

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

LISTENING SECTION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

Tuesday, January 26, 2010 — 1:15 to 4:15 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 a speech about the benefits of public parks, answer some multiple-choice questions, and write a response based on the situation described below. You will hear the speech twice. You may take notes on the next page anytime you wish during the readings.

The Situation: Your local officials are planning to develop a parcel of land in your community. You have decided to attend a planning board meeting to present a proposal requesting that a public park be included in the plans. In preparation for your proposal, listen to a speech by Will Rogers, president of the Trust for Public Land, about public parks. Then use relevant information from the speech to prepare your proposal.

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

In the middle of the 19th century parks visionaries like Frederick Law Olmsted looked at the rapidly developing American cities and understood that parks were going to be essential. New York's Central Park isn't just an example of brilliant park design and a critical commitment by New York's civic leadership in the late nineteenth century—it was a response to some very basic human needs that urban life cannot otherwise satisfy. Those parks creators knew a basic truth—you simply can't have a great city—or even a livable city—without a great parks system. ...

When it comes to parks benefits I have become convinced that what we're really talking about is **health**—in the fullest sense of the word—the physical and mental health of the individual, community health, environmental health and economic health.

The Center for Disease Control and public health officials around the country have made the explicit connection between how we develop our cities and towns and our physical health. When it comes to the growing national epidemics of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and hypertension, exercise is an acknowledged prevention. Numerous studies demonstrate that people who live near parks, trails and recreation facilities are healthier because they use them.

Parks benefit our mental health as well. I subscribe to the theory called “Biophilia” put forward by biologist E.O. Wilson. Wilson and others believe that we have a genetically programmed need to interact with nature and other species. Perhaps that helps explain why hospital stays are shorter when patients recover with a view of the park rather than a parking lot—even photographs of nature appear to have a benefit. Perhaps that's why employee absenteeism and turnover are lower in so-called healthy office buildings where there is more fresh air and natural light. ...

When it comes to community health, parks do something for community that back yards never will: They don't just connect us with nature and the chance to exercise our bodies and our imaginations; they connect us with each other. When we come together in our public parks and plazas we feel the diversity and the vitality of the urban environment and they help us celebrate community—and in a very real sense, democracy.

Parks, open space and urban nature contribute to environmental health beyond providing habitat for plants and critters. Trees give us shade and save energy as well as filtering our air and capturing carbon which helps mitigate climate change. Protected watersheds along rivers like the Chattahoochee help protect the quality of our drinking water from non-point source pollution—the most significant threat to our water supplies. ...

Those are benefits we all want for our cities and towns—but what do we need to do to have a park system that delivers them? For starters, let's be clear about the difference between a great park and a great park system! Central Park is truly a great park—but as New York City grew, it didn't attend to its system of parks—and there are many neighborhoods with no parks and no access to nature or recreation. ...

Let me focus again on Equitable Access and the importance of the comprehensive

system that serves everyone. I believe that a city is only as healthy as its most underserved neighborhood. As a matter of basic equity, every child deserves the opportunity to grow up with wonderful public parks and gardens where he or she can connect with nature and with other children.

Look at Chicago with its renown park system: Lincoln Park is terrific, so is Grant Park and the wonderful new Millennium Park with its Frank Geary band shell and high profile public art. But move west away from the park-rich Lake Michigan lakefront and you will find neighborhoods desperate for parks. You can find even greater deficits in the newer, more spread out cities of the Sunbelt. And in Los Angeles fully two-thirds of all kids under the age of 14 literally have no place to play—no nearby park, garden or recreation area.

We are in danger of raising a generation of children without a connection with nature! One author calls it Nature Deficit Disorder and another, Robert Michael Pyle, talks about the importance of connection and close to home natural places: "...the places of initiation, where the borders between ourselves and other creatures break down, where the earth gets under our nails and a sense of place gets under our skin."

Pyle also reminds that without this connection we lose our sense of responsibility for the natural world: "People who care conserve. People who don't know, don't care. What's the extinction of the condor to a child who has never known a wren?" ...

—excerpted and adapted from "The Benefits of a
World-Class Park System,"
www.tpl.org, March 27, 2006

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.

