in the history of Yellow Stone High [Yellow Stone, China] to do so. Now I had a future, a bright one. In a few years, I would be fluent in English, could go to work for the Foreign Ministry and would converse in that fine language with fine people in an elegant international setting. Other things would follow, and I would be able to take care of my wonderful family and give them all that had been denied them.

15 Though I had never set foot outside my county and Putien was the largest city I had ever been to, my mind had wings, and it had traveled far away. ...

Finally, two days before I was about to leave, his<sup>1</sup> letter came.

20 It was a moment of great happiness for all of us. Mom and Dad, who were hardened by many years of suffering and deprivation, rarely revealed their emotions, but now I saw Dad collapse into a chair, bury his face in his shaking hands, and weep. Mom sat down also and let loose a torrent. Everyone was sniffing.

25 Thirty years of humiliation had suddenly come to an end. Two sons had been accepted into leading universities within the same year. Mom and Dad had never dreamed of such a day. They had thought we were finished. Kicked around in school, I had almost dropped out many times. Jin had been forced to quit school at the age of twelve to become a farmer with nothing to look forward to but blisters on his tender hands, being spit upon by the older farmers, and backbreaking work that had taken away ten prime years of his life. There had been years of no hope, no dreams, only tears, hunger, shame, and darkness. ...

30 After breakfast, I checked my train ticket for the last time. Dad, my sisters, and Jin had borrowed bikes and were coming to Putien to see me off at the bus station. I hugged Mom at the door again and again. She cried, but a smile shone through her tears. She pulled me once more into her arms, then gently pushed me away and nodded. Only at that moment as I looked at her did I realize that she was the most beautiful woman in the whole world and that I was going to miss her when I was thousands of miles away in Beijing. ...

35 Together Jin and I threw my heavy wooden trunk onto the overloaded luggage rack on top of the shaky, dusty bus. Then we squeezed into a crowded seat that was marked for four people but actually had six occupying it. My sisters came up to the bus and hugged me tearfully, then Dad climbed up the steps. He stumbled, and I sprang out of my seat to meet him. He was a big man and gave me a bear hug. I was surrounded once more by the same

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<sup>1</sup>his — Jin, the narrator's brother

40 warmth I used to feel as a small kid hiding under his padded cotton overcoat. He took my face in his hands and bit his lower lip until it turned pale. ...

I love you, Dad. I am your son, forever.

—Da Chen  
excerpted from *Colors of the Mountain*, 1999  
Random House, Inc.

**Passage II**  
**At the San Francisco Airport**

*To J. W. [his daughter], 1954*

This is the terminal: the light  
Gives perfect vision, false and hard;  
The metal glitters, deep and bright.  
Great planes are waiting in the yard—  
5 They are already in the night.

And you are here beside me, small,  
Contained and fragile, and intent  
On things that I but half recall—  
Yet going whither you are bent.  
10 I am the past, and that is all.

But you and I in part are one:  
The frightened brain, the nervous will,  
The knowledge of what must be done,  
The passion to acquire the skill  
15 To face that which you dare not shun.

The rain of matter upon sense  
Destroys me momentarily. The score:  
There comes what will come. The expense  
Is what one thought, and something more—  
20 One's being and intelligence.

This is the terminal, the break.  
Beyond this point, on lines of air,  
You take the way that you must take;  
And I remain in light and stare—  
25 In light, and nothing else, awake.

—Yvor Winters  
from *The Hudson Review*, Spring 1955

## 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 memoir excerpt) — Questions 21–22 refer to Passage I.

- 21 The phrase “my mind had wings, and it had traveled far away” (line 15) suggests the narrator
- (1) may meet his future wife
  - (2) will soon fly to England
  - (3) is fearful of university life
  - (4) imagines being gone already
- 22 The events depicted in lines 21 through 27 indicate that
- (1) life has been difficult
  - (2) the family is respected
  - (3) farming has been profitable
  - (4) the brothers are not close

**Passage II** (the poem) — Questions 23–24 refer to Passage II.

- 23 Lines 6 and 7 imply that the narrator feels that his daughter needs
- (1) discipline
  - (2) employment
  - (3) protection
  - (4) education

- 24 The narrator’s reference to “the past” (line 10) implies that his daughter is
- (1) reviewing historical events
  - (2) following detailed plans
  - (3) renewing old friendships
  - (4) seeking a new path

**Question 25 refers to both passages.**

- 25 Passage I (lines 30 and 31) and Passage II (lines 23 through 25) indicate that the parents view the unfolding situations with
- (1) curiosity
  - (2) acceptance
  - (3) happiness
  - (4) relief

## Short-Response Questions

**Directions** (26–27): Write your response 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 memoir excerpt) and Passage II (the poem) to establish a controlling idea about parting. 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 memoir 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:

“...we pay a price for everything we get or take in this world...”  
— L. M. Montgomery  
*Anne of Green Gables*, 1908

### 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



