

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

## ENGLISH

## SESSION TWO

**Thursday, June 19, 2008 — 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 poem 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 attitudes toward nature as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from *both* passages to establish a controlling idea about attitudes toward nature. 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 attitudes toward nature
- 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

### The Trees are Gone

Rebecca Avenue has lost its trees:  
the willow that would brush against my window,  
and the spruce that cooled our porch out back,  
the ginko I would rake in mid-October,  
5 with its matted leaves like Oriental fans.  
Even the beech has been cut down,  
that iron pillar of my mother's garden,  
with its trunk so smooth against one's cheek.

10 The dirt I dug in has been spread  
with blacktop: tar and oil. They've rolled it  
blithely over sidewalk slate  
where cracks once splintered into island tufts.  
Even leafy hills beyond the town  
have been developed, as they like to say:  
15 those tinsel woods where I would rinse myself  
in drizzle, in the pinwheel fall.

You can stand all day here without knowing  
that it once knew trees: green over green  
but gamely turning violet at dusk,  
20 then black to blue-vermillion in the dawn.  
It's sentimental, but I miss those trees.  
I'd like to slip back through the decades  
into deep, lush days and lose myself again  
in leaves like hands, wet thrash of leaves.

—Jay Parini  
from *The Art of Subtraction*, 2005  
George Braziller, Inc.

## Passage II

The Serengetti Plains spread from Lake Nyaraza, in Tanganyika, northward beyond the lower boundaries of Kenya Colony. They are the great sanctuary of the Masai People and they harbour more wild game than any similar territory in all of East Africa. In the season of drought they are as dry and tawny<sup>1</sup> as the coats of the lion that prowl them, and during the rains they provide the benison<sup>2</sup> of soft grass to all the animals in a child's picture book.

5

They are endless and they are empty, but they are as warm with life as the waters of a tropic sea. They are webbed with the paths of eland<sup>3</sup> and wildebeest and Thompson's gazelle and their hollows and valleys are trampled by thousands of zebra. I have seen a herd of buffalo invade the pastures under the occasional thorn tree groves and, now and then, the whimsically fashioned figure of a plodding rhino has moved along the horizon like a grey boulder come to life and adventure bound. There are no roads. There are no villages, no towns, no telegraph. There is nothing, as far as you can see, or walk, or ride, except grass and rocks and a few trees and the animals that live there....

10

15

From the open cockpit I could see straight ahead, or peer backward and down, past the silver wings. The Serengetti lay beneath me like a bowl whose edges were the ends of the earth. It was a bowl full of hot vapours that rose upward in visible waves and exerted physical pressure against the Avian, lifting her, as heat from a smouldering fire lifts a flake of ash....

20

About noon I reached Rothschild's Camp<sup>4</sup> and circled over it. But there was no activity, no life — not even the compact, slow-moving silhouette of a lion. There was nothing but the distinguishing formation of high, grey rocks piled against each other, jutting from the earth like the weather-worn ruins of a desert cathedral....

25

But, if there was no smoke to mark the site of a hearthstone or a camp, there were at least other signs of life, not human, but scarcely less welcome for that.

In a hundred places, as far as I could see and in all directions, little puffs of dust sprang suddenly into being, rolled across the plain and disappeared again. From the air they were like so many jinni<sup>5</sup>, each bursting from the confines of his fabulous and bewitched jar to rush off with the wind on the urgent accomplishment of a long-plotted evil deed, or maybe a good one.

30

But when the dust puffs cleared, I could see that small bands of animals were running this way and that, looking everywhere but upward, trying to escape the sound of the plane.

35

Between Magadi and Narok I watched a yellow cloud take shape beneath me and just ahead. The cloud clung close to the earth and grew as I approached it into a swaying billow that blunted the sunlight and obscured the grass and mimosa trees in its path.

40

Out of its farthest edge the forerunners of a huge herd of impala, wildebeest, and zebra plunged in flight before the shadow of my wings. I circled, throttled down and lost height until my propeller cut into the fringe of the dust, and particles of it burned in my nostrils.

<sup>1</sup>tawny — a warm sandy color

<sup>2</sup>benison — a blessing

<sup>3</sup>eland — an African antelope

<sup>4</sup>Rothschild's Camp — a camping site for hunters

<sup>5</sup>jinni — genie

45 As the herd moved it became a carpet of rust-brown and grey and dull red. It  
was not like a herd of cattle or of sheep, because it was wild, and it carried with it  
the stamp of wilderness and the freedom of a land still more a possession of  
Nature than of men. To see ten thousand animals untamed and not branded with  
the symbols of human commerce is like scaling an unconquered mountain for the  
50 first time, or like finding a forest without roads or footpaths, or the blemish of an  
axe. You know then what you had always been told — that the world once lived  
and grew without adding machines and newsprint and brick-walled streets and  
the tyranny of clocks.

55 In the forefront of the herd I could see impala leaping as they ran, and  
wildebeest flaunting their brittle horns, or flinging themselves on the ground with  
the abandon of mad dervishes. I do not know why they do this, but whether it is  
a faulty sense of balance or merely a shameless recourse to the melodramatic, the  
wildebeest, if frightened by a plane, will always react in the manner of the circus  
clown in his frantic attempts to escape the trained spotted dog around and around  
the sawdust arena....

—Beryl Markham  
excerpted from *West with the Night*, 1942  
The Riverside Press

## 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 poem) — Questions 1–5 refer to Passage I.

- 1 The purpose of the poem's first line is to introduce
  - (1) an allegory
  - (2) a setting
  - (3) an allusion
  - (4) a symbol
- 2 In line 5, the leaf shape is described through the use of
  - (1) a metaphor
  - (2) apostrophe
  - (3) a simile
  - (4) onomatopoeia
- 3 The beginning of stanza two suggests that trees have been replaced by
  - (1) lawns
  - (2) flowers
  - (3) water
  - (4) pavement
- 4 The reference to "They've" in line 10 most probably refers to
  - (1) construction workers
  - (2) neighborhood children
  - (3) street cleaners
  - (4) town officials
- 5 The description in line 12 suggests an image of
  - (1) broken glass
  - (2) children's games
  - (3) growing grass
  - (4) lonely parks

**Passage II** (the autobiographical excerpt) — Questions 6–10 refer to Passage II.

- 6 In the first paragraph, the narrator reveals that the Serengeti Plains are dry, but also
  - (1) settled
  - (2) abundant
  - (3) solid
  - (4) windy
- 7 The phrase "all the animals in a child's picture book" (line 6) emphasizes that these African animals are
  - (1) familiar
  - (2) young
  - (3) domesticated
  - (4) miniature
- 8 As used in the passage, "the Avian" (line 19) refers to the narrator's location
  - (1) in a balloon
  - (2) on a hilltop
  - (3) in a plane
  - (4) on a roof
- 9 The appearance of "little puffs of dust" (lines 28 and 29) is the narrator's first glimpse of
  - (1) fleeing animals
  - (2) camping hunters
  - (3) nesting birds
  - (4) traveling nomads
- 10 According to the narrator, the charging animal that looks the most comical is the
  - (1) eland
  - (2) zebra
  - (3) impala
  - (4) wildebeest

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 7 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:

“...it is the human lot to try and fail...”

—David Mamet

“Attention Must Be Paid”

*The New York Times*, February 13, 2005

### 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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**ANSWER SHEET**

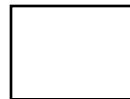
Student ..... Sex:  Male  Female

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.

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Signature

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