

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

LISTENING SECTION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

Tuesday, January 11, 2011 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 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, one essay booklet, and scrap paper to each student. Then distribute to each student an answer sheet with his or her name already filled in.
- 3 After each student has received an examination booklet, an essay booklet, scrap paper, and his or her answer sheet, say:

Check to make sure that the answer sheet that has been given to you has your name and student ID entered on it. If the information has not been pre-entered, you must do so now. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it.

- 4 After the students have filled in all headings on their essay booklets, say:

You will listen to a passage and answer some multiple-choice questions. You will hear the passage twice.

I will read the passage aloud to you once. Listen carefully. You may take notes on page 3 of your examination booklet. Then I will tell you to open your examination booklet to page 4. You will be given a chance to read the questions before the second reading. Then I will read the passage a second time. You may also take notes during the second reading or answer the questions.

Now I will read the passage aloud to you for the first time. Open your examination booklet to page 3.

- 5 Note the time you start reading the listening passage. The three-hour examination starts now. Read both the introduction and the passage aloud, including the attribution at the end. Read with appropriate expression, but without added comment.

Listening Passage

The following passage is from an article entitled “Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution” by Natalie Bober, published in *The Horn Book Magazine* in January/February 1996. In this excerpt, Bober discusses the letters Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John Adams during the American revolutionary period.

Early in her marriage, as Abigail Smith Adams began to experience the long separations from her husband, John, that would ultimately shadow and shape their marriage, letter writing became a way of life for her. Her bursting heart often found vent at her pen.

Indeed, Abigail lives in history because of the letters she wrote to her family and friends, and we are the richer for them. More than two thousand letters survive today as a written legacy to us because her husband ignored her plea to burn them. John’s reply to her was: “The Conclusion of your Letter makes my Heart throb more than a cannonade would. You bid me burn your Letters. But I must forget you first.”

In fact, recognizing the potential importance of their letters, John ultimately asked Abigail to “put them up safe and preserve them. They may exhibit to our posterity a kind of picture of the manners, opinions, and principles of these times of perplexity, danger, and distress.”

They do just that! And more. For me, personally, these past five years that I have spent reading and re-reading them have been an inspiration. They have taken me on a journey back in time and allowed me the privilege every biographer yearns for: a glimpse into the heart and mind, and even the soul, of Abigail Adams.

They were extraordinary letters that recorded an extraordinary life — one that not only gave impetus to a husband and son to become presidents of the United States but opened wide a window on a crucial period in history. Her letters allow us to witness, through her eyes, the birth of our nation, and to come to know the people who played a vital role in it.

It is Abigail’s voice in those letters that I hoped to capture for my readers. And it is those letters that became the vehicle by which I could take my readers on a journey back in time. For we cannot really know Abigail Adams unless we know what it was like to live in the eighteenth century. ...

In my persistent search for what the biographer calls truth, beyond the necessary reading and hard labor that go into writing a life, I have had the joy and excitement of myriad unexpected happenings. All have left their mark on me. In the case of Abigail Adams, the more details I uncovered in my quest for her, the more I found myself becoming Abigail Adams.

I was with her in Boston on a cold, clear night in March of 1770, as she coped with two small children while the explosion that came to be known as the Boston Massacre was taking place outside her window. I felt her terror as Massachusetts was plunged into the fierce tumult of war, and every alarm sent minutemen marching past her door, hungry, thirsty, looking for a place to rest.

I listened as she taught John Quincy how to read and write, and subtly began to inculcate in him a sense of duty to his father and to his country. Years later, still concerned about her children’s education, Abigail instructed their father: “You will not teach them what to think, but how to think, and they will know how to act.”

I sat with her on lonely nights when, in the silence of the cold, dark house, using her pen as her emotional outlet, she wrote letters to her husband pouring out her fears as well as her passionate love for him.

As she vividly described the devastating situation in Massachusetts to her husband in Philadelphia, she brought the reality of war home to him. When some members of Congress continued to press for conciliation with Great Britain, Abigail’s letters echoed in John’s mind and he pressed for [gun]powder.

In her own way, Abigail Adams may have changed the course of history.

As she reached beyond the kitchen and the nursery to explore the outside world, she worried about the lack of education for women: “If we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen and Philosophers, we must have learned women,” she warned.

Reflecting on the importance of her position as a woman and on her own growing independence, she wrote the letter to John that has echoed down through the centuries, and marks, in a sense, the beginning of change in the status of women:

“In the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could.” She recognized the possibilities as well as the limits of her position as a woman in a man’s world.

When Abigail died, her daughter-in-law Louisa, John Quincy’s wife, described her as “the guiding planet around which all revolved, performing their separate duties only by the impulse of her magnetic power.” That magnetic power still pulls me. ...

— excerpted from “Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution”
The Horn Book Magazine, January/February 1996

6 After reading the passage aloud once, say:

You may take five minutes to look over the questions before I read the passage aloud the second time.

7 After the students have had five minutes to read the questions, say:

As you listen to the second reading, you may take notes or answer the questions. You will be given an opportunity to complete the questions after the second reading. Now I will read the passage aloud a second time.

8 Read both the introduction and the passage a second time.

9 After the second reading, say:

Now turn to page 4 of your test booklet, read the directions and answer the multiple-choice questions. You may look over your notes to answer the questions.

