

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION TWO

Thursday, June 18, 2009 — 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 (an excerpt from a novel and a poem). 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 childhood memories as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about childhood memories. 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 childhood memories
- 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

At first I used to dream of Mai Ling every night. I know that I dreamed about her and that it was her, it was Mai Ling, with her almond eyes in her pale face, her plait¹ hanging before her as she bent over me, and her smile. Above all it was her smile that I used to see, and her bending over me and talking to me. I would try to answer her; I would search for the right words, flounder about in the dream and yearn to speak but, try as I might, no sound would come from my throat. It was as though something prevented me from speaking. Then she would disappear, her eyes would disappear little by little, and so too would the half-loosened plait hanging before her as she leant forwards, until in the end only her smile remained, just that, a smile without those almond eyes and that pale face bent over me. Then that too dissolved into the darkness. And I would wake up.

It took me a while to realise where I was. My eyes searched instinctively for the brazier² in the centre of the yurt,³ where the dried dung⁴ had become a dark powder. During the winter nights, when the cold threatened our warmth, Mai Ling would get up from time to time to add more dung; as she did so the brazier would emit a startling flash of light, the wooden lattice of the yurt seemed to come alive and the crimson of the carpets ignited for an instant, then fell swiftly into shadow again as the flame died down into the bottom of the pan. Then the air filled with that sharp smell I knew well, a mixture of burnt hay and earth, and with the thin smoke which caught in the throats of guests who weren't used to living as we did and made them cough. I looked for the gleam of the little oil lamp in front of the image of the Padma Sambhava,⁵ a glimmer which barely lit the lotus petals of the pedestal, the crossed legs and the fingers brushing the ground, while the torso, arms and ears down to the shoulders could dimly be made out through the darkness, as could the gilt which covered them. The lacquered cabinet in which the women kept their jewels and the few documents we had was itself red and gold, while the rugs draped on the rush walls and the fringed door were a glowing crimson, so that even the shadow inside the yurt seemed to have absorbed the reddish hues. And in the morning, when the first rays settled on the ceremonial saddle hanging on the wall, reflecting off its trim, its brass stirrups and its silk, the whole yurt seemed to fill with gold. In the evenings, lying in the place reserved for the youngest children, my eyes followed the winding of the carpets, the curve of deer horns and the course of a stream woven in a brighter thread. All around, everybody slept on their felt mattresses in their assigned place, the men on the right, on the left my cousins Haysce, Yesügen and Yesü, and my aunt Qada'an with her youngest son, Temüjin, who had not yet been weaned. In the winter, we put a small pen near the entrance of the yurt: the new-born animals slept with us, safe from the cold and the wolves. From time to time I would reach out an arm, slip it between the bars of the pen and touch the soft, silken coat of a new-born lamb. I would stroke the animal's warm body, feel it rise and fall, uncertain whether or not to trust the hand which

¹plait — braid

²brazier — a pan for holding burning fuel/coals

³yurt — a circular domed tent used by Mongol nomads

⁴dung — dried manure used for fuel

⁵Padma Sambhava — a religious icon

45 fondled it. I was reassured by the breathing of all those bodies. Even though
outside the wind blew and the dogs howled restlessly, the shadowy yurt was full
of familiar presences and I soon closed my eyes....

— Silvia Di Natale
excerpted from *Kuraj*, 2000
Bloomsbury Publishing

Passage II

Ironing Their Clothes

With a hot glide up, then down, his shirts,
I ironed out my father's back, cramped
and worried with work. I stroked the yoke,
and breast pocket, collar and cuffs,
5 until the rumpled heap relaxed into the shape
of my father's broad chest, the shoulders shrugged off
the world, the collapsed arms spread for a hug.
And if there'd been a face above the buttondown neck,
I would have pressed the forehead out, I would
10 have made a boy again out of that tired man!

If I clung to her skirt as she sorted the wash
or put out a line, my mother frowned,
a crease down each side of her mouth.
This is no time for love! But here
15 I could linger over her wrinkled bedjacket,
kiss at the damp puckers of her wrists
with the hot tip. Here I caressed complications
of darts, scallops, ties, pleats which made
her outfits test of the patience of my passion.
20 Here I could lay my dreaming iron on her lap

The smell of baked cotton rose from the board
and blew with a breeze out the window
to a family wardrobe drying on the clothesline,
all needing a touch of my iron. Here I could tickle
25 the underarms of my big sister's petticoat
or secretly pat the backside of her pyjamas.
For she too would have warned me not to muss
her fresh blouses, starched jumpers, and smocks,
All that my careful hand had ironed out,
30 forced to express my excess love on cloth.

— Julia Alvarez
from *The Renewal of The Vision:
Voices of Latin American
Women Poets 1940–80, 1987*
Spectacular Diseases

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 novel excerpt) — Questions 1–7 refer to Passage I.

- 1 According to the narrator, Mai Ling’s responsibility was to
 - (1) keep the yurt warm
 - (2) attend to guests’ needs
 - (3) teach the children manners
 - (4) protect the family’s valuables
- 2 The narrator most probably views Mai Ling as a
 - (1) teacher
 - (2) tribal leader
 - (3) playmate
 - (4) mother figure
- 3 The narrator’s memories of the yurt are strengthened through
 - (1) youthful games
 - (2) sensory impressions
 - (3) old pictures
 - (4) family stories
- 4 According to the text, one feature of the narrator’s culture was
 - (1) land ownership
 - (2) vegetarian foods
 - (3) extended families
 - (4) sign language
- 5 The “new-born lamb” (line 41) and the narrator are similar in that both need
 - (1) solitude
 - (2) grooming
 - (3) exercise
 - (4) protection
- 6 The narrator viewed the atmosphere in the yurt as
 - (1) educational
 - (2) unhealthy
 - (3) comforting
 - (4) crowded

- 7 The narrator’s story is told primarily through
 - (1) contrast
 - (2) flashback
 - (3) simile
 - (4) analogy

Passage II (the poem) — Questions 8–10 refer to Passage II.

- 8 Lines 8 through 10 suggest that the narrator
 - (1) sympathizes with the father
 - (2) respects the father’s work
 - (3) resents ironing the father’s shirts
 - (4) believes the father is sick
- 9 The ironing of the “wrinkled bedjacket” (line 15) represents the narrator’s
 - (1) desire to grow up
 - (2) love for the mother
 - (3) search for friendship
 - (4) frustration with the task
- 10 The narrator recalls that her big sister was concerned about the
 - (1) smells of baking
 - (2) amount of laundry
 - (3) obedience of her siblings
 - (4) looks of her clothes

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:

“...the strongest man upon earth is he who stands most alone.”

—Henrik Ibsen
“An Enemy of the People”
from *Ghosts: An Enemy of the People: The Wild Duck*, 1890

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**

Thursday, June 18, 2009 — 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