

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 Alice Cary’s poem “Autumn,” published in 1874, the speaker contemplates the onset of autumn. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Cary uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker’s complex response to the changing seasons.

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.

Autumn

Shorter and shorter now the twilight clips
 The days, as though the sunset gates they crowd,
 And Summer from her golden collar slips
Line And strays through stubble-fields, and moans aloud,

5 Save when by fits the warmer air deceives,
 And, stealing hopeful to some sheltered bower,¹
 She lies on pillows of the yellow leaves,
 And tries the old tunes over for an hour.

The wind, whose tender whisper in the May
 10 Set all the young blooms listening through th’ grove,
 Sits rustling in the faded boughs to-day
 And makes his cold and unsuccessful love.

The rose has taken off her tire² of red—
 The mullein-stalk³ its yellow stars have lost,
 15 And the proud meadow-pink⁴ hangs down her head
 Against earth’s chilly bosom, witchèd with frost.

The robin, that was busy all the June,
 Before the sun had kissed the topmost bough,
 Catching our hearts up in his golden tune,
 20 Has given place to the brown cricket now.

The very cock crows lonesomely at morn—
 Each flag⁵ and fern the shrinking stream divides—
 Uneasy cattle low,⁶ and lambs forlorn
 Creep to their strawy sheds with nettled sides.

- 25 Shut up the door: who loves me must not look
Upon the withered world, but haste to bring
His lighted candle, and his story-book,
And live with me the poetry of Spring.

¹ a spot in a garden shaded by a covering of vines or branches

² attire

³ stem of a woolly-leaved plant

⁴ slender plant with pink flowers

⁵ plant with long tapering leaves

⁶ moo

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 Nisi Shawl’s novel *Everfair*, published in 2016. In this passage, the narrator describes the experience of a young woman, Lisette, as she rides her bicycle through the French countryside in July 1889. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Shawl uses literary elements and techniques to portray Lisette’s complex response to her experience of riding her bicycle.

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 Lisette Toutournier sighed. She breathed in again,
out, in, the marvelous air smelling of crushed stems,
green blood bruised and roused by her progress along
this narrow forest path. Her progress, and that of her
5 new mechanical friend. Commencing to walk again,
she pushed it along through underbrush and creepers,
woodbine and fern giving way before its wheels. Oh,
how the insects buzzed about her exposed skin, her
face and hands and wrists and ankles, waiting to bite.
10 And the vexing heat bid fair to stifle her as she
climbed the hillside slowly—but the
scent—intoxicating! And soon, so soon, all this effort
would be repaid.

There! The crest came in sight, the washed-out
15 summer sky showing itself through the beech trees’
old silver trunks. Now her path connected with the
road, stony, rutted, but still better suited for riding.
She stood a moment admiring the view: the valley, the
blurred rows of cultivation curving away smaller and
20 smaller in the bluing distance, the sky pale overhead,
the perfect foil for the dark-leaved woods behind her
and by her sides. Not far off a redwing sang, cold
water trickling uphill.

She had the way of it now: gripping the rubber
25 molded around the machine’s metal handlebars, she
leaned it toward her and swung one skirted leg over
the drop frame. Upright again, she walked it a few
more steps forward, aiming straight along the lane, the
yellow-brown dust bright in the sun. The machine’s
30 glossy paint shone. Within the wheel’s front rim its
spokes were a revolving web of intricacy, shadows
and light chasing one another. Tiny puffs of dust
spurted from beneath the black rubber tires.

She raised her eyes. The vista opened wider, wider.
35 The road laid itself down before her.

Up on the creaking leather seat. Legs drawn high,
boots searching, scraping, finding their places . . . and
pedal! Push! Feet turning circles like her machine’s
wheels, *with* those wheels. It was, at first, work. She
40 pedaled and steered, wobbling just once and catching
herself. Then going faster, faster! Flying! Freedom!

Saplings, walls, and vines whipped by, flashes of
greenbrown greengrey as Lisette on her machine sped
down the road, down the hill. Wind rushed into her
45 face, whistled in her ears, filled her nose, her lungs,
tore her hair loose of its pins to stream behind her.
She was a wild thing, laughing, jouncing over dry
watercourses, hanging on for dear, dear life. Lower,
now, and some few trees arched above, alternately
50 blocking the hot glare and exposing her to it
coolwarmcoolwarm, currents of sun and shade
splashing over her as she careened by. Coasting, at
last, spilling all velocity till she and the machine came
to rest beside the river.

55 The river. The comforting smell and sound of it
rushing away. Out on the Yonne’s broad darkness a
barge sailed, bound perhaps for Paris, the Seine, the
sea beyond,¹ carrying casks of wine and other
valuables. Flushed from her ride, Lisette blushed yet
60 more deeply, suddenly conscious of the curious stares
of those around her: Mademoiselle Carduner, the
schoolmistress; and Monsieur Lutterayne, the
chemist,² out for a promenade during his dinner hour
or on some errand, seizing a chance to vacate his
65 stuffy shop. Flustered, she attempted to restrain her
hair into a proper chignon,³ but at only sixteen and
with many pins missing, this was beyond her skill.
She began furiously to plait⁴ her thick blond curls,
and the others moved away.

70 At last she was alone on the riverbank with her

Question 1: Poetry Analysis

6 points

In Alice Cary’s poem “Autumn,” published in 1874, the speaker contemplates the onset of autumn. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Cary uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker’s complex response to the changing seasons.

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. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a defensible interpretation of the speaker's complex response to the changing season.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Cary uses various literary elements to convey the speaker's response to the onset of autumn."</i> Do not relate to the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Fall is a time when leaves change and decay is all around us."</i> Describe the poem or features of the poem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"In the poem 'Autumn,' the speaker describes how flowers, birds, and even temperatures react to the changing of summer into fall. They lose their colors, migrate, and turn colder."</i> 	Examples that earn this point: Provide a defensible interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"While autumn makes the speaker's surroundings less hospitable, the speaker takes comfort in the memories of summer and the promise of spring's future arrival."</i> <i>"The personification of nature reveals the speaker's sense of loss at summer's ending and of dread at autumn's arrival."</i> <i>"Cary uses a predictable rhyme scheme and four-line stanzas to highlight how the predictable seasonal cycle eases the speaker's otherwise melancholy reaction to autumn's arrival."</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 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. 	

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 ...” OR “In a world where ...” OR “Since the beginning of time ...”</i>). Only hint at or suggest other possible interpretations (<i>“While another reader may see ...” OR “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. 	