



AP[®] English Literature and Composition 2015 Free-Response Questions

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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.)

In the following poem by Caribbean writer Derek Walcott, the speaker recalls a childhood experience of visiting an elderly woman storyteller. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, discuss the speaker's recollection and analyze how Walcott uses poetic devices to convey the significance of the experience.

XIV

With the frenzy of an old snake shedding its skin,
the speckled road, scored with ruts, smelling of mold,
twisted on itself and reentered the forest
Line where the dasheen¹ leaves thicken and folk stories begin.
5 Sunset would threaten us as we climbed closer
to her house up the asphalt hill road, whose yam vines
wrangled over gutters with the dark reek of moss,
the shutters closing like the eyelids of that mimosa²
called Ti-Marie; then—lucent as paper lanterns,
10 lamplight glowed through the ribs, house after house—
there was her own lamp at the black twist of the path.
There's childhood, and there's childhood's aftermath.
She began to remember at the minute of the fireflies,
to the sound of pipe water banging in kerosene tins,
15 stories she told to my brother and myself.
Her leaves were the libraries of the Caribbean.
The luck that was ours, those fragrant origins!
Her head was magnificent, Sidone. In the gully of her voice
shadows stood up and walked, her voice travels my shelves.
20 She was the lamplight in the stare of two mesmerized boys
still joined in one shadow, indivisible twins.

¹ dasheen: tropical plant with large leaves

² mimosa: tropical plant whose leaves close or droop when touched or shaken

"XIV" from MIDSUMMER by Derek Walcott. Copyright © 1984 by Derek Walcott.
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Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from the opening of *The Beet Queen*, a 1986 novel by Louise Erdrich. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze how Erdrich depicts the impact of the environment on the two children. You may wish to consider such literary devices as tone, imagery, selection of detail, and point of view.

Unfortunately, we do not have permission to reproduce the excerpt from Louise Erdrich's *The Beet Queen* on this website.

The excerpt consists of the first six paragraphs of the novel.

Question 3

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

In literary works, cruelty often functions as a crucial motivation or a major social or political factor. Select a novel, play, or epic poem in which acts of cruelty are important to the theme. Then write a well-developed essay analyzing how cruelty functions in the work as a whole and what the cruelty reveals about the perpetrator and/or victim.

You may select a work from the list below or another work of equal literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Beloved
A Bend in the River
Billy Budd
Black Boy
Catch-22
Cat's Eye
The Crucible
Frankenstein
A Gesture Life
Great Expectations
Heart of Darkness
Invisible Man
The Kite Runner
The Last of the Mohicans
Lord of the Flies

Mansfield Park
Medea
The Merchant of Venice
Night
The Odyssey
Oliver Twist
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Othello
The Red Badge of Courage
The Scarlet Letter
Sister Carrie
Sophie's Choice
Tess of the d'Urbervilles
To Kill a Mockingbird
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
Wuthering Heights

STOP

END OF EXAM