The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

ENGLISH

Monday, January 26, 2015 — 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., only

The possession or use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you have or use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has four parts. Part 1 tests listening skills; you are to answer all eight multiple-choice questions. For Part 2, you are to answer all twelve multiple-choice questions. For Part 3, you are to answer all five multiple-choice questions and the two short constructed-response questions. For Part 4, you are to write one essay response. The two short constructed-response questions and the essay response should be written in pen.

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

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

NOTES

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

Part 1 (Questions 1–8)

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–8): Use your notes to answer the following questions about the passage read to you. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

1 The account begins with a
(1) series of specific statements
(2) persuasive argument
(3) series of rhetorical questions
(4) chronological list

2 Albert Einstein's unfinished manuscript influenced the speaker to
(1) write for a local newspaper
(2) disprove Einstein's laws of physics
(3) build larger experimental models
(4) investigate Einstein's studies

3 When the speaker was told "one had to abandon the impossible and embrace the practical," people meant that he should
(1) become kinder
(2) get an education
(3) stop dreaming
(4) get a laptop

4 The speaker believed that the only way to challenge himself was to
(1) explore space independently
(2) study physics and mathematics
(3) invent new technology
(4) create research facilities

5 The speaker's high school science project was a
(1) gamma ray beam generator
(2) presentation to Westinghouse
(3) science fiction short story
(4) wire replica of the football field

6 The assembly of the speaker's "atom smasher" partly depended on
(1) financial backing
(2) teacher collaboration
(3) student teamwork
(4) discarded materials

7 What allowed the speaker to fulfill his dream?
(1) receiving an athletic award
(2) completing his high school education
(3) winning a college scholarship
(4) heading an important space project

8 The speaker concludes that his research into the "'impossible' questions in science today" leaves him feeling
(1) confused
(2) excited
(3) exhausted
(4) distinguished

Part 2 (Questions 9–20)

Directions (9–20): Below each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

Reading Comprehension Passage A

In all years and all seasons, The Bridge was there. We could see it from the roof of the tenement where we lived, the stone towers rising below us from the foreshortened streets of downtown Brooklyn. We saw it in newspapers and at the movies and on the covers of books, part of the signature of the place where we lived. Sometimes, on summer afternoons during World War II, my mother would gather me and my brother Tom and my sister, Kathleen, and we'd set out on the most glorious of walks. We walked for miles, leaving behind the green of Prospect Park, passing factories and warehouses and strange neighborhoods, crossing a hundred streets and a dozen avenues, seeing the streets turn green again as we entered Brooklyn Heights, pushing on, beaded with sweat, legs rubbery, until, amazingly, looming abruptly in front of us, stone and steel and indifferent, was The Bridge.

It was the first man-made thing that I knew was beautiful. We could walk across it, gazing up at the great arc of the cables. We could hear the sustained eerie musical note they made when combed by the wind (and augmented since by the hum of automobile tires), and we envied the gulls that played at the top of those arches. The arches were Gothic, and provided a sense of awe that was quite religious. And awe infused the view of the great harbor, a view my mother embellished by describing to us the ships that had brought her and so many other immigrants to America—the Irish and the Italians and the Jews, the Germans, the Poles, and the Swedes, all of them crowding the decks, straining to see their newfound land. What they saw first was the Statue of Liberty, and the skyline, and The Bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge. …

There was a long time in my life when I didn't see much of The Bridge, except from the roof or the back window. The reason was simple: Trolleys were replaced by automobiles, and nobody I knew in our neighborhood owned a car. But then when I was sixteen, I got a job in the Brooklyn Navy Yard as a sheet-metal worker, and at lunchtime we would wander out along the cobblestone streets beside the dry docks, and from there we could look up at The Bridge. "Now the cats that built *that*," a black welder named Fred Thompson said to me one day, "they knew what they were *doin'*."

They certainly did. As I grew older, I came increasingly to see The Bridge as a monument to craft. It was New York's supreme example of the Well-Made Thing. All around us in the sixties, the standards of craft eroded. As aestheticians[1] proclaimed the virtues of the spontaneous, or exalted the bold gesture, or condemned form as an artistic straitjacket, I would cross The Bridge and wonder what they could mean. More than twenty men were killed in the construction of this thing, and others were ruined for life by accidents and disease suffered in its service. To those men, carelessness meant death, not simply for themselves, but for the human beings who would use what they were making. So they had no choice: They had to make it to last. And in doing so, in caring about detail and function and strength, they saw craft triumph into art. …

Of course, it is the nature of all bridges that they travel in two directions. I know dozens of people who traveled west on The Bridge, wandered the world, and then made the long, wide circle home to Brooklyn. I don't know anybody who ever did that from the Bronx.

[1]aestheticians — specialists in the nature of beauty

From the Manhattan shore, The Bridge still seems to whisper: "Come, travel across me. It's only 1,562 feet across the river, and over here, and beyond, lies Oz, or Camelot, or Yoknapatawpha County."[2] And from the Brooklyn side it speaks in plain, bourgeois[3] tones, with a plain, simple message: "Come home." …

—Pete Hamill
excerpted from "Bridge of Dreams"
New York Magazine, May 30, 1983

[2]Oz, Camelot, Yoknapatawpha County — fictional places
[3]bourgeois — middle class

9 By referring to the Brooklyn Bridge as "The Bridge," the narrator communicates his

(1) respect
(2) disdain
(3) arrogance
(4) understanding

10 The imagery used in lines 12 through 15 appeals to the reader's sense of

(1) touch and sound
(2) smell and taste
(3) sight and sound
(4) sight and smell

11 The narrator enriches the historical significance of The Bridge by referring to

(1) immigration experiences
(2) construction materials
(3) musical notations
(4) political consequences

12 Which phrase from the passage best signals that time has elapsed?

(1) "I didn't see much of The Bridge" (line 22)
(2) "But then when I was sixteen" (line 24)
(3) "at lunchtime we would wander" (line 25)
(4) "from there we could look up at The Bridge" (lines 26 and 27)

13 The phrases "monument to craft" (line 30) and "Well-Made Thing" (line 30) are most closely related to which other phrase from the passage?

(1) "proclaimed the virtues of the spontaneous" (lines 31 and 32)
(2) "condemned form as an artistic straitjacket" (lines 32 and 33)
(3) "To those men, carelessness meant death" (line 35)
(4) "caring about detail and function and strength" (lines 37 and 38)

14 According to the narrator, in addition to offering opportunities, The Bridge will

(1) be maintenance free
(2) be a tourist attraction
(3) bring a traveler home
(4) provide military security

Reading Comprehension Passage B

The common raven (Corvus corax) holds a special fascination for bird lovers because of its complex, even baffling behaviors and its aura of mystery—which are revealed in fact and embellished in legend.

This denizen[1] of northern latitudes and high altitude is North America's largest passerine, or perching bird, and a relative of the crow. With a length of 24-26 inches and a wingspan in excess of four feet, this iridescent black bird presents an imposing sight especially when it skillfully executes hawk-like flight motions during courtship displays and while guarding its nest. The raven, you see, is a bit of an aerial acrobat and seems to fly for the sheer joy of it. Rolls, somersaults and even level flight upside-down may be the most spectacular behaviors the casual birder will be able to observe.

Because both birds are large, black, and similarly shaped, it can be hard to tell the common raven from the American crow (Corvus brachyrhynchos). In addition to being somewhat larger, ravens have a heavier beak with a decided "Roman nose" appearance. They also have shaggy throat feathers, called hackles, which can be slicked down or fluffed out, apparently to aid communication. In flight, their rounded, wedge-shaped tails and feathers resemble extended fingers near the ends of their wings. …

The raven is both predator and scavenger. Although omnivorous, most of its diet is animal matter, including insects, lizards, frogs, rodents and the eggs and young of other birds. In addition, it regularly dines on carrion[2] and garbage.

The raven's sometimes inexplicable and genuinely annoying habits—they've been known to harass livestock and pets, pilfer golf balls and peck holes in the skins of unattended light airplanes—led to human reactions that thinned its ranks, particularly in the Northeast. This bird has made a remarkable comeback in the last few decades, however, partly due to its ability to take advantage of the presence of people. The raven can survive everything from arctic to desert conditions, often aided, ironically, by garbage dumps and other artifacts of human settlement. …

Raven pairs stay together throughout the breeding season and usually bond for life. Courtship displays generally begin in February, just before breeding. Pairs often return to previous nesting areas and begin a spectacular aerial courtship ritual. They perform unison flight maneuvers, sometimes circling their chosen nest site with wingtips nearly touching. Occasionally, the male takes steep, sudden dives or tumbles in mid-air. Feather-preening seems to be a common activity while earthbound.

Ravens prefer remote, forested areas with tall coniferous trees or rocky ledges where they can build nests and catch air currents that loft them into soaring flights. They also nest on rugged seacoasts and forested marine islands, as are found off the coast of Maine. …

Nests tend to be built in solitary places, typically miles from other raven nests. Sometimes, new nests are built atop old ones, although nesting pairs may alternate among two or more sites in the same nesting area from year to year. In this way, the best nesting areas can be used for 100 years or more. …

Many a researcher has discovered firsthand the cunning ways of the raven. Generally acknowledged to be among the most intelligent of birds, ravens display a seeming social awareness, even with other species, and surprising problem-solving abilities.

Accounts abound of ravens closely following large predators such as wolves or coyotes, and of sharing, unmolested, in their kills once the carnivores opened the carcasses. Although this could be seen as just opportunistic feeding, the easy relationship between the species seems to hint at something more substantial.

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[1]denizen — inhabitant

[2]carrion — dead flesh

Inuit[3] hunting traditions advise watching where ravens circle and dip their wings as a sure tipoff to the location of game. Some speculate that ravens actually use their aerial vantage points to guide larger, stronger predators to prey, which they then share. …

—Brian W. Swinn
excerpted from "Mystery on the Wing:
Life and Lore of the Common Raven"
New York State Conservationist, December 2005

[3]Inuit — Native people of northern North America and Greenland

15 The introduction suggests that the appeal of the raven is based on

(1) range of habitat
(2) tolerance of humans
(3) mannerisms and reputation
(4) size and appearance

16 Commas are used in line 5 to indicate a

(1) series
(2) definition
(3) question
(4) summary

17 According to lines 14 and 15, a raven's "hackles" help it to

(1) send messages
(2) attract a mate
(3) fly long distances
(4) locate prey

18 The author's statements that "Raven pairs … bond for life" (line 27) and "nesting areas can be used for 100 years or more" (lines 38 and 39) suggest that ravens have

(1) various environments
(2) fear of people
(3) predictable habits
(4) camouflage ability

19 According to the passage, a possible sign of ravens' intelligence is their ability to

(1) protect their young from predators
(2) lead other animals to prey
(3) migrate long distances
(4) imitate human voices

20 The passage as a whole reveals the author's attitude toward ravens to be one of

(1) indifference
(2) amusement
(3) distrust
(4) admiration

Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

Directions: On the following pages read Passage I (an excerpt from an autobiography) and Passage II (a poem) about traditions. You may use the margins to take notes as you read. Answer the multiple-choice questions on the answer sheet provided for you. Then write your response for question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet.

Passage I

"I believe that the Japanese word for wife literally means honorable person remaining within," says my mother. "During the nineteen twenties, when I was a child in Japan, my seventeen-year-old cousin married into a wealthy family. Before her marriage, I would watch as she tripped gracefully through the village on her way to flower arrangement class. Kimono faintly rustling. Head bent in modesty. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. After her marriage, she disappeared within her husband's house. She was not seen walking through the village again. Instead, she would send the clear, plucked notes of her okoto—her honorable Japanese harp—to scale the high courtyard wall. I used to pause to listen. In late spring, showers of petals from swollen cherry blossoms within her courtyard would rain onto the pavement. I would breathe the fragrant air and imagine her kneeling at her okoto, alone in a serene shadowy room. It seemed so romantic, I could hardly bear it." My mother laughs and shakes her head at her childhood excess. After a moment she speaks. "Courtyard walls, built to keep typhoons out, also marked the boundaries of a well-bred wife. Because of this, in other ways, the Japanese always have taught their daughters to soar."

"And you?"

"When I was eleven years old, my father gave me okoto."

During the 1950s, in our four-room flat on the south side of Albany, New York, my mother would play her okoto. Sometimes on Sunday afternoons when the jubilant gospel singing had faded from the AME Zion Church across the alley, my mother would kneel over a long body of gleaming wood, like a physician intent on reviving a beautiful patient, and pinch eerie evocative[1] chords from the trembling strings of her okoto.

"Misa-chan, Yuri-chan," she would call to my sister and me, "would you like to try?"

"*Hai*, Okaa-chan"—yes sweet honorable mother—we would murmur, as if stirred from a trance.

"I was a motherless child," says Okaa-chan, when I have grown to adolescence. "My father gave me okoto to teach me to cherish my womanhood."

"Your womanhood?"

My mother plucks a chord in demonstration. "The notes are delicate yet there is resonance. Listen. You will learn about timelessness and strength. Listen. You will understand how, despite sorrow, heart and spirit can fly."

An American daughter, I cannot understand the teachings of my mother's okoto. Instead, I listen to the music of her words.

A formal, family photograph is the only memento my mother has of her mother. In 1919, an immigrant family poses in a Los Angeles studio and waits for a moment to be captured that will document success and confidence in America; a moment that can be sent to anxious relatives in Japan. A chubby infant, pop-eyed with curiosity, my mother sits squirming on her father's lap. My forty-five-year-old grandfather levels a patrician[2] stare into the camera. By his side, wearing matching sailor suits, his sons aged three and five

[1]evocative — calling forth

[2]patrician — aristocratic

stand self-conscious with pride and excitement. My grandmother stands behind her husband's chair. In her early twenties, she owns a subdued prettiness and an even gaze.

My seven-year-old aunt is not in the picture. She has been sent to Japan to be raised as a proper ojo-san—the fine daughter of a distinguished family. Within the next year, her mother, brothers, and baby sister will join her. Five years later, my grandmother will be banished from the family. The circumstances of her banishment will remain a family secret for over forty years. …

—Lydia Yuri Minatoya
excerpted and adapted from "My Mother's Music"
Talking to High Monks in the Snow: An Asian American Odyssey, 1992
HarperCollins

Passage II

Chain Saw

The trunk's roped to fall
back into the woods
and not toward the house.
They take the top first,
dismantling the great ladder,
no limbs cracking,
nothing falling,
but lowered by cables
then chipped and sprayed
back into the woods.
They leave the stump.
Soon ferns will grow there
in the duff.[1]
As far as I know,
cousin Sam was the last
to climb it, in the early sixties—
he'd have been ten or twelve.
He reached the spot my father
did at the same age: strong fork,
last reliable seat, the family seat,
white pine a century old,
the height of the dominion,[2]
staying up there for a while
in medicinal air, overlooking
Gran's roof, the apple trees,
the car, the relatives gathering
in the reddening day,
the hour of nostalgia, the alpenglow.[3]
Sam saw the scar
of his initials, and the date.

—Chase Twichell
Dog Language, 2005
Copper Canyon Press

[1]duff — the partly decayed organic matter on the forest floor
[2]dominion — territory or sphere of influence
[3]alpenglow — light seen near sunrise or sunset on the summits of mountains

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (21–25): Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

Passage I (the autobiography excerpt) — Questions 21–23 refer to Passage I.

21 In line 14 the word "this" refers to a

(1) danger
(2) custom
(3) dream
(4) melody

22 The mother tells the story in the first paragraph in order to

(1) defend her family
(2) revise her memory
(3) explain her culture
(4) distract her children

23 According to lines 26 through 31, the narrator's mother was taught self-reliance by

(1) remaining close to her mother
(2) participating in family decisions
(3) retaining her father's inheritance
(4) learning to play an instrument

Passage II (the poem) — Questions 24–25 refer to Passage II.

24 The purpose of lines 1 through 3 is to

(1) establish the situation
(2) introduce the characters
(3) signal a contrast
(4) present a conflict

25 In line 22, "the height of the dominion" could only be achieved by

(1) earning personal wealth
(2) accomplishing a dangerous feat
(3) inheriting family property
(4) gaining a grandparent's approval

Short-Response Questions

Directions (26–27): Write your responses to question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet. Be sure to answer ***both*** questions.

26 Write a well-developed paragraph in which you use ideas from ***both*** Passage I (the autobiography excerpt) and Passage II (the poem) to establish a controlling idea about traditions. Develop your controlling idea using specific examples and details from ***both*** Passage I and Passage II.

27 Choose a specific literary element (e.g., theme, characterization, structure, point of view, etc.) or literary technique (e.g., symbolism, irony, figurative language, etc.) used by ***one*** of the authors. Using specific details from ***either*** Passage I (the autobiography excerpt) ***or*** Passage II (the poem), in a well-developed paragraph, show how the author uses that element or technique to develop the passage.

Part 4 (Question 28)

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 beginning on page 3 of the essay booklet.

Critical Lens:

> "…the most constructive way of resolving conflicts is to avoid them."
>
> — Felix Frankfurter
> *Cases Adjudged in the Supreme Court at October Term, 1952*

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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