

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION TWO

Friday, June 15, 2007 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 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 (a fable and an excerpt from an autobiography). 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 lessons learned as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about lessons learned. 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 lessons learned
- 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

A man ambushed a stone. Caught it. Made it a prisoner. Put it in a dark room and stood guard over it for the rest of his life.

His mother asked why.

He said, because it's held captive, because it is the captured.

5 Look, the stone is asleep, she said, it does not know whether it's in a garden or not. Eternity and the stone are mother and daughter; it is you who are getting old. The stone is only sleeping.

But I caught it, mother, it is mine by conquest, he said.

10 A stone is nobody's, not even its own. It is you who are conquered; you are minding the prisoner, which is yourself, because you are afraid to go out, she said.

Yes, yes, I am afraid, because you have never loved me, he said.

Which is true, because you have always been to me as the stone is to you, she said.

— Russell Edson
from *A Stone is Nobody's*, 1961
Thing Press

Passage II

...Once, when I was the only child at home, my mother went to Danang¹ to visit Uncle Nhu, and my father had to take care of me. I woke up from my nap in the empty house and cried for my mother. My father came in from the yard and reassured me, but I was still cranky and continued crying. Finally, he gave me a rice cookie to shut me up. Needless to say, this was a tactic my mother never used.

The next afternoon I woke up and although I was not feeling cranky, I thought a rice cookie might be nice. I cried a fake cry and my father came running in.

“What’s this?” he asked, making a worried face. “Little Bay Ly doesn’t want a cookie?”

I was confused again.

“Look under your pillow,” he said with a smile.

I twisted around and saw that, while I was sleeping, he had placed a rice cookie under my pillow. We both laughed and he picked me up like a sack of rice and carried me outside while I gobbled the cookie.

In the yard, he plunked me down under a tree and told me some stories. After that, he got some scraps of wood and showed me how to make things: a doorstep for my mother and a toy duck for me. This was unheard of—a father doing these things with a child that was not a son! Where my mother would instruct me on cooking and cleaning and tell stories about brides, my father showed me the mystery of hammers and explained the customs of our people.

His knowledge of the Vietnamese went back to the Chinese Wars in ancient times. I learned how one of my distant ancestors, a woman named Phung Thi Chinh, led Vietnamese fighters against the Han². In one battle, even though she was pregnant and surrounded by Chinese, she delivered the baby, tied it to her back, and cut her way to safety wielding a sword in each hand. I was amazed at this warrior’s bravery and impressed that I was her descendant. Even more, I was amazed and impressed by my father’s pride in her accomplishments (she was, after all, a humble female) and his belief that I was worthy of her example. “*Con phai theo got chan co ta*” (Follow in her footsteps), he said. Only later would I learn what he truly meant.

Never again did I cry after my nap. Phung Thi women were too strong for that. Besides, I was my father’s daughter and we had many things to do together.

On the eve of my mother’s return, my father cooked a feast of roast duck. When we sat down to eat it, I felt guilty and my feelings showed on my face. He asked why I acted so sad.

“You’ve killed one of mother’s ducks,” I said. “One of the fat kind she sells at the market. She says the money buys gold which she saves for her daughters’ weddings. Without gold for a dowry—*con o gia*—I will be an old maid!”

My father looked suitably concerned, then brightened and said, “Well, Bay Ly, if you can’t get married, you will just have to live at home forever with me!”

I clapped my hands at the happy prospect.

My father cut into the rich, juicy bird and said, “Even so, we won’t tell your mother about the duck, okay?”

I giggled and swore myself to secrecy.

¹Danang — seaport in central Vietnam

²Han — Chinese Dynasty

The next day, I took some water out to him in the fields. My mother was due home any time and I used every opportunity to step outside and watch for her. My father stopped working, drank gratefully, then took my hand and led me to the top of a nearby hill. It had a good view of the village and the land beyond it, almost to the ocean. I thought he was going to show me my mother coming back, but he had something else in mind.

He said, “Bay Ly, you see all this here? This is the Vietnam we have been talking about. You understand that a country is more than a lot of dirt, rivers, and forests, don’t you?”

I said, “Yes, I understand.” After all, we had learned in school that one’s country is as sacred as a father’s grave.

“Good. You know, some of these lands are battlefields where your brothers and cousins are fighting. They may never come back. Even your sisters have all left home in search of a better life. You are the only one left in my house. If the enemy comes back, you must be both a daughter and a son. I told you how the Chinese used to rule our land. People in this village had to risk their lives diving in the ocean just to find pearls for the Chinese emperor’s gown. They had to risk tigers and snakes in the jungle just to find herbs for his table. Their payment for this hardship was a bowl of rice and another day of life. That is why Le Loi, Gia Long, the Trung Sisters, and Phung Thi Chinh fought so hard to expel the Chinese. When the French came, it was the same old story. Your mother and I were taken to Danang to build a runway for their airplanes. We labored from sunup to sundown and well after dark. If we stopped to rest or have a smoke, a Moroccan would come up and whip our behinds. Our reward was a bowl of rice and another day of life. Freedom is never a gift, Bay Ly. It must be won and won again. Do you understand?”

I said that I did.

“Good.” He moved his finger from the patchwork of brown dikes, silver water, and rippling stalks to our house at the edge of the village. “This land here belongs to me. Do you know how I got it?”

I thought a moment, trying to remember my mother’s stories, then said honestly, “I can’t remember.”

He squeezed me lovingly. “I got it from your mother.”

“What? That can’t be true!” I said. Everyone in the family knew my mother was poor and my father’s family was wealthy. Her parents were dead and she had to work like a slave for her mother-in-law to prove herself worthy. Such women don’t have land to give away!

“It’s true.” My father’s smile widened. “When I was a young man, my parents needed someone to look after their lands. They had to be very careful about who they chose as wives for their three sons. In the village, your mother had a reputation as the hardest worker of all. She raised herself and her brothers without parents. At the same time, I noticed a beautiful woman working in the fields. When my mother said she was going to talk to the matchmaker about this hard-working village girl she’d heard about, my heart sank. I was too attracted to this mysterious tall woman I had seen in the rice paddies. You can imagine my surprise when I found out the girl my mother heard about and the woman I admired were the same.

“Well, we were married and my mother tested your mother severely. She not only had to cook and clean and know everything about children, but she had to be able to manage several farms and know when and how to take the extra produce to the market. Of course, she was testing her other daughters-in-law as well.

100 When my parents died, they divided their several farms among their sons, but you know what? They gave your mother and me the biggest share because they knew we would take care of it best. That's why I say the land came from her, because it did."

I suddenly missed my mother very much and looked down the road to the south, hoping to see her. My father noticed my sad expression.

"Hey." He poked me in the ribs. "Are you getting hungry for lunch?"...

— Le Ly Hayslip with Jay Wurts
excerpted from *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*, 1989
Doubleday

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 fable) — Questions 1–4 refer to Passage I.

1 According to the mother, when one takes a prisoner, one becomes

- (1) cruel
- (2) captive
- (3) safe
- (4) heroic

2 Line 8 reveals that the adult son thinks of himself as a

- (1) victor
- (2) destroyer
- (3) fool
- (4) fugitive

3 In lines 11 through 13 the mother and the adult son are disagreeing over

- (1) jealousy
- (2) debt
- (3) punishment
- (4) control

4 The fable is primarily developed through the use of

- (1) dialogue
- (2) allusion
- (3) suspense
- (4) description

Passage II (the autobiographical excerpt) — Questions 5–10 refer to Passage II.

5 The incidents involving the rice cookies suggest the father's

- (1) thriftiness
- (2) industry
- (3) thoughtfulness
- (4) daring

6 The father's interactions with Bay Ly reveal his disregard for

- (1) technological farming
- (2) historical fiction
- (3) international relations
- (4) gender roles

7 Which words suggest that the story of Phung Thi Chinh influenced the narrator?

- (1) "I was her descendant" (line 28)
- (2) "Never again did I cry after my nap" (line 33)
- (3) "I was my father's daughter" (line 34)
- (4) "I took some water out to him" (line 47)

8 The lesson taught in school "that one's country is as sacred as a father's grave" (lines 56 and 57) relates to

- (1) theology
- (2) economics
- (3) literature
- (4) patriotism

9 In calling "a bowl of rice and another day of life" (lines 65 and 70 and 71) both payment and reward, the father is emphasizing the

- (1) continuing struggle of the people
- (2) generous benefits of governments
- (3) limited capacity of the land
- (4) appropriate gratitude of farmers

10 What characteristic was most important in the arranged marriage of Bay Ly's parents?

- (1) their personal happiness
- (2) their political connections
- (3) her hard work
- (4) his social status

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:

“For what does it mean to be a hero? It requires you to be prepared to deal with forces larger than yourself.”

—Norman Mailer
The Spooky Art, 2003

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**

Friday, June 15, 2007 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 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

Tear Here