

# Sample AP English Language and Composition Exam Questions

The following multiple-choice and free-response exam questions are typical of those used on past AP English Language and Composition Exams.

## Sample Multiple-Choice Questions

**Questions 1–11. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.**

*This passage is excerpted from an essay written in nineteenth-century England.*

It has been well said that the highest aim in education is analogous to the highest aim in mathematics, namely, to obtain not *results* but  
*Line* *powers*, not particular solutions, but the means by  
5 which endless solutions may be wrought. He is the most effective educator who aims less at perfecting specific acquirements than at producing that mental condition which renders acquirements easy, and leads to their useful application; who does not seek to make  
10 his pupils moral by enjoining particular courses of action, but by bringing into activity the feelings and sympathies that must issue in noble action. On the same ground it may be said that the most effective writer is not he who announces a particular discovery,  
15 who convinces men of a particular conclusion, who demonstrates that this measure is right and that measure wrong; but he who rouses in others the activities that must issue in discovery, who awakes men from their indifference to the right and the  
20 wrong, who nerves their energies to seek for the truth and live up to it at whatever cost. The influence of such a writer is dynamic. He does not teach men how to use sword and musket, but he inspires their souls with courage and sends a strong will into their  
25 muscles. He does not, perhaps, enrich your stock of data, but he clears away the film from your eyes that you may search for data to some purpose. He does not, perhaps, convince you, but he strikes you, undeceives you, animates you. You are not directly  
30 fed by his books, but you are braced as by a walk up to an alpine summit, and yet subdued to calm and reverence as by the sublime things to be seen from that summit.

Such a writer is Thomas Carlyle. It is an idle  
35 question to ask whether his books will be read a  
century hence: if they were all burnt as the grandest  
of Suttees<sup>1</sup> on his funeral pile, it would be only like  
cutting down an oak after its acorns have sown a  
forest. For there is hardly a superior or active mind  
40 of this generation that has not been modified by  
Carlyle's writings; there has hardly been an English  
book written for the last ten or twelve years that  
would not have been different if Carlyle had not lived.  
The character of his influence is best seen in the fact  
45 that many of the men who have the least agreement  
with his opinions are those to whom the reading of  
*Sartor Resartus* was an epoch in the history of their  
minds. The extent of his influence may be best seen in  
the fact that ideas which were startling novelties when  
50 he first wrote them are now become common-places.  
And we think few men will be found to say that this  
influence on the whole has not been for good. There  
are plenty who question the justice of Carlyle's  
estimates of past men and past times, plenty who  
55 quarrel with the exaggerations of the *Latter-Day*  
*Pamphlets*, and who are as far as possible from  
looking for an amendment of things from a Carlylian  
theocracy with the 'greatest man', as a Joshua who is  
to smite the wicked (and the stupid) till the going  
60 down of the sun.<sup>2</sup> But for any large nature, those  
points of difference are quite incidental. It is not as a  
theorist, but as a great and beautiful human nature,  
that Carlyle influences us. You may meet a man  
whose wisdom seems unimpeachable, since you find  
65 him entirely in agreement with yourself; but this  
oracular man of unexceptionable opinions has a  
green eye, a wiry hand, and altogether a *Wesen*, or  
demeanour, that makes the world look blank to you,  
and whose unexceptionable opinions become a bore;  
70 while another man who deals in what you cannot but  
think 'dangerous paradoxes', warms your heart by the  
pressure of his hand, and looks out on the world with  
so clear and loving an eye, that nature seems to reflect  
the light of his glance upon your own feeling. So it is  
75 with Carlyle. When he is saying the very opposite of  
what we think, he says it so finely, with so hearty

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1 A suttee is a now-obsolete Hindu funeral practice.

2 Carlyle believed that great men, or heroes, shaped history through their personal actions and divine inspiration. Joshua, a military leader and successor to Moses, led the Jewish people to the Promised Land.

conviction—he makes the object about which we  
differ stand out in such grand relief under the clear  
light of his strong and honest intellect—he appeals  
80 so constantly to our sense of the manly and the  
truthful—that we are obliged to say ‘Hear! hear!’ to  
the writer before we can give the decorous ‘Oh! oh!’  
to his opinions.

1. What is the relationship between the two paragraphs in the passage?
  - (A) The first paragraph describes strengths of a writer that Carlyle exhibits, and the second discusses his legacy.
  - (B) The first paragraph surveys various types of writers, and the second focuses on Carlyle.
  - (C) The first paragraph describes Carlyle’s critics, and the second depicts his supporters.
  - (D) The first paragraph considers who influenced Carlyle, and the second lists those he influenced.
  - (E) The first paragraph explains Carlyle’s major ideas, and the second evaluates his predictions.
2. Which of the following best represents the author’s intended audience?
  - (A) Individuals who are fairly well acquainted with Carlyle’s writing
  - (B) Readers who are having trouble understanding Carlyle’s prose
  - (C) Writers who hope to produce books that are like Carlyle’s
  - (D) Instructors looking for different ways to teach Carlyle
  - (E) Scholars seeking information about Carlyle’s personal life
3. Lines 5–12 (“He is ... noble action”) contrast
  - (A) the acquisition of skills and the possession of aptitude
  - (B) the labor of reasoning and the exhilaration of acting
  - (C) the dissemination of knowledge and the cultivation of intellectual and moral powers
  - (D) the traits of practical students and those of creative thinkers
  - (E) the benefits of learning and the rewards of teaching
4. The author uses the phrase “On the same ground” (lines 12–13) to set up a comparison between
  - (A) the aims of mathematics and those of education
  - (B) conceptually powerful writers and exemplary educators
  - (C) intellectual challenges faced by writers and those faced by readers
  - (D) the formulation of solutions and the identification of problems
  - (E) scientific writing and inspirational writing

5. On the basis of the first paragraph, Thomas Carlyle is best characterized as a writer who is
- (A) ambitious, seeking to increase the number of people buying his books
  - (B) revolutionary, agitating his readers to adopt a radically new worldview
  - (C) charismatic, enticing his readers to support his views and beliefs
  - (D) provocative, compelling his readers to reach their own conclusions
  - (E) masterful, overpowering his readers with a sense of awe and veneration
6. The “acorns” (line 38) represent
- (A) Carlyle’s young children
  - (B) Carlyle’s less prominent contemporaries
  - (C) ideas in Carlyle’s books
  - (D) books written about Carlyle
  - (E) those who are critical of Carlyle
7. In lines 47–48, the author refers to “an epoch in the history of their minds” to
- (A) illustrate the ways in which other intellectuals disagreed with Carlyle
  - (B) define the meaning of the title *Sartor Resartus*
  - (C) question the continued relevance of Carlyle’s ideas
  - (D) describe the major impact that Carlyle had on other people
  - (E) characterize the arduous process of reading *Sartor Resartus*
8. The author mentions the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (lines 55–56) primarily to
- (A) provide an example of what is indisputably “good” (line 52)
  - (B) identify the book that discusses “past men and past times” (line 54)
  - (C) acknowledge some of the concerns held by the “plenty” (line 54)
  - (D) justify Carlyle’s desire for “an amendment of things” (line 57)
  - (E) explain Carlyle’s inspiration for the theory of the “greatest man” (line 58)
9. Which rhetorical strategy does the author adopt in lines 44–63 (“The character ... influences us”)?
- (A) She goes on the offensive, berating opponents of Carlyle for their absence of wisdom, judgment, and foresight.
  - (B) She acknowledges but discredits other arguments, accusing Carlyle’s critics of misunderstanding the originality of Carlyle’s ideas.
  - (C) She claims that most people do not recognize Carlyle’s genius, suggesting that only a discerning few are capable of doing so.
  - (D) She cites facts to counter opposition to Carlyle’s eminence, claiming that all of Carlyle’s judgments are unassailable.
  - (E) She gives examples of Carlyle’s far-reaching influence, noting that even criticism of Carlyle implies praise.

10. What purpose do lines 63–74 (“You may ... own feeling”) serve?
- (A) They contrast the appeal of a writer who merely confirms his readers’ views with that of a writer who boldly challenges them.
  - (B) They develop an analogy between the kinds of individuals people are attracted to and the kinds of writing they prefer.
  - (C) They challenge the idea that writers modify their ideas to appeal to a wide range of readers.
  - (D) They examine whether relationships based on shared ideas and interests are rewarding to both parties.
  - (E) They provide examples from various writers in which the appearance of good and evil is deceptive.
11. In lines 75–83 (“When he ... his opinions”), the author develops her rhetorical purpose by
- (A) contrasting “he” and “we” to set Carlyle apart and show how he is critical of everyone else
  - (B) inserting dashes to highlight Carlyle’s most influential ideas and opinions
  - (C) employing dramatically urgent adverbs to create a surprising conclusion for the reader
  - (D) delaying the conclusion of the independent clause to build up the reader’s sense of anticipation
  - (E) utilizing the parallel “Hear! hear!” and “Oh! oh!” to imitate a chorus of approval for Carlyle

**Questions 12–24. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.**

*This passage consists of excerpts from an essay published in the 1940s.*

It is the fate of actors to leave only picture postcards behind them. Every night when the curtain goes down the beautiful coloured canvas is rubbed out. What remains is at best only a wavering, insubstantial phantom—a verbal life on the lips of the living.

5 Ellen Terry was well aware of it. She tried herself, overcome by the greatness of Irving as Hamlet and indignant at the caricatures of his detractors, to describe what she remembered. It was in vain. She dropped her pen in despair. “Oh God, that I were a writer!” she cried. “Surely a *writer* could not string words together about Henry Irving’s Hamlet and say *nothing, nothing*.” It never struck her, humble as she was, and obsessed by her lack of book learning, that

15 she was, among other things, a writer. It never occurred to her when she wrote her autobiography, or scribbled page after page to Bernard Shaw late at night, dead tired after a rehearsal, that she was “writing.” The words in her beautiful rapid hand bubbled off her pen. With dashes and notes of exclamation she tried to give them the very tone and stress of the spoken word. It is true, she could not build a house with words, one room opening out of another, and a staircase connecting the whole. But whatever she took up became in her warm,

25 sensitive grasp a tool. If it was a rolling-pin, she made perfect pastry. If it was a carving knife, perfect slices fell from the leg of mutton. If it were a pen, words peeled off, some broken, some suspended in mid-air, but all far more expressive than the tappings of the professional typewriter.

30 With her pen then at odds and ends of time she has painted a self-portrait. It is not an Academy portrait, glazed, framed, complete. It is rather a bundle of loose leaves upon each of which she has dashed off a sketch for a portrait—here a nose, here an arm, here a foot, and there a mere scribble in the margin. The sketches done in different moods, from different angles, sometimes contradict each other. . . .

35 Which, then, of all these women is the real Ellen Terry? How are we to put the scattered sketches together? Is she mother, wife, cook, critic, actress, or should she have been, after all, a painter? Each part seems the right part until she throws it aside and plays another. Something of Ellen Terry it seems overflowed

45 every part and remained unacted. Shakespeare could  
not fit her; not Ibsen; nor Shaw. The stage could not  
hold her; nor the nursery. But there is, after all, a  
greater dramatist than Shakespeare, Ibsen, or Shaw.  
There is Nature. Hers is so vast a stage, and so  
50 innumerable a company of actors, that for the most  
part she fobs them off with a tag or two. They come  
on and they go off without breaking the ranks. But  
now and again Nature creates a new part, an original  
part. The actors who act that part always defy our  
55 attempts to name them. They will not act the stock  
parts—they forget the words, they improvise others  
of their own. But when they come on the stage falls  
like a pack of cards and the limelights are extinguished.  
That was Ellen Terry's fate—to act a new part. And  
60 thus while other actors are remembered because they  
were Hamlet, Phèdre, or Cleopatra, Ellen Terry is  
remembered because she was Ellen Terry.

12. Which of the following statements is best supported by information given in the passage?
- (A) Terry never focused on one career; she was skilled at so many things that she did not excel in any one thing.
  - (B) Terry was so clever an actress that her portrayal of a role seemed to change every night.
  - (C) Shaw encouraged Terry to become a play-wright by carefully tutoring her in creating plots and characters.
  - (D) Because Terry lacked confidence in certain of her skills, she never fully realized she was a person of rare talents and gifts.
  - (E) Because Terry did not have natural talent for either writing or acting, she struggled to learn her crafts and became great through sheer willpower.
13. The author's attitude toward Terry can best be described as
- (A) superior and condescending
  - (B) unbiased and dispassionate
  - (C) sympathetic and admiring
  - (D) curious and skeptical
  - (E) conciliatory and forgiving
14. In line 1, "picture postcards" functions as a metaphor for the
- (A) published text of a play
  - (B) audience's impressions of the actors' performances
  - (C) critical reviews of plays
  - (D) plays in which the actors in the company have previously performed
  - (E) stage designer's sketches of sets and scenes

15. The passage implies that the primary enemy of the “beautiful coloured canvas” and the “wavering, insubstantial phantom” (lines 3 and 4–5) is the
- (A) cost of producing plays
  - (B) whims of critics
  - (C) passage of time
  - (D) incredulity of audiences
  - (E) shortcomings of dramatists
16. The phrase “a verbal life on the lips of the living” (line 5) suggests that
- (A) performances live only in the memories of those who witness and speak of them
  - (B) actors do not take the trouble to explain their art to the public
  - (C) the reviews of critics have a powerful influence on the popularity of a production
  - (D) dramatists try to write dialogue that imitates ordinary spoken language
  - (E) audiences respond to the realism of the theater
17. What is the relationship of the second and third sentences (lines 2–5) to the first sentence (lines 1–2)?
- (A) They are structurally less complex than the first.
  - (B) They are expressed in less conditional terms than the first.
  - (C) They introduce new ideas not mentioned in the first.
  - (D) They clarify and expand on the first.
  - (E) They question the generalization made in the first.
18. The pronoun “it” (line 6) refers to which of the following?
- (A) “fate” (line 1)
  - (B) “curtain” (line 2)
  - (C) “canvas” (line 3)
  - (D) “phantom” (line 5)
  - (E) “life” (line 5)
19. The effect of italicizing the words “*nothing, nothing*” (line 13) is to
- (A) emphasize Terry’s sense of frustration
  - (B) indicate a sarcastic tone
  - (C) suggest the difficulty of writing great parts for actors
  - (D) link a clear sense of purpose to success in writing
  - (E) imply that Terry’s weakness in writing is her tendency to exaggerate



20. The words “bubbled off” (line 19) and “peeled off” (line 28), used to describe the way Terry wrote, emphasize
- (A) polish and sophistication
  - (B) thoughtfulness and application
  - (C) bluntness and indiscretion
  - (D) mystery and imagination
  - (E) ease and spontaneity
21. Which of the following stylistic features is used most extensively in lines 25-30 ?
- (A) Inversion of normal subject/verb/object order
  - (B) Repetition of sentence structure
  - (C) Periodic sentence structure
  - (D) Sentence fragments for emphasis
  - (E) Use of connotative meanings that add complexity
22. The effect of mentioning an “Academy portrait” (line 32) is to
- (A) imply that Terry deserved to have her portrait painted by a great artist
  - (B) suggest that Terry was adept at self-expression both in writing and in painting
  - (C) clarify the informal nature of Terry’s self-portrait through contrast
  - (D) hint that Terry’s self-absorption prevented her from writing about herself dispassionately
  - (E) blame Terry for her rebellion against the conventions of art forms
23. The “sketches” (line 36) are most probably
- (A) responses to reviewers who have criticized Terry’s acting
  - (B) paintings by Terry of other actors
  - (C) stage directions from playwrights
  - (D) self-revelatory remarks
  - (E) descriptions of characters Terry has portrayed
24. The author suggests that Shakespeare, Shaw, and Ibsen could not “fit” (line 46) Terry chiefly because
- (A) the parts they created did not allow Terry to make use of every aspect of her talents
  - (B) their dramatic talents were focused on plot rather than on character
  - (C) Terry was better at conveying certain kinds of characters and emotions than she was at conveying others
  - (D) their plays were set in historical periods different from the one in which Terry lived
  - (E) the speeches they wrote for their female characters were written in accents and dialects different from Terry’s

**Questions 25–37. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.**

*This passage is taken from a book that examines Canadian book clubs.*

So pronounced is the book-club phenomenon that the format has spread to other venues and media, the most famous of these being the ‘book club’ component of Oprah Winfrey’s television talk show. Staged like an actual book-group meeting, with invited discussants and a cozy living-room setting, the Winfrey show can boost a featured title to instant bestsellerdom and turn authors into stars. There are now ‘book clubs’ online, in bookstores, and functioning as consumer focus groups for publishers.<sup>1</sup> Colleges, bookstores, and resorts have recently begun to develop ‘readers’ retreats.’<sup>2</sup> Newsletters, magazines, newspapers, and published guides advise readers how to find, establish, and manage successful clubs.<sup>3</sup>

The widespread popularity of these reading groups has even occasioned a form of ‘book-club backlash.’ In a newspaper opinion piece titled ‘Why I Won’t Join the Book Club,’ one contributor expressed alarm that reading was becoming another scheduled activity to be slotted in ‘like the trip to the gym and the grocery store’; self-improving readers ‘pop’ books as they would vitamin tablets. But books ‘are not about schedules,’ author Stephanie Nolen argues; rather, they are ‘about submerging yourself . . . about getting lost, about getting consumed.’<sup>4</sup> Considerable attention was garnered by another article, detailing the darker side of some New York City reading groups. Headlined ‘Book-Club Lovers Wage a War of Words’ when reprinted by the *Globe and Mail*, it could equally well have been titled ‘When Book Clubs Go Bad’: ‘No longer just friendly social gatherings with a vague continuing-education agenda, many of today’s book groups have become literary pressure cookers, marked by aggressive intellectual one-upmanship and unabashed social skirmishing. In

1 For an example of an online ‘book club’—this one produced by a mass-market circulation women’s magazine—see Conversations (Book Club) on Chateleine Connects at <http://www.chatelaine.com/living/chatelaine-book-club/>.

2 For example, Vancouver bookseller Celia Duthie is developing such ‘retreats’ at a country inn. There are discussion periods and visits by authors and, most importantly, time to read. See Keyes, ‘Out of the Woods.’

3 Some popular guides are Greenwood et al., *The Go on Girl!*; Jacobson, *The Reading Group Handbook*; and Saal, *The New York Public Library Guide to Reading Groups*. A new entry to the field, developed with a particular eye to the needs of Canadian clubs, is Heft and O’Brien, *Build a Better Book Club*.

4 Nolen, ‘Why I Won’t Join the Book Club.’

living rooms and bookshops, clubs are frazzling under the stress, giving rise to a whole new profession: the book-group therapist.<sup>5</sup> The clubs that Elaine Daspin describes here seem to be functioning as unconsciousness- rather than consciousness-raising sessions, where competitive readers battle for interpretive supremacy. While book-club therapists may well be confined to the rarefied worlds of the Upper East Side or Long Island, authors of recent book-club guides reiterate the need to establish common purposes, regular routines, and guidelines for thorough preparation.

Clearly, the positives outweigh the pitfalls; book clubs are in demand because they offer individual readers an extra dimension of appreciation and understanding. Yet despite the fact that shared discussion of literary texts is also the foundation of literary study in school, college, and university classrooms, literary theorists and reader-response critics have yet to devote much attention to such shared and synergistic study, instead construing readers as isolates or abstractions. (Studies tend to focus on the emotional responses or cognitive activities of individual readers, or to infer such reactions by examining the properties of a literary text.) But club and classroom participants know that there is something different, something added, about sharing and discussing literature with other people.

25. The organization of the passage can best be described as
- (A) personal narrative followed by analysis
  - (B) empirical data followed by conjecture
  - (C) nonjudgmental explanation of a current phenomenon followed by a question
  - (D) descriptive analysis followed by a final judgment
  - (E) condemnation of a practice followed by partial acceptance
26. In context, the author places the term “book club” in quotation marks in lines 3 and 9 in order to
- (A) show that these are humorous examples
  - (B) highlight how formal some of these clubs are
  - (C) reveal that the book clubs that appear online or on television are unsatisfactory
  - (D) suggest that the term is being broadened beyond its original meaning
  - (E) imply that many book club members do not like the term

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5 Daspin, ‘Book-Club Lovers Wage a War of Words.’ The piece originally appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*.

27. The first paragraph (lines 1–15) serves to
- (A) explain why the author enjoys one way of reading
  - (B) describe the extension of a particular activity into nontraditional areas
  - (C) make generalizations that will be developed later
  - (D) explore ways in which people can structure free time
  - (E) detail the power of media and mass marketing to censor
28. According to lines 23–26, Stephanie Nolen’s primary criticism of book clubs is that they
- (A) are too programmed
  - (B) do not offer enough variety
  - (C) cause readers to be anxious
  - (D) overlook many classics
  - (E) forego quality for quantity
29. The clubs referred to in line 39 are discussed in
- (A) the online discussion group of a particular book club
  - (B) a study sponsored by book club participants
  - (C) an editorial in a Canadian magazine
  - (D) a guide written by Elaine Daspin
  - (E) an article published in the *Wall Street Journal*
30. The “recent book-club guides” (lines 45–46) tend to emphasize
- (A) how book clubs need to be structured and regular in order to succeed
  - (B) how difficult it is to start a book club in New York
  - (C) how often even the best book clubs fail
  - (D) the variety of reasons that people have for starting book clubs
  - (E) the challenges of selecting books for discussion
31. The last paragraph (lines 49–64) marks a shift from
- (A) popular to academic contexts
  - (B) supported to unsound generalizations
  - (C) impersonal to personal examples
  - (D) subtle irony to explicit sarcasm
  - (E) neutral to negative characterization of book clubs
32. The function of lines 52–58 (“Yet despite . . . abstractions”) is to
- (A) argue for the value of a particular literary theory
  - (B) explain how important it is not to make abstract judgments
  - (C) point out a discrepancy between teaching practices and literary theory
  - (D) highlight the demand for a way to measure emotional responses to texts
  - (E) explore the author’s views about reading in isolation

33. The final sentence (lines 62–64) serves to
- (A) conclude an argument begun in the first paragraph
  - (B) suggest a probable cause for an ongoing phenomenon
  - (C) argue that publishers need to pay more attention to book clubs
  - (D) offer a final analysis of the phenomenon described in the second paragraph
  - (E) explain why the author has chosen a particular field of study
34. One function of sentence 3 (lines 8–10) and footnote 1 is to
- (A) give an example of a group that earns money by reading
  - (B) show that book clubs are not intended for literary scholars
  - (C) note the connection between marketing and book clubs
  - (D) cite one book club as a particular model of excellence
  - (E) suggest the benefits of online discussion groups
35. It can be inferred from footnote 2 that “Out of the Woods” is
- (A) an article about a type of retreat
  - (B) an exposé about fee-based book clubs
  - (C) an essay about book club protocol
  - (D) a meditation on favorite works by famous authors
  - (E) an article about how to start a traditional book club
36. The function of footnote 3 is to
- (A) offer specific examples of one of the types of resources mentioned
  - (B) convince the reader of the value of book clubs
  - (C) test whether the reader is interested in particular books
  - (D) evaluate tips on how to set up book clubs
  - (E) compare the strengths and weaknesses of certain books
37. The information in footnote 2 is different from that in footnote 3 in that footnote 2
- (A) is critical while endnote 3 is neutral
  - (B) assumes that readers do not like research while endnote 3 assumes that readers like research
  - (C) is concerned with local book clubs while endnote 3 relates to global issues
  - (D) primarily provides an illustration of a phenomenon while endnote 3 primarily lists resources
  - (E) relates mostly to marketing while endnote 3 relates mostly to cultural conflicts in book clubs

**Questions 38–50. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.**

*This passage is excerpted from a nonfiction book published in the late twentieth century.*

Line Climatologists speak of thunderstorms pregnant  
with tornadoes, storm-breeding clouds more than twice  
the height of Mount Everest; they speak of funicular  
5 envelopes and anvil clouds with pendant mammati and  
of thermal instability of winds in cyclonic vorticity,  
of rotatory columns of air torquing at velocities up to  
three hundred miles an hour (although no anemometer  
in the direct path of a storm has survived), funnels that  
can move over the ground at the speed of a strolling  
10 man or at the rate of a barrel-rolling semi on the turn-  
pike; they say the width of the destruction can be the  
distance between home plate and deep center field and  
its length the hundred miles between New York City  
and Philadelphia. A tornado, although more violent  
15 than a much longer lasting hurricane, has a life  
measured in minutes, and weathercasters watch it  
snuff out as it was born: unnamed.

I know here a grandfather, a man as bald as if a  
cyclonic wind had taken his scalp—something wit-  
20 nesses claim has happened elsewhere—who calls  
twisters Old Nell, and he threatens to set crying  
children outside the back door for her to carry off.  
People who have seen Old Nell close, up under her  
skirt, talk about her colors: pastel-pink, black, blue,  
25 gray, and a survivor said this: *All at once a big hole  
opened in the sky with a mass of cherry-red, a yellow  
tinge in the center*, and another said: *a funnel with  
beautiful electric-blue light*, and a third person: *It was  
glowing like it was illuminated from the inside*. The  
30 witnesses speak of shapes: a formless black mass, a  
cone, cylinder, tube, ribbon, pendant, thrashing hose,  
dangling lariat, writhing snake, elephant trunk. They  
tell of ponds being vacuumed dry, ... chickens clean-  
plucked from beak to bum, water pulled straight up  
35 out of toilet bowls, ... a wife killed after being jerked  
through a car window, a child carried two miles and set  
down with only scratches, a Cottonwood Falls mother  
(fearful of wind) cured of chronic headaches when a  
twister passed harmlessly within a few feet of her  
40 house, and, just south of Chase, a woman blown out of  
her living room window and dropped unhurt sixty feet  
away and falling unbroken beside her a phonograph  
record of “Stormy Weather.”

38. The author develops the passage primarily through
- (A) accumulation of detail
  - (B) pro-and-con argument
  - (C) thesis followed by qualification
  - (D) assertion supported by evidence
  - (E) analysis of the ideas of other
39. The author is best described as
- (A) a curious individual who seeks out diverse information from a variety of sources
  - (B) a serious scientist who is determined to learn more about the causes of these storms
  - (C) an excited eyewitness who is too distracted to fear for personal safety
  - (D) a confused novice who is unable to decide which claims are accurate
  - (E) an ironic interpreter who comments on the failures and follies of others
40. Compared with that of the rest of the passage, the diction of lines 1–8 (“Climatologists ... survived”) is
- (A) informal and straightforward
  - (B) technical and specialized
  - (C) subjective and impressionistic
  - (D) speculative and uncertain
  - (E) understated and euphemistic
41. The statement “although ... survived” (lines 7–8) is an admission that
- (A) details about technical equipment are of interest only to specialists
  - (B) some tornadoes are so powerful that scientists cannot quantify them precisely
  - (C) scientists have abandoned the effort to measure the wind speed of tornadoes
  - (D) predicting the path a tornado will take is extremely difficult
  - (E) precise measurement of wind speed will aid climatologists in categorizing tornadoes
42. Which of the following is true of the comparisons in lines 11–14 (“they say ... Philadelphia”)?
- (A) They emphasize the unpredictable nature of tornadoes.
  - (B) They exaggerate the danger of tornadoes in order to make people cautious of them.
  - (C) They use technical terminology in order to ensure accuracy of description.
  - (D) They draw on familiar information to particularize an aspect of tornadoes.
  - (E) They clarify the distinctions between the language of climatologists and that of weathercasters.

43. The first sentence of the passage (lines 1–14) employs all of the following to convey the power and variety of tornadoes EXCEPT
- (A) abstract generalization
  - (B) the jargon of climatologists
  - (C) metaphor
  - (D) parallel construction
  - (E) varying degrees of formality
44. The passage implies that unlike hurricanes, tornadoes are not given human names because
- (A) there are too many of them
  - (B) their destruction is not as great as that of hurricanes
  - (C) they last too short a time
  - (D) they move too erratically to be plotted
  - (E) they can appear in any area of the world
45. When the passage moves from the first paragraph to the second, it also moves from
- (A) overview to illustration
  - (B) analysis to argumentation
  - (C) narration of the past to analysis of the past
  - (D) assertion to definition
  - (E) objective presentation to *ad hominem* argument
46. The phrase “as bald as if a cyclonic wind had taken his scalp” (lines 18–19) does all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) describe the grandfather with an image related to the cyclone
  - (B) suggest a lighter tone for the paragraph
  - (C) particularize the first of several sources of information mentioned in the paragraph
  - (D) suggest the power of the tornado
  - (E) express concern about the condition of the grandfather
47. In context, the image of being up under Old Nell’s skirt (lines 23–24) is meant to suggest
- (A) safety
  - (B) confusion
  - (C) domesticity
  - (D) familiarity
  - (E) imprisonment



48. Which of the following best describes the images in the last sentence of the passage (lines 32–43)?
- (A) A disdainful rehearsal of other people's experiences
  - (B) A random listing of repulsive or frightening occurrences
  - (C) A thorough review of absurd legends
  - (D) A series of increasingly detailed and implausible events
  - (E) A chronological account of major storms
49. The second paragraph of the passage relies especially on the use of
- (A) cautionary advice
  - (B) colorful anecdotes
  - (C) self-deprecating humor
  - (D) extended analysis
  - (E) terrifying juxtapositions
50. The passage ends on a note of
- (A) utter exhaustion
  - (B) genuine relief
  - (C) catastrophic destructiveness
  - (D) ominous warning
  - (E) lighthearted irony

## Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions

1 – A	14 – B	27 – B	40 – B
2 – A	15 – C	28 – A	41 – B
3 – C	16 – A	29 – E	42 – D
4 – B	17 – D	30 – A	43 – A
5 – D	18 – A	31 – A	44 – C
6 – C	19 – A	32 – C	45 – A
7 – D	20 – E	33 – B	46 – E
8 – C	21 – B	34 – C	47 – D
9 – E	22 – C	35 – A	48 – D
10 – A	23 – D	36 – A	49 – B
11 – D	24 – A	37 – D	50 – E
12 – D	25 – D	38 – A	
13 – C	26 – D	39 – A	