

Question 1

(Suggested time—30 minutes)

Directions: Your work on the preceding prose passage called your attention to some of its details. It is reprinted here for your convenience.

In the opening lines of the passage, we are told that “the new arrangement was inevitably confounding” to Maisie. Some synonyms for “confounding” are “confusing,” “unnerving,” “perplexing,” “puzzling.”

Write a descriptive or narrative piece which presents a person who is undergoing a new experience that is confounding. Use any techniques of the writer’s craft that you feel are appropriate to your subject. Your work should have shape and coherence.

(5) The child was provided for, but the new arrangement was inevitably confounding to a young intelligence intensely aware that something had happened which must matter a good deal and looking anxiously out for the effects of so great a cause. It was to be the fate of this patient little girl to see much more than she at first understood, but also even at first to understand

(10) much more than any little girl, however patient, had perhaps ever understood before. Only a drummer-boy in a ballad or a story could have been so in the thick of the fight. She was taken into the confidence of passions on which she fixed just the stare she might have had for images bounding across the wall in the slide of a magic-lantern. Her little world was phantasmagoric—strange shadows dancing on a sheet. It was as if the whole performance had been given for her—

(15) a mite of a half-scared infant in a great dim theatre. She was in short introduced to life with a liberality in which the selfishness of others found its account, and there was nothing to avert the sacrifice but the modesty of her youth.

Her first term was with her father, who spared her only in not letting her have the wild letters addressed to her by her mother: he confined himself to holding them up at her and shaking them, while he showed his teeth, and then amusing her by the way he chuckled them, across

(20) the room, bang into the fire. Even at that moment, however, she had a scared anticipation of fatigue, a guilty sense of not rising to the occasion, feeling the charm of the violence with which the stiff unopened envelopes, whose big monograms—*Ida* bristled with monograms—she would have liked to see, were made to whizz, like dangerous missiles, through the air. The greatest effect of the great cause was her *own* greater importance, chiefly revealed to her in the larger freedom with which she was handled, pulled hither and thither and kissed, and the proportionately greater niceness she was obliged to show. Her features had somehow become prominent; they were so perpetually nipped by the gentlemen who came to see her father and the smoke of whose

(25) cigarettes went into her face. Some of these gentlemen made her strike matches and light their cigarettes; others, holding her on knees violently jolted, pinched the calves of her legs till she shrieked—her shriek was much admired—and reproached them with being toothpicks. The word stuck in her mind and contributed to her feeling from this time that she was deficient in something that would meet the general desire. She found out what it was; it was a congenital tendency to the production of a substance to which *Moddle*, her nurse, gave a short ugly name, a name

(30) painfully associated at dinner with the part of the joint that she didn’t like. She had left behind her the time when she had *no* desires to meet, none at least save *Moddle’s*, who, in Kensington Gardens, was always on the bench when she came back to see if she had been playing too far. *Moddle’s* desire was merely that she shouldn’t do that, and she met it so easily that the only spots in that long brightness were the moments of her wondering what would become of her if,

(35) on her rushing back, there should be no *Moddle* on the bench. They still went to the Gardens, but there was a difference even there; she was impelled perpetually to look at the legs of other children and ask her nurse if they were toothpicks. *Moddle* was terribly truthful; she always said: “Oh my dear, you’ll not find such another pair as your own.” It seemed to have to do with something else that *Moddle* often said: “You feel the strain—that’s where it is; and you’ll feel it still worse, you know.”

(40) Thus from the first *Maisie* not only felt it, but knew she felt it. A part of it was the consequence of her father’s telling her he felt it too, and telling *Moddle*, in her presence, that she must make a point of driving that home. She was familiar, at the age of six, with the fact that everything had been changed on her account, everything ordered to enable him to give

(45) himself up to her. She was to remember always the words in which *Moddle* impressed upon her that he did so give himself: “Your papa wishes you never to forget, you know, that he has been dreadfully put about.” If the skin on *Moddle’s* face had to *Maisie* the air of being unduly, almost painfully, stretched, it never presented that appearance so much as when she uttered, as she often had occasion to utter, such words. The

(50) child wondered if they didn’t make it hurt more than usual; but it was only after some time that she was able to attach to the picture of her father’s sufferings, and more particularly to her nurse’s manner about them, the meaning for which these things had waited. By the time she had grown sharper, as the gentlemen who had criticised her calves used to say, she found in her mind a collection of images and echoes to which meanings were attachable—images and

- (55) echoes kept for her in the childish dusk, the dim closet, the high drawers, like games she wasn't yet big enough to play. The great strain meanwhile was that of carrying by the right end the things her father said about her mother—things mostly indeed that Moddle, on a glimpse of them, as if they had been complicated toys or difficult hooks, took out of her hands and put away in the closet. A wonderful assortment of objects of this kind she was to discover there
- (60) later, all tumbled up too with the things, shuffled into the same receptacle, that her mother had said about her father.

- She had the knowledge that on a certain occasion which every day brought nearer her mother would be at the door to take her away, and this would have darkened all the days if the ingenious Moddle hadn't written on a paper in very big easy words ever so many pleasures
- (65) that she would enjoy at the other house. These promises ranged from "a mother's fond love" to "a nice poached egg for your tea," and took by the way the prospect of sitting up ever so late to see the lady in question dressed, in silks and velvets and diamonds and pearls, to go out: so that it was a real support to Maisie, at the supreme hour, to feel how, by Moddle's direction, the paper was thrust away in her pocket and there clenched in her fist. The supreme hour
- (70) was to furnish her with a vivid reminiscence, that of a strange outbreak in the drawing-room on the part of Moddle, who, in reply to something her father had just said, cried aloud: "You ought to be perfectly ashamed of yourself—you ought to blush, sir, for the way you go on!" The carriage, with her mother in it, was at the door; a gentleman who was there, who was always there, laughed out very loud; her father, who had her in his arms, said to Moddle:
- (75) "My dear woman, I'll settle you presently!"—after which he repeated, showing his teeth more than ever at Maisie while he hugged her, the words for which her nurse had taken him up. Maisie was not at the moment so fully conscious of them as of the wonder of Moddle's sudden disrespect and crimson face; but she was able to produce them in the course of five minutes when, in the carriage, her mother, all kisses, ribbons, eyes, arms, strange sounds and
- (80) sweet smells, said to her: "And did your beastly papa, my precious angel, send any message to your own loving mamma?" Then it was that she found the words spoken by her beastly papa to be, after all, in her little bewildered ears, from which, at her mother's appeal, they passed, in her clear shrill voice, straight to her little innocent lips, "He said I was to tell you, from him," she faithfully reported, "that you're a nasty horrid pig"

Question 2

(Suggested time—30 minutes)

Directions: Read the following poem carefully and then write the assignment given after the poem.

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| <p>I wonder whether one expects
Flowing tie or expert sex
Or even absent-mindedness
Of poets any longer. Less</p> <p>(5) Candour than the average,
Less confidence, a ready rage,
Alertness when it comes to beer,
An affectation that their ear
For music is a little weak,</p> <p>(10) These are the attributes we seek;
But surely not the morning train,
The office lunch, the look of pain
Down the blotched suburban grass,
Not the weekly trance at Mass.</p> <p>(15) Drawing on my sober dress
These, alas, I must confess.</p> <p>I pat my wallet pocket, thinking
I can spare an evening drinking;
Humming as I catch the bus</p> <p>(20) Something by Sibelius,
Suddenly—or as I lend
A hand about the house, or bend
Low above an onion bed—
Memory stumbles in the head;</p> | <p>(25) The sunlight flickers once upon
The massive shafts of Babylon
And ragged phrases in a flock
Settle softly, shock by shock.</p> <p>And so my bored menagerie</p> <p>(30) Once more emerges: Energy,
Blinking, only half awake,
Gives its tiny frame a shake;
Fouling itself, a giantess,
The bloodshot bulk of Laziness</p> <p>(35) Obscures the vision; Discipline
Limps after them with jutting chin,
Bleeding badly from the calf:
Old Jaws-of-Death gives laugh for laugh
With Error as they amble past,</p> <p>(40) And there as usual, lying last,
Helped along by blind Routine,
Futility flogs a tambourine.</p> |
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Write a unified essay in which you relate the imagery of the last stanza to the speaker's view of himself earlier in the poem and to his view of how others see poets.

Question 3

(Suggested time—45 minutes)

Choose a work of literature written before 1900. Write an essay in which you present arguments for and against the work's relevance for a person in 1974. Your own position should emerge in the course of your essay. You may refer to works of literature written after 1900 for the purpose of contrast or comparison.

