

# DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

## LISTENING SECTION

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

Thursday, August 12, 1999—8:30 to 11:30 a.m., only

**BE SURE THAT THE LISTENING SECTION IS ADMINISTERED TO EVERY STUDENT.**

- 1 Before the start of the examination period, say:

**Do not open the examination booklet until you are instructed to do so.**

- 2 Distribute one examination booklet and one essay booklet to each student.

- 3 After each student has received an examination booklet and an essay booklet, say:

**Tear off the answer sheet, which is the last page of the examination booklet, and fill in its heading. Now circle “Session One” and fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet.**

- 4 After the students have filled in all headings on their answer sheets and essay booklets, say:

Look at page 2 of your examination booklet and follow along while I read the **Overview** and **The Situation**.

**Overview:**

For this part of the test, you will listen to a speech giving one writer’s reactions to communications technology, answer some multiple-choice questions, and write a response based on the situation described below. You will hear the speech twice. You may take notes on the next page anytime you wish during the readings.

**The Situation:**

Your school newspaper publishes a regular feature called “Viewpoints,” which presents views on a current topic. Next month’s topic is “Communications Technology.” The editor of the newspaper has asked you to write an article on the impact of communications technology on contemporary life. In preparation for writing your article, listen to a speech given by writer Dale Featherling. Then use relevant information from the speech to write your article.

Now I will read the passage aloud to you for the first time.

- 5 Now read the passage aloud with appropriate expression, but without added comment.

## Listening Passage

My favorite piece of communications technology is disgustingly low-tech. I don't have call-waiting. I passed on Caller ID. I wouldn't own a cellular phone, a mobile phone, or even a cordless phone. I don't have or want a pager, and a car fax is definitely not in my future.

Instead, my delight is the little switch that turns the phone's ringer on or off. Preferably "off."

I'm a writer, and, yes, the telephone is crucial to my livelihood, not to mention my general existence. But, increasingly, I'm finding that I can live without it for blissful hours at a stretch. I'm reminded of someone who said that having one phone is a necessity, having two is a luxury, having three is an indulgence, and having none is paradise.

Each day I turn off the intruder for periods of time that are collectively known by the technical term "sanity." (I keep the answering machine on in a distant room, so I'll still get the message if Ed McMahon phones to tell me I've won the \$10 million!)

This may seem subversive to say in this tapped-in, online, Open-All-Night, beeper-toting, halogen-lighted, pulsating, speeding, great global village of frenetic over-achievers, but I like the sound of silence. And that sound is increasingly important to me.

There are actually times when I don't want to be reached. There are times when I covet solitude and like to listen without interruption to, say, the burbling of the fountain in my backyard or perhaps the purr of my cat. Or maybe I just want to finish my macaroni and cheese in peace.

For an alleged communicator, that may seem odd, and it certainly is out of step with the times. (Not a first for me.) But what columnist William Safire called the "rage for reachability" hasn't reached me yet. I am quite content to write—or occasionally, even think in solitude. Or, for that matter, grab an afternoon nap.

I once stayed in a hotel in Panama City where a sign over the doorway to the bar read "No guns allowed inside." (I found that reassuring, though not necessarily strictly honored.) But if I were to go to Jerusalem, I think I'd be more comforted by a sign, said to be hanging in the dining room of the King David Hotel, asking patrons to turn off their pagers and phones while inside.

In fact, I'm a little irked by this recent, ever-so-urgent need so many people have to be fully accessible. A writer friend of mine and his wife not long ago were in Yosemite and made the long trip up to Glacier Point to watch the sunset on a beautiful summer evening. I've done that, too, and it's not merely spectacular, it's awesome—facing this infinite vista of forest and granite as waterfalls spill to the valley some 3,000 feet below.

So there were my friends, soaking up the grandeur, when, next to them, a guy pulls out his cell phone and begins a long, loud conversation involving closure on some business deal. That's like playing your Game Boy in the Sistine Chapel—but noisier and perhaps more rude.

As a society we're starting to suffer severely from what one writer called "access addiction." But, I'm sorry, no one's so important that he needs to be instantly accessible 24 hours a day unless he's a candidate for a liver transplant or is an irreplaceable cog in civilization's wheel like, say, Dennis Rodman.

In fact, I think a lot of these electronic gadgets are more attention-getting than functional. It almost makes one nostalgic for the big boom boxes. They were probably the '80s symbol of this "look-at-me" mentality. Except boom-box listeners hardly ever ran off the road or rear-ended somebody while engaging in their obsession of the day.

Don't get me wrong. I'm a modern, with-it consumer and conveyer of information ... well, I did last year finally get rid of my 10-year-old, agonizingly slow computer with the five-inch floppies.

Now I'm Mr. Multi Media. I'm online, on the 'Net, and on the ball, sort of. I enjoy an occasional e-mail as much as the next guy. In fact, I'm so forward-thinking, I own a CD drive, though, in truth, I probably give it more of a workout with products by Mozart than by Microsoft.

But while I admit that I couldn't long exist without my fax, I still do use my old-fashioned phone on a wire just as I always have. So if you call me while I'm talking, you'll get—imagine this!—a busy signal. But at least you'll know I'm there and (da-DA) busy ... and the person I'm already talking to won't be shunted to oblivion by call-waiting.

So, call me retrograde. Call me antediluvian. Call me a troglodyte, if you will. Call me, uncool, even. But don't call me when I'm taking a nap or eating my lunch or enjoying a rare moment of repose. The phone will be turned off, and you'll have to just talk to the tape.

But, lest you think I'm immune to progress, I want you to know I did recently retire my rotary phone. I put it in the closet next to my leisure suit and hula hoop. You never know when they're coming back in fashion.

6 After reading the passage aloud once, say:

You may take a few minutes to look over **The Situation** and your notes.  
(Pause) Now I will read the passage aloud a second time.

7 Read the passage a second time.

8 After the second reading, say:

Now turn to page 4 of your examination booklet, read the directions, and answer the multiple-choice questions. Be sure to follow all the directions given in your examination booklet and your essay booklet. You may now begin.