

# 12

## Practice Test 1

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**Practice Test 1**

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION I

Time—1 hour

**Directions:** This section consists of passages drawn from literary works and questions about those passages' style, form, and content. Read each prose selection or poem carefully and choose the best answer to each of the subsequent questions on the passage. Remember to completely darken the corresponding oval on your answer sheet. (Also, be sure to take extra care on those questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.)

**Questions 1–15.** Choose your answers to questions 1–15 based on a careful reading of the following passage.

Phraxos lay eight dazzling hours in a small steamer south of Athens, about six miles off the mainland of the Peloponnesus and in the center of a landscape as

memorable as itself: to the north and west, a great fixed arm of mountains, in whose crook the island stood; to the east a gently peaked archipelago; to the south the soft blue desert of the Aegean stretching away to Crete. Phraxos was beautiful. There was no other adjective;

it was not just pretty, picturesque, charming—it was simply and effortlessly beautiful. It took my breath away when I first saw it, floating under Venus like a majestic black whale in an amethyst evening sea, and it still takes my breath away when I shut my eyes now and remember it. Its beauty was rare even

in the Aegean, because its hills were covered with pine trees, Mediterranean pines as light as greenfinch feathers. Nine-tenths of the island was uninhabited and uncultivated: nothing but pines, coves, silence, sea. Herded into one corner, the north-west, lay a

spectacular agglomeration of snow-white houses round a couple of small harbours.

But there were two eyesores, visible long before we landed. One was an obese Greek-Edwardian hotel near the larger of the two harbours, as at home on Phraxos

as a hansom cab in a Doric temple. The other, equally at odds with the landscape, stood on the outskirts of the village and dwarfed the cottages around it: a dauntingly long building several storeys high and reminiscent, in spite of its ornate Corinthian facade, of

a factory—a likeness more than just visually apt, as I was to discover.

But Lord Byron School, the Hotel Philadelphia, and the village apart, the body of the island, all thirty square miles of it, was virgin. There were some silvery

olive-orchards and a few patches of terrace cultivation on the steep slopes of the north coast, but the rest was primeval pine-forest. There were no antiquities. The ancient Greeks never much liked the taste of cistern-water.

The lack of open water meant also that there were no wild animals and few birds on the island. Its distinguishing characteristic, away from the village, was silence. Out on the hills one might pass a goatherd

and his winter flock (in summer there was no grazing) of bronze-billed goats, or a bowed peasant-woman carrying a huge faggot, or a resin-gatherer; but one very rarely did. It was the world before the machine, almost before man, and what small events happened—the passage of a shrike, the discovery of a new path,

a glimpse of a distant cacique far below—took on an unaccountable significance, as if they were isolated, framed, magnified by solitude. It was the last eerie, the most Nordic solitude in the world. Fear had never touched the island. If it was haunted, it was by

nymphs, not monsters.

I was forced to go frequently for walks to escape the claustrophobic ambiance of the Lord Byron School. To begin with there was something pleasantly absurd about teaching in a boarding school (run on

supposedly Eton-Harrow lines) only a look north from where Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon. Certainly the masters, victims of a country with only two universities, were academically of a far higher standard than Mitford had suggested, and in themselves the

boys were no better and no worse than boys the world over. But they were ruthlessly pragmatic about English. They cared nothing for literature, and everything for

science. If I tried to read the school eponym's poetry with them, they yawned; if I taught the English names

for the parts of a car, I had trouble getting them out of class at lesson's end; and often they would bring me American scientific textbooks full of terms that were just as much Greek to me as the expectant faces waiting for a simple paraphrase.

Both boys and masters loathed the island, and regarded it as a sort of self-imposed penal settlement where one came to work, work, work. I had imagined something far sleepier than an English school, and

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instead it was far tougher. The crowning irony was (80) that this obsessive industry, this mole-like blindness to their natural environment, was what was considered to be so typically English about the system. Perhaps to Greeks, made blasé by living among the most beautiful landscapes in the world, there was nothing discordant (85) in being cooped up in such a territory; but it drove me mad with irritation...

Soon I took to the hills. None of the other masters even stirred an inch farther than they needed to, and the boys were not allowed beyond the *chevaux de frise*\* (90) of the high-walled school grounds except on Sundays, and then only for the half-mile along the coast road to the village. The hills were always intoxicatingly clean and light and remote. With no company but my own boredom, I began for the first time in my life to (95) look at nature, and to regret that I knew its language as little as I knew Greek. I became aware of stones, birds, flowers, land, in a new way, and the walking, the swimming, the magnificent climate, the absence of all traffic, ground or air—for there wasn't a single car on (100) the island, there being no roads outside the village, and aeroplanes passed over not once a month—these things made me feel healthier than I had ever felt before. I began to get some sort of harmony between body and mind; or so it seemed. It was an illusion.

\*literally a "horse of plank" or a wooden horse

Excerpt from *The Magus* by John Fowles (pp. 52-53).  
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1. The word "itself" (line 2) refers to
  - (A) "Phraxos" (line 1)
  - (B) "landscape" (line 3)
  - (C) "mainland" (line 2)
  - (D) "Peloponnesus" (line 3)
  - (E) "desert" (line 7)
2. The narrator's first impression (lines 8-17) was best emphasized by his use of
  - (A) pretentious hyperbole
  - (B) elusive metaphors
  - (C) Metaphysical speculations
  - (D) whimsical onomatopoeia
  - (E) symbolic similes
3. The tone the narrator reflects in his description of the island primarily helps to
  - (A) describe the beauty of the sea and the mountains
  - (B) verbalize his anticipation of the representation of the "Corinthian facade"
  - (C) reinforce the contrast between intellectual pursuits and natural passions
  - (D) provide a pedantic explanation for the lack of towns on the island
  - (E) analyze his primary affinity to the physical surroundings
4. The word "obese" (line 23) refers to the
  - (A) proximity of the hotel to the water
  - (B) correlation between the size of the hotel and the island
  - (C) analogous comparison of a taxi to a hotel
  - (D) intrusion of an ostentatious manifestation of the modern world on the enticing beauty of the island
  - (E) concentration of buildings on the "north-west" section of the island
5. The second paragraph helps to establish the narrator's
  - (A) acceptance of the contrast of civilization and nature on the island
  - (B) uneasiness with his first impression of the island
  - (C) understanding of the significance of the facade of the buildings with his future experiences on the island
  - (D) perspective of the conflict of his inability to escape the trappings of a proper education
  - (E) critical analysis of the island's beauty
6. The speaker establishes the tone of the passage in the fourth paragraph by
  - (A) describing the feeling of solitude the island evoked
  - (B) comparing the isolation of the village with the absence of wild life
  - (C) reflecting on the island's ability to permeate his understanding of reality
  - (D) associating his life in school with feelings of depression
  - (E) stressing the pedagogy to which he adheres

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7. The allusions to Clytemnestra and Agamemnon serve to
- establish an underlying conflict between the pursuits of intellect and those of passion
  - prepare the reader for the surreptitious events that follow
  - explain the influence of myth on the history of the island
  - provide an image of grandeur that the island exuded
  - communicate an atmosphere of antiquity and violence
8. The speaker implies that education on Phraxos is
- superficially mediocre
  - annoyingly archaic
  - overzealously superfluous
  - disconcertingly adequate
  - perplexingly inconsequential
9. The speaker's attitude toward his assignment can best be described as one of
- frustration
  - elation
  - confusion
  - trepidation
  - disappointment
10. The speaker's use of "mole-like blindness" (line 80) implies
- the shortcomings of the British educational system
  - the myopic interests of the students
  - the consequence of the apathy of the island's inhabitants
  - the conundrum of teaching on the island
- I and II
  - I, II, and III
  - II and III
  - III and IV
  - I, II, III, IV
11. The attitude of the speaker is emphasized by the use of
- parody
  - apostrophe
  - imagery
  - repetition
  - hyperbole
12. The use of the metaphor "termitary" (line 85) helps to reinforce all of the following EXCEPT
- the atmosphere of the school is the epitome of a British education
  - the attitude of the Greeks on the island provides a paradoxical contrast to the students in the school
  - the masters and the students seem oblivious to their surroundings
  - the school directed their attention to the pragmatic rather than the romantic application of knowledge
  - the students and masters were task oriented in their approach to life
13. The reader can infer from the last paragraph that the hills make the speaker feel
- laconic
  - languid
  - apathetic
  - congenial
  - impatient
14. "It was an illusion" (line 104) implies
- the speaker's harmonious feelings would confront inner turmoil
  - the weather on the island would soon become dreary
  - the speaker would learn the true meaning of the Greek language
  - there was a war about to break out between the English and the Greeks
  - he would no longer enjoy his moments of solitude in the hills
15. The elements that help reinforce the theme of this passage include all of the following EXCEPT
- imagery
  - allusion
  - diction
  - metaphor
  - paradox

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Questions 16–29. Choose your answers to each of the following questions based on careful reading of the following poem by Christina Rossetti.

Passing away, saith the World, passing away:  
Chances, beauty and youth sapped day by day:  
Thy life never continueth in one stay.

Line Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to gray

- (5) That hath won neither laurel nor bay?  
I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:  
Thou, root stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay  
On my bosom for aye.  
Then I answered: Yea.

- (10) Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away:  
With its burden of fear and hope, or labor and play;  
Hearken what the past doth witness and say:  
Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,  
A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.

- (15) At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day  
Lo the bridegroom shall come and shall not delay:  
Watch thou and pray.  
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away:

- (20) Winter passeth after the long delay:  
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,  
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.  
Tho' I tarry, wait for Me, trust Me, watch and pray.  
Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day,  
(25) My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear Me say.  
Then I answered: Yea.

16. How many "speakers" does the poem directly present?

- (A) one
- (B) two
- (C) three
- (D) four
- (E) five

17. "Laurel" and "bay" (line 5) are allusions to

- (A) flowers highly prized for their rarity which bloom briefly and beautifully and then die
- (B) spices which add flavor to food and, metaphorically, to life
- (C) leaves traditionally woven into wreaths to honor poets
- (D) traditional symbols for Homer and Ovid respectively
- (E) traditional symbols for true faith and pious conduct respectively

18. Lines 6–7 suggest that

- (A) the principal narrator is faced with a choice between the afterlife that true faith offers, or the physical corruption that awaits the unbeliever
- (B) although the World has regenerative powers, the principal narrator of the poem does not
- (C) paradoxically, life can sometimes emerge from death
- (D) there is a natural cyclical pattern of renewal that the principal narrator has forsaken
- (E) the principal narrator is gravely ill and certain to die before the spring

19. Which of the following lines contains an image NOT echoed closely elsewhere in the poem?

- (A) Line 6
- (B) Line 7
- (C) Line 13
- (D) Line 14
- (E) Line 21

20. Which of the following choices best characterizes the speaker's attitude in each of the poem's three stanzas respectively?

- (A) Realization of death's inevitability; fear of physical decay; passive acceptance of what cannot be escaped
- (B) Nostalgia for the earthly world that must be left behind; fear of physical decay; welcome acceptance of the afterlife
- (C) Realization that death will come before one's ambitions have been achieved; dismay over the visible signs of physical decay; supplication for the healing powers of divine intervention
- (D) Sorrow and mild surprise at the arrival of early death; deepening awareness of death's certainty; hopefulness for a place in the afterlife
- (E) Acknowledgment of death's inevitability; understanding of the need to prepare oneself; gladness at the prospect of union with the divine

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21. In the context of the poem "A moth is in thine array" (line 13) is intended to imply that
- (A) the narrator's attire is being eaten by moths
  - (B) the narrator's body is being consumed by cancer, or a cancer-like disease
  - (C) the narrator's soul contains a destructive element which, unless the narrator takes some action, will render it unworthy of the afterlife
  - (D) the narrator's soul is corrupted with sin that only death can purge
  - (E) the narrator's body is being gradually destroyed by the silent and natural processes of life
22. Lines 7 and 8 provide an example of
- (A) apostrophe
  - (B) doggerel
  - (C) enjambment
  - (D) mixed metaphor
  - (E) simile
23. In the third stanza "winter" can be taken to represent
- (A) long disease
  - (B) earthly life
  - (C) the coldness of the grave
  - (D) spiritual despair
  - (E) aging and loss of vigor
24. Which of the following statements most accurately characterizes the relationship of the imagery in the third stanza to that of the first and second stanzas?
- (A) The third stanza weaves together the wedding-day imagery of the second stanza and the springtime imagery of the first stanza, thereby reconciling those earlier stanzas' differing views.
  - (B) Through its imagery the third stanza further develops the themes which were advanced by the first stanza and then questioned by the second stanza.
  - (C) The third stanza echoes much of the first two stanzas' imagery, but recasts that imagery so that what earlier had been likened to decay is instead characterized as renewal.
  - (D) By echoing the imagery of the earlier stanzas the third stanza reaffirms and repeats the views advanced by those stanzas.
  - (E) By introducing the terms "love" and "sister" the third stanza continues the progression by which each stanza proposes its own unique central metaphor around which to further the poem's exploration of the themes of death and renewal.
25. Lines 15 and 16 suggest that
- (A) the principal narrator's final hour will come, despite the small uncertainty of knowing exactly what hour that will be
  - (B) the bridegroom mentioned in line 16 will arrive at three distinct times
  - (C) the hour when a deadly illness first infects the principal narrator cannot be avoided
  - (D) a mysterious and evil stranger will arrive at some time between midnight and morning
  - (E) the principal narrator's soul prophesies that she will eventually meet the man who will become her beloved husband

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26. In context, the word "spray" (line 21) most nearly means

- (A) tree
- (B) blanket
- (C) a small branch
- (D) a liquid mist
- (E) a holy spirit

27. The grammatical subject of the sentence that begins at line 24 is

- (A) "Arise"
- (B) "night is past and lo it is day"
- (C) "My love, My sister, My spouse"
- (D) "thou"
- (E) "Me"





**Questions 28–38.** Choose answers to questions 28–30 based on a careful reading of the passage below. The selection in part discusses Romantic poet John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," particularly that poem's famous closing lines: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." The blank in line 30 represents the omission of a word which will be the subject of a later question.

The question of real importance is not whether Eliot, Murry, and Garrod are right in thinking that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" injures the poem. The question of real importance concerns beauty and truth in a much more general way: What is the relation of the beauty (the goodness, the perfection) of a poem to the truth or falsity of what it seems to assert? It is a question which has particularly vexed our own generation to give it I. A. Richards's phrasing, "it is the problem of belief."

- (10) The "Ode," by its bold equation of beauty and truth, raises this question in its sharpest form—the more so when it becomes apparent that the poem itself is obviously intended to be a parable, on the nature of poetry, and of art in general. The "Ode" has apparently been an enigmatic parable, to be sure: one can emphasize beauty is truth and throw Keats into the pure-art camp, the usual procedure. But it is only fair to point out that one could stress truth is beauty, and argue with the Marxist critics of the 'thirties for a propaganda art. The very ambiguity of the statement, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" ought to warn us against insisting very much on the statement in isolation, and to drive us back to a consideration of the context in which the statement is set.
- (25) It will not be sufficient, however, if it merely drives us back to a study of Keats's reading, his conversation, his letters. We shall not find our answer there even if scholarship does prefer on principle investigations of Browning's \_\_\_\_\_ question, "What porridge had John Keats?" For even if we knew just what porridge he had, physical and mental, we should still not be able to settle the problem of the "Ode." The reason should be clear: our specific question is not what did Keats the man perhaps want to assert here about the relation of beauty and truth; it is rather: was Keats the poet able to exemplify that relation in this particular poem? Middleton Murry is right: the relation of the final statement in the poem to the total context is all-important.
- (40) Indeed, Eliot, in the very passage in which he attacks the "Ode" has indicated the general line which we are to take in its defense. In that passage, Eliot goes on to contrast the closing lines of the "Ode" with a line from King Lear, "Ripeness is all." Keats's lines strike him as false; Shakespeare's, on the other hand, as not clearly false, and as possibly quite true. Shakespeare's generalization, in other words, avoids raising the

question of truth. But is it really a question of truth and falsity? One is tempted to account for the difference of effect which Eliot feels in this way: "Ripeness is all" is a statement put in the mouth of a dramatic character and a statement which is governed and qualified by the whole context of the play. It does not directly challenge an examination into its truth because its relevance is pointed up and modified by the dramatic context.

Now, suppose that one could show that Keats's lines, in quite the same way, constitute a speech, a consciously riddling paradox, put in the mouth of a particular character, and modified by the total context of the poem. If we could demonstrate that the speech was in "character," was dramatically appropriate, was properly prepared for—then would not the lines have all the justification of "Ripeness is all?" In such case, should we not have waived the question of the scientific or philosophic truth of the lines in favor of the application of a principle curiously like that of dramatic propriety? I suggest that some such principle is the only one legitimately to be invoked in any case. Be this as it may, the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" provides us with as neat an instance as one could wish in order to test the implication of such a maneuver.

28. Based on its style and content, the passage is most likely taken from
- (A) a letter exchanged between poets regarding the value of Keats's poetry
- (B) an early nineteenth-century critical appreciation by a friend of John Keats
- (C) a nineteenth-century treatise on poetic technique
- (D) a twentieth-century critical study of the structure of poetry
- (E) a twentieth-century literary essay examining the relationship of the work and the biography of John Keats

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29. Which of the following correctly completes the blank in line 29?
- (A) paradoxical
  - (B) naive
  - (C) perceptive
  - (D) foolish
  - (E) ironic
30. The third paragraph emphasizes which of the following assertions?
- (A) To understand what is meant by "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," one must consider the social and personal context surrounding Keats at the time he composed the lines.
  - (B) In order to pass a meaningful critical judgment upon the final lines of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" one must consider how those lines mesh with the entire poem.
  - (C) The meaning of the final lines of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" cannot be exactly deciphered, which is as Keats perhaps intended.
  - (D) It does not matter what Keats the man wanted to say, but only what Keats the poet wanted to say.
  - (E) The relation of beauty and truth is exemplified by the context of the final statement of the poem.
31. Which of the following best describes the third paragraph?
- (A) It develops the thesis set forth in the second paragraph by focusing the problem onto more manageable areas than the necessarily vague concepts "beauty and truth."
  - (B) It injects a much needed note of levity by poking fun at the scholarly pretensions of poet Robert Browning.
  - (C) It reaffirms the recommendation of the second paragraph after first identifying and repudiating a misinterpretation of the author's initial recommendation.
  - (D) It redirects the assertion of the second paragraph away from a consideration of isolated lines toward the all-important concept of the total poem.
  - (E) It proves that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" can be understood by consideration of the context of those lines within the larger "Ode."
32. Based on the second paragraph, with which of the following statements would the author be most likely to agree?
- (A) The "Ode" was in some part written to offer symbolic instruction about the essence of poetry and art.
  - (B) The "Ode" is a poetic type of riddle.
  - (C) The purpose of Keats' poem was to pose questions, not to provide answers.
  - (D) The meaning of Keats' lines can be found through a combination of the views of the "pure-art camp" and the "Marxist critics of the 'thirties."
  - (E) Both the "pure-art camp" and the "Marxist critics of the 'thirties" are correct in their assessment of the final lines of the "Ode." This ambiguity is what makes the poem an enigmatic parable.

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33. Which of the following asks a question most similar to that posed in lines 5-7?
- (A) How can we know whether a poem is beautiful before we know if it is true?
  - (B) Does the truth of the claims a poem makes affect the poem's artistic merit?
  - (C) Is it more important for a poem to be beautiful than it is to be true?
  - (D) Can a poem deal in unpleasant, even "ugly" truth and still be a good poem?
  - (E) Are truth and beauty truly equivalent, or is the phrase simply "poetic?"
34. Based solely on the passage, it is certain the author disagrees with which of the following statements?
- (A) The lines "Beauty is truth, truth beauty that is all/ye know on Earth and all ye need to know" need not be understood in terms of Keats' own belief in the sentiment these lines express.
  - (B) The lines "Beauty is truth, truth beauty that is all/ye know on Earth and all ye need to know" are effective even when one considers what Keats actually meant to say.
  - (C) The lines "Beauty is truth, truth beauty that is all/ye know on Earth and all ye need to know" are effective only when considered in the context of the total poem.
  - (D) The lines "Beauty is truth, truth beauty that is all/ye know on Earth and all ye need to know" do not mar the perfection of Keats' "Ode."
  - (E) The lines "Beauty is truth, truth beauty that is all/ye know on Earth and all ye need to know" are best understood independently of the poem from which they are drawn.
35. Which of the following is the thesis the author prepares to explore?
- (A) In the context of the poem, a consideration of the last lines of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" as a character's speech shows the lines to be dramatically prepared for as well as provides a test-case for this type of analysis.
  - (B) Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is as great a masterpiece as Shakespeare's *King Lear*.
  - (C) If "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is read as a dramatic monologue delivered by a character not unlike Shakespeare's *King Lear*, it takes on richer meaning.
  - (D) According to the principle of dramatic propriety a character's speeches, no matter how ambiguous or paradoxical, can be justified by the total context of the play or poem.
  - (E) The only principle that may be legitimately invoked concerning "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is that of dramatic propriety.
36. In lines 20-21 the author makes a distinction between two questions in order to
- (A) highlight the extremely subtle difference between what an author says, and what an author intends to say
  - (B) contrast the flaws of an obsolete critical method with the virtues of the author's own method
  - (C) reveal the similarities in the methods of otherwise widely differing critical approaches
  - (D) emphasize that he intends to examine not what exactly the poet meant to say, but whether the poem itself has been crafted into a harmonious embodiment of the poet's ideas
  - (E) underscore the point that a critic must possess a thorough understanding of a poet's biographical situation and beliefs in order to begin to analyze a poem with any fidelity to the author

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37. In the sentence "Keats's lines strike him as false; Shakespeare's, on the other hand, as not clearly false, and as possibly quite true," the comma immediately following "Shakespeare" is
- (A) an error
  - (B) necessary both to bracket the prepositional phrase "on the other hand" and to indicate the omission of the words "lines strike him"
  - (C) necessary to bracket the independent clause "on the other hand"
  - (D) necessary to bracket the dependent clause "on the other hand"
  - (E) an optional comma used here for effect
38. The sentence that begins "In such case, should" (lines 63-67) contains an example of which one of the following?
- (A) simile
  - (B) epic question
  - (C) rhetorical question
  - (D) metaphor
  - (E) onomatopoeia

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Questions 39–53. Read the poem below carefully, and then choose answers to the questions that follow.

Mother, picked for jury duty, managed to get through  
A life of Voltaire in three volumes. Anyway, she knew  
Before she half-heard a word, the dentist was guilty.

Line As a seminarist whose collar is his calling

- (5) Chokes up without it, baring his naked neck,  
The little furtive dentist is led across the deck  
Mounts the plank, renders a nervous cough.  
Mother frowns, turns a page, flick a fly-speck  
With her fingernail. She will push him off!
- (10) Call to her, Voltaire, amid the wreck  
Of her fairmindedness; descended from a line  
Of stiff physicians; dentists are beyond  
The iron palings, the respectable brass plate,  
Illegible Latin script, the chaste degrees.
- (15) Freezing, she acknowledges the mechanic, welder,  
wielder  
Of pliers, hacker, hawker, barber—Spit it out, please.  
Worst of all, this dentist advertises.

- Gliding through Volume II with an easy breast stroke,
- (20) Never beyond her depth, she glimpses him,  
Formerly Painless, all his life-like bridges  
Swept away; tasting brine as the testimony  
Rises: how he chased his siren girl receptionist,  
Purse-lipped, like a starlet playing nurse
- (25) With her doll's kit, round and round the little lab  
where full balconies of plaster teeth  
Grinned at the clinch.

New musical chimes

- Score their dalliance as the reception room fills.
- (30) Pulling away at last from his mastic Nereid,  
He admits a patient; still unstrung,  
Stares past the tiny whirlpool at her, combing  
Her silvery hair over his silver tools, runs the drill—  
Mark this!—the drill through his victim's tongue.
- (35) Mother took all his easy payments, led the eleven  
Crew-members, docile, to her adamant view:  
He was doomed, doomed, doomed, by birth, profession,  
Practice, appearance, personal habits, loves . . .  
And now his patient, swollen-mouthed with cancer!

(40) Doves

- Never cooed like Mother pronouncing sentence.  
She shut Voltaire with a bang, having come out even,  
The last page during the final, smiling ballot,  
The judge, supererogated, studying the docket
- (45) As Mother, with eleven good men in her pocket  
And a French philosopher in her reticule, swept out.

- Nice Mrs. Nemesis, did she ever look back  
At love's fool, clinging to his uneasy chair,  
Gripping the arms, because she had swooped down,  
(50) And strapped him in, to drill him away, then say,  
"Spit out your life, right there."

- Imposing her own version of the Deity  
Who, as the true idolaters well know,  
Has a general practice, instructs in Hygiene &  
(55) Department,  
Invents diseases for His cure and care:  
She knows him indispensable. Like Voltaire.

39. Overall, the Mother's attitude toward the trial related in the poem shows her to be
- (A) interested in seeing that all the relevant facts be uncovered and considered  
(B) completely unaware of the duties imposed upon her by her situation  
(C) one who believes that those brought to trial are almost always guilty  
(D) unconcerned with taking her responsibilities as a juror too lightly  
(E) one who considers herself above the law
40. The phrase "half-heard" (line 3) serves to
- (A) characterize the Mother as elderly  
(B) reinforce the fact that the Mother pays as much attention to reading as the trial  
(C) show that the Mother does not hear well  
(D) emphasize the speed with which the Mother reaches her decision  
(E) suggest the very quiet tone in which the guilty dentist speaks
41. In the second stanza, the dentist is most directly implied to be
- (A) a man suffering from a terminal illness  
(B) a fly-speck  
(C) a seminarist  
(D) a man who will be made to "walk the plank"  
(E) a victim of circumstances over which he has had no control

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42. Which of the following best conveys the meaning in context of "Freezing, she acknowledges the mechanic, welder, wielder/ Of pliers, hacker, hawker, barber" (lines 15-17)?
- (A) The Mother thinks of other tradesmen she dislikes as much as she does dentists.
  - (B) The Mother thinks of professions similar to dentistry.
  - (C) The Mother thinks of the diverse and distasteful aspects of the dentist's profession.
  - (D) The Mother thinks of trades which, like dentistry, she recognizes as necessary although disagreeable.
  - (E) The Mother thinks of the control typically male professions exert upon her and how in this instance the tables are turned.
43. The phrase, "the dentist advertises" principally suggests (line 18):
- (A) the dentist is unscrupulous
  - (B) the dentist is not professionally qualified
  - (C) the dentist's lack of skill causes him to constantly seek new clientele
  - (D) the dentist is a newcomer to the area
  - (E) the dentist offends the Mother's sense of propriety
44. The poem states or implies which of the following?
- I. To a large degree the Mother finds the dentist guilty because he is a dentist.
  - II. The jury finds the dentist guilty.
  - III. The dentist should be found innocent.
- (A) I only
  - (B) II only
  - (C) III only
  - (D) I and II only
  - (E) I, II, and III
45. In the fourth stanza, the dentist is portrayed as
- (A) comically lecherous
  - (B) brutally vicious
  - (C) calculatingly criminal
  - (D) timidly amorous
  - (E) angrily frustrated
46. The phrase "tasting brine" (line 22) indicates the dentist's
- (A) desire for the trial to be over quickly
  - (B) anger at the falsehoods offered as testimony against him
  - (C) shame at the revelations of his unprofessional behaviour
  - (D) fear of being imprisoned for his acts
  - (E) sense of the growing likelihood of a guilty verdict
47. Which one of the following is used as a metaphor for reading?
- (A) dreaming
  - (B) walking
  - (C) conversing
  - (D) swimming
  - (E) flying
48. Which stanza suggests that the Mother's treatment of the dentist could be seen as "poetic justice?"
- (A) 4
  - (B) 5
  - (C) 6
  - (D) 7
  - (E) 8
49. "Nice Mrs. Nemesis" is an example of
- (A) understatement
  - (B) hyperbole
  - (C) irony
  - (D) personification
  - (E) onomatopoeia

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50. The poem's final stanza suggests which of the following?
- I. The mother's vision of God is deeply held but unsophisticated.
  - II. The mother believes that God's views are similar to those of Voltaire's.
  - III. The mother believes that God shares her belief in the need for social decorum.
- (A) I only  
(B) II only  
(C) III only  
(D) I and III only  
(E) II and III only
51. Grammatically, "swept out" (line 46) takes as its subject
- (A) "The judge" (line 44)
  - (B) "Mother" (line 45)
  - (C) "eleven good men" (line 45)
  - (D) "French philosopher" (line 46)
  - (E) "her reticule" (46)
52. The Mother disapproves of the dentist for all of the following reasons EXCEPT
- (A) his religious beliefs
  - (B) his profession
  - (C) his affair with his assistant
  - (D) his demeanor
  - (E) his mistreatment of a patient
53. Which one of the following choices best describes the poet's attitude toward the Mother's jury service?
- (A) frustrated anger
  - (B) anxious shame
  - (C) scornful displeasure
  - (D) cold indifference
  - (E) amused ambivalence

**STOP**

END OF SECTION I

IF YOU FINISH BEFORE TIME IS CALLED, YOU MAY CHECK YOUR WORK ON THIS SECTION.  
DO NOT GO ON TO SECTION II UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total Time—2 hours

Question 1

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay score.)

The passage that follows is a fictional treatment of the young Lee Harvey Oswald, who as an adult would assassinate President John F. Kennedy. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay concerning the methods by which the author has portrayed the subject and the substance of the portrait itself. Be sure to consider such literary elements as diction, imagery, and point of view.

He returned to the seventh grade until classes ended. In summer dusk the girls lingered near the benches on Bronx Park South. Jewish girls, Italian girls in tight skirts, girls with ankle bracelets, their voices

Line

(5) murmurous with the sound of boys' names, with song lyrics, little remarks he didn't always understand. They talked to him when he walked by making him smile in his secret way.

(10) Oh a woman with beer on her breath, on the bus coming home from the beach. He feels the tired salty sting in his eyes of a day in the sun and water.

"The trouble leaving you with my sister,"

Marguerite said, "she had too many children of her own. Plus the normal disputes of family. That meant I

(15) had to employ Mrs. Roach, on Pauline Street, when you were two. But I came home one day and saw she whipped you, raising welts on your legs, and we moved to Sherwood Forest Drive."

Heat entered the flat through the walls and

(20) windows, seeped down from the tar roof. Men on Sundays carried pastry in white boxes. An Italian was murdered in a candy store, shot five times, his brains dashing the wall near the comic-book rack. Kids trooped to the store from all around to see the

(25) traces of grayish spatter. His mother sold stockings in Manhattan.

A woman on the street, completely ordinary, maybe fifty years old, wearing glasses and a dark dress,

(30) handed him a leaflet at the foot of the El steps. Save the Rosenbergs, it said. He tried to give it back thinking he would have to pay for it, but she'd already turned away. He walked home, hearing a lazy radio voice doing a ballgame. Plenty of room, folks. Come on out for the rest of this game and all of the second. It

(35) was Sunday, Mother's Day, and he folded the leaflet neatly and put it in his pocket to save for later.

There is a world inside the world.

He rode the subway up to Inwood, out to Sheepshead Bay. There were serious men down there,

(40) rocking in the copper light. He saw, beggars, men who talked to God, men who lived on the trains, day and night, bruised, with matted hair, asleep in patient

bundles on the wicker seats. He jumped the turnstiles once. He rode between cars, gripping the heavy chain.

(45) He felt the friction of the ride in his teeth. They went so fast sometimes. He liked the feeling they were on the edge. How do we know the motorman's not insane? It gave him a funny thrill. The wheels touched off showers of blue-white sparks, tremendous hissing

(50) bursts, on the edge of no-control. People crowded in, every shape face in the book of faces. They pushed through the doors, they hung from the porcelain straps. He was riding just to ride. The noise had a power and a human force. The dark had a power. He stood at the

(55) front of the first car, hands flat against the glass. The view down the tracks was a form of power. It was a secret and a power. The beams picked out secret things. The noise was pitched to a fury he located in the mind, a satisfying wave of rage and pain.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE 



Carefully read the following poems by Sylvia Plath and William Blake. Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the speakers use imagery to reveal their attitudes toward infancy.

### Morning Song

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.  
The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry  
Took its place among the elements.

- Line* Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.  
(5) In a drafty museum, your nakedness  
Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.  
I'm no more your mother  
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow  
Effacement at the wind's hand.
- (10) All night your moth-breath  
Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:  
A far sea moves in my ear.  
One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral  
In my Victorian nightgown.
- (15) Your mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square  
Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try  
Your handful of notes;  
The clear vowels rise like balloons.
- Sylvia Plath

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### Infant Sorrow

My mother groaned, my father wept;  
Into the dangerous world I leapt,  
Helpless, naked, piping loud,  
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,  
Striving against my swaddling bands,  
Bound and weary, I thought best  
To sulk upon my mother's breast.

—William Blake

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<http://www.online-literature.com/blake/617/>  
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Question 3

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay score.)

“When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him.”

—Jonathon Swift

“Thoughts on Various Subjects, Moral and Diverting”

In some works of literature, the main character often finds himself or herself in conflict with the social or moral values. Choose one novel or play of literary merit in which the character is at odds with the people around him or her, or with society at large. Write an essay in which you explain the merits of the character and how these conflicts are essential to the overall meaning of the work.

You may select a work from the list below, or you may choose to write upon another work of comparable literary merit.

*The Idiot*  
*Moby-Dick*  
*The Turn of the Screw*  
*As I Lay Dying*  
*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*  
*Hamlet*  
*King Lear*  
*Invisible Man*  
*Native Son*  
*Medea*  
*A Fan's Notes*  
*Heart of Darkness*  
*Nausea*  
*Crime and Punishment*  
*Waiting for Godot*

*Man's Fate*  
*The Duchess of Malfi*  
*Wuthering Heights*  
*The Iliad*  
*Hunger*  
*Catch-22*  
*Miss Lonelyhearts*  
*Marat/Sade*  
*Old Goriot*  
*Under the Volcano*  
*The Scarlet Letter*  
*Long Day's Journey Into Night*  
*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*  
*The Yellow Wallpaper*

**STOP**

END OF SECTION II

IF YOU FINISH BEFORE TIME IS CALLED, YOU MAY CHECK YOUR WORK ON THIS SECTION.

# 13

## **Practice Test 1: Answers and Explanations**

## QUESTIONS 1–15

This passage from the beginning of *The Magus*, a novel by contemporary British author John Fowles, is a selection that exhibits a sophistication of style that you will find on the AP Literature Exam. This exam tests your knowledge, not only of literary elements, but of how well you comprehend the effect of those elements on the selection as a whole.

The voice of the narrator is important in this piece, as it is in every piece. But after you have finished reading this selection, you should be able to recognize that the narrator's realization of his situation was reflected in the setting.

1. **The correct answer is (A).** You may have read answer choice (A), which is a straightforward answer, and thought "oh, that's the answer" and then puzzled over the other choices wondering if you'd missed something. Perhaps (B) and (C) seemed to be possible answers also. Most of the time a pronoun refers to the last noun that has been named, but there are exceptions to this rule. In this case, the narrator is telling us that Phraxos, which is in the center of the landscape (B), was as memorable as the landscape was. When you looked at choice (C) again, you would have seen that "mainland" was used for location rather than imagery. Choice (D) could not have been the correct choice because a noun must precede the pronoun, not the other way around. Your only logical choice then was (A).
2. **The correct answer is (E).** Remember that when you are given choices that contain two words, both words must correctly answer the question. If one of the words is not accurate, then the entire choice must be eliminated. This question also tests your knowledge of literary terminology. Choice (A) could have been eliminated immediately because the narrator states that it was "simply and effortlessly beautiful." That alone would have eliminated choice (A) because "pretentious" indicates it was showy and not simple. The description is also not a form of a hyperbole. Choice (B) could have been a close choice because of the term "metaphor." In the phrase "amethyst evening sea," one could see that the adjective "amethyst" can be seen as a color or as a gem. However, the term "elusive" eliminates the answer because "elusive" indicates that it is intangible and mysterious. The concrete comparisons that are used in lines (5–10) would also help to eliminate this answer. Choice (C) indicates that the comparisons that are made are farfetched and do not have any concrete references. This is not the case. Choice (D) indicates that there is no depth to the impression the landscape has made on the narrator. This is the exact opposite of what has occurred. (E) is the correct answer. The comparisons used in these lines are predominately similes and when you continue reading, it is evident that the use of Venus and the use of the whale are symbolic. Venus, the brightest planet in the sky, is used in contrast with a black whale in an evening sea. Also, Venus is symbolic of passion and romantic notions, whereas the whale is a symbol of earthly and pragmatic ideals.
3. **The correct answer is (C).** Make sure you understand what this question is asking. To answer it, you need to first think about what the narrator's tone is as he describes the island. He is clearly awed by its beauty. Now, what is the effect of this awe? Choice (A) seems pretty redundant, and does not really address how the tone advances something else. Does it advance his anticipation of the one "facade?" This choice is only partially correct; the narrator is expressing something about the setting. However, he is not offering a logical explanation of the lack of towns on the island (D); this does not really suit the tone of awe and beauty. Same thing with (E)—the narrator is not offering a cold, objective analysis. So what does his awed description of the island's beauty *do*? It highlights the contrast between nature and the intellect, choice (C).

4. **The correct answer is (D).** This is a question that depends on you taking the time to refer to the line in which the word "obese" appears. If you rely on the definition you might erroneously choose (B) because the answer indicates a size. Don't forget if you are given a line number, you must check to see how the word is used. Read at least one sentence before the word appears and one sentence after the word appears to get a better understanding of the meaning of the word in context. Rarely will you be asked for a textbook definition of a word, although it might happen. Choice (A) deals with the location of the hotel to the water, which does not answer the question. Choice (C) does reflect a comparison to the analogy that the narrator makes, but it does not answer the question. The question is asking what the word "obese" is being used to describe. Choice (E) is a detail found in the previous paragraph that has to do with location. The remaining choice is (D). The word "obese" implies a very large object that is evidently out of place. This hotel is the result of modern commercialism and an intrusion on the landscape. Even if you did not know the meaning of all of the words in this selection, through POE, you should have arrived at choice (D).
5. **The correct answer is (C).** This question asks you to reflect on the importance of the second paragraph to the selection as a whole. The narrator recognizes that the building has a "facade." He later learns that this is not the only thing that has a disguise. He learns that the feelings of harmony he has are also an "illusion." Choice (A) is not accurate. The word "acceptance" is not true of this passage. When he arrives on the island he sees it in terms of simple beauty and considers the modern buildings to be "eyesores." The word "uneasiness" in choice (B) is not an accurate description of his impression. The second paragraph does not help to establish choice (C) even though this may be true of your understanding of the passage. Remember that you must select the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question. The second paragraph offers a critical analysis of the island's beauty, not the intrusion of civilization.
6. **The correct answer is (C).** Once again, you must take a look at the entire paragraph before you make a decision. In order to establish tone, you must consider the word choice and the imagery that the author has provided. In this case choice (A) only refers to the description of the solitude of the island. Choice (B) refers only to one of the comparisons the narrator states. Choice (D) does not provide an accurate picture of the narrator's attitude in this paragraph, which is evident by his use of the words "significance," and "eerie." Neither of those words indicates depression. With the mention of nymphs and monsters in the last sentence, it is evident that a scholarly tone is not evident in this paragraph. Choice (C) is the best answer for this question. It provides a more in-depth understanding of what the narrator is trying to express.
7. **The correct answer is (A).** This question provides you with the fact that the names of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon are allusions. If you do not know where they were in Greek tragedy and mythology then you might not understand what is being asked of you. Clytemnestra was the wife of Agamemnon, a Greek warrior who accompanied Odysseus to Troy. Prior to his departure, he sacrificed his daughter, Iphigenia, to the gods in order that he might return home safely. He rationalized his decision to kill his daughter. His wife, Clytemnestra, also sister to the infamous Helen of Troy, vowed revenge on Agamemnon for the murder. Agamemnon returned home safely, only to be murdered by his wife. This conflict provides the correct answer to this question. You should not have chosen choice (B) because there are not surreptitious events that follow in this passage, as is evident by the narrator's understanding of the

misconception of the harmony he felt. If you chose (C) you may have recognized the names from Greek mythology, but there is no mention of the history of the island by the narrator. If you chose (D), you may have recognized the Greek names in relationship with a kingdom, but the word "grandeur" is not the word that would be used to describe the island. It is its natural beauty that captivates the narrator. You could eliminate choice (E) because nowhere in the passage is there a reference to violence. Once again, you might have been able to make the correct choice by Process of Elimination.

8. **The correct answer is (D).** This question requires you to have an understanding of the vocabulary used in the choices. Once again, you must remember that both words must accurately describe the speaker's impression of education on the island. In this case, choice (A) can be eliminated because the education is a solid and practical British education, not superficial. You can also eliminate choice (B) because it may be annoying to the narrator, but it is not archaic, merely adequate and current. Choice (C) does not provide you with any choices that are accurate. Choice (E) may provide you with the idea that the education one receives there is inconsequential, but it is not perplexing to the speaker. He understands that the education is an adequate education, but he is frustrated that education does not involve more of a romantic notion of education. Therefore the best answer is choice (D).
9. **The correct answer is (A).** The speaker finds the school constricting and the students exasperating. They preferred to talk about cars rather than poetry. This he found frustrating, choice (A). If you had chosen (E), you chose an answer that was close to correct, but it was more than disappointment that the narrator felt; it was frustration.
10. **The correct answer is (A).** This type of question poses the most difficulty for students. Once again, you need to look carefully at the question and the choices you are given. Eliminate the choices that do not supply the correct implications. It is true that the narrator believes that there are shortcomings in the British educational system. The education fostered an interest for science and little for literature. If you decided that in I choice was a correct answer, you are on the right track. You can eliminate choice (C) and choice (D). If you look at choice II you will see that the "myopic" or limited vision of the students who only wanting to learn scientific information and not that of literature, also makes selection II a valid statement. Since the choices that are left all include II, you have to look at III and IV and determine whether or not they also apply. Selection III may be true, but you need to refer to line 80 to make sure you understand what the object of reference is to "mole-like blindness." You can easily determine that this reference loosely applies to education. In that case, you can eliminate selection III because it refers to all inhabitants of the island. We do not know if this statement is true based on this selection. Now you can also eliminate choices (E) and (B). Choice IV is not true, and therefore you are left with choice (A).
11. **The correct answer is (C).** This question requires you to know the various literary terminology. Parody is not evident in this passage. You can eliminate choice (A). Apostrophe, which is usually used in poetry, is not used in this passage. You can eliminate choice (B). Repetition is often used by good writers, but choice (D) indicates that the attitude of the speaker is emphasized by their usage. So choice (D) is not the best answer for this question. Take a look at (E). Hyperbole is not used. Now, you need to decide between choice (C) and choice (D). This passage, as most literary passages, does depend on the author's use of imagery to make his point. So keep choice (C). That leaves choice (C), the correct answer.

12. **The correct answer is (B).** You may say “I don’t know the meaning of *termitary*” (a nest of termites). But remember that this is an EXCEPT question. In this case notice the word *except* in the statement. Take a look and see if what the statements say are true even if you don’t understand the term. You do know that choice (A) is correct. The atmosphere of the school on Phraxos is the same as it is in England. You know that the attitude of the Greeks on the island is not in contrast to those of the students in school. The Greeks may not pay attention to their surroundings, but the students in the school are also Greek and receiving a British education. This statement therefore cannot be true. A look at the other choices indicates statements that you have already decided as accurate in other questions. Choice (C) indicates that masters and students do not appreciate their surroundings. This choice is a true statement. Choice (D) is implied when the narrator states that the students devoured any scientific information that the masters provided. Choice (E) implies the same response as choice (D). Therefore, the answer is (B).
13. **The correct answer is (D).** Your choice of the correct answer depends on your knowledge of vocabulary. “Laconic” means uncommunicative. You could possibly infer that the speaker did not communicate with others based on this selection, however, once again you need to read the statement carefully. You are asked to infer how the hills made the speaker feel. They made him feel harmonious with nature. Choice (B) indicates they made him feel weak. This is not true. You can eliminate it. Choice (C) is the opposite of what the speaker felt. You can eliminate (C) as well. Although the speaker may have felt impatient at times, the hills did not make him feel that way. You can eliminate (E). Choice (D) is the best answer.
14. **The correct answer is (A).** Don’t forget to refer to the reference line. “It was an illusion” refers to the speaker’s feelings of harmony between body and mind. The closest answer for the question is (A). You can eliminate (B) because the choice indicates that the climate was an illusion. That is not true. You can also eliminate (C) because it deals with the Greek language and the narrator previously indicated that he knew very little Greek. This is a detail and not a sufficient response to the statement. Choice (D) indicates a feeling of animosity between the two cultures. This is not a correct choice. Choice (E) indicates the speaker will not enjoy his time in the hills. That is not what the speaker says previously. Remember, in a reference question, you must look at what comes just before the line and what comes after it, if appropriate. Without a doubt, (A) is the answer.
15. **The correct answer is (E).** Once again you are quizzed on your knowledge of terminology. Refer to the back of the book if you are not familiar with the literary terms that have been used in these questions. The key to understanding what is being asked of you is to look at the question. The question is not asking you what literary elements are used in the passage—it is asking what elements help to reinforce the meaning of the selection. In this case, all but (E) are correct.

## QUESTIONS 16–29

The passage is by Christina Rossetti (1830–94), and was written when she was in her early thirties. The poem’s spiritual, death-haunted theme is typical of Rossetti, who was beset with ill-health her entire—yet relatively long—life.

The Rossettis, Christina and her brothers William Michael and Dante Gabriel, were at the center of an influential mid-nineteenth-century arts movement called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Pre-Raphaelite painting and writing was concerned with medieval themes, with romance (often tinged with self-destruction or death), nature, nostalgia, and vivid imagery and color.

Christina’s brother, Dante (arguably the leader of the Pre-Raphaelite movement) is guilty of one of the truly cheese-ball acts of literary narcissism. When Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s wife died, the painter-poet buried the manuscripts of several of his poems in the casket with her. Ah, love. Seven years later he decided maybe it wasn’t such a good idea and had the mess dug up so he could get his poems back. The last laugh, however, is on Dante, whose literary reputation is waning, whereas, after years spent in her brother’s shadow, Christina Rossetti has acquired a growing respect from the literary world.

The poem on the test (like almost everything Christina Rossetti wrote) is a meditation on the transience of life and the inevitability of death. When, in the third stanza, God promises to come for the poet when her hour arrives, the poem becomes an avowal of faith.

While the bulk of the poem’s meaning is accessible to most readers, the questions asked on the test lay several traps for the unwary. When reading and interpreting poetry, be on guard against making assumptions that can’t be justified. Several questions have incorrect choices that suggest the principal narrator is on her deathbed. You should not reason that the poem’s intense contemplation of death indicates the poet is gravely ill or about to die; it is an unwarranted assumption.

Another difficulty you face when answering the questions on the Rossetti passage is that the questions ask about some of the poem’s subtler points. There are several questions, for example, about the important shift in the recurrent nature imagery that occurs in the poem’s final stanza. Complications also rise from the presence of more than one speaker in the poem.

There is a longstanding tradition in English poetry of conversing with the spiritual forces of the cosmos and oneself. It may seem a hopelessly old-fashioned device, but poets up to the present day continue to create interesting and important works using this convention. The Rossetti poem, however, not only has the speaker in dialogue with the metaphysical world, but in the second stanza takes matters a degree further by having the Soul speak with the voice of the past. Following the line “Hearken what the past doth witness and say:” the Soul presents what the past has to say about human mortality. You needed to understand that in this stanza the past is *not* being directly presented as a speaker, in fact the past is probably not even being quoted; the Soul is interpreting the past for the benefit of the principal narrator. This is a tangled piece of rhetorical construction and causes most students some problems.

Overall, the passage, taken together with its questions, is at the difficult end of the spectrum of work you will see on the AP English Literature and Composition Exam.

16. **The correct answer is (D).** As noted in the general notes to the passage, this is a tough question. Most students choose answer choice (E), five. But the past is not a speaker. The past is being interpreted for the principal narrator by the Soul. Another choice that sophisticated readers sometimes pick is (A), one. The reasoning behind choosing (A) is usually that only the poet is speaking; the Soul, World, and God represent elements and ideas within the poet. In this reading, the poem is a kind of internal monologue in which the poet sorts out her feelings about death and the afterlife. This interpretation is absolutely plausible (Rossetti certainly did not intend for you to think she had actually held a conversation with the World or with God).



The problem is that it is an *interpretation*. The question asks, "How many speakers does the poem present?" The emphasis is on what the poem presents, not what the poem might suggest. The question is not asking for an interpretation but simply for what the poem presents. It presents four speakers.

17. **The correct answer is (C).** This is one of the relatively rare knowledge questions on the test. You either know it or you don't. Eighty to ninety percent of the test is about your ability to understand the material you read, both the details and the larger picture. But there are some facts which ETS feels they can expect you know. They expect you to know the basic terminology of literary criticism and form (i.e., simile, metaphor, sonnet, couplet, etc.) and they occasionally ask about those literary historical references a broadly read individual should recognize. This question is an example of the latter.
- In ancient Greek and Roman society a garland of laurel and bay leaves was awarded in recognition of triumph in sports, war, or poetry. The original "gold medal" of the Olympics was a laurel wreath, as is that wreath you always see framing Julius Caesar's bald pate. The reason the answer specifically mentions poets is that laurel (bay is a variety of laurel) was the symbolic flower of Apollo, patron God of poetry. Even today, when people are honored as the national poet their title is *poet laureate*. Speaking of honors, graduation from college with a bachelor's degree will mean that you have earned your *baccalaureate*, a term derived from the medieval university tradition of crowning graduates with laurel.
18. **The correct answer is (B).** The lines in question here, "I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:/Thou, root stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay," contrast the cyclical progress of the seasons with the linear trajectory of human life. Line 7 is a troublemaker line for many students, who frequently pick-up on "root-stricken" as indicating that the principal narrator is deathly ill. What root-stricken refers to is the fundamental presence of death in human life. The author and humans in general are "root-stricken" in the sense that death is immanent in us from the beginning, or to use another plant metaphor: We carry the seed of death within us from conception.
19. **The correct answer is (C).** The incorrect answers all make use of imagery that draws on living things, especially plants, and of the changing seasons. In line 13, the image of "Rust in thy gold" is the one image of the poem that draws neither on the seasons nor on living things.
20. **The correct answer is (E).** In this question the key was to use Process of Elimination, reading each answer choice carefully for what makes it *wrong*. An answer that gets the meaning of two out of three stanzas correct is still all wrong. In these kinds of questions, pay close attention to the wording of the answer choices. In (B), for example, you should reason that stanza 1, "nostalgia for the earthly world that must be left behind" is close enough to leave alone, and "welcome acceptance of the afterlife" for stanza 3 is substantially correct. However, "fear of physical decay" for stanza 2 is only half-correct. Physical decay is certainly contemplated, but fear is much too strong a term. This makes the answer wrong. Cross it off. Working this way you should find yourself, without too much trouble, left only with the correct answer, (E).
21. **The correct answer is (E).** The question shouldn't have given you too much trouble. You were asked, essentially, what "a moth in thine array" is meant to signify metaphorically. The image is yet one more description of the natural aging process. The incorrect choices offer various misreadings, either seeing illness where none is present, or spiritual anxieties that neither the line in question, nor the poem as a whole, is concerned with.

22. **The correct answer is (C).** This is another terminology question. If it gave you any trouble you should refer to our section on literary terms for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam. Also, remember to use Process of Elimination to get rid of those answers you are sure are wrong and guess with what's left. No blanks!
23. **The correct answer is (B).** This is a question that many students get wrong. Always return to the passage. The third stanza presents a dramatic reversal in the poem's meaning and direction by refiguring imagery from the previous stanzas with an antithetical meaning. In the first two stanzas, Spring and all the imagery of Spring are used to represent youth, energy, and life. You might easily think then that winter, as Spring's opposite, represents (E) aging and loss of vigor, or perhaps (C) the coldness of the grave, that is, death itself. But the question asks for the meaning of winter in the *third* stanza. In this stanza God says that now "winter passeth after the long delay." What follows are images of spring now clearly tied to death and the afterlife. Spring in the final stanza is a metaphor for the joy of reunion with God. In the final stanza, God offers death as a joyous spring-like occasion. It is earthly life, separate from the Maker, which is the long winter.
24. **The correct answer is (C).** As with all questions with longer answers you must read carefully and eliminate when an answer is partially correct. Partially correct means all wrong. Otherwise, the reasoning behind this question is fully covered in the explanation to question 23.
25. **The correct answer is (A).** Understanding the lines in question is less a matter of the lines themselves than letting them make sense in the overall context of the poem. If you understood the bulk of the poem, then this shouldn't have been a difficult question. If the poem itself gave you trouble, this question might have as well. The incorrect choices offer various misreadings and over-interpretations.
26. **The correct answer is (C).** One of the easiest questions on the test. This is essentially a vocabulary question, but chances are you were unfamiliar with the passage's usage of the word "spray." It was a matter of figuring out the meaning from context. None of the incorrect answers makes sense in context except possibly (A), and we hope that between (A) and (C), you chose (C).
27. **The correct answer is (D).** You are certain to see a question (or two or three) like this on your test. If you got this question wrong, brush up on your skills with our section on grammar for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam (page 123). As outlined in that section, the best way to figure out the construction of the kind of sentence ETS likes to ask about is to rewrite the sentence (in your mind—you shouldn't need to actually write it down) into a more natural form. The sentences ETS chooses are never straightforward "subject, verb, direct-object, indirect object" sentences like "Jack threw the ball to me." The sentence that begins line 24 "Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day, My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear me say," should be re-written:

"Thou shalt hear me say, 'Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day,  
My love, My sister, My spouse.'"

Notice we've put quotation marks around what God reports he will say. This is how the sentence would normally be punctuated. Written this way, it should be no problem to see that "Thou" is the grammatical subject.

## QUESTIONS 28–38

The passage is by critic Cleanth Brooks. Brooks was a leading member of the “New Critics,” an influential school of literary criticism that flourished in the United States and England from the 1930s through the 1960s. The New Criticism was never as monolithic as some of its detractors have claimed. Important New Critics like Brooks, William Empson, and Robert Penn Warren, had numerous differences and each was a highly idiosyncratic (and successful) writer. But they did share some common assumptions about literary criticism. Uppermost was their belief that a work of literature should be interpreted through the words on the page. The author’s psychological imperatives and historical situation were to be considered only slightly if at all (in general not at all.) The test’s passage highlights this feature of New Critical thought, most obviously in the paragraph that cites Browning’s ironic question, “What porridge had John Keats?”

Another feature of New Criticism is its emphasis on “close reading.” That is, New Critics were famous (or infamous) for spending pages discussing a single line, sometimes even a single word, of a poem. This was probably the inevitable result of an approach that limited one’s discussion solely to the text, treating the author as little more than a name at the bottom of the page. But while sometimes excessive and dubiously reasoned, close reading, at its best, in the hands of critics like Brooks or Empson, could sometimes produce ten pages of illuminating thought about a single line.

Since 1960, English and American literary criticism has come increasingly under the influence of continental European modes of thought. The European critics (led by French scholars such as Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, and Kristeva) have literary criticism take on broader issues of language and society while holding itself to a kind of philosophical rigor. Against this very different current of thought, New Criticism has fallen by the wayside. Nevertheless, most contemporary scholars agree that New Criticism, especially when applied to poetry, the form to which it is best suited, has produced exciting and original commentary.

The passage is, of course, nonfiction, which is mildly unusual for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam. But past AP Literature Exams have sometimes included nonfiction passages, and you shouldn’t be thrown off if you see something like this on the test you take. This passage would be right at home on the AP exams, so if you’re wondering what sort of stuff shows up on the Language Exam, this is a very good example. But keep in mind that the questions would emphasize structure and technique more.

If you were unfamiliar with Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn” you might have felt this passage was somewhat unfair: How are you supposed to understand a passage and answer questions about a poem you haven’t read or can’t remember? Well, there’s no doubt you would have felt more comfortable answering the questions on this passage if you knew Keats’s great “Ode,” but realize the questions focused on the passage’s general argument, not on details of Keats’s poem. Knowing the “Ode” wasn’t necessary to understanding the passage and even less to answering the questions. But this brings up an important point. Confidence plays a large role in standardized test taking, and test taking in general. Don’t let unfamiliar or difficult passages rattle you. Chances are if a question or even a whole passage seems tough (or even impossible), you aren’t alone—tens of thousands of other AP students across the country feel the very same thing. If you keep this in mind and don’t get rattled, a hard passage could work to your *advantage*: While your peers experience mental meltdown, you’re just working away knowing that you’ll float to the top of the curve.

28. **The correct answer is (D).** It would have sped up your elimination of answers to know that when the author mentions Eliot he means T.S. Eliot, the modernist poet and critic. You would have been able to scratch out the answers that place the passage in the nineteenth century; Eliot was active as a poet and critic in the first half of the twentieth century. But the AP English Literature Exam above all a comprehension test, and this question was actually a disguised comprehension question. You didn't need any special knowledge about the names mentioned in the passage. You needed to understand that the passage is drawn from a larger work that uses Keats's poem to test certain means of looking at poetry in general. This focus becomes most apparent in the last line of the passage, where the author writes: "Be this as it may, the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' provides us with as neat an instance as one could wish in order to test the implication of such a maneuver." This line should make it clear that the true subject of discussion is less Keats's poem than the trying out of a means of interpretation. The correct answer does *not* mention Keats. Many students cross out (D) for this reason. Those students get the question wrong. A better way to work was to cross out those answers which contained something wrong. Choice (A) was simply ridiculous. The passage is nothing like a personal letter, nor does it question the value of Keats's poetry. (Keats's best poems, particularly the Odes, are as unassailable as Shakespeare's work.) In choice (B), again the emphasis is incorrectly on Keats, and you should have recognized the style of the passage as distinctly twentieth century, certainly not *early* nineteenth century. Choice (C) emphasizes poetic technique, yet nowhere in the passage is the nitty-gritty of poetic composition discussed—eliminate. Choice (E) emphasizes the life and work of Keats. This is precisely the critical approach the author explicitly rejects. This leaves only choice (D), the correct answer.
29. **The correct answer is (E).** Here you needed to realize that the blank in the passage precedes a *deliberately* and *obviously* foolish question. Filling the blank with the word "foolish" would indicate that Browning didn't realize his question was silly. Assuming Browning was sane—a safe assumption—that couldn't be the case. All the same, nine out of ten students pick (D), "foolish," here and get the question wrong. Of the choices given, (E) is the only possible choice. When a statement is made that intentionally calls attention to its foolishness, that statement is ironic.
30. **The correct answer is (B).** The correct answer nicely paraphrases the sense of the third paragraph. The incorrect choices make, in one way or another, a garble of the paragraph. Choice (A) speaks for the importance of biographical understanding, which is exactly what the author is arguing against. Choice (C) mentions a point discussed in the second paragraph, not the third. Choice (D) makes of a mess of a key sentence by repeating the word "want" where the author discussed what was "exemplified." Choice (E) passes judgment, whereas in the passage the question of whether or not Keats's last lines are successful is still in dispute.
31. **The correct answer is (C).** This was a plain old hard question. Understanding the answer choices was a reading comprehension question in itself. Well, you want every point you can get, but don't think that means you should or are going to get every question right. The proper technique here, as with any question you are less than 100 percent sure of, was to go through the choices one phrase at a time and eliminate what you found to be wrong. If you kept your concentration and eliminated well you should have been left with the right answer. For example, choice (D) might have tempted you if you were looking for correct answers: "all-important concept of the total poem" probably sounded pretty good. Looking for what is wrong however, you would have noticed that the answer's description of the second paragraph is way off the mark, and you would have eliminated it.

32. **The correct answer is (A).** The question relied on your ability to understand what the author meant by “it becomes apparent that the poem itself is obviously intended to be a parable, on the nature of poetry, and of art in general.” A parable is a story that offers symbolic instruction. By saying that the Ode is “an enigmatic parable, to be sure,” the author indicates that just what symbolic instruction Keats intended is open to interpretation, but Choice (B) takes this reading too far by suggesting that the poem is a riddle. Choice (C) is similar to choice (B), and wrong for the same reasons. Choice (D) uses words from the paragraph to say things the passage never came close to stating. Like choice (D), choice (E) uses phrases from the passage. Its point may be more reasonable than (D)’s, but it too is not found in the paragraph.
33. **The correct answer is (B).** Here your task was to paraphrase a difficult, abstractly phrased question. A good technique would have been to rephrase (and simplify) the question in your own words. For example: What is the relation of the goodness of a poem to its truth or falsity? Having done this you should see that the question is asking about the relationship of a poem’s truth to the quality of the poem. Most simply, the question is: Does a poem have to be true to be good? Notice that most of the wrong answers use the proper terms—truth, beauty—but misplace the emphasis. For example, choice (C) asks which is more important, truth or beauty? You should have been able to see that the relationship of truth to beauty, not their relative importance, was at issue.
34. **The correct answer is (E).** Questions where you’re looking for what *isn’t* right are real mind-benders, and students miss them all the time. They seem easy enough in principle, but when it comes to actually doing them under time pressure and with all the other stresses of taking the test it sometimes seems like you can actually feel your brain getting crisped. Take these questions slowly, and concentrate. What usually happens is you’re fine through the first choice or so but then the strain of making sense of ETS’s gobbledeygook language gets to be too much and you lose it.

There are two key words in the question. The first, of course, is “disagrees,” but another key word is “certain.” You must look for what the passage shows the author to be definitely against. Don’t get caught up in wondering if he *might* or *might not* disagree. You need to find what he definitely disagrees with. We mentioned this earlier but it’s worth repeating here: On “opposite” type questions, don’t use Process of Elimination unless you absolutely have to—just look for the right answer. Choice (E) is correct because he thinks the lines *cannot* be understood independently of the poem. The incorrect choices all offer ideas with which the author agrees or which are uncertain (that is, ideas where it isn’t certain he disagrees). He might disagree, maybe we have a strong hunch he’ll disagree, but that isn’t enough. We’ve got to be certain.

35. **The correct answer is (A).** This question called on your ability to see where the passage was headed. You should have seen two points: First, the author was preparing to support the last two lines of the poem by treating them as character’s speech rather than as the testimony of Keats. Second, the author intends this defense to provide a test-case example of the value of his method of treating poems as akin to dramatic monologues.

When the answer choices are longish, as they are for this question, remember to beware of the “little” words. What seems like a plausible answer often falls apart when you take that answer word by word and phrase by phrase. Choice (E), for example, might have been tempting. If you looked at the word “only,” however, you would have changed your mind. Does the author really suggest that dramatic propriety is the *only* principle that can be applied to “Ode on a Grecian Urn”? No. He says that he thinks it is the only principle to apply when considering the appropriateness of the last two lines, but that is much more specific. (E) is also wrong because a further discussion of this point is not where the passage is headed.

36. **The correct answer is (D).** Here your task was to understand the author's use of the questions in lines 21–23. The point was to emphasize that the author does not believe understanding Keats's intent reveals much about the poem. He wants to look at what Keats actually wrote and consider whether it hangs together with the unity of a true work of art. The correct answer paraphrases this idea well.
37. **The correct answer is (B).** This question brings up a fairly uncommon grammatical point, but assuming you knew the comma was mandatory (and eliminated (A) and (E) from your choices) all you really needed to be able to do was identify "on the other hand" as a phrase and not a clause. This would have eliminated (C) and (D).
- The correct answer mentions the often unnoticed use of a comma to mark omissions. Here's an example: John's coat was black; Jim's, blue. As you know, a semicolon joins related sentences. That is, what follows a semi-colon should be a complete sentence. In our example "Jim's, blue" certainly doesn't look like a complete sentence, but it is in fact legit. The comma represents the omission of "coat was."
38. **The correct answer is (C).** This is a straightforward literary term question. If you had any trouble with it, refer to our glossary of terms on page 195.

### QUESTIONS 39–53

The passage is the poem "A Long Line of Doctor's" by contemporary American poet Carolyn Kizer. Overall, the questions shouldn't have caused you too many problems as long as you had a working sense of the general content of the poem and kept the poem's main idea in mind.

Essentially, the poem describes a character called Mother (we shouldn't presume that the poem is in fact about Kizer's mother, the poem might narrate an entirely fictional trial and fictional people) who serves on the jury at the trial of a dentist. The Mother takes a strange and not particularly honorable approach to her duties; she simply finds the dentist guilty from the moment she lays eyes on him, and so pays as much attention to the book she's reading as to the trial itself. If you got this much from the poem you would be off to a good start. Using POE carefully should have solved most (or all) of your problems.

39. **The correct answer is (D).** This question called for you to interpret the answer choices carefully. You needed to pay strict attention to the wording of the choices. Choice (A) should have been an easy first elimination. It describes an attitude completely opposite to that of the Mother's. The other three incorrect answers were a little bit tricky. In (B), was she "completely unaware?" Take the statement literally. Does she not know that she will be called upon to deliver a verdict? Of course she does. She may be unaware of some of the ethical duties imposed on her, but that doesn't make her "completely" unaware. Eliminate (B). Similarly, in (C), just because the Mother judges the dentist according to her own rather than legal standards we can't assume that she would face every jury situation this way, nor in fact does she hold the dentist's status as accused against him. She just doesn't like creepy little dentists. (E) shouldn't have been too tough to eliminate. The Mother certainly considers herself superior to the dentist (and probably a lot of other people as well) but how she feels the law applies to her we don't know. Eliminate. This leaves only (D). Yes, it's fair to say that the Mother takes her responsibilities too lightly, and her certainty about the whole affair tells us that she is has no doubts about her fitness as a juror.

40. **The correct answer is (B).** This should have been a piece of cake. You needed to not read too much into the phrase "half-heard." Don't let the answer choices' power of suggestion steer you down false paths. The Mother half-hears because she's reading. If the poet wanted to suggest age or poor hearing she would have returned to those ideas to make them clearer. Here, she wants to reinforce the impression that the Mother has made up her mind so fully that she barely bothers with the details of the trial.
41. **The correct answer is (D).** This is an extremely tricky question. Many students pick answer choices (B) or (C). But the dentist is not said to be a seminarian (a clergyperson.) The dentist is uncomfortable like a priest without the white collar of that profession. The rest of the stanza relates the courtroom to a ship. (e.g. the "plank," the "deck.") The dentist isn't compared to a condemned sailor, but is described as though he is one when the Mother pushes the fly-speck from the page, and says "she will push him off." This refers to the way in which she will push him from the plank. It also suggests that she thinks of him as easily dismissed and insignificant as a fly, and perhaps as repulsive. But the poet does not describe the dentist as a fly-speck. Choice (E) may or may not be true, but it is found neither in the stanza, nor in the poem. Only (D) is correct.
42. **The correct answer is (C).** Here you needed to understand that the poem is about the Mother and the dentist, not about other people. That is, you needed to stay with the main idea. The phrase in question refers only to the dentist, in fact choice (C) summarizes it nicely. The dentist is the "hacker, wielder of pliers" etc. Yes, some of the items in the list are a bit confusing, but use your imagination. How is the dentist a "barber"? Well, think of the hydraulic chair you have to sit in, or the bib the dentist pulls around your neck; aren't those things reminiscent of being in a barber-shop?
43. **The correct answer is (E).** Here you needed to stay with the main idea and not get drawn toward a silly answer. Throughout the poem the Mother feels herself to be superior to dentists in general and to this dentist in particular. The Mother is a tremendous snob; she considers dentists low-lives. Advertising is just one more thing that her-kind-of-people just don't do. You might have had some difficulty if you didn't know the word "propriety." It refers to what is proper or polite. POE should have led you to the right answer anyway however, so long as you saw that other answers all involved reading much too deeply into the passage.
44. **The correct answer is (D).** This is a super POE question and it should have been pretty easy. Choices I and II should have been obvious. The Mother finds the dentist guilty because he is a dentist and she persuades the rest of the jury that the dentist is guilty. Using POE you are then down to just choices (D) and (E). So, does the poem imply that the dentist should have been found innocent? Not at all. All it implies is that the dentist is an unattractive creep who drilled a patient through the tongue. Does this make him guilty? Who knows. Innocent? Again: who knows. We're never told with what exactly the dentist has been charged.
45. **The correct answer is (A).** ETS has a way of sneaking a good bit of vocabulary into the test, and this question is a good example. It is also a good example of a question that lends itself to POE and the principle of half-bad = all-bad. You didn't have to know what lecherous meant in (A) to say that the dentist could be seen as comically chasing his assistant round the chair while molded plaster teeth grin from the shelves, and there's something sickly funny too about his being so out of it with love that he drills right through a patient's tongue. So if you didn't know what lecherous meant you'd leave (A) for a guess. For (B) to be correct the

dentist would had to have deliberately drilled through his patient's tongue. That's wrong, so eliminate (B). For exactly the same reason eliminate (C), the dentist was not calculating. In (D) you find more vocab. What's amorous? If you know, great, but you don't need to know to eliminate the choice. You could eliminate by simply using the half-bad = all-bad principle. Is the dentist timid? No. He chased his assistant around the chair. He sounds more like a maniac. Eliminate (D). (Amorous means seeking "more" that is, love and sex.) Finally there's (E). The dentist drilled his patient's tongue in a moment of dreamy contemplation, not anger. Eliminate (E). Thus, using POE, we're left with only (A). So what does lecherous mean? Well, essentially, it means: lustful, with strong overtones of slime.

46. **The correct answer is (E).** The phrase "tasting brine" continues the doomed-sailor-forced-to-walk-the-plank metaphor of the second stanza. Again vocabulary helps: "brine" is sea-water. The dentist has begun to realize that things are not going well, that he will be found guilty. Metaphorically then, he will walk the plank and end up with a mouthful of sea-water. It's worth pointing out how nicely Kizer sets this image of "tasting brine." It refers back to the earlier sailor metaphors, but it also works as a fresh rephrasing of a stale idea: that one finds a bitter taste in one's mouth in the face of unpleasant prospects. Along similar lines and just because artistry is worth pointing out wherever you find it, note Kizer's use of the word "rises" in the phrase "as the testimony rises." It's an unusual striking verb in this context, but perfectly suited to the moment. "Rises" implies increase in sound and in passion. It is also the verb of choice to refer to deepening water, as in a rising tide—or even more appropriately—to the effect an approaching storm has on the seas, as in the seas' rise. In the poem, Kizer has found a use for "rise" where all three meanings—increasing sound, increasing emotion, rising (metaphorical) water—come into play. Does seeing this specifically help you answer the question? Not really. But we wanted to point out the kind of sensitivity to language you want to develop in order to fully appreciate poetry (and everything else you read). Developing a keen ear for language brings pleasure and success far beyond the AP exam (although it brings that too).
47. **The correct answer is (D).** The key to this question was to go back and find where the poem attaches a metaphor to reading. The question gives no line reference, but you shouldn't have had too much trouble spotting line 19, where the mother reads with "an easy breaststroke." (Of course, to do this you needed to have an idea of what a metaphor is. We've mentioned it a couple of times already, but here it is again: Make sure you can define the terms *simile* and *metaphor*, and make sure you can tell the difference between them. Both concepts are defined in our glossary of literary terms.) This was a very easy question so long as you went back to the passage. The disastrous mistake was to not go back to the passage and try to figure out the answer based on memory and common sense. Even if you didn't get the question wrong you'd actually end up wasting time, and you'd probably get it wrong.
48. **The correct answer is (D).** This is primarily a term question but you could have arrived at a correct guess without knowing that "poetic justice" refers to punishment that reflects the crime. (For example, a counterfeiter buys an expensive old painting with bogus money only to discover later that the painting is a forgery.) In the seventh stanza the poet describes the dentist now in the position of a patient, gripping the arms of his chair and being most uncomfortably drilled. This sort of reversal also falls under the category of poetic justice. If you were unfamiliar with the term poetic justice you could have arrived at a perfectly good guess by reading the question carefully. It refers to the "Mother's treatment" of the dentist. In which



stanza is the mother most directly involved with the dentist himself (and not simply the legal process)? In the seventh stanza, where she “strapped him in, to drill him away.” This should have made (D), the most attractive guess. *Guess.* By the way, there’s another more technical definition of poetic justice, which ETS will probably not use. We cover that definition, as well as the one above, in our glossary.

49. **The correct answer is (C).** There’s our old friend irony again. In the phrase “Nice Mrs. Nemesis” the irony is not very delicate, in fact it has almost become irony’s nasty little brother sarcasm. To answer this question it helped a great deal to know that a “nemesis” is an arch-enemy. (In the poem, Kizer actually refers to the Greek goddess, Nemesis, who represented righteous anger.) If you knew that a nemesis is an arch-enemy, or even just something negative (which you could have figured out from context) you could have reasoned that “Nice Mrs. ‘something nasty’” contains the kind of contradiction that makes for irony. Barring that, you should have worked with the terms you knew and used POE to eliminate. All the terms in the answer choices are covered in our glossary of terms.
50. **The correct answer is (D).** These I, II, III questions are made for POE. After reading through the selection items you should have gone back to the final stanza and reread it. Then look at the items again. Which choice is easiest to decide upon? Choice II should look weird—eliminate it. The stanza discusses the Mother’s idea of God; Voltaire is an afterthought, and all that’s said is that she finds him “indispensable.” What Voltaire’s views are the poem doesn’t say (and ETS does not expect you to know Voltaire’s philosophy). With item II gone, choices (B) and (E) are gone as well. What about item III? Social decorum refers to polite behavior. In the last stanza the mother mentions that God instructs in “hygiene and deportment,” that is, in necessary social graces. Item III is a keeper. Even if you didn’t know what decorum meant, which makes more sense: the Mother believes God agrees with her, or disagrees? If you got the general drift of the poem you should know that the Mother thinks God shares her views. Keeping item III means you can eliminate (A). All that’s left are choices (C) and (D). Okay, let’s look at item I. Here you needed to read closely. She says God is “indispensable.” That’s good enough to justify the “deeply held” part of item I. What about “unsophisticated.” Is it a sophisticated conception of the Divine to think that God cares about hygiene? Not really. Furthermore, Kizer’s comparison of the Mother to “true idolaters” reinforces the unsophisticated idea. Does the Mother think she’s unsophisticated? Not at all! She thinks she’s hot-stuff reading Voltaire and all! But the question doesn’t ask what the Mother thinks of herself. It asks about what the poem says about her. In the final stanza Kizer has some fun at the Mother’s expense. Item I is a keeper, which makes the right answer (D).
51. **The correct answer is (B).** This should have been a truly easy grammar question. In fact, it really isn’t a grammar question at all, just a disguised comprehension question. Basically it asks, who “swept out?” The answer is Mother. You should have gone back to the poem and read the sentence carefully. ETS likes to ask grammar, or pseudogrammar questions like this one, when the elements in question are widely separated. In this instance, the only difficult aspect of the question is that several words intervene between “Mother” and “swept-out.” Don’t let that throw you. Subject and verb do not have to come close to one another.

ETS likes it when they don’t. You’ve probably also been taught that modifiers should be placed next to the word(s) they modify. That’s true, but ETS likes to ask questions about sentences that are exceptions to that rule.

52. **The correct answer is (A).** The lines "He was doomed, doomed, doomed by birth, profession, / Practice, appearance, personal habits, loves . . . / And now his patient swollen-mouthed with cancer!" gave this question away. All you had to do was to work through the choices using those lines to eliminate (remember this is an EXCEPT question!) In the end, all you are left with is the correct answer. The dentist's religious beliefs are never mentioned.
53. **The correct answer is (E).** This is a tone question. As you read the poem you probably found yourself thinking the Mother is being pretty harsh and unfair condemning a man for being a dentist. And it's true. By conventional ethical standards the Mother has behaved abominably. Kizer knows it but never passes judgment. Mostly Kizer has fun with the situation. She's impressed with the Mother's strength (and arrogance) even as she calls upon Voltaire to rescue the "wreck of [the Mother's] fairmindedness." Kizer's sympathetic to the Mother, but not entirely so, not when she refers to the Mother as "Nice Mrs. Nemesis" and not when she relates the Mother's vision of the deity. These things are lightly critical. The whole thing is softened by the fact that the dentist does sound like a creep who deserves what he gets, so the Mother's cavalier attitude doesn't have tragic consequences. All of this adds up to (E), amused ambivalence. The situation might have been shocking, but Kizer prefers to see the underlying humor in the clash of the Mother's sense of snooty proper conduct, the dentist's low-life self-presentation, and the irony that neither of them are actually conducting themselves well. The incorrect choices all call up emotional states that are too extreme to be justified, and should have been pretty easy to eliminate so POE should have gotten you the right answer even if the term "ambivalence" in choice (E) puzzled you.