

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

IN

**ENGLISH****SESSION TWO****Thursday, August 19, 2010 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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 essay 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 respect as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about respect. 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 respect
- 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

It is early May, and the temperature is in the seventies. Our yellow school bus pulls into the Ortley Beach parking lot, empty except for one car with a Pennsylvania license plate and a shark-like surfboard on the roof. The bus door shutters open, and we file out: myself, my class of twenty-seven excited fourth-graders, and school environmentalist Walt Doherty. With our lunches and jackets on the seats, we set off to explore the natural wonders of the Jersey shoreline, carrying with us nothing but ourselves.

A few surprised early sunbathers look up from their novels as we climb onto the wooden boardwalk and descend the few steps to the beach. Our first sensation is an abstract one: Freedom. The visual constriction of highways, buildings, and traffic is abruptly lifted. There is a rush of light and a sense of space. The hard angles of buildings and houses are replaced by smooth curves: dunes, the tide line, waves, the rim of the horizon, the sweep of the gulls. The light on the sea dazzles the eyes, and the waves glitter with a thousand small suns.

By the boardwalk, along the dunes, strands of tall grass have taken root in this loose world of sand. Here is our first stop. Gathering around a dune, Walt asks what life we see. A small white butterfly flutters from the grass.

“Insect!” cries one boy.

“Yes. Any other kind?”

Raising her hand, one girl shyly says, “Plant life.”

“Good!” Walt says. “That beach grass spreads out its roots underneath the sand, and holds the dune in place.”

Looking at the dune and a yellow wildflower peering out from the grass, William Blake’s lines rise into my thoughts: “To see a world in a grain of sand, / And a Heaven in a wildflower....” The sand is multicolored, shiny, and varied in texture and size. Much of it appears to be smoky quartz. I consider how rock is a symbol of durability, and how quartz is one of the hardest minerals. But while rocks wear away and break, a particle of sand is nearly indestructible. It is what remains after years of attrition by the weather and the sea. It is the heart of the rock itself—true grit. Perhaps it should be the symbol of durability.

From the grassy dunes, we walk down to the tide line and along the shore between the sea and its high-water mark—a sinuous<sup>1</sup> strand varying from four to eight feet wide, with driftwood, clamshells, molted claws, seaweed, and shells of crabs and mussels as far as the eye can see.

It is here we search for other signs of life. We find the cuneiform<sup>2</sup> tracks of a gull on wet, darkened sand. Above us we hear their mewing cries. In the strand we discover gull feathers with their hard, hollow quills and soft barbs—even a gull skull picked clean by beetles, its sharp, yellow beak still intact and menacing.

Farther ahead we spot sandpipers running from the breaking waves. There is a roar, then a cat-like hiss. The sea quickly slides downslope again. The teeter-tail sandpipers turn, searching for small fish and crustaceans as they rapidly chase back the Atlantic. This seemingly comic game of tag goes on until we get too close. The skittery sandpipers fly off.

We scatter then, too, each of us making individual forays.<sup>3</sup> We regroup at the next jetty to share what we found: a razor clam, a white sand dollar, a skate’s black

<sup>1</sup>sinuous — winding

<sup>2</sup>cuneiform — ancient writing that used wedge-shaped characters

<sup>3</sup>forays — sudden raids

egg purse, scallop and oyster shells, numerous clamshells and carapaces<sup>4</sup> of crabs. Walt tells us that the coastal Indians made wampum from the white and purple parts of some of these shells. They were made into beads and woven into belts or short strands used for trading. One boy holding an overload of clamshells says,  
50 “Wow, I could have been rich!”

Walt laughs, saying, “Yes, but it took a lot of work and craftsmanship to make those shells valuable.”

Again we go off on our individual excursions. The sun is higher in the sky. The waves are scales of light, and the sky is as clear and distinct as the smell of the salt  
55 in the breeze. It is a glorious morning as the children dance back from the waves that rushed at their feet.

Just before turning back for lunch, one of the boys finds a horseshoe crab, its underparts exposed to the sun and the gulls. We gather around as it tries to upright itself with its tapered spike. The horseshoe crab has not changed in the  
60 millions of years it has been on earth, but this one probably would have died if we had not happened along. Walt points out its feeding parts, and mentions that the Atlantic Coast is the only place you can find these creatures. “As frightening as it may look, it is actually quite harmless,” he says. Picking it up by its spike, he tosses it back into the Atlantic.

Just past the white foam of the breakers, we can see the crab’s dark shape moving out to sea. I sense its force for life, and how we are all intricately and invisibly linked in this ancient world of the shore. The children look on for about  
65 half a minute, then turn their attentions elsewhere. Above us a laughing gull goes into its noisy “Hah-hah-hah.” Walt and I linger for a few seconds more, then  
70 begin walking with the children back to the bus. The long rhythm of the sea in our ears, the salt air prickling our lungs, we carry with us a renewed awareness of life; somehow our world has grown larger.

—Frank Finale  
“A Walk Along the Beach”  
from *Jersey Shore Almanac*, 1991

---

<sup>4</sup>carapaces — hard bony outer coverings

## Passage II

### Poosum Crossing

Backing out the driveway  
the car lights cast an eerie glow  
in the morning fog centering  
on movement in the rain slick street

- 5 Hitting brakes I anticipate a squirrel or a cat or sometimes  
a little raccoon  
I once braked for a blind little mole who try though he did  
could not escape the cat toying with his life  
10 Mother-to-be possum occasionally lopes home ... being  
naturally ... slow her condition makes her even more ginger

We need a sign POSSUM CROSSING to warn coffee-gurgling  
neighbors:  
we share the streets with more than trucks and vans and  
railroad crossings

- 15 All birds being the living kin of dinosaurs  
think themselves invincible and pay no heed  
to the rolling wheels while they dine  
on an unlucky rabbit

- I hit brakes for the flutter of the lights hoping it's not a deer  
20 or a skunk or a groundhog  
coffee splashes over the cup which I quickly put away from me  
and into the empty passenger seat  
I look ...  
relieved and exasperated ...  
25 to discover I have just missed a big wet leaf  
struggling ... to lift itself into the wind  
and live

—Nikki Giovanni  
from *Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea*, 2002  
HarperCollins

## 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 essay) — Questions 1–7 refer to Passage I.

- 1 The feeling of “Freedom” (line 10) is conveyed through the use of
  - (1) personification
  - (2) imagery
  - (3) metaphor
  - (4) alliteration
- 2 One purpose of “Gathering around a dune” (line 16) is to
  - (1) focus student interest
  - (2) provide safety equipment
  - (3) explain beach erosion
  - (4) discuss group rules
- 3 The narrator admires the particles of sand because they
  - (1) beautify the beach
  - (2) shelter live clams
  - (3) protect the coast
  - (4) endure over time
- 4 The group’s “search for other signs of life” (line 35) requires them to
  - (1) communicate with each other
  - (2) rely on their senses
  - (3) change their point of view
  - (4) observe people on the beach
- 5 One purpose of Walt’s telling the students about wampum is to
  - (1) protect the shells from the students
  - (2) explain how to recognize poisonous shellfish
  - (3) stress the significance of their find
  - (4) encourage the children to make crafts

- 6 The encounter with the horseshoe crab is used to emphasize its
  - (1) large appetite
  - (2) swimming ability
  - (3) predatory nature
  - (4) vulnerable state
- 7 As a result of his time at the beach, the narrator experiences
  - (1) a strengthened appreciation of nature
  - (2) an eagerness for world travel
  - (3) an admiration for seagulls
  - (4) a new feeling of self-worth

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

- 8 The incidents recounted in lines 7 through 10 suggest that the narrator is
  - (1) proud
  - (2) carefree
  - (3) concerned
  - (4) inspired
- 9 The narrator would like to post a new neighborhood sign in order to protect
  - (1) fragile plants
  - (2) woodland creatures
  - (3) small cars
  - (4) private property
- 10 In the final stanza, the narrator’s reaction to saving a leaf is described through the use of
  - (1) simile
  - (2) flashback
  - (3) repetition
  - (4) irony

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:

“Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt  
*The New York Times*, April 15, 1939

### 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







Tear Here

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH  
SESSION TWO

Thursday, August 19, 2010 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.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 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 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

Tear Here

Tear Here

Tear Here