

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
SECTION II
Total time—2 hours
3 Questions

Question 1

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

In William Ellery Channing’s poem “The Barren Moors,” published in 1843, the speaker addresses moors, open expanses of wild, uncultivated land. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Channing uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the speaker’s experience of this natural setting.

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.

The Barren Moors

On your bare rocks, O barren moors,
On your bare rocks I love to lie,—
They stand like crags upon the shores,
Line Or clouds upon a placid sky.

5 Across those spaces desolate,
The fox pursues his lonely way,
Those solitudes can fairly sate¹
The passage of my loneliest day.

Like desert Islands far at sea
10 Where not a ship can ever land,
Those dim uncertainties to me,
For something veritable stand.

A serious place distinct from all
Which busy Life delights to feel,
15 I stand in this deserted hall,
And thus the wounds of time conceal.

No friend’s cold eye, or sad delay,
Shall vex me now where not a sound
Falls on the ear, and every day
20 Is soft as silence most profound.

No more upon these distant wolds²
The agitating world can come,
A single pensive thought upholds
The arches of this dreamy home.

25 Within the sky above, one thought
Replies to you, O barren moors!
Between, I stand, a creature taught
To stand between two silent floors.

¹ fully satisfy

² hills

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

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

The following excerpt is from Brenda Peynado’s short story “The Rock Eaters,” published in 2021. In this passage, the narrator is one of a group of people who left their home country after developing the ability to fly, an ability that is accepted as realistically possible within the story. Years later, the group returns to that country with their children. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Peynado uses literary elements and techniques to convey the narrator’s complex experience of this return home.

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.

We were the first generation to leave our island country. We were the ones who developed a distinct float to our walk on the day we came of age. Soon enough we were hovering inches above the ground, Line 5 then somersaulting with the clouds, finally discovering we could fly as far as we’d ever wanted. And so we left. Decades later, we brought our children back to see our home country. That year, we all decided we were ready to return.

10 We jackknifed through clouds and dodged large birds. We held our children tightly; they had not yet learned to fly. Behind us trailed roped-together lines of suitcases packed with gifts from abroad. We wondered who would remember us.

15 Our parents, those who were still alive, came out to greet us, hands on their brows like visors. Some were expecting us. Others were surprised, terrified at the spectacle of millions of their prodigals¹ blotting the sky with our billowing skirts, our shirts starched for 20 the arrival. We touched down on our parents’ driveways, skidding to rough landings at their feet, denting cars, squashing flowers, rattling windows.

Our old friends and siblings, the ones we’d left behind, kept their doors locked. They peered through 25 window blinds at the flattened flowerbeds, the suitcases that had burst and strewn packages all over the yards and streets, our youngest children squealing now that they’d been released, the peace we’d broken by returning. They didn’t trust us, not after our 30 betrayal decades ago, the whiff of money we’d earned or lost in other countries like a suspect stench. Our parents hugged their grandchildren and brought them inside to houses with no electricity, candles wavering like we were in a séance. “More brownouts,” they told

35 us. “We remember,” we said, recoiling at how little the place fit us anymore. Those first nights we slept in our old beds, our feet hanging over the edges, the noises of the city and the country crowing and honking us awake, music from radios and guitars, 40 celebrations we’d not been invited to.

We dragged our children along to knock on the doors of old friends and siblings, the ones who never developed the ability to fly. They eventually, reluctantly, opened their doors. At first we sat stiffly 45 on couches and inquired after their health and others we once knew. Then we got them to laugh with us about the time we pulled the nuns’ skirts or put gum in the kink of a rival’s hair, when we caught baby chicks in the village and raised them, or cracked open 50 almonds on the malecón.² Then their children came shyly out of their rooms and took ours by the hand. We smiled when we saw them climbing trees together in the patios, their children showing ours how to eat cajujitos solimán and acerolas³ from the branch.

55 We introduced our children to everyone we used to know: at colmados,⁴ by the side of the road, at the baseball fields, at country clubs we had to beg to be let back into. We showed our children the flamboyán trees in the parks, blooms of coral red spilling in the 60 dirt. We showed them the granite striated through the rock faces of mountains, the glimmering pebbles under waterfalls, the red dust that stained the seats of their best clothes. We walked past the stray dogs that growled and whined; the most ancient among them 65 remembered us, wagging their tails when they saw us and running to sniff our offspring. We dunked our children into the rivers we’d once swum. We dug through the banks for the arrowheads that belonged to

Question 1: Poetry Analysis

6 points

In William Ellery Channing’s poem “The Barren Moors,” published in 1843, the speaker addresses moors, open expanses of wild, uncultivated land. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Channing uses literary elements and techniques to develop a complex portrayal of the speaker’s experience of this natural setting.

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 poem.
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 poem that doesn't respond to the prompt. • Describe the poem or features of the poem rather than making a claim that requires a defense. Examples that do not earn this point: <p>Restate the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>The speaker has a complex experience in the setting of these moors.</i>” • “<i>William Ellery Channing uses various literary devices to portray the speaker’s complex experience in nature.</i>” <p>Do not relate to the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Nature experiences can inspire great poetry.</i>” <p>Describe the poem or features of the poem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>This poem is particularly vivid in its description of the moors.</i>” 		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a defensible interpretation of the complex portrayal of the speaker’s experience of this natural setting.
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <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 poem 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. 		<p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <p>Provide a defensible interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>The speaker’s experience of the natural setting is one of solitude and uncertainty, but also of appreciation and peace.</i>” • “<i>By having the speaker address the moors directly, Channing portrays the setting to be a place where divisions are blurred.</i>” • “<i>The moors provide an escape from the cares of the world, but this escape to nature does not provide any advice or resolution. Rather, it offers a quiet that’s more ‘profound.’</i>”

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0–4 points)	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student's argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the poem contributes to its meaning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the poem contribute to its meaning.

Decision Rules and Scoring Notes

Typical responses that earn 0 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are incoherent or do not address the prompt. May be just opinion with no textual references or references that are irrelevant. 	Typical responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to focus on summary or description of a poem rather than specific details or techniques. Mention literary elements, devices, or techniques with little or no explanation. 	Typical responses that earn 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consist of a mix of specific evidence and broad generalities. May contain some simplistic, inaccurate, or repetitive explanations that don't strengthen the argument. May make one point well but either do not make multiple supporting claims or do not adequately support more than one claim. Do not explain the connections or progression between the student's claims, so a line of reasoning is not clearly established. 	Typical responses that earn 3 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. Organize an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims. Commentary may fail to integrate some evidence or fail to support a key claim. 	Typical responses that earn 4 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniformly offer evidence to support claims. Focus on the importance of specific words and details from the poem to build an interpretation. Organize and support an argument as a line of reasoning composed of multiple supporting claims, each with adequate evidence that is clearly explained. Explain how the writer's use of multiple literary techniques contributes to the student's interpretation of the poem.
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row. To earn the fourth point in this row, the response may observe multiple instances of the same literary element or technique if each instance further contributes to the meaning of the poem. 				

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 poem could be said to ...</i>”). Make a single statement about how an interpretation of the poem comments on something thematic without consistently maintaining that thematic interpretation. Oversimplify complexities in the poem. 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 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 poem. Illuminating the student’s interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the poem. 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. 		