



AP[®] English Literature and Composition 2016 Free-Response Questions

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2016 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS
ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
SECTION II

Total time-2 hours

Question 1

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

Read carefully the following poem by Richard Wilbur, first published in 1949. Then, write an essay in which you analyze how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. You may wish to consider poetic elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone.

The Juggler

A ball will bounce, but less and less. It's not
A light-hearted thing, resents its own resilience.
Falling is what it loves, and the earth falls
So in our hearts from brilliance,
5 Settles and is forgot.
It takes a sky-blue juggler with five red balls

To shake our gravity up. Whee, in the air
The balls roll round, wheel on his wheeling hands,
Learning the ways of lightness, alter to spheres
10 Grazing his finger ends,
Cling to their courses there,
Swinging a small heaven about his ears.

But a heaven is easier made of nothing at all
Than the earth regained, and still and sole within
15 The spin of worlds, with a gesture sure and noble
He reels that heaven in,
Landing it ball by ball,
And trades it all for a broom, a plate, a table.

Oh, on his toe the table is turning, the broom's
20 Balancing up on his nose, and the plate whirls
On the tip of the broom! Damn, what a show, we cry:
The boys stamp, and the girls
Shriek, and the drum booms
And all comes down, and he bows and says good-bye.

25 If the juggler is tired now, if the broom stands
In the dust again, if the table starts to drop
Through the daily dark again, and though the plate
Lies flat on the table top,
For him we batter our hands
30 Who has won for once over the world's weight.

From *Ceremony and Other Poems* (1950)
in Richard Wilbur, *New and Collected Poems*,
New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988

Question 2

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

In this excerpt from Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), Michael Henchard and his daughter Elizabeth-Jane are reunited after years of estrangement. During this separation, Henchard has risen from poor seasonal farmworker to wealthy mayor of a small country town, while Elizabeth has supported herself by waiting on tables at a tavern.

Read the passage carefully. Paying particular attention to tone, word choice, and selection of detail, compose a well-written essay in which you analyze Hardy's portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters.

Of all the enigmas which ever confronted a girl
there can have been seldom one like that which
followed Henchard's announcement of himself to
Elizabeth as her father. He had done it in an ardour
and an agitation which had half carried the point of
affection with her; yet, behold, from the next morning
onwards his manner was constrained as she had never
seen it before.
The coldness soon broke out into open chiding.
One grievous failing of Elizabeth's was her
occasional pretty and picturesque use of dialect
words those terrible marks of the beast to the truly
genteel.
It was dinner-time-they never met except at
meals and she happened to say when he was rising
from table, wishing to show him something, "If you'll
bide where you be a minute, Father, I'll get it."
" 'Bide where you be,' " he echoed sharply. "Good
God, are you only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough,
that ye use such words as those?"
She reddened with shame and sadness.
"I meant 'Stay where you are,' Father," she said,
in a low, humble voice. "I ought to have been more
careful."
He made no reply, and went out of the room.
The sharp reprimand was not lost upon her, and in
time it came to pass that for "fay" she said "succeed";
that she no longer spoke of "dumbledores" but of
"humble-bees"; no longer said of young men and
women that they "walked together," but that they
were "engaged"; that she grew to talk of "greggles" as
"wild hyacinths"; that when she had not slept she did
not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she
had been "hag-rid," but that she had "suffered from
indigestion."
These improvements, however, are somewhat in
advance of the story. Henchard, being uncultivated
himself, was the bitterest critic the fair girl could
possibly have had of her own lapses really slight
now, for she read omnivorously. A gratuitous ordeal

was in store for her in the matter of her handwriting.
She was passing the dining-room door one evening,
and she had occasion to go in for something. It was
not till she had opened the door that she knew the
Mayor was there in the company of a man with whom
he transacted business.
"Here, Elizabeth-Jane," he said, looking round at
her, "just write down what I tell you—a few words of
an agreement for me and this gentleman to sign. I am
a poor tool with a pen."
"Be jowned, and so be I," said the gentleman.
She brought forward blotting-book, paper, and ink,
and sat down.
"Now then An agreement entered into this
sixteenth day of October write that first."
She started the pen in an elephantine march across
the sheet. It was a splendid round, bold hand of her
own conception, a style that would have stamped a
woman as Minerva's own in more recent days. But
other ideas reigned then: Henchard's creed was that
proper young girls wrote ladies'-hand-nay, he
believed that bristling characters were as innate
and inseparable a part of refined womanhood as sex
itself. Hence when, instead of scribbling like the
Princess Ida,

In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East,

Elizabeth-Jane produced a line of chain-shot and
sandbags, he reddened in angry shame for her, and,
peremptorily saying, "Never mind—I'll finish it,"
dismissed her there and then.
Her considerate disposition became a pitfall to her
now. She was, it must be admitted, sometimes
provokingly and unnecessarily willing to saddle
herself with manual labors. She would go to the
kitchen instead of ringing, "not to make Phoebe come
up twice." She went down on her knees, shovel in
hand, when the cat overturned the coal-scuttle;

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80 moreover, she would persistently thank the parlour-
maid for everything, till one day, as soon as the girl
was gone from the room, Henchard broke out with,
“Good God, why dostn’t leave off thanking that girl
as if she were a goddess born! Don’t I pay her a dozen
85 pound a year to do things for ‘ee?” Elizabeth shrank
so visibly at the exclamation that he became sorry a
few minutes after, and said that he did not mean to be
rough.

These domestic exhibitions were the small
protruding needle-rocks which suggested rather than
90 revealed what was underneath. But his passion had
less tenor for her than his coldness. The increasing
frequency of the latter mood told her the sad news
that he disliked her with a growing dislike. The more
interesting that her appearance and manners became
95 under the softening influences which she could now
command, and in her wisdom did command, the more
she seemed to estrange him.

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Question 3

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

Many works of literature contain a character who intentionally deceives others. The character's dishonesty may be intended either to help or to hurt. Such a character, for example, may choose to mislead others for personal safety, to spare someone's feelings, or to carry out a crime.

Choose a novel or play in which a character deceives others. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the motives for that character's deception and discuss how the deception contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another work of comparable literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Anna Karenina
As You Like It
Atonement
Beloved
The Blind Assassin
The Bonesetter's Daughter
The Burgess Boys
Catch-22
The Color Purple
Crime and Punishment
The Crucible
A Doll House
Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close
The Great Gatsby
Hamlet
Heart of Darkness
In the Lake of the Woods
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre

Jude the Obscure
The Kite Runner
M. Butterfly
Madame Bovary
The Memory Keeper's Daughter
Middlesex
Much Ado About Nothing
Never Let Me Go
Oryx and Crake
Othello
The Picture of Dorian Gray
The Portrait of a Lady
Pride and Prejudice
Snow Flower and the Secret Fan
Twelfth Night
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
The Women of Brewster Place
Wuthering Heights
A Yellow Raft in Blue Water

**STOP
END OF EXAM**