

SESSION TWO

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

SESSION TWO

Friday, June 16, 2000 — 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., only

The last page of this booklet is the answer sheet for the multiple-choice questions. Fold the last page along the perforations and, slowly and carefully, tear off the answer sheet. Then fill in the heading of your answer sheet. Now circle “Session Two” and fill in the heading of each page of your essay booklet.

This session of the examination has two parts. For Part A, you are to answer all ten multiple-choice questions and write a response, as directed. For Part B, you are to write a response, as directed.

When you have completed this session of the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the end of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the session and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the session. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.

Part A

Directions: Read the passages on the following pages (a memoir and an excerpt from a novel). Write the number of the answer to each multiple-choice question on your answer sheet. Then write the essay in your essay booklet as described in **Your Task**. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

Your Task:

After you have read the passages and answered the multiple-choice questions, write a unified essay about the nature of boyhood friendships, as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about the nature of boyhood friendships. Using evidence from **each** passage, develop your controlling idea and show how the author uses specific literary elements or techniques to convey that idea.

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Use ideas from **both** passages to establish a controlling idea about the nature of boyhood friendships
- Use specific and relevant evidence from **each** passage to develop your controlling idea
- Show how each author uses specific literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, structure, point of view) or techniques (for example: symbolism, irony, figurative language) to convey the controlling idea
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Use language that communicates ideas effectively
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Passage I

I don't remember everything about meeting Tobey. One day we faced each other in the middle of the white coral road, hesitating to speak, staring. We were the only boys for miles around. I remember wondering how he could walk on the hot, sharp coral without shoes.

5 "Don't your feet hurt?"

He shakes his head.

"Do you live around here?"

"Back there. Around the corner."

"Hey, that's great. I live in the new house by the woods."

10 "I saw you working on it," he says.

"We ought to get some wire and a couple of dry-cell batteries and string it up between our houses. We could learn Morse code and send messages."

He looks up from the road. "You think we could?"

"Sure."

15 "Have you got a bike?"

"Yes." I had just gotten it.

"Let's go swimming. I know a rock pit back in the woods. It's got an island in the middle."

"Okay. I'll have to get my bathing suit."

20 "Heck, you don't need a suit. There's nobody around."

"How far is it?"

"A couple of miles. It's a great place," he says.

All that summer we were together. My days started with Tobey calling from the road. "Fra-yunk ... hey, Fra-yunk ..." I'd swallow some milk, grab a piece of bread,
25 and rush out, the screen door slamming behind me. There he'd be, straddling his bike, bare feet in the white dust, a brown arm waving, beckoning me out into the blinding glare.

We spent most of our time in the woods. The first project was a tree-house built precariously high in a tall pine. The climb was difficult for anyone who didn't know
30 the secret hand-holds we'd constructed at the hardest parts. Lazing around in the sun we'd tell stories and pick the black pine tar off our hands and feet. Far below us the earth dozed. Occasionally we'd glance back to Chula Vista—when a car started, or a man on a roof flashed his hammer. (Down would come the arm in dead silence, then, too late, the sharp snap of the blow.) Above, the fat white clouds
35 drifted in the blue. Great sedate clouds, rich and peaceful. We lay on our backs watching them, getting dizzy as they slipped along behind the branches, as if our tree was falling.

On the ground we laid out track and field games. Hour after hour our bodies fell like bundles into the softened sand. Tobey once high-jumped his own height.
40 We kept a record in a nickel notebook, carefully noting down our performances and progress.

We had caches of canned food and comic books at different places in the woods. We rarely used them; it was the idea that pleased us.

45 Best of all was the rock quarry. Down the long white coral road on our bikes,
mile after mile into the deserted woods. Leaving the bikes against a tree we walked
across the sand. The air buzzed with sun and sleepy insects.

Once we found a dead mule, bones picked almost clean, ants streaming through
the eyes. The stench was too much for us and after poking the corpse we ran away,
gasping for breath. We talked about that mule for weeks. What was its fascination?
50 Death dramatized, something of unbelievable importance being revealed right in
front of us. But something else too. We rambled over a tremendous amount of
space every day, over vast areas of silent, empty woods (a pine woods on sandy
ground is more like a desert than anything else), rambled over miles of wasteland
trying to find the center of it, the heart, the place to *know* it. We sensed the forces
55 around us but they were too thinly spread, too finely drawn over all the miles of
woods for us to grasp them. The forces eluded us. We would run into a clearing
knowing that just a moment ago, in that instant before we had arrived, something
of importance had happened there. But when we found the dead mule we knew we
were close, suddenly very close. Those forces spread like air over the woods had
60 converged here, on this animal the moment he died, and were not yet altogether
gone.

We could see the abandoned quarry behind the trees, the tall white island in the
center seeming to move as we ran. Two black hawks lifted from the pinnacle, swerv-
ing away over the water and up into the blue air, their wings beating slowly, syn-
65 chronized in movement like a double image in a dream. Impossibly still, the water
lay against the shining coral shore like brown glass. We ran to the edge, shouting to
break the silence.

“Yodela-ay! Yodelay-io!”

“Ali-ali-ali-ali-ali-*in-free!*”

70 Or just “Yay!”

We did a lot of shouting—phrases from childhood games, satisfying noises of all
kinds. We were afraid, but only a little afraid, of the silence around us. Usually there
was enough breeze in the tops of the pines to make a faint rustling noise behind the
day, but I remember times, hot, airless days, sitting in the woods alone in perfect
75 silence, paralysis creeping over my limbs, my ears deaf without sound to hear, my
eyes frozen without movement to watch. We shouted in joy and fear, sending our
voices ahead to animate the bleakness, supremely conscious of ourselves as pin-
points of life in a world of dead things, impurities that sand, coral, water, and dead
mules were only tolerating.

80 Running to the edge of the bank we threw ourselves into the water, instantly
setting the whole broad surface alive with movement and dappled light. Our legs
kicked up thin sheets of water that sparkled in the sun and the slapping of our
cupped hands echoed away into the woods. The water was always warm.

Neither one of us knew how to swim properly. We’d simply crash through, with
85 a tremendous amount of wasted movement, toward the island, our progress slow
but steady. We never raced, knowing, I suppose, that as bad as we were it was point-
less. Halfway across we’d tread water.

“It’s great nobody ever comes here,” I’d say, spluttering.

“I bet nobody even knows about it except us.”

90 At the highest point of the island a bed of soft green moss had grown over the
coral. We’d lie with our chins in our hands looking out over the miles of pine woods,
the sun hot against our backsides.

“We ought to build a shack out here.”

“Have to carry all the wood.”

95 “We could build a raft and float the stuff over.”

“Hmm ...”

Often we'd fall asleep, tired from the long ride and the swim, a drowsy, dreamless half-sleep in the sun. When one awoke the colors of the world had deepened, as if the whole scene had just been created.

— Frank Conroy

Passage II

My father and my stepmother had seen a stucco house in Bloomington that they liked, and they got an architect to copy the exterior and then the three of them fiddled with the interior plans until they were satisfactory. I was shown on the blueprints where my room was going to be. In a short time the cement foundation was poured and the framing was up and you could see the actual size and shape of the rooms. I used to go there after school and watch the carpenters, hammering: *pung, pung, pung, kapung, kapung, kapung, kapung...* They may have guessed that I was waiting for them to pick up their tools and go home so I could climb around on the scaffolding but they didn't tell me I couldn't do this, or in fact pay any attention to me at all. And I had the agreeable feeling, as I went from one room to the next by walking through the wall instead of a doorway, or looked up and saw blue sky through the rafters, that I had found a way to get around the way things were.

Before the stairway was in, there was a gaping hole in the center of the house and you had to use the carpenters' rickety ladder to get to the second floor. One day I looked down through this hole and saw Cletus Smith standing on a pile of lumber looking at me. I suppose I said, "Come on up." Anyway, he did. We stood looking out at the unlit streetlamp, through a square opening that was some day going to be a window, and then we climbed up another ladder and walked along horizontal two-by-sixes with our arms outstretched, teetering like circus acrobats on the high wire. We could have fallen all the way through to the basement and broken an arm or a leg but we didn't.

Boys don't need much of an excuse to get on well together, if they get on at all. I was glad for his company, and pleased when he turned up the next day. If I saw him now the way he was then, I don't know that I would recognize him. I seem to remember his smile, and that he had large hands and feet for a boy of thirteen. We played together in that unfinished house day after day, risking our necks and breathing in the rancid odor of sawdust and shavings and fresh-cut lumber.

I never asked Cletus if there wasn't something he'd rather be doing, because he was always ready to do what I wanted to do. It occurs to me now that he was not very different from an imaginary playmate. When I was with him, if I said something the boys in the school yard would have jeered at, he let the opportunity pass and went on carefully teetering with one foot in front of the other, or at most, without glancing in my direction, which would have endangered his balance, nodded.

I suppose he must have liked me somewhat or he wouldn't have been there. And that he was glad for my companionship. He didn't act as if there was some other boy waiting for him to turn up. He must have understood that I was going to live in this house when it was finished, but it didn't occur to me to wonder where he lived...

When the look of the sky informed us that it was getting along toward suppertime, we climbed down the ladder and said "So long" and "See you tomorrow," and went our separate ways in the dusk.

— William Maxwell

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–10): Select the best suggested answer to each question and write its number in the space provided on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about the ideas and information you might want to use in your essay. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

Passage I (the memoir) — Questions 1–4 refer to Passage I.

- 1 The references to shoes (lines 3 and 4) and bathing suit (lines 19 and 20) provide clues to the boys' dissimilar
- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1 ages | 3 interests |
| 2 upbringing | 4 abilities |
- 2 The descriptions of the tree-house (lines 28 through 30) and the caches of food and comic books (lines 42 and 43) help to convey the boys' desire to
- | |
|--|
| 1 reject the friendship of others |
| 2 avoid hard work |
| 3 create a private world |
| 4 establish a competitive relationship |
- 3 The discovery of the dead mule is significant because it forces the boys to confront the power of
- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1 nature | 3 silence |
| 2 love | 4 space |
- 4 The passage is characterized as a memoir because it relies on
- | |
|-----------------------|
| 1 rich description |
| 2 personal experience |
| 3 foreshadowing |
| 4 metaphor |

Passage II (the excerpt from a novel) — Questions 5–10 refer to Passage II.

- 5 The idea that the narrator was trying to cope with the events in his life is suggested by the
- | |
|---|
| 1 struggle of the father and stepmother to create a blueprint |
| 2 sound of the carpenters hammering |
| 3 emerging size and shape of the rooms |
| 4 narrator's reaction to the openings in the house |
- 6 As used in line 15, the word "rickety" most nearly means
- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1 sturdy | 3 unstable |
| 2 conspicuous | 4 imposing |
- 7 The narrator suggests that he appreciates Cletus primarily for his friend's
- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1 presence | 3 status |
| 2 conversation | 4 admiration |
- 8 According to the narrator, Cletus shared the narrator's interest in
- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1 circus acts | 3 woodworking |
| 2 daring deeds | 4 nature study |
- 9 What literary technique is illustrated by the description of the carpenters hammering (lines 6 and 7) and the boys walking among the scaffolding (lines 17 through 21)?
- | | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 1 irony | 3 figurative language |
| 2 allegory | 4 dramatic monologue |
- 10 The narrator's reflections suggest that his relationship with Cletus could best be described as
- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 unhealthy | 3 insignificant |
| 2 frustrating | 4 superficial |

After you have finished these questions, turn to page 2. Review **Your Task** and the **Guidelines**. Use scrap paper to plan your response. Then write your response to Part A, beginning on page 1 in your essay booklet. After you finish your response for Part A, go on to page 8 of your examination booklet and complete Part B.

Part B

Your Task:

Write a critical essay in which you discuss **two** works of literature you have read from the particular perspective of the statement that is provided for you in the **Critical Lens**. In your essay, provide a valid interpretation of the statement, agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it, and support your opinion using specific references to appropriate literary elements from the two works. You may use scrap paper to plan your response. Write your essay in Part B, beginning on page 7 of your essay booklet.

Critical Lens:

“It is not what an author says, but what he or she *whispers*, that is important.”

— Logan Pearsall Smith
(adapted)

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Provide a valid interpretation of the critical lens that clearly establishes the criteria for analysis
- Indicate whether you agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it
- Choose **two** works you have read that you believe best support your opinion
- Use the criteria suggested by the critical lens to analyze the works you have chosen
- Avoid plot summary. Instead, use specific references to appropriate literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, setting, point of view) to develop your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a unified and coherent manner
- Specify the titles and authors of the literature you choose
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

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ANSWER SHEET

Student Sex: Male Female

School Grade Teacher

Write your answers to the multiple-choice questions for Part A on this answer sheet.

Part A

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____



**HAND IN THIS ANSWER SHEET WITH YOUR ESSAY BOOKLET,
SCRAP PAPER, AND EXAMINATION BOOKLET.**

Your essay responses for Part A and Part B should be written in the essay booklet.

I do hereby affirm, at the close of this examination, that I had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that I have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination.

Signature

Tear Here

Tear Here

Tear Here