

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

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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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

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

**AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE
2004 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 2

Henry James's "The Pupil"

General Directions: This scoring guide will be useful for most of the essays that you read, but in problematic cases, please consult your table leader. The score that you assign should reflect your judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole—its content, its style, its mechanics. Reward the writers for what they do well. The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised by one point above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case may a poorly written essay be scored higher than a three (3).

- 9-8** These essays offer a persuasive analysis of the three characters and the relationships among them as depicted in the excerpt from Henry James's "The Pupil." The writers make a strong case for their interpretation of character and situation, examine techniques such as tone and point of view, and include apt and specific references to the passage. Although these essays may not be error-free, they are perceptive in their analysis. In writing that is clear, precise, and effective, they demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of the passage. Generally, the nine (9) essays reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an eight (8).
- 7-6** These essays offer a reasonable interpretation of James's three characters and the relationships among them. With attention to techniques such as tone and point of view, the writers provide sustained, competent analysis supported by specific references to the text. Although these essays may not be error-free and are not so convincing or so thoroughly developed as essays in the highest range, they reveal the writer's ability to express ideas and insights with clarity and control. Generally, the seven (7) essays present better developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a six (6).
- 5** These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading of the passage, but tend to be superficial in their analysis of the three characters and their relationships. They often rely on paraphrase, but exhibit some analysis, implicit or explicit. The discussion of how tone, point of view, and other techniques shape the characters and their relationships may be slight, and support from the passage may be thin. While these writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by surface errors. Generally, essays scored a five (5) lack the more effective organization and the more sustained development characteristic of 7-6 papers.
- 4-3** These lower-half essays offer a less than thorough understanding of the task and a less than adequate treatment of how James uses tone, point of view, and other techniques to depict the characters and the relationships among them. Relying on plot summary or paraphrase in place of textual support, the writers may fail to articulate a convincing basis for interpretation and argument, and may consistently misread the passage. These essays may be characterized by a lack of control over the elements of composition, with inadequate development of ideas, an accumulation of errors, or a focus that is unclear, inconsistent, or repetitive. Generally, essays scored a four (4) exhibit better control of organization and language than those scored a three (3).

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Question 2 (cont'd.)

- 2-1** These essays compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4-3 range. They may persistently misunderstand the passage, be unacceptably brief, or be incoherent. They may contain pervasive compositional errors that interfere with understanding. Although some attempt has been made to respond to the question, the writer's assertions are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the passage. Essays scored a one (1) contain little coherent discussion of the passage or are especially inept or unsound.
- 0** These essays give a response that is no more than a reference to the task.
- Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.