

2023



AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Free-Response Questions Set 1

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, witched 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.

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- 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.

15 There! The crest came in sight, the washed-out
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.

25 She had the way of it now: gripping the rubber
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.

35 She raised her eyes. The vista opened wider, wider.
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
greenbrowngreengrey 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

mechanical friend. She tied her plaits together, though she knew that momentarily they would slither apart. She stroked the machine's still-gleaming handlebars, then leaned to fit her forehead at their center, so.

75 “Dear one,” whispered Lisette. “How can you ever know how much you mean to me? Who would not give all they could, everything they had, in exchange for such happiness as I have found with you?”

¹ The Yonne River in France is a tributary of the Seine River, which passes through the city of Paris toward the Atlantic Ocean.

² pharmacist

³ a hairstyle in which the hair is pinned into a knot at the nape of the neck or at the back of the head

⁴ braid

Everfair by Nisi Shawl. © 2016, Nisi Shawl.

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 3

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

In many works of literature, characters choose to reinvent themselves for significant reasons. They may wish to separate from a previous identity, gain access to a different community, disguise themselves from hostile forces, or express a more authentic sense of self.

Either from your own reading or from the following list, choose a work of fiction in which a character intentionally creates a new identity. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the character’s reinvention contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide 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 Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man

The Awakening

Brooklyn

By the Way . . . Meet Vera Stark

Ceremony

The Color Purple

The Count of Monte Cristo

Disgrace

Fahrenheit 451

Fences

Great Expectations

A House for Mr. Biswas

The House of the Spirits

The Hummingbird’s Daughter

Jane Eyre

Jasmine

The Joy Luck Club

Kindred

Kiss of the Spider Woman

The Known World

The Last of the Menu Girls

Lila

Little Fires Everywhere

Lucy

The Mayor of Casterbridge

Middlesex

The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez

The Nickel Boys

Orlando

Passing

The Poisonwood Bible

Sophie’s Choice

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Surfacing

The Taming of the Shrew

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall

Their Eyes Were Watching God

There There

Vanity Fair

Washington Black

Wuthering Heights

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STOP

END OF EXAM