

The College Board
Advanced Placement Examination
ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
SECTION II
Total Time—2 hours

Question I

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

In the passage below, which comes from William Wordsworth's autobiographical poem *The Prelude*, the speaker encounters unfamiliar aspects of the natural world. Write an essay in which you trace the speaker's changing responses to his experience and explain how they are conveyed by the poem's diction, imagery, and tone.

- One summer evening (led by her') I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
- Line Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
(5) Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
(10) Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
(15) The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin pinnacle² lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
(20) Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
(25) And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
(30) And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
(35) That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
(40) Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

¹Nature

²Small boat

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

In the following excerpts from the beginning and ending of Tillie Olsen's short story "I Stand Here Ironing," a mother's reflections are prompted by another person's concern about her daughter. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the narrative techniques and other resources of language Olsen uses to characterize the mother and the mother's attitudes toward her daughter.

I stand here ironing, and what you asked me moves tormented back and forth with the iron.

"I wish you would manage the time to come in and talk with me about your daughter. I'm sure you can help me understand her. She's a youngster who needs help and whom I'm deeply interested in helping?"

"Who needs help?". . . Even if! came, what good would it do? You think because I am her mother! have a key, or that in some way you could use me as a key?

(10) She has lived for nineteen years. There is all that life that has happened outside of me, beyond me.

And when is there time to remember, to sift, to weigh, to estimate, to total? I will start and there will be an interruption and I will have to gather it all together

(15) again. Or I will become engulfed with all I did or did not do, with what should have been and what cannot be helped,

She was a beautiful baby. The first and only one of our five that was beautiful at birth. You do not guess

(20) how new and uneasy her tenancy in her now-loveliness. You did not know her all those years she was thought homely, or see her poring over her baby pictures, making me tell her over and over how beautiful she had been—and would be, I would tell her—and was now, to the seeing eye. But the seeing eyes were few or nonexistent. Including mine,

I nursed her. They feel that's important nowadays! nursed all the children, but with her, with all the fierce rigidity of first motherhood, I did like the books then

(30) said. Though her cries battered me to trembling and my breasts ached with swollenness, I waited till the clock decreed.

Why do I put that first? I do not even know if it matters, or if it explains anything.

(35) She was a beautiful baby. She blew shining bubbles of sound. She loved motion, loved light, loved color and music and textures. She would lie on the floor in her blue overalls patting the surface so hard in ecstasy her hands and feet would blur. She was a miracle to me, but

(40) when she was eight months old I had to leave her daytimes with the woman downstairs to whom she was no miracle at all, for I worked or looked for work and for Emily's father, who "could no longer endure" (he

wrote in his good-bye note) "sharing want with us."

(45) I was nineteen. It was the pre-relief, pre-WPA world of the depression. I would start running as soon as I got off the streetcar, running up the stairs, the place smelling sour, and awake or asleep to startle awake, when she saw me she would break into a clogged weeping that could not be comforted, a weeping! can hear yet.

She is so lovely. Why did you want me to come in at all? Why were you concerned? She will find her way.

(55) She starts up the stairs to bed. "Don't get me up with the rest in the morning?" "But! thought you were having midterms." "Oh, those!" she comes back in, kisses me, and says quite lightly, "in a couple of years when we'll all be atom-dead they won't matter a bit?"

She has said it before. She *believes* it. But because I have been dredging the past, and all that compounds a human being is so heavy and meaningful in me, I cannot endure it tonight.

(65) I will never total it all. I will never come in to say: She was a child seldom smiled at. Her father left me before she was a year old. I had to work her first six years when there was work, or I sent her home and to his relatives. There were years she had care she hated.

(70) She was dark and thin and foreign-looking in a world where the prestige went to bloneness and curly hair and dimples, she was slow where glibness was prized. She was a child of anxious, not proud, love. We were poor and could not afford for her the soil of easy

(75) growth. I was a young mother, I was a distracted mother. There were the other children pushing up, demanding. Her younger sister seemed all that she was not. There were years she did not want me to touch her. She kept too much in herself, her life was such she had to keep too much in herself. My wisdom came too late. She has much to her and probably little will come of it. She is a child of her age, of depression, of war, of fear.

Let her be. So all that is in her will not bloom—
(85) but in how many does it? There is still enough left to live by. Only help her to know—help make it so there is cause for her to know—that she is more than this dress on the ironing board, helpless before the iron.

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Question 3

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

In a novel or play, a *confidant* (male) or a *confidante* (female) is a character, often a friend or relative of the hero or heroine, whose role is to be present when the hero or heroine needs a sympathetic listener to confide in. Frequently the result is, as Henry James remarked, that the *confidant* or *confidante* can be as much “the reader’s friend as the protagonist’s.” However, the author sometimes uses this character for other purposes as well.

Choose a *confidant* or *confidante* from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you discuss the various ways this character functions in the work. You may write your essay on one of the following novels or plays or on another of comparable quality. Do not write on a poem or short story.

As You Like It
The Awakening
The Color Purple
Don Quixote
Great Expectations
The Great Gatsby
Hamlet
The Handmaid’s Tale
Hedda Gabler
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Lord of the Flies
Medea
The Mill on the Floss
The Misanthrope
Othello
A Passage to India
Phèdre
The Portrait of a Lady
Pride and Prejudice
Pygmalion
A Raisin in the Sun
Romeo and Juliet
A Streetcar Named Desire
Sula
The Turn of the Screw
The Watch that Ends the Night
Wide Sargasso Sea
Wuthering Heights

END OF EXAMINATION