

# DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

## LISTENING SECTION

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

Thursday, June 15, 2006—9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.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 an account by Christopher Reeve, answer some multiple-choice questions, and write a response based on the situation described below. You will hear the account twice. You may take notes on the next page anytime you wish during the readings.

**The Situation:**

Your school is celebrating Diversity Day. As a member of the publicity committee, you have been asked to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper promoting the accomplishments of individuals with disabilities. In preparation for writing your letter, listen to an account by actor and director Christopher Reeve. Then use relevant information from the account to write your letter.

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

- 5 Now read the passage aloud, including the attribution at the end. Read with appropriate expression, but without added comment.

## Listening Passage

...I consider myself extremely fortunate because my schedule is so varied. Many patients have no choice but to become stuck in a routine, which of course makes it hard for them to be optimistic about the future. But I'm able to travel, to visit scientists in their laboratories and hear about progress in research months before the results are published in scientific journals. Thanks to the generosity of groups that hire me for speaking engagements, I've appeared all over the country, sharing my experiences and creating more awareness about the disabled. Often I speak at rehab centers and talk about what I've learned with other spinal cord patients. I had the opportunity to direct a film, which gave me great creative satisfaction and kept me from thinking so much about myself.

I spend much of my time planning events to raise money for the Christopher Reeve Foundation. In our first year of operation we raised more than \$750,000; 70 percent of it went to the APA [American Paralysis Association] and the rest to groups dedicated to quality of life issues of the disabled. I was also involved in the creation of a paid commercial called *Circle of Friends* to benefit the APA. I approved the script and called friends like Paul Newman, Mel Gibson, and Meryl Streep as well as a number of scientists to ask for their participation....

People often ask me what it's like to have sustained a spinal cord injury and be confined to a wheelchair. Apart from all the medical complications, I would say the worst part of it is leaving the physical world—having had to make the transition from participant to observer long before I would have expected. I think most of us are prepared to give up cherished physical activities gradually as we age. I certainly wouldn't be competing in combined training events in my sixties or skiing nearly as fast as I used to. If I went sailing in my later years I wouldn't go single-handed. Stronger arms and more agile bodies would be needed to raise and trim the sails or steer in a heavy sea....

When the first Superman movie came out, I gave dozens of interviews to promote it. The most frequently asked question was: "What is a hero?" I remember how easily I'd talk about it, the glib response I repeated so many times. My answer was that a hero is someone who commits a courageous action without considering the consequences. A soldier who crawls out of a foxhole to drag an injured buddy back to safety, the prisoners of war who never stop trying to escape even though they know they may be executed if they're caught. And I also meant individuals who are slightly larger than life: Houdini and Lindbergh of course, John Wayne and JFK, and even sports figures who have taken on mythical proportions, such as Babe Ruth or Joe DiMaggio.

Now my definition is completely different. I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles. The fifteen-year-old boy down the hall at Kessler [Rehabilitation Hospital] who had landed on his head while wrestling with his brother, leaving him paralyzed and barely able to swallow or speak. Travis Roy, paralyzed in the first eleven seconds of a hockey game in his freshman year at college. Henry Steifel, paralyzed from the chest down in a car accident at seventeen, completing his education and working on Wall Street at age thirty-two, but having missed so much of what life has to offer. These are real heroes, and so are the families and friends who have stood by them.

At UVA [The University of Virginia Health Sciences Center] and at Kessler, I always kept the picture of the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl in front of me. I would look at the hundreds of steps leading up to the clouds and imagine myself climbing slowly but surely to the top. That desire sustained me in the early days after my injury, but during the next couple of years I had to learn to face the reality: you manage to climb one or two steps, but then something happens and you fall back three. The worst of it is the unpredictability. Several times I've made a commitment to appear at a function or give a speech, but the night

before, or even that morning, a skin tear, or dysreflexia, or a lung infection suddenly developed and I had to go to the hospital instead.

Climbing up the steps, I've appeared at the Oscars, spoken at the Democratic Convention, directed a film, written this book, worked on political issues, and traveled more extensively than most high-level quadriplegics. But, falling backwards, I've been hospitalized eleven times for dysreflexia, pneumonia, a collapsed lung, a broken arm, two blood clots, a possible hip fracture, and the infection in my left ankle that nearly resulted in the partial amputation of my leg...

The sensory deprivation hurts the most: I haven't been able to give [my son] Will a hug since he was two years old, and now he's five and a half. This is the reason [my wife] Dana and I decided not to have another child; it would be too painful not to be able to hold and embrace this little creature the way I did with the others. The physical world is still very meaningful to me; I have not been able to detach myself from it and live entirely in my mind. While I believe it's true that we are not our bodies, that our bodies are like houses we live in while we're here on earth, that concept is more of an intellectual construct than a philosophy I can live by on a daily basis. I'm jealous when someone talks about a recent skiing vacation, when friends embrace each other, or even when Will plays hockey in the driveway with someone else.

If someone were to ask me what is the most difficult lesson I've learned from all this, I'm very clear about it: I know I have to give when sometimes I really want to take. I've realized instinctively that it's part of my job as a father now not to cause Will to worry about me. If I were to give in to self-pity or express my anger in front of him, it would place an unfair burden on this carefree five-year-old. If I were to turn inward and spend my time mourning the past, I couldn't be as close to [my children] Matthew and Alexandra, two teenagers who naturally need to turn to me for advice. And what kind of life would it be for Dana if I let myself go and became just a depressed hulk in a wheelchair? All of this takes effort on my part, because it's still very difficult to accept the turn my life has taken, simply because of one unlucky moment....

excerpted from *Still Me*, 1998  
Random House

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.

