

**2005 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, published in 1789 and 1794, were written by William Blake in response to the condition of chimney sweeps. Usually small children, sweeps were forced inside chimneys to clean their interiors. Read the two poems carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the two poems, taking into consideration the poetic techniques Blake uses in each.

The Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry “ ’weep! ’weep! ’weep! ’weep!”*
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

Line

5 There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curl’d like a lamb’s back, was shav’d, so I said,
“Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head’s bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.”

10 And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
Were all of them lock’d up in coffins of black;

15 And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open’d the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun;

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,
20 He’d have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho’ the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

* The child’s lisping attempt at the chimney sweep’s street cry,
“Sweep! Sweep!”

William Blake, “The Chimney Sweeper,” *The Complete Poetry and
Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (1789; 1794; Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1965).

(1789)

The Chimney Sweeper

A little black thing among the snow
Crying “ ’weep, ’weep,” in notes of woe!
“Where are thy father & mother? say?”
“They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Line

5 “Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil’d among the winter’s snow;
They clothéd me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

10 “And because I am happy, & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery.”

William Blake, “The Chimney Sweeper,” *The Complete Poetry and
Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (1789; 1794; Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1965).

(1794)