

Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Line It had taken him three months to complete the
thirty-six four-by-six-foot panels that would join
together, like a huge puzzle, to form the immense
mural. The last thing he painted, on the final morning,
5 was a third apple—airborne—tossed by a child
 juggler. The apples were like tiny planets, and the
 child, otherwise small and unexceptional, gained
 power through his manipulation of them. Kenneth had
 to break one last egg to paint this, and as he passed it
10 from hand to hand, letting the white drain to the floor,
 and allowing the clean yolk to settle in his palm, he
 looked at this boy—his serene, confident expression,
 the three apples aloft, the face calm with the
 knowledge that they would be kept in the air
15 indefinitely. While Kenneth mixed the yolk with the
 warm shades of ground pigment, he remembered the
 critic telling him to keep things on the picture plane
 flat, two-dimensional, and he smiled as the apple
 became spherical under his brush. When he could
20 imagine the weight of it in his hand, he knew he was
 finished. Then he began to toss brushes, palettes, and
 pigments down to the floor below. There was a drill
 shrieking somewhere in the building. The clatter his
 tools made on landing must have been drowned out by
25 its noise.

Kenneth figured he had broken five thousand eggs,
 more or less, in the making of the mural, and each
 time he broke the shell, he thought of the critic’s head,
 the smooth baldness of the top of it. Humpty-
30 Dumpty,¹ he thought, this wall, and the wall of
 cultural fashion that could keep you out, for a while,
 until the great fall. By now he knew that fashion
 always fell, it failed and fell. He was happy to be free
 of it. And as he used the shell to separate the white

35 from the yolk, he thought about Harding,² a man who
 had never made use of egg tempera. He wondered
 what had become of him. And the woman Harding
 had loved, whether she had ever painted again, and
 whether or not he himself would ever come across a
40 painting by Gentleman.³ The girl in Germany, the
 couple in Italy,⁴ floated by, a sense of them here and
 there in the mural. These narratives fought for space
 in his mind. But the mural itself, he knew, was
 divorced from narrative. As it should be, he whispered
45 to himself, as it should be. *Flight and Its Allegories*.⁵

Once he was on the ground, he rifled through a
 canvas sack until he found the camera he was looking
 for, a Brownie Starflex, with six exposures still
 available. He shot the mural from left to right. Then
50 he walked across the full length of the half-tiled floor.
 This was the last exposure and it would make the
 mural look incredibly small, like a two-inch-long
 piece of ribbon with an unreadable pattern on it. But
 he wanted to show its proportions to a friend and, in
55 any case, the more professional pictures would be
 taken later, after he was gone, when the mural had
 begun to live its own independent life in the presence
 of an audience.

For months now there had been noise, the
60 workmen’s power tools and, in the odd moments
 when those were silent, the roar of the planes arriving
 and departing at the old, soon-to-be abandoned
 terminal. He had seen the passengers, through the
 plate glass of the windows, rivers of them, pouring
65 down the steps that were pushed up to airliners, then
 flowing darkly across the tarmac. What would they
 make of *Flight and Its Allegories*? Would they be
 struck by it? Or would they simply pass it by,

preoccupied by the mysteries of their individual lives
70 as they walked forward or waited in the lounge? He
was not unaware that public art could be—and often
was—ignored. Still, what pleasure he had taken in the
making of it.

¹ Humpty-Dumpty is a nursery-rhyme character, typically depicted as an egg. He falls from a wall, breaks, and cannot be put together again.

² Kenneth's former art teacher, who cautioned Kenneth against appropriating the ideas, styles, and techniques of other artists

³ Alexander Gentleman, an obscure artist that Harding once knew; another artist later copied his style and gained fame as a result

⁴ "The girl in Germany" and "the couple in Italy" are people Kenneth met while backpacking through Europe.

⁵ Allegories are works of literature or art that express moral or political messages, often through the use of symbols.

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Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 3

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

Many works of literature explore a character's sense of lacking something important in life. The character perceives an unfulfilled need which may be emotional, spiritual, financial, or something the character does not understand or cannot articulate. Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which such a feeling is explored. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character's sense of an unfulfilled need contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Antigone
The Awakening
The Bell Jar
Brave New World
Ceremony
Death of a Salesman
Don Quixote
Fences
Frankenstein
The Goldfinch
The Handmaid's Tale
How the García Girls Lost Their Accents
Howards End
The Hundred Secret Senses
If Beale Street Could Talk
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
Kindred
Little Fires Everywhere
Macbeth

Moby-Dick
Native Son
On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
Passing
A Raisin in the Sun
Sag Harbor
The Scarlet Letter
The Secret Life of Bees
Song of Solomon
Sweat
Swing Time
The Tempest
There There
A Thousand Splendid Suns
To the Lighthouse
The Visit
When the Emperor Was Divine
White Noise
Wuthering Heights

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 2: Prose Fiction Analysis

6 points

The following excerpt is from Jane Urquhart’s novel *The Night Stages*, published in 2015. In this passage, an artist named Kenneth is finishing a mural for a new airline terminal using the long-established medium of egg tempera, a paint made of egg yolk, pigment, and water. He thinks about the influences on his work and how his mural may be received. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Urquhart uses literary elements and techniques to convey Kenneth’s complex perspective as he completes his mural.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 	1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Make a generalized comment about the passage that doesn't respond to the prompt. Describe the passage or features of the passage rather than making a claim that requires a defense. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible interpretation of Kenneth's complex perspective as he completes his mural.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"In this excerpt, the author shows Kenneth thinking about how complex the experience of making art can be."</i> Do not respond to the prompt but make a generalized comment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Great works of art can have an amazingly powerful effect on our emotions."</i> Describe the passage or features of the passage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Kenneth uses eggs to make paint for his mural, and afterwards he takes pictures to show his friends."</i> 	Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"The passage shows Kenneth realizing that the experience of painting the mural is a worthwhile endeavor no matter what may happen to it afterwards."</i> <i>"Kenneth's experience of completing the mural causes him to consider the impact of artistic tradition and its continued value in the future."</i> <i>"Although Kenneth works alone, he recognizes that he does not really create alone—he is aware that his art is always influenced by other people, both those he has known personally as well as complete strangers."</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis may be more than one sentence, provided the sentences are in close proximity. The thesis may be anywhere within the response. For a thesis to be defensible, the passage must include at least minimal evidence that <i>could</i> be used to support that thesis; however, the student need not cite that evidence to earn the thesis point. The thesis <i>may</i> establish a line of reasoning that structures the essay, but it needn't do so to earn the thesis point. A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Sophistication (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to contextualize their interpretation, but such attempts consist predominantly of sweeping generalizations (“<i>Human experiences always include...</i>” OR “<i>In a world where...</i>” OR “<i>Since the beginning of time...</i>”). Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (“<i>While another reader may see...</i>” OR “<i>Though the passage could be said to...</i>”). Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the passage comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the passage. Use complicated or complex sentences or language that is ineffective because it does not enhance the student’s argument. 	Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive.
	Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student’s argument, not merely a phrase or reference. 	