

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

REGENTS EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

The possession or use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you have or use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has three parts. For Part 1, you are to read the texts and answer all 24 multiple-choice questions. For Part 2, you are to read the texts and write one source-based argument. For Part 3, you are to read the text and write a text-analysis response. The source-based argument and text-analysis response should be written in pen. Keep in mind that the language and perspectives in a text may reflect the historical and/or cultural context of the time or place in which it was written.

When you have completed the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the bottom of the front of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.

Part 1

Directions (1–24): Closely read each of the three passages below. After each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you. You may use the margins to take notes as you read.

Reading Comprehension Passage A

The Island of Sea Women

Two Korean girls from the island of Jeju join the haenyeo (women divers) in order to help support their families.

...The sky was just beginning to turn pink when Mother, Grandmother, and I stepped outside. Now that it was light, I could see my steamy breath billowing then dissipating in the cold air. Grandmother moved slowly, but Mother had efficiency in every step and gesture. Her legs and arms were strong. Her basket was on her back, and she helped me with mine,
5 securing the straps. Here I was, going to work, helping to feed and care for my family, and becoming a part of the long tradition of haenyeo. Suddenly I felt like a woman. ...

We came around a corner and into a long straightaway. Ahead in the distance, my friend Mi-ja danced from foot to foot, to keep warm, from excitement. Her skin was perfect, and the morning light glowed on her cheeks. I'd grown up in the Gul-dong section of Hado, while
10 Mi-ja lived in the Sut-dong section, and the two of us always met in this spot. Even before we reached her, she bowed deeply to show her gratitude and humility to my mother, who bent at her waist just enough to acknowledge Mi-ja's deference.¹ Then Mother wordlessly strapped the third basket to Mi-ja's back.

"You girls learned to swim together," Mother said. "You've watched and learned as
15 apprentices. You, Mi-ja, have worked especially hard."

I didn't mind that Mother singled out Mi-ja. She'd earned it. ...

"You are another daughter to me," Mother replied. "Today, Halmang Samseung's job is done. As the goddess who oversees pregnancy, childbirth, and raising a child to the age of fifteen, she is now fully released from her duties. Many girls have friends, but the two of you
20 are closer than friends. You are like sisters, and I expect you to take care of each other today and every day as those tied by blood would do."

It was as much a blessing as a warning.

Mi-ja was the first to voice her fears. "I understand about swallowing water breath before going beneath the waves. I must hold as much air within me as possible. But what if I don't
25 know when to come up? What if I can't make a good sumbisorì?"

Swallowing water breath is the process all haenyeo use to gather enough air in their lungs to sustain them as they submerge. The sumbisorì is the special sound—like a whistle or a dolphin's call—a haenyeo makes as she breaches the surface of the sea and releases the air she's held in her lungs, followed by a deep intake of breath.

30 "Sucking in air shouldn't be troublesome," Mother said. "You breathe in every day as you walk about the earth." ...

We had seven bulteoks² in Hado—one for each neighborhood's diving collective. Our group had thirty members. Logic would say that the entrance should face the sea, since haenyeo go back and forth from it all day, but having the entrance at the back gave an added

¹deference — giving in to

²bulteoks — outdoor stone structures used by haenyeo

35 barrier against the constant winds blowing in from the water. Above the crash of waves, we could hear women's voices—teasing, laughing, and shouting well-worn gibes back and forth. As we entered, the gathered women turned to see who'd arrived. They all wore padded jackets and trousers.

Mi-ja set down her basket and hurried to the fire.

40 “No need for you to worry about tending the fire now,” Yang Do-saeng called out good-naturedly. She had high cheekbones and sharp elbows. She was the only person I knew who kept her hair in braids at all times. She was a little older than my mother, and they were diving partners and best friends. Do-saeng's husband had given her one son and one daughter, and that was the end. A sadness, to be sure. Nevertheless, our two families
45 were very close, especially since Do-saeng's husband was in Japan doing factory work. These days about a quarter of all Jeju people lived in Japan, because a ferry ticket cost half the price of a single bag of rice here on our island. Do-saeng's husband had been in Hiroshima for so many years that I didn't remember him. My mother helped Do-saeng with ancestor worship, and Do-saeng helped my mother when she had to cook for our family when we performed
50 our rites. “You're no longer an apprentice. You'll be with us today. Are you ready, girl?”

“Yes, Auntie,” Mi-ja responded, using the honorific, bowing and backing away.

The other women laughed, causing Mi-ja to blush.

“Stop teasing her,” my mother said. “These two have enough to worry about today.” ...

Mother began the meeting by asking, “Does this beach have any food?”

55 “More food than there are grains of sand on Jeju,” Do-saeng trilled, “if we had an abundance of sand instead of rocks.”

“More food than on twenty moons,” another woman declared, “if there were twenty moons above us.” ...

“Good,” Mother said in response to the ritual bantering.³ “Then let us discuss where we
60 will dive today.” At home, her voice always seemed so loud. Here, hers was just one of many loud voices, since the ears of all haenyeo are damaged over time by water pressure. One day I too would have a loud voice.

The sea doesn't belong to anyone, but every collective had assigned diving rights to specific territories: close enough to the shore to walk in, within twenty- to thirty-minutes'
65 swimming distance from land, or accessible only by boat farther out to sea; a cove here, an underwater plateau not too far offshore, the north side of this or that island, and so on. Mi-ja and I listened as the women considered the possibilities. As baby-divers, we hadn't earned the right to speak. Even the small-divers kept quiet. Mother struck down most proposals. “That area is overfished,” she told Do-saeng. Another time, she came back with, “Just as on
70 land, our sea fields also follow the seasons. To honor spawning times, conch can't be picked from the ocean floor from July to September, and abalone⁴ can't be harvested from October through December. It is our duty to be keepers and managers of the sea. If we protect our wet fields, they will continue to provide for us.” Finally, she made her decision. “We'll row to our underwater canyon not far from here.”

75 “The baby-divers aren't ready for that,” one of the grandmother-divers said. “They aren't strong enough, and they haven't earned the right either.”

Mother held up a hand. “In that area, lava flowed from Grandmother Seolmundae to form the rocky canyon. Its walls provide something for every ability. The most experienced among us can go as deep as we want, while the baby-divers can pick through those spots

³bantering — speaking in a teasing manner

⁴abalone — edible rock-clinging mollusks whose shells are lined with mother-of-pearl

80 close to the surface. The Kang sisters will show Mi-ja what to do. And I'd like Do-saeng's daughter, Yu-ri, to watch over Young-sook. Yu-ri will soon become a small-diver, so this will be good training for her."

Once Mother explained, there were no further objections. Mothers are closer to the women in their diving collective than they are to their own children. Today, my mother and I
85 had begun to form that deeper relationship. Observing Do-saeng and Yu-ri together, I could see where my mother and I would be in a few years. But this moment also showed me why Mother had been elected chief. She was a leader, and her judgment was valued.

"Every woman who enters the sea carries a coffin on her back," she warned the gathering. "In this world, in the undersea world, we tow the burdens of a hard life. We are crossing
90 between life and death every day."

These traditional words were often repeated on Jeju, but we all nodded somberly as though hearing them for the first time.

"When we go to the sea, we share the work and the danger," Mother added. "We harvest together, sort together, and sell together, because the sea itself is communal." ...

—Lisa See

excerpted from *The Island of Sea Women*, 2019

Scribner

1 The description of the mother in lines 1 through 5 emphasizes her

- (1) level of frustration
- (2) delight in her work
- (3) concern about the weather
- (4) sense of determination

2 Lines 14 through 21 establish a theme of

- (1) cooperation
- (2) celebration
- (3) prosperity
- (4) patience

3 The statement in line 22 emphasizes the

- (1) simplicity of being admitted to the haenyeo
- (2) danger associated with being a haenyeo
- (3) importance of the tradition of the haenyeo
- (4) isolation involved with becoming a haenyeo

4 Lines 26 through 29 serve to

- (1) describe an image
- (2) compare and contrast
- (3) introduce a conflict
- (4) explain and define

5 Mi-ja's use of the word "Auntie" (line 51) implies her

- (1) enthusiasm
- (2) admiration
- (3) sarcasm
- (4) sympathy

6 The responses to the mother's question (lines 55 through 59) indicate that the women

- (1) lack confidence in the mother's leadership
- (2) are worried about the girls' lack of skills
- (3) can find humor in their difficult task
- (4) plan to accomplish their task quickly

7 The central idea of lines 63 through 66 is that the collectives are organized to

- (1) avoid unsafe territories
- (2) ensure there are no limitations to harvesting
- (3) enlarge the breeding grounds
- (4) provide equal opportunities to harvest

8 Lines 75 and 76 indicate that the haenyeo collectives

- (1) compete for their harvesting areas
- (2) carefully rank divers by experience
- (3) reluctantly accept beginner divers
- (4) guard their secret harvesting knowledge

9 Which lines signal a shift in mood?

- (1) “ ‘You girls learned to swim together,’ Mother said. ‘You’ve watched and learned as apprentices. You, Mi-ja, have worked especially hard.’ ” (lines 14 and 15)
- (2) “ ‘Mi-ja set down her basket and hurried to the fire. ‘No need for you to worry about tending the fire now,’ Yang Do-saeng called out good-naturedly.’ ” (lines 39 through 41)
- (3) “ ‘The other women laughed, causing Mi-ja to blush. ‘Stop teasing her,’ my mother said. ‘These two have enough to worry about today.’ ” (lines 52 and 53)
- (4) “ ‘The most experienced among us can go as deep as we want, while the baby-divers can pick through those spots close to the surface.’ ” (lines 78 through 80)

Reading Comprehension Passage B

To a Snake

I knew you were not poisonous
when I saw you in the side garden;
even your name—milk snake—
sounds harmless, and yet your pattern
5 of copper splotches outlined in black
frightened me, and the way you were
curled in loops; and it offended me
that you were so close to the house
and clearly living underneath it
10 if not inside, in the cellar, where I
have found your torn shed skins.

You must have been frightened too
when I caught you in the webbing
of the lacrosse stick and flung you
15 into the woods, where you landed
dangling from a vine-covered branch,
shamelessly twisted. Now I
am the one who is ashamed, unable
to untangle my feelings,
20 braided into my DNA or buried
deep in the part of my brain
that is most like yours.

—Jeffrey Harrison
“To a Snake”
from *Into Daylight*, 2014
Tupelo Press

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| <p>10 The speaker’s reaction to the snake (lines 1 through 6) was triggered by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) curiosity (3) movement(2) coloring (4) aggression <p>11 The word “if” in line 10 indicates the speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) provokes a response from the snake(2) tolerates that the snake lives near the garden(3) respects the needs of the snake(4) resents that the snake goes into the cellar <p>12 The use of “the lacrosse stick” (line 14) to move the snake most likely suggests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) hastiness (3) creativity(2) precision (4) sensitivity | <p>13 The phrase “shamelessly twisted” (line 17) emphasizes the speaker’s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) pride in the quick reaction(2) surprise at the snake’s inaction(3) guilt surrounding the violent act(4) certainty about the snake’s survival <p>14 Lines 17 through 22 demonstrate a shift in mood from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) boredom to excitement(2) innocence to vengeance(3) courage to bitterness(4) hesitancy to regret |
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Reading Comprehension Passage C

If You're Just Not a Morning Person, Science Says You May Never Be

If Cassidy Sokolis ever needs to wake up before 11 am, she scatters three alarm clocks throughout her bedroom. Even then, she still often sleeps through the clamor. . . .

When she was 19, Sokolis was diagnosed with delayed sleep phase, a disorder that sets her internal clock permanently out of sync with the rest of the world. It's not that she needs
5 more sleep than the average person. It's just that her body prefers her to begin a seven- or eight-hour cycle after 3 am.

While she's still a college student, Sokolis can start her day at 11 am, thanks to a flexible class schedule. But now she's nearing graduation, and she's worried her unusual schedule will get in the way of her dream of becoming a teacher — a profession with notoriously
10 early start times. "If it's between changing my career and finding a way to make it work, I'm definitely going to have to find a way to make it work," she says.

Sokolis is on the far end of the bell curve¹ of human sleep habits.

We all have a preferred, inborn time for sleeping. Science has validated the idea that there are "morning people," "evening people," and those in between. These are called
15 chronotypes. And just like it's rare for a person to be 7 feet tall, it's rare for Sokolis to not be able to sleep until 3 am. We all have a chronotype, just like we all have a height.

Even people who are slightly more oriented to the evening — people who like to sleep between 1 am and 9 am, say — may be faced with a difficult choice: Listen to your body, or force it to match the sleep habits of most everyone else?

20 Research has been gaining insight on that question. It turns out our internal clocks are influenced by genes and are incredibly difficult to change. If you're just not a morning person, it's likely you'll never be, at least until the effects of aging kick in.

And what's more, if we try to live out of sync with these clocks, our health likely suffers. The mismatch between internal time and real-world time has been linked to heart disease,
25 obesity, and depression.

This all amounts to a case — not an absolute case, but a compelling one nonetheless — that we should listen to our bodies and not the alarm clocks.

Your body is a clock

Most people — around 30 to 50 percent — fall right in the middle of the chronotype bell curve, sleeping between the hours of 11 pm and 7 am.

30 Another 40 percent are either slightly morning people or slightly evening people, off by an hour or so.

People like Sokolis are even more rare: Only around 0.2 percent — one out of 500 — of adults have a delayed sleep phase like Sokolis. (The condition is much more common among teens, whose clocks gradually shift earlier as they age.) A few more adults (1 percent) have
35 advanced sleep phase syndrome and prefer to go to sleep around 8 pm, according to the American Sleep Association. Society tends to be more forgiving of them.

To understand why some people are early birds while others are night owls, let's consider the body's circadian system.² The body is an orchestra of organs, each providing an essential function. In this metaphor, the circadian rhythm is the conductor.

¹bell curve — a graph showing a distribution of data that occurs naturally in many situations

²circadian system — the body's internal clock of 24-hour cycles that controls essential functions and processes

40 The most important thing to know about the circadian system is that it doesn't just control when we're sleepy. "Every neurotransmitter,³ hormone, and chemical in the body cycles with the daily rhythm," Philip Gehrman, a sleep researcher and clinician at the University of Pennsylvania, tells me. "It's not just humans; even single-cell organisms follow a circadian rhythm. It really seems to be a fundamental property of life."

45 Our bodies run this tight schedule to try to keep up with our actions. Since we usually eat a meal after waking up, we produce the most insulin in the morning. We're primed to metabolize breakfast before even taking a bite. It's more efficient that way.

For people who are either more morning-oriented or evening-oriented, everything the circadian system controls is delayed.

50 "Evening types on average get down to their lowest core body temperature later than normal," Leon Lack, who studies circadian rhythms at Flinders University in Australia, tells me in an email. "Their circadian system doesn't start producing sleepiness until later or alertness until later." They also release cortisol, the stress hormone, later than average. Most people hit their peak alertness around 10 am. Evening-type people can hit theirs hours later.

55 Some extreme night owls gather on Reddit⁴ to discuss the unique challenges of being out of sync with the world. That's where I found Sokolis and several others, including Kat Park, who were willing to share their personal stories. Mainly I wanted to know what it feels like to be on a schedule mismatched with the rest of the world.

60 "When I wake up in the morning, it's like I'm fighting horse tranquilizers," says Park, a 34-year-old health care administrator who lives in Overland Park, Kansas. If she had it her way, she'd fall asleep around 3 am and wake up around noon.

You're also subject to judgment if you're groggy when others are at their peak, Park and others said. ...

When our personal clock is out of sync with society's, our health suffers

65 Scientists have a term for being out of sync: social jet lag. It's a social nuisance for the people who have it, but it also puts stress on the body that may undermine health. ...

In 2012, researchers in Europe analyzed a self-report data set of 65,000 Europeans and found "social jet lag significantly increased the probability of belonging to the group of overweight participants." There's also correlational research⁵ indicating that late chronotypes may be at a greater risk for depression, and that they're more likely to engage in risky behaviors like smoking. ...

70 A 2015 study tracking the sleep of 447 middle-aged adults for a week also picked up on this worrisome pattern. It found social jet lag correlated with insulin resistance — a precursor⁶ to diabetes — lower HDL cholesterol (the good kind), higher levels of triglycerides,⁷ higher waist circumference, and higher BMI [Body Mass Index].⁸ These correlations remained even after adjusting for behaviors like exercise, smoking, and alcohol use. ...

³neurotransmitter — a chemical substance that facilitates the transmission of impulses between neurons in the brain

⁴Reddit — an Internet-based social media platform

⁵correlational research — research that determines the statistical relationship between two or more variables

⁶precursor — something that precedes or predicts an occurrence

⁷triglycerides — type of fat found in blood

⁸BMI — a ratio comparing a person's weight to their height

Toward a “chronotype acceptance” movement

Simply put: Society favors early risers. Think no further than phrases like, “The early bird catches the worm.”

- 80 Getting an official diagnosis can help lift the burden from people on a different clock. “It really helps to know it isn’t my fault,” Sokolis says of her diagnosis. But people like her are still left with a hard choice. The best-paying jobs start in the morning. Educational opportunities do, too. Can they really afford to miss out on everything that happens before noon?

The delayed sleep phase sufferers I spoke to all agreed: The one thing they wished for was greater tolerance of people like them. ...

—Brian Resnick

excerpted and adapted from “If You’re Just Not a Morning Person,
Science Says You May Never Be”
www.vox.com, March 17, 2017

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| <p>15 The details in lines 1 through 6 show that Cassidy Sokolis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) functions on little sleep(2) has an unusual sleep cycle(3) has an unpredictable sleep pattern(4) requires less sleep than most people <p>16 The comparison of chronotypes to height in lines 14 through 16 clarifies that chronotypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) are universal(2) determine growth(3) are adjustable(4) provide stability <p>17 As used in line 17, the phrase “oriented to” most nearly means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) disturbed by(2) inclined toward(3) experienced with(4) excited about <p>18 The metaphor in lines 38 and 39 suggests that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) aging transforms sleep phases(2) breathing is stressed during sleep(3) health is affected by sleep patterns(4) exercise determines sleep patterns | <p>19 Lines 40 through 44 emphasize a central idea about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) our traditional beliefs about preferred circadian rhythms(2) our limited knowledge of the purpose of circadian rhythms(3) the conflicting theories in circadian rhythms research(4) the critical importance of circadian rhythms to life <p>20 A primary function of lines 50 through 54 is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) introduce a bias(2) reinforce a claim(3) dismiss a counterclaim(4) propose a solution <p>21 The phrase “social jet lag” in lines 64 through 68 serves to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) suggest reasons to ignore warnings(2) exaggerate the supposed danger(3) question the connection to disease(4) identify possible side effects |
|---|--|

- 22 The function of an “official diagnosis” (line 78) is that it enables people like Sokolis to
- (1) be more comfortable with their natural sleep patterns
 - (2) request more comfortable working conditions
 - (3) supplement their sleep loss with daily naps
 - (4) receive appropriate treatment for their medical diagnosis

- 23 Which statement reflects a central idea of the text as a whole?
- (1) “While she’s still a college student, Sokolis can start her day at 11 am, thanks to a flexible class schedule” (lines 7 and 8)
 - (2) “we should listen to our bodies and not the alarm clocks” (line 27)
 - (3) “Some extreme night owls gather on Reddit to discuss the unique challenges” (line 55)
 - (4) “researchers in Europe analyzed a self-report data set of 65,000 Europeans” (line 66)
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- 24 The text is developed primarily through the use of
- (1) detailed examples
 - (2) chronological order
 - (3) order of importance
 - (4) claim and counterclaim

Part 2

Argument

Directions: Closely read each of the **four** texts provided on pages 13 through 20 and write a source-based argument on the topic below. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response. Write your argument beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet.

Topic: Should employers consider social media activity when evaluating potential candidates?

Social Media is a term for computer and cellphone-based communication systems where participants can send messages, photographs and videos to others, forming communities of connected individuals. These platforms usually keep the communications of their participants available for access indefinitely.

Your Task: Carefully read each of the **four** texts provided. Then, using evidence from at least **three** of the texts, write a well-developed argument regarding whether or not employers should consider social media activity when evaluating potential candidates. Clearly establish your claim, distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims, and use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least **three** of the texts to develop your argument. Do *not* simply summarize each text.

Guidelines:

Be sure to:

- Establish your claim regarding whether or not employers should consider social media activity when evaluating potential candidates
- Distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims
- Use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least **three** of the texts to develop your argument
- Identify each source that you reference by text number and line number(s) or graphic (for example: Text 1, line 4 or Text 2, graphic)
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Texts:

Text 1 – How Social Media Can Reveal the Best (And Worst) of Your Employment Candidates

Text 2 – Should You Consider Social Media When Evaluating Job Candidates?

Text 3 – Guardrails for Using Social Media During the Hiring Process

Text 4 – How Social Media Could Affect Your Job

Text 1

How Social Media Can Reveal the Best (And Worst) of Your Employment Candidates

Picture this: You had an argument three months ago on social media with a stranger over the hot-button issue of the day. You were provoked because you felt the other poster was such a jerk, and you had to stand your ground. You didn't even care that much about the topic (what was it again?), but somebody had to set that person straight. You didn't love the way you conducted yourself, but the comments are buried under millions of new posts and forgotten now, anyway, so who cares, right?

Well, someone might. And that someone might be your next potential employer.

As the president of a company that provides pre-employment screenings for clients, it's my job to find everything I can about a candidate through their social media. I don't make any decisions for clients; I simply hand over the information. Through this experience, I'm finding that hiring managers are more frequently conducting background checks that go beyond criminal and public records and employment history. And a candidate's irate,¹ aggressive and potentially threatening postings are what many are on the lookout for. ...

Those decision makers are checking Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter [renamed as X], TikTok, Reddit and more—every place where a candidate might have made a posting that can raise a red flag. As a job-seeker, you might have consented when you checked a box online or on your paper application. And even if you didn't, statements made in public forums, which includes social media, are fair game.² Screenings might range from simply viewing content available to the public to in-depth searches of posts you've made on social media over the past six months (even the posts you've deleted).

A CareerBuilder survey found that 57% of employers have found social content that caused them to rule out a candidate. What might rule someone out? Some of it is obvious, based on my experience: patterns of overt³ anger, suggestions of violence, associations with questionable characters, signs of crass⁴ behavior or even too many political posts. I've seen that a post one might consider mild or mainstream could get a resume tossed in the recycle bin.

Getting oneself in trouble with a social media post on the employment side isn't limited to the job search. In June [2022], the *Washington Post* fired a reporter for a days-long Twitter [X] dispute related to another reporter who himself had received a one-month suspension for an unsavory⁵ posting.

I've seen that legal issues can also prompt a closer look at a person's social media. The most obvious gaffes⁶ are those in which a person is caught in a fraud situation, such as posting a picture of themselves waterskiing when they're supposed to be home in bed collecting workers' compensation benefits, for instance. ...

¹irate — annoyed or angry

²fair game — appropriate, available or reasonable to review

³overt — obvious

⁴crass — rude or distasteful

⁵unsavory — objectionable

⁶gaffes — blunders

35 As an employer, it's all about eliminating potential risk. For this reason, I suggest to
clients that they take a look at current employees' social media accounts, too—a practice I
do myself. Now, what they do in their private time is their own business, and I don't believe
an untoward⁷ social media post is grounds to let someone go. But I do believe it's good to
40 know what is going on in employees' lives by their postings. If their social media revelations
don't affect their performance or raise issues with co-workers, they probably will not pose a
problem at the workplace. ...

—Harry Kazakian
excerpted and adapted from “How Social Media Can Reveal
the Best (And Worst) of Your Employment Candidates”
www.forbes.com, September 26, 2022

⁷untoward — inappropriate

Text 2

Should You Consider Social Media When Evaluating Job Candidates?

You're a hiring manager in the process of screening a pool of applicants for a senior management position. You've narrowed your list down to five top candidates, but you want to limit yourself to three people for a third round of interviews. You're naturally nervous about making a poor choice—this new hire will have a largely public-facing role and a potentially huge impact on your company's brand and reputation.

So you decide to do a little scouting on social media to see if you can turn up anything interesting that might sway your decision one way or the other—and what you find gives you pause about one of your top picks. What should you do?

Know the Risks...

What you may find in a candidate's social media presence—for the most part—is fair game, says Jeff Williams, VP of enterprise and HR [Human Resources] solutions at Paychex. “It's 2023, and what is posted on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter [X]—and even Facebook for the nostalgic—is an accessible, noninvasive way of gaining insight on your candidate,” he says. You're not stalking or “creeping,” he adds. You're accessing information that anyone can see.

But social media can be both a blessing and a curse when hiring, says Jennifer Preston, an HR consultant with Flex HR. While social media channels can yield ample benefits for HR professionals, recruiters and hiring managers for vetting¹ job candidates, consulting such sources can also be risky—particularly when they are used to evaluate candidates based on their personal lives, opinions and what they choose to post and re-post. Preston says this information can create dangerous biases that can lead to legal risks.

Marlene Allen Murray, a business litigation attorney at the law firm Fennemore Craig, says that an employer is not violating any laws by looking into an applicant's interests and values. “Social media posts can reveal a more honest view of an applicant than what they might share during an interview,” she says.

However, Murray adds that there's a big caveat:² Employers must not use the information they find on social media outlets “to discriminate against a candidate based on ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender or other protected classes.” Employers, Murray says, “might be sued by a candidate if any unlawful prejudice is shown by the employer during the recruitment process,” even if employers do not intentionally or explicitly use the information they find online. ...

Stick to What's Relevant...

Preston says appropriate uses of conducting a social media search on a job candidate include determining if the candidate is qualified to perform the essential functions of the job and evaluating whether the candidate's profile is consistent with their resume and the answers they give during the interview process.

Amy Laiker, the head of the New York City office of Tiger Recruitment, a boutique staffing agency, says that information about a job candidate discovered online through a general search of social media profiles can legitimately be used in considering candidates unless that information is related to a legally protected status such as race, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

¹vetting — evaluating

²caveat — caution

For example, says Laiker, legitimate red flags may go up if a candidate for a position that requires a high degree of confidentiality and discretion has profiles in which they share every minute detail of their daily life, or post images with their computer monitor in full view. Hiring managers may also take note if a candidate has a LinkedIn profile with a career history that materially differs from what they represented on their resume.

Jeff Williams says a good practice is for hiring managers to ask themselves what information is necessary to make a good decision and whether what they discover is relevant to their hiring choice. For example,

- Is your candidate who they say they are? That is, is the person you interviewed reflected in their social media accounts?
- Does your candidate possess credentials relevant to the position you are seeking to fill (e.g., education levels, association memberships and awards received)?
- Does your candidate bash their former employers or colleagues?
- Does your candidate exhibit extreme behavior or poor judgment?
- Is your candidate engaged in any illegal behavior?

Laiker says it's generally better to review a candidate's social media presence (which may contain a photo of the individual) only after an initial video or in-person interview. Doing so, says Laiker, can minimize the risk of an applicant saying they were rejected on the grounds of race, age, disability or other discrimination. ...

The bottom line? "The essence of using social media to evaluate a candidate should be to determine if this person can perform the essential functions of the job," says Preston. "Is this person's candidacy accurate and consistent with their resume?" Asking that question when evaluating information learned during the hiring process is the most important step you can take in determining whether you've come across a true red flag or just irrelevant information.

—Lin Gensing-Pophal
excerpted and adapted from "Should You Consider Social Media
When Evaluating Job Candidates?"
www.shrm.org, June 9, 2023

Text 3

Guardrails for Using Social Media During the Hiring Process

It's increasingly common for employers to use social media during the hiring process. The temptation is obvious — there's a wealth of potentially useful information about applicants available online. It's not unreasonable to wish to use social media to understand a prospective employee's professional qualifications and skills to determine whether they fit with the criteria for the position. It's no wonder that a recent survey from The Harris Poll finds that seventy-one percent of US hiring decision-makers agree that looking at candidates' social media profiles is an effective way to screen applicants. Furthermore, 70% believe employers should screen all applicants' social media profiles, while the majority (67%) say they use social networking sites to research potential job candidates.

Despite the potential benefits, this sleuthing causes significant heartburn for employment and privacy lawyers and HR [Human Resources] professionals. While social media can be a fruitful way to find and recruit candidates, a minefield of legal risks appear when companies use social media during the screening process.

Potential Risks

- **Discrimination!** Federal, state and local anti-discrimination laws prohibit discrimination in hiring based on a prospective employee's protected class. The danger of researching applicants using social media is that you may become aware that the applicant belongs to a protected category — something that through the general application process you otherwise would be unaware of. And, you can't put the genie back in the bottle. If a recruiter or hiring manager has accessed this data, it is difficult to prove that they were not influenced by it in their hiring decision.

Two cases underscore this danger:

- In *Gaskell v. University of Kentucky*, the court denied a defense motion for summary judgment¹ when a top candidate was passed over partly due to information about the employee's religious beliefs the employer discovered through an online search.
- In *Hardin v. Dadlani*, the court concluded that since the hiring manager had previously expressed a preference for white female employees, his instructions to an employee to look up an applicant on Facebook and invite her in for an interview "if she looks good" can be reasonably construed to refer to her race, which can establish discriminatory animus.²

- **Running up against lawful off-duty conduct laws.** Many states have enacted laws prohibiting employers from discriminating on the basis of an employee's lawful off-duty conduct (for example, California, Illinois, New Jersey and New York). These laws vary in specificity. They generally protect an employee's participation in recreational or leisure activities during personal time, such as tobacco use, consuming alcohol, possessing firearms, or engaging in political activities.

¹summary judgment — a ruling by a judge designed to resolve a lawsuit before going to court

²animus — attitude

- **Violating the Fair Credit Reporting Act [FCRA].** In some instances, companies may find that working with a third-party social media background check provider may be preferable since the third-party provider can separate out any information about a prospective employee's protected class or lawful off-duty conduct. But — be aware that social media background check companies are considered consumer reporting agencies³ under the FCRA or similarly regulated entities under state background check laws because they assemble or evaluate consumer report information that is provided to employers using that information as a factor in determining eligibility for employment.

Accordingly, employers using social media background check companies must also comply with disclosure and authorization requirements for obtaining consumer reports and taking adverse employment actions based on information in the reports under the FCRA and similar state laws. In particular, before obtaining a consumer report, an employer must under the FCRA:

- Notify the prospective employee or current employee that the employer may obtain a consumer report for employment purposes.
 - Obtain written consent from the prospective employee or current employee.
- **Running afoul of the National Labor Relations Act.** In recent years, the NLRB⁴ has scrutinized how social media policies, or enforcement of these policies, might discourage current employees from using social media to engage in concerted activity, such as discussing unions, wages, or other employment terms and conditions. The NLRB prohibits discrimination against applicants based on union affiliation or support. Therefore, using social media to screen out applicants on this basis may lead to an unfair labor charge against the company.
 - **Liability under password protection laws.** More than two dozen states have enacted laws addressing employer access to current and prospective employees' social media accounts. These laws generally prohibit employers from requesting password and username information or otherwise accessing the password-protected portions of a prospective or current employee's personal social media accounts, with certain exceptions. (Further, in all 50 states, asking for an applicant's (or employee's) password creates a real risk of violating the federal Stored Communications Act.) ...
 - **Computer interference laws.** To comply with computer interference laws, like the United States Federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, employers must ensure that none of its employees or agents exceed any access to social media sites granted in the sites' terms of use (which would be a violation both of the site terms as well as applicable computer interference laws). ...

—Caroline Burnett & Sofia Chesnokova
excerpted and adapted from “Guardrails for Using Social
Media During the Hiring Process”
www.theemployerreport.com, February 8, 2022

³consumer reporting agency — individuals or companies that collect information on people, such as debt and work histories, and then package and sell that information

⁴NLRB — the National Labor Relations Board is the agency created by the act that protects the rights of employees

Text 4

How Social Media Could Affect Your Job

...A social media screening is usually done prior to employment, when a candidate is applying for a job. It involves researching a prospect's social media profiles and their activity, including what they post, like and comment on. Some of the platforms they are likely to check are LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter [X], TikTok, and WhatsApp. ...

5 Audit your social media accounts before applying for a position. While it's important to check every account, there are some platforms hiring managers are more likely to check, such as LinkedIn. ...

10 Most employers view LinkedIn as a secondary resume, and some even post jobs on LinkedIn. However, they are still likely to check other social media channels, such as Instagram. In addition to what you're posting, make sure you are cognizant¹ of who you follow and how they are interacting with your content. ...

Tip

Showcase your positive personality traits on your social media profiles to be an effective applicant. Just one negative impression from your social media profile could disqualify you from a position. ...

1. Don't erase your profile.

15 While the fear of something embarrassing or negative being discovered might tempt some job candidates to completely erase their online persona, employers say that strategy can backfire.

20 About 1 in 5 employers in The Harris Poll's survey said they won't call a person for an interview if they can't find them online. In addition to seeming like you're trying to hide something, it's not a good idea to delete your profile, because it doesn't guarantee the data is completely gone. Instead, the best practice is to keep your social accounts clean and up to date. ...

2. Use social media to your benefit.

25 Despite what job candidates might think, most employers are looking for reasons to hire someone. The Harris Poll surveyed over 1,000 employers and found that 67 percent of them look for information that supports a candidate's qualifications to get them through the door. ...

3. Google yourself.

30 Every few weeks or months, take a minute to Google yourself in an incognito window.² This is likely where your employer is going to start when they take a look at your online presence, so it's good to know what will pop up. This will also help you get ahead of anything negative, so you can make sure all the top search results are things you would be fine with your employer seeing. ...

What to avoid on social media

The study found that a whopping 55 percent of employers who use social media screenings said they have found content that caused them not to hire a candidate.

¹cognizant — mindful

²incognito window — a private browsing window in an Internet search engine

35 Follow these guidelines from The Harris Poll’s survey to keep your online presence professional:

1. Avoid posting anything potentially offensive. If you wouldn’t bring in a particular picture and post it in your cubicle, or say something at the workplace, remove it from your public page.
2. Be purposeful in your posts. Ask yourself: What is my goal with posting this? Is this best for a private or public page?
3. Keep it simple: Remember that less is more in your public profiles.
4. Never complain about employers or colleagues — past or present — on social media.

45 While these tips are geared toward job seekers, the results of the Express Employment Professionals survey also make clear that existing employees should take this advice to heart. Not only are employers sometimes monitoring their employees’ social media behavior, but future employers may conduct social media screenings as well. ...

—David Cotriss
excerpted and adapted from “How Social Media Could Affect Your Job”
www.businessnewsdaily.com, May 11, 2023

Part 3

Text-Analysis Response

Your Task: Closely read the text provided on pages 22 and 23 and write a well-developed, text-based response of two to three paragraphs. In your response, identify a central idea in the text and analyze how the author’s use of **one** writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis. *Do not* simply summarize the text. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response. Write your response in the spaces provided on pages 7 through 9 of your essay booklet.

Guidelines:

Be sure to:

- Identify a central idea in the text
- Analyze how the author’s use of **one** writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Examples include: characterization, conflict, denotation/connotation, metaphor, simile, irony, language use, point-of-view, setting, structure, symbolism, theme, tone, etc.
- Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Text

Ballpark: Baseball in the American City

...In the baseball park we can see how this country expressed a concept of community, and how we imbued¹ the public realm with shared meaning. The baseball park was always a special kind of place, usually privately built and privately owned but able to instill people with a greater sense that it belonged to them than most places that had been built by their government: this garden in the center of the city, this piece of *rus in urbe*,² was spiritually public if legally private, and in almost every city it formed a defining element of the civic realm. As much as the town square, the street, the park, and the plaza, the baseball park is a key part of American public space.

We can see through baseball parks how Americans went from viewing their cities as central to the idea of community in the first decades of the twentieth century to wanting to run away from them in the decades after World War II, and then how we have tried in our own time to use baseball parks to get our cities back. The first generation of ballparks, places like Union Grounds and Washington Park in Brooklyn and South End Grounds in Boston and Sportsman's Park in St. Louis, as well as the ornate and marvelously named Palace of the Fans in Cincinnati and the still larger Ebbets Field and Fenway Park and Wrigley Field that followed not far behind, grew out of neighborhoods, took their eccentric³ forms from the pattern of city streets, and were inextricably tied to their surroundings. The story of Ebbets Field is the story of Brooklyn, as the story of Tiger Stadium is the story of downtown Detroit.

The second generation of ballparks, places like Shea Stadium, is a different story: concrete bunkers, often circular, shaped not by the grid of urban streets but by a backward glance to the ancient Colosseum, an amphitheater built for gladiators, not pitching duels. (Not by accident, perhaps, were many of them designed to do double duty as football stadiums.) Set in a sea of parking, these ballparks were generally built during the years after World War II to escape the city, or at least to minimize any connection to it, and they were invariably⁴ suburban in concept if not in geography. They reveal how far Americans had come in the postwar years from thinking of urban neighborhoods as desirable turf. The most famous of the postwar structures built for baseball, the Astrodome, had a roof that rendered the entire ball field interior space, removing even the fig leaf⁵ of *rus in the urbe*. And the Astrodome was far from the only ballpark whose builders thought baseball would be better off played on artificial turf under a huge dome than on grass under the sky.

And the story changes again with the ballparks of the third generation. Beginning in 1992 with Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore, new ballparks in cities across the country brought baseball back to its downtown origins, often, as at Camden Yards, quite literally integrated into older urban neighborhoods, and returning to the field of grass under the open sky. (A few recent ballparks have had retractable roofs, very different from permanent domes; they use technology as a means of avoiding rain postponements, not of cutting all play off from nature.) But what is most important about the ballparks of the third generation is that most of them were designed in the hope of weaving together an urban fabric that had been broken, aspiring to use baseball to heal the city rather than to run away from it.

¹imbued — filled

²*rus in urbe* — countryside in the city

³eccentric — unusual

⁴invariably — consistently

⁵fig leaf — used in art to censor nudity

40 Today, more than a quarter century after Camden Yards opened to great acclaim, it
still represents our most encouraging model. But the commitment to a vibrant and open
urbanism that it aspired to is threatened by the very latest development in ballparks, the
movement away from connecting to the real city in favor of envisioning the ballpark as more
like the centerpiece of a developer-built theme park. This trend is exemplified by SunTrust
45 Park in Atlanta, which opened in 2017 in the Atlanta suburbs as part of the Battery, a
quasi-urban,⁶ instant neighborhood of restaurants, condos, bars, and hotels in which
everything, even the streets, is part of a private development project, largely controlled by
the Atlanta Braves. Atlanta is the most fully realized project of this type, but the idea it
represents—the extension of the private space of the ballpark into the surrounding streets
50 and neighborhood—is playing out around older ballparks such as Wrigley Field in Chicago
and Busch Stadium in St. Louis, as these teams try to remake much of their surroundings.
And it is the blueprint for future new ballparks, like Globe Life Field, which the Texas
Rangers are building in Arlington, Texas, to replace Globe Life Park, which opened only
twenty-five years ago, and the new ballpark the Oakland Athletics plan for the Howard
55 Terminal section of the Oakland waterfront.

Until these recent developments, it looked as if you could summarize the saga of the
ballpark as one of city to suburb and back again. But now, a generation after Baltimore
reconnected baseball to the energy of the city, ballparks have begun to move in yet another
direction, blurring the distinction between the real city and the artifice⁷ of the ballpark. The
60 private realm of the ballpark has pushed its way into the public realm of the surrounding
city, competing with it in places like St. Louis's Ballpark Village adjacent to Busch Stadium;
in Atlanta, it has obliterated all traces of the real city in favor of the artificial neighborhood
of the Battery, which is, for all intents and purposes, a theme park version of a city. Whether
this phenomenon becomes a true fourth generation in the evolution of the ballpark remains
65 to be seen. But these recent developments underscore what has been true of the baseball
park throughout its life of more than a century and a half: that it has been an indicator not
only of our architectural taste, but also of our attitudes towards cities and community, our
notions of public space, and our changing views about the nature of place. The ballpark is
one of the greatest of all American building types, and it reveals as much about how we treat
70 our cities today as it ever has in the past. ...

—Paul Goldberger
excerpted from *Ballpark: Baseball in the American City*, 2019
Alfred A. Knopf

⁶quasi-urban — partially urban

⁷artifice — deception
