

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH**SESSION TWO****Wednesday, January 25, 2006 — 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., only**

The last page of this booklet is the answer sheet for the multiple-choice questions. Fold the last page along the perforations and, slowly and carefully, tear off the answer sheet. Then fill in the heading of your answer sheet. Now circle “Session Two” and fill in the heading of each page of your essay booklet.

This session of the examination has two parts. For Part A, you are to answer all ten multiple-choice questions and write a response, as directed. For Part B, you are to write a response, as directed.

When you have completed this session of the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the end of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the session and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the session. 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.

Part A

Directions: Read the passages on the following pages (an essay and an excerpt from a novel). Write the number of the answer to each multiple-choice question on your answer sheet. Then write the essay in your essay booklet as described in **Your Task**. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

Your Task:

After you have read the passages and answered the multiple-choice questions, write a unified essay about a childhood place as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about a childhood place. Using evidence from **each** passage, develop your controlling idea and show how the author uses specific literary elements or techniques to convey that idea.

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about a childhood place
- Use specific and relevant evidence from **each** passage to develop your controlling idea
- Show how each author uses specific literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, structure, point of view) or techniques (for example: symbolism, irony, figurative language) to convey the controlling idea
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Use language that communicates ideas effectively
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Passage I

I am a displaced person. I sit here on a swing on the deck of my house in Northern California admiring how the fog has turned the valley below into a lake. For hours nothing will be visible below me except this large expanse of vapor; then slowly, as the sun rises and gains in intensity, the fog will start to curl up and
5 begin its slow rolling drift toward the ocean. People here call it the dragon; and, indeed, a dragon is what it looks like, puffing and coiling, winged, flaring and in places thin and discreet, as it races before the sun, back to its ocean coast den. Mornings I sit here in awe and great peace. The mountains across the valley come and go in the mist; the redwoods and firs, oaks and giant bays appear as
10 clumpish spires, enigmatic shapes of green, like the stone forests one sees in Chinese paintings of Guilin.

It is incredibly beautiful where I live. Not fancy at all, or exclusive. But from where I sit on my deck I can look down on the backs of hawks, and the wide, satiny wings of turkey vultures glistening in the sun become my present
15 connection to ancient Egyptian Africa. The pond is so still below me that the trees reflected in it seem, from this distance, to be painted in its depths.

All this: the beauty, the quiet, the cleanliness, the peace, is what I love. I realize how lucky I am to have found it here. And yet, there are days when my view of the mountains and redwoods makes me nostalgic for small rounded hills
20 easily walked over, and for the look of big leaf poplar and the scent of pine.

I am nostalgic for the land of my birth, the land I left forever when I was thirteen—moving first to the town of Eatonton, and then, at seventeen, to the city of Atlanta.

I cried one day as I talked to a friend about a tree I loved as a child. A tree
25 that had sheltered my father on his long cold walk to school each morning: it was midway between his house and the school and because there was a large cavity in its trunk, a fire could be made inside it. During my childhood, in a tiny, overcrowded house in a tiny dell below it, I looked up at it frequently and felt reassured by its age, its generosity despite its years of brutalization (the fires, I
30 knew, had to hurt), and its tall, old-growth pine nobility. When it was struck by lightning and killed, and then was cut down and made into firewood, I grieved as if it had been a person. Secretly. Because who among the members of my family would not have laughed at my grief?

I have felt entirely fortunate to have had this companion, and even today
35 remember it with gratitude. But why the tears? my friend wanted to know. And it suddenly dawned on me that perhaps it *was* sad that it was a tree and not a member of my family to whom I was so emotionally close.

As a child I assumed I would always have the middle Georgia landscape to live in, as Brer Rabbit, a native also, and relative, had his brier patch. It was not
40 to be. The pain of racist oppression, and its consequence, economic impoverishment, drove me to the four corners of the earth in search of justice and peace, and work that affirmed my whole being. I have come to rest here, weary from travel, on a deck—not a southern front porch—overlooking another world.

I am content; and yet, I wonder what my life would have been like if I had
45 been able to stay home?

I remember early morning fogs in Georgia, not so dramatic as California ones, but magical too because out of the Southern fog of memory tramps my dark father, smiling and large, glowing with rootedness, and talking of hound dogs,
50 biscuits and coons. And my equally rooted mother bustles around the corner of

55 our house preparing to start a wash, the fire under the black wash pot extending a circle of warmth in which I, a grave-eyed child, stand. There is my sister Ruth, beautiful to me and dressed elegantly for high school in gray felt skirt and rhinestone brooch, hurrying up the road to catch the yellow school bus which glows like a large glow worm in the early morning fog....

— Alice Walker
excerpted from “My Heart Has Reopened To You:
The Place Where I Was Born”
Her Blue Body Everything We Know, 1991
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Passage II

...The scenes of the farm were not as fantastic to John as he'd hoped they would be. The barn, its neat white trim picked out by moonlight, still looked obstinately like the barn, and the nocturnal knockings of the horses within were familiar, flat, and uninteresting. He could make of the manure pile no shapes or ghouls. It looked exactly like *the* manure pile that bulked so large in his daily activities. The air, though, clear and now cool, bearing the sweet, alluring scent of clover, invigorated him, and when he rounded the corner of the orchard, the way the pasture lay thick as fur fitted his sense of what this adventure, this first night abroad, ever, should be.

The farm buildings sat on a hill embraced by the wide curve of a large creek. The two barns on one side and the white house and old orchard on the other formed a rectangle bisected by the gravel driveway. Fanning away from the central compound were fenced paddocks, stands of trees, and outbuildings for the storage of machinery. A couple housed straight stalls for horse shows and winter use. John had lived nowhere but the farm, and the nights he had spent away, at horse shows or with relatives, were so few that each remained discrete and pristine in his memory. Visits to cousins, one family in Cleveland and the other in Baltimore, had been arrestingly exotic: lawns instead of fields, afternoons among teeming strangers at giant public swimming pools, late nights of jokes, giggles, and the danger of lighting matches under the bedclothes. Once, with his cousin Fred, he had sneaked out the bedroom window, then tiptoed around the house to spy on the grownups. Most exotic of all, there had been no horses.

An undulating apron of ground spread green-black and silver to the woods below. Mares and foals, feeling safety in the peace of the weather, were scattered over the lower third of the hillside, lying down or resting in the hammocks of their own joints. From where John stood, they all looked black, but when a head turned or a leg moved, bright white floated on the moonlight. This was more like it. The idea of night rambles about the farm had seemed spectacularly deviant to him, as if his daily resentments gestated something criminal, but now, actually out here, with his body clattering inside his clothes and his quietest cough like slamming doors, he felt delightfully orphaned and mute, about to discover something, anything, even though there was nothing he didn't know already about the farm....

He came to the creek, where he had learned to swim (five strokes, walk across the gravel bar, seven more strokes, turn around). Every summer the four children exhausted its possibilities by the last week of school, but now, as John stood on the slippery bank, drawn there by the dappling of light through the trees, he drew in his breath, as if something were about to happen. By day you could see the gravel streambed through two or three feet of clear water. Water spiders skated and dragonflies hovered and minnows skittered in your peripheral vision. By night (off to his left, and then to his right, bullfrogs splashed into the water) the pool was black; he could not see at all, but this betokened everything rather than nothing. He squatted down and stuck his hand in, half expecting to pull out a dripping wad of life itself. The water was cold and fine, delicious to his skin. John laughed aloud and at once forgave the farm for being so familiar. Anything seemed possible at night. In the water at his feet, for example, he sensed not just minnows and frogs, but bass and trout and crawdads and river clams and water snakes (he stepped back). In the woods surrounding there were surely mice, rabbits, and moles, but why not woodchucks and badgers, opossums and raccoons, even deer? Among

50 the leafy limbs and hollows of trees (boxelder, white ash, sugar maple, walnut,
white and red and pin oak, elm and hickory, sycamore and poplar) there must be
orioles and woodpeckers and bluebirds and jays and cardinals as well as sparrows,
wrens, and robins. Owls and bats would be gazing upon him right this very
55 moment. He paused, listening, and shivered blissfully. For an instant he could see
it all, the densely inhabited earth and the thick stars, ready and waiting to be
catalogued....

— Jane Smiley
excerpted from *Barn Blind*, 1980
Harper & Row

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–10): Select the best suggested answer to each question and write its number in the space provided on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about the ideas and information you might want to use in your essay. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

Passage I (the essay) — Questions 1–5 refer to Passage I.

- 1 What sensation triggers the author’s memory of a childhood place?
 - (1) looking at a Chinese painting of forests
 - (2) hearing sounds from the valley below
 - (3) smelling the ocean on the breeze
 - (4) viewing the landscape near her present home

- 2 The author describes the tree near her childhood home as a
 - (1) mischievous playmate
 - (2) casual acquaintance
 - (3) kind protector
 - (4) stern teacher

- 3 When Alice Walker compares herself to Brer Rabbit, hero of a southern folktale, she is using the literary device known as
 - (1) allusion
 - (2) euphemism
 - (3) foreshadowing
 - (4) onomatopoeia

- 4 The author states that she left middle Georgia because of
 - (1) religious intolerance
 - (2) racial prejudice
 - (3) gender bias
 - (4) physical abuse

- 5 An image which connects the beginning and the end of the essay is that of the
 - (1) sun
 - (2) lake
 - (3) fog
 - (4) road

Passage II (the excerpt from a novel) — Questions 6–10 refer to Passage II.

- 6 At first John finds the scene of the farm at night
 - (1) disappointing
 - (2) exciting
 - (3) attractive
 - (4) frightening

- 7 The farm in the passage primarily raises
 - (1) cows
 - (2) horses
 - (3) vegetables
 - (4) chickens

- 8 The author introduces “Visits to cousins” (line 17) in order to
 - (1) introduce a symbol
 - (2) provide a motive
 - (3) complicate the plot
 - (4) create a contrast

- 9 The author uses a simile in lines 29 through 31 to emphasize the night’s
 - (1) silence
 - (2) coldness
 - (3) darkness
 - (4) smells

- 10 At the end of the passage, John imagines
 - (1) city trips
 - (2) other farms
 - (3) many creatures
 - (4) his cousins

After you have finished these questions, turn to page 2. Review **Your Task** and the **Guidelines**. Use scrap paper to plan your response. Then write your response to Part A, beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet. After you finish your response for Part A, go on to page 8 of your examination booklet and complete Part B.

Part B

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 in Part B, beginning on page 7 of the essay booklet.

Critical Lens:

“All that is literature seeks to communicate power..”
—Thomas De Quincey
The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, 1897

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

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SESSION TWO**

Wednesday, January 25, 2006 — 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., only

ANSWER SHEET

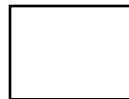
Student Sex: Male Female

School Grade Teacher

Write your answers to the multiple-choice questions for Part A on this answer sheet.

Part A

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 7 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 8 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 9 _____ |
| 5 _____ | 10 _____ |



**HAND IN THIS ANSWER SHEET WITH YOUR ESSAY BOOKLET,
SCRAP PAPER, AND EXAMINATION BOOKLET.**

Your essay responses for Part A and Part B should be written in the essay booklet.

I do hereby affirm, at the close of this examination, that I had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that I have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination.

_____ Signature

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Tear Here

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