



AP[®] English Literature and Composition 2004 Free-Response Questions

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2004 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

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 section score.)

The poems below are concerned with darkness and night. Read each poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the poems, analyzing the significance of dark or night in each. In your essay, consider elements such as point of view, imagery, and structure.

Unfortunately, we have
been denied permission to
reproduce Emily Dickinson's
poem, "We grow accustomed
to the Dark," on this Web site.

The poem was
reprinted from
The Poems of Emily Dickinson,
ed. Thomas H. Johnson
(Cambridge: Harvard
University Press, 1951).

Acquainted with the Night

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

Line I have looked down the saddest city lane.
5 I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

10 But not to call me back or say good-by;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

—Robert Frost

"Acquainted with the Night" from
THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST
edited by Edward Connery Lathem.
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Question 2

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

The following passage comes from the opening of “The Pupil” (1891), a story by Henry James. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the author’s depiction of the three characters and the relationships among them. Pay particular attention to tone and point of view.

Line
5 The poor young man hesitated and procrastinated: it cost him such an effort to broach the subject of terms, to speak of money to a person who spoke only of feelings and, as it were, of the aristocracy. Yet he was unwilling to take leave, treating his engagement as settled, without some more conventional glance in that direction than he could find an opening for in the manner of the large, affable lady who sat there drawing a pair of soiled *gants de Suède** through a fat, jewelled hand and, at once pressing and gliding, repeated over and over everything but the thing he would have liked to hear. He would have liked to hear the figure of his salary; but just as he was nervously about to sound that note the little boy came back—the little boy Mrs. Moreen had sent out of the room to fetch her fan. He came back without the fan, only with the casual observation that he couldn’t find it. As he dropped this cynical confession he looked straight and hard at the candidate for the honour of taking his education in hand. This personage reflected, somewhat grimly, that the first thing he should have to teach his little charge would be to appear to address himself to his mother when he spoke to her—especially not to make her such an improper answer as that.

25 When Mrs. Moreen bethought herself of this pretext for getting rid of their companion, Pemberton supposed it was precisely to approach the delicate subject of his remuneration. But it had been only to say some things about her son which it was better that a boy of eleven shouldn’t catch. They were extravagantly to his advantage, save when she lowered her voice to sigh, tapping her left side familiarly: “And all over-clouded by *this*, you know — all at the mercy of a weakness — !” Pemberton gathered that the weakness was in the region of the heart. He had known the poor child was not robust: this was the basis on which he had been invited to treat, through an English lady, an Oxford

40 acquaintance, then at Nice, who happened to know both his needs and those of the amiable American family looking out for something really superior in the way of a resident tutor.

45 The young man’s impression of his prospective pupil, who had first come into the room, as if to see for himself, as soon as Pemberton was admitted, was not quite the soft solicitation the visitor had taken for granted. Morgan Moreen was, somehow, sickly without being delicate, and that he looked intelligent (it is true Pemberton wouldn’t have enjoyed his being stupid), only added to the suggestion that, as with his big mouth and big ears he really couldn’t be called pretty, he might be unpleasant. Pemberton was modest—he was even timid; and the chance that his small scholar might prove cleverer than himself had quite figured, to his nervousness, among the dangers of an untried experiment. He reflected, however, that these were risks one had to run when one accepted a position, as it was called, in a private family; when as yet one’s University honours had, pecuniarily speaking, remained barren. At any rate, when Mrs. Moreen got up as if to intimate that, since it was understood he would enter upon his duties within the week she would let him off now, he succeeded, in spite of the presence of the child, in squeezing out a phrase about the rate of payment. It was not the fault of the conscious smile which seemed a reference to the lady’s expensive identity, if the allusion did not sound rather vulgar. This was exactly because she became still more gracious to reply: “Oh, I can assure you that all that will be quite regular.”

70 Pemberton only wondered, while he took up his hat, what “all that” was to amount to—people had such different ideas. Mrs. Moreen’s words, however, seemed to commit the family to a pledge definite enough to elicit from the child a strange little comment, in the shape of the mocking, foreign ejaculation, “Oh, là-là!”

*suede gloves

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Question 3

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

Critic Roland Barthes has said, “Literature is the question minus the answer.” Choose a novel or play and, considering Barthes’ observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers any answers. Explain how the author’s treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

You may select a work from the list below or another novel or play of comparable literary merit.

Alias Grace
All the King’s Men
Candide
Crime and Punishment
Death of a Salesman
Doctor Faustus
Don Quixote
A Gesture Life
Ghosts
Great Expectations
The Great Gatsby
Gulliver’s Travels
Heart of Darkness
Invisible Man
Joe Turner’s Come and Gone
King Lear
Major Barbara

Middlemarch
Moby-Dick
Obasan
Oedipus Rex
Orlando
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
The Scarlet Letter
Sister Carrie
The Sound and the Fury
Sula
The Sun Also Rises
Their Eyes Were Watching God
The Things They Carried
The Turn of the Screw
Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf

END OF EXAMINATION