

Sample Questions for English Language and Composition

Sample Multiple-Choice Questions

Questions 1-10. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers. This passage is taken from a nineteenth-century essay.

- It is not easy to write a familiar style. Many people mistake a familiar for a vulgar style, and suppose that to write without affectation is to write at random. On the contrary, there is nothing that requires more precision, and, if I may so say, purity of expression, than the style I am speaking of. It utterly rejects not only all unmeaning pomp, but all low, cant phrases, and loose, unconnected, slipshod allusions. It is not to take the first word that offers, but the best word in common use; it is not to throw words together in any combination we please, but to follow and avail ourselves of the true idiom of the language. To write a genuine familiar or truly English style, is to write as any one would speak in common conversation, who had a thorough command and choice of words, or who could discourse with ease, force, and perspicuity, setting aside all pedantic and oratorical flourishes. Or to give another illustration, to write naturally is the same thing in regard to common conversation, as to read naturally is in regard to common speech. It does not follow that it is an easy thing to give the true accent and inflection to the words you utter, because you do not attempt to rise above the level of ordinary life and colloquial speaking. You do not assume indeed the solemnity of the pulpit, or the tone of stage-declamation: neither are you at liberty to gabble on at a venture, without emphasis or discretion, or to resort to vulgar dialect or clownish pronunciation. You must steer a middle course. You are tied down to a given and appropriate articulation, which is determined by the habitual associations between sense and sound, and which you can only hit by entering into the author's meaning, as you must find the proper words and style to express yourself by fixing your thoughts on the subject you have to write about. Any one may mouth out a passage with a theatrical cadence, or get upon stilts to tell his thoughts: but to write or speak with propriety and simplicity is a more difficult task. Thus it is easy to affect a pompous style, to use a word twice as big as the thing you want to express: it is not so easy to pitch upon the very word that exactly fits it. Out of eight or ten words equally common, equally intelligible, with nearly equal pretensions, it is a matter of some nicety and discrimination to pick out the very one, the preferableness of which is scarcely perceptible, but decisive. The reason why I object to Dr. Johnson's style is, that there is no discrimination, no selection, no variety in it. He uses none but "tall, opaque words," taken from the "first row of the rubric:"—words with the greatest number of syllables, or Latin phrases with merely English terminations. If a fine style depended on this sort

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- of arbitrary pretension, it would be fair to judge of an author's elegance by the measurement of his words, and the substitution of foreign circumlocutions (with no precise associations) for the mother-tongue. How simple it is to be dignified without ease, to be pompous without meaning! Surely, it is but a mechanical rule for avoiding what is low to be always pedantic and affected. It is clear you cannot use a vulgar English word, if you never use a common English word at all. A fine tact is shown in adhering to those which are perfectly common, and yet never falling into any expressions which are debased by disgusting circumstances, or which owe their signification and point to technical or professional allusions. A truly natural or familiar style can never be quaint or vulgar, for this reason, that it is of universal force and applicability, and that quaintness and vulgarity arise out of the immediate connection of certain words with coarse and disagreeable, or with confined ideas.

1. Which of the following best describes the rhetorical function of the second sentence in the passage?
 - (A) It makes an appeal to authority.
 - (B) It restates the thesis of the passage.
 - (C) It expresses the causal relationship between morality and writing style.
 - (D) It provides a specific example for the preceding generalization.
 - (E) It presents a misconception that the author will correct.
2. Which of the following phrases does the author use to illustrate the notion of an unnatural and pretentious writing style?
 - (A) "unconnected, slipshod allusions" (line 7)
 - (B) "throw words together" (lines 8-9)
 - (C) "gabble on at a venture" (line 22)
 - (D) "get upon stilts" (lines 30-31)
 - (E) "pitch upon the very word" (line 34)
3. In lines 10-32 of the passage, the author uses an extended analogy between.
 - (A) language and morality
 - (B) preaching and acting
 - (C) writing and speaking
 - (D) vulgar English and incorrect pronunciation
 - (E) ordinary life and the theater
4. In line 17, "common speech" refers to
 - (A) metaphorical language
 - (B) current slang
 - (C) unaffected expression
 - (D) regional dialect
 - (E) impolite speech

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5. Which of the following words is grammatically and thematically parallel to “tone” (line 21)?
- (A) “solemnity” (line 21)
 - (B) “pulpit” (line 21)
 - (C) “stage-declamation” (line 21)
 - (D) “liberty” (line 22)
 - (E) “venture” (line 22)
6. In context, the expression “to pitch upon” (line 34) is best interpreted as having which of the following meanings?
- (A) To suggest in a casual way
 - (B) To set a value on
 - (C) To put aside as if by throwing
 - (D) To utter glibly and insincerely
 - (E) To succeed in finding
7. The ability discussed in lines 35-38 is referred to elsewhere as which of the following?
- (A) “theatrical cadence” (line 30)
 - (B) “foreign circumlocutions” (line 46)
 - (C) “fine tact” (line 51)
 - (D) “professional allusions” (lines 54-55)
 - (E) “universal force” (line 56)
8. The author’s observation in the sentence beginning “It is clear” (lines 49-51) is best described as an example of which of the following?
- (A) Mocking tone
 - (B) Linguistic paradox
 - (C) Popularity of the familiar style
 - (D) The author’s defense of Johnson’s style
 - (E) The author’s advice to the reader
9. In line 52, “those” refers to which of the following?
- I. “words” (line 45)
 - II. “circumlocutions” (line 46)
 - III. “associations” (line 46)
- (A) I only
 - (B) II only
 - (C) I and III only
 - (D) II and III only
 - (E) I, II, and III

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10. The author's tone in the passage as a whole is best described as
- (A) harsh and strident
 - (B) informal and analytical
 - (C) contemplative and conciliatory
 - (D) superficial and capricious
 - (E) enthusiastic and optimistic

Questions 11-22. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers. This passage is taken from an autobiographical work written in the mid-twentieth century.

Up on the corner lived a drunk of legend, a true phenomenon, who could surely have qualified as the king of all the world's winos. He was neither poetic like the others nor ambitious like the singer (to whom we'll presently come) but his drinking bouts were truly awe-inspiring and he was not without his sensitivity. In the throes of his passion he would shout to the whole wide world one concise command, "Shut up!" Which was disconcerting enough to all who heard (except, perhaps, the singer), but such were the labyrinthine acoustics of courtyards and areaways that he seemed to direct his command at me. The writer's block which this produced is indescribable. On one heroic occasion he yelled his obsessive command without one interruption longer than necessary to take another drink (and with no appreciable loss of volume, penetration or authority) for three long summer days and nights, and shortly afterwards he died. Just how many lines of agitated prose he cost me I'll never know, but in all that chaos of sound I sympathized with his obsession, for I, too, hungered and thirsted for quiet. Nor did he inspire me to a painful identification, and for that I was thankful. Identification, after all, involves feelings of guilt and responsibility, and, since I could hardly hear my own typewriter keys, I felt in no way accountable for his condition. We were simply fellow victims of the madding crowd. May he rest in peace.

No, these more involved feelings were aroused by a more intimate source of noise, one that got beneath the skin and worked into the very structure of one's consciousness—like the "fate" motif in Beethoven's Fifth or the knocking-at-the-gates scene in *Macbeth*. For at the top of our pyramid of noise there was a singer who lived directly above us; you might say we had a singer on our ceiling.

Now, I had learned from the jazz musicians I had known as a boy in Oklahoma City something of the discipline and devotion to his art required of the artist. Hence I knew something of what the singer faced. These jazzmen, many of them now world-famous, lived for and with music intensely. Their driving motivation was

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION I

Time—1 hour

Directions: This part consists of selections from prose works and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question and completely fill in the corresponding circle on the answer sheet.

Note: Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

Questions 1-14. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

(The following passage is from an essay published in the late twentieth century.)

Line I am a writer. And by that definition, I am someone who has always loved language. I am fascinated by language in daily life. I spend a great deal of my time thinking about the power of language—the way it can
5 evoke an emotion, a visual image, a complex idea, or a simple truth. Language is the tool of my trade. And I use them all—all the Englishes I grew up with.

10 Recently, I was made keenly aware of the different Englishes I do use. I was giving a talk to a large group of people, the same talk I had already given to half a dozen other groups. The nature of the talk was about my writing, my life, and my book *The Joy Luck Club*. The talk was going along well enough, until I remembered one major difference that made the whole talk
15 sound wrong. My mother was in the room. And it was perhaps the first time she had heard me give a lengthy speech using the kind of English I have never used with her. I was saying things like, “The intersection of memory upon imagination” and “There is an aspect
20 of my fiction that relates to thus-and-thus”—a speech filled with carefully wrought grammatical phrases, burdened, it suddenly seemed to me, with nominalized forms, past perfect tenses, conditional phrases, all the forms of standard English that I had learned in school
25 and through books, the forms of English I did not use at home with my mother.

30 Just last week, I was walking down the street with my mother, and I again found myself conscious of the English I was using, the English I do use with her. We were talking about the price of new and used furniture and I heard myself saying this: “Not waste money that way.” My husband was with us as well, and he didn’t notice any switch in my English. And then I realized why. It’s because over the twenty years we’ve
35 been together I’ve often used that same kind of English with him, and sometimes he even uses it with me. It has become our language of intimacy, a different sort

of English that relates to family talk, the language I grew up with.

40 So you’ll have some idea of what this family talk I heard sounds like, I’ll quote what my mother said during a recent conversation which I videotaped and then transcribed. During this conversation, my mother was talking about a political gangster in Shanghai who had
45 the same last name as her family’s, Du, and how the gangster in his early years wanted to be adopted by her family, which was rich by comparison. Later, the gangster became more powerful, far richer than my mother’s family, and one day showed up at my
50 mother’s wedding to pay his respects. Here’s what she said in part:

“Du Yusong having business like fruit stand. Like off the street kind. He is Du like Du Zong—but not Tsung-ming Island people. The local people call
55 putong, the river east side, he belong to that side local people. That man want to ask Du Zong father take him in like become own family. Du Zong father wasn’t look down on him, but didn’t take seriously, until that man big like become a mafia. Now important person,
60 very hard to inviting him. Chinese way, came only to show respect, don’t stay for dinner. Respect for making big celebration, he shows up. Mean gives lots of respect. Chinese custom. Chinese social life that way. If too important won’t have to stay too long. He come
65 to my wedding. I didn’t see, I heard it. I gone to boy’s side, they have YMCA dinner. Chinese age I was nineteen.”

70 You should know that my mother’s expressive command of English belies how much she actually understands. She reads the *Forbes* report, listens to *Wall Street Week*, converses daily with her stock-broker, reads all of Shirley MacLaine’s books with ease—all kinds of things I can’t begin to understand. Yet some of my friends tell me they understand
75 50 percent of what my mother says. Some say they understand 80 to 90 percent. Some say they understand none of it, as if she were speaking pure Chinese. But to me, my mother’s English is perfectly clear,

80 perfectly natural. It's my mother tongue. Her language, as I hear it, is vivid, direct, full of observation and imagery. That was the language that helped shape the way I saw things, expressed things, made sense of the world.

1. The final sentence of the first paragraph (lines 6-7) is unusual in the way it uses a
 - (A) first person pronoun
 - (B) verb tense
 - (C) plural noun
 - (D) capital letter
 - (E) dangling participle
2. The function of the first paragraph is to
 - (A) explain the purpose of the passage
 - (B) define the relationship between literary language and everyday speech
 - (C) describe the author's writing process
 - (D) characterize the author and her interests
 - (E) establish the author's concern about the misuse of language
3. In context, "carefully wrought" (line 21) suggests both
 - (A) precision and formlessness
 - (B) beauty and permanence
 - (C) simplicity and perfection
 - (D) nervousness and self-control
 - (E) technical mastery and craftsmanship
4. The word "burdened" (lines 21-22) modifies
 - (A) "things" (line 18)
 - (B) "intersection" (line 18)
 - (C) "aspect" (line 19)
 - (D) "speech" (line 20)
 - (E) "me" (line 22)
5. During the talk described in paragraph 2, the author responds to her mother's presence by
 - (A) altering the vocabulary and syntax she had been using to express her ideas to the group
 - (B) regretting that there are certain interests she does not share with her mother
 - (C) thinking about how audience determines the appropriateness of a style
 - (D) reexamining the mother-daughter themes in her latest work
 - (E) deciding that her mother does not need to learn academic English
6. The third paragraph provides
 - (A) a concrete example of how writers transform personal experience into art
 - (B) a series of assertions about the nature of language
 - (C) a rationale for the author's shifting allegiances
 - (D) an anecdote that reinforces ideas expressed in the previous paragraphs
 - (E) an argument that will be challenged in the remainder of the passage
7. Which of the following is true of the mother's quoted speech (lines 52-67) ?
 - (A) The author expects the speech to be comprehensible enough to enable her to make a point about her mother's use of language.
 - (B) The author is concerned that her mother will change the way she talks because she is being videotaped.
 - (C) The author uses the speech as an example of the way her mother talked when the author was young, not the way her mother talks now.
 - (D) The author wants to suggest that it is her mother's accent, not her syntax, that makes her English difficult to understand.
 - (E) The author is more interested in what her mother says in the speech than in the way she says it.

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8. The effect of using the second person pronoun in lines 40 and 68 is to
- (A) emphasize the author's awareness of an audience
 - (B) illustrate the effectiveness of using informal diction when speaking publicly
 - (C) indicate a shift in focus from the personal to the impersonal
 - (D) echo the style of the author's talk described in paragraph two
 - (E) enlarge the scope of the discussion to include differences in usage by native speakers of English
9. The first two sentences in the last paragraph (lines 68-73) do which of the following?
- (A) Define ambiguous terms
 - (B) Develop vivid metaphors
 - (C) Explain convoluted reasoning
 - (D) Resolve disagreements
 - (E) Present contrasts
10. In the last paragraph, the author insists on the
- (A) importance of an expressive command of standard English
 - (B) sophistication of some of her mother's English language skills
 - (C) inherent value of the books her mother chooses to read
 - (D) need for language learners to practice on a wide variety of written materials
 - (E) value of reading as a means of improving the language skills of nonnative speakers
11. In the context of the whole passage, the last sentence (lines 81-83) serves to
- (A) establish that the author associates her mother's language with the past, not the present
 - (B) validate the form of English the author hears from her mother
 - (C) discredit the form of English the author learned from books
 - (D) summarize the characteristics of the mother's way of speaking
 - (E) reiterate the thesis that children imitate the language of their parents
12. The author uses directly quoted speech at various points in the passage to
- (A) clarify the complexity of the decisions writers have to make
 - (B) establish her credibility as a well-read academic
 - (C) emphasize the underlying similarities of languages
 - (D) show how her own understanding of English evolved
 - (E) illustrate various forms of English
13. Which of the following best characterizes the voice of the author in the passage as a whole?
- (A) A lonely, private voice
 - (B) An informal, public voice
 - (C) A formal, speech-making voice
 - (D) An ironic, disillusioned voice
 - (E) A scholarly, detached voice
14. A central concept in the passage is the notion that
- (A) English has been enriched by borrowing from other languages
 - (B) speakers use different forms of language for different purposes
 - (C) English is easier to understand than to speak
 - (D) creative writers should first master the standard form of their native language
 - (E) literary conventions must often be sacrificed for elegance of expression

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(This passage is excerpted from a publication by a contemporary biologist.)

We know less about life on earth than we know about the surface of the moon and Mars—in part because far less money has been spent studying it.

Line 5 Taxonomy, the study of classification and hence of biological diversity, has been allowed to dwindle, while other important fields such as space exploration and biomedical studies have flourished. Like glass-blowing and harpsichord manufacture, taxonomy of many kinds of organisms has been left in the hands of

10 a small number of unappreciated specialists who have had few opportunities to train their successors. To take one of hundreds of examples, two of the four most abundant groups of small animals of the soil are springtails and oribatid mites. Marvelously varied,

15 having complex life cycles, and teeming by the millions in every acre of land, these tiny animals play vital ecological roles by consuming dead vegetable matter. Thus they help to drive the energy and materials cycles on which all life depends. Yet there

20 are only four specialists in the United States who can identify springtails—one is retired—and only one is an expert on oribatid mites. The reason that so little is heard about these important organisms in the scientific literature and popular press is that there are

25 so few people who know enough to write about them at any level.

The general neglect of expertise in the face of overwhelming need and opportunity rebounds to the weakness of many other enterprises in science and

30 education. Museums are understaffed, with too few biologists to develop research collections and prepare exhibitions. Systematics, the branch of biology that employs taxonomy and the study of similarities among species to work out the evolution of groups of

35 organisms, is able to address only a minute fraction of life. Biogeography, the analysis of the distribution of organisms, is similarly hobbled. So is ecology, the extremely important discipline that explores the

relationships of organisms to their environment and to one another. A great deal of the future of biology depends on the strengthening of taxonomy, for if you can't tell one kind of plant or animal from another, you are in trouble. Some kinds of research may be held up indefinitely. As the Chinese say, the

45 beginning of wisdom is getting things by their right names.

The study of classification and expertise on “obscure” groups of organisms such as periwinkles, leeches, springtails and mites may receive the needed

50 boost by association with what has come to be known as biodiversity studies. Biodiversity studies constitute a hybrid discipline that took solid form during the 1980s. They can be defined (a bit formally, I admit, but bear with me) as follows: the systematic

55 examination of the full array of organisms and the origin of this diversity, together with the technology by which diversity can be maintained and utilized for the benefit of humanity. Thus biodiversity studies are both scientific in nature, a branch of pure evolutionary

60 biology, and applied studies, a branch of biotechnology.

Two events during the past quarter-century brought biodiversity to center stage and encouraged the deliberately hybrid form of its analysis. The first was

65 the recognition that human activity threatens the extinction of not only a few “star” species such as giant pandas and California condors, but also a large fraction of all the species of plants and animals on earth. At least one-quarter of the species on earth are

70 likely to vanish due to the cutting and burning of tropical rainforests alone if the current rate of destruction continues. The second reason for the new prominence of biodiversity studies is the recognition that extinction can be slowed and eventually halted

75 without significant cost to humanity. *Extinction is not a price we are compelled to pay for economic progress.* Quite the contrary: As the examples of the rosy periwinkle and medicinal leech suggest, conservation can promote human welfare. Ultimately

80 conservation might even be necessary for continued progress in many realms of human endeavor.

1. The primary purpose of the first paragraph (lines 1-26) is to
 - (A) inspire students to enter scientific professions
 - (B) argue that certain animal groups are becoming extinct
 - (C) encourage people to follow the progress of current scientific research
 - (D) call attention to the decline of a significant field of study
 - (E) explain the relationship between different scientific disciplines

2. The author mentions “glass-blowing and harpsichord manufacture” (lines 7-8) to suggest that taxonomy is
 - (A) a field characterized by antiquated practices
 - (B) an art that is extremely difficult to master
 - (C) a profession practiced by relatively few people
 - (D) an area of expertise with various practical applications
 - (E) a discipline that has limited usefulness

3. The series of phrases in lines 14-16 (“Marvelously varied . . . acre of land”) primarily conveys the
 - (A) critical job that springtails and oribatid mites perform in the natural environment
 - (B) ferocity with which springtails and oribatid mites compete for survival
 - (C) array of tiny animals that coexist with springtails and oribatid mites in the soil
 - (D) characteristics of springtails and oribatid mites
 - (E) life span of springtails and oribatid mites living in the soil

4. In the context of lines 19-22, the words “one is retired” are best described as
 - (A) a detail that makes a critical situation even more precarious
 - (B) a fact that is puzzling to the author and other biologists
 - (C) a claim that is of equal concern to scientists and the general public
 - (D) an excuse for outdated designs for research projects
 - (E) an aside that undermines the point about taxonomy that is being made

5. Which of the following best describes the relationship between the first and second paragraphs?
 - (A) The second paragraph illustrates the work of the specialists mentioned in the first paragraph.
 - (B) The second paragraph describes the effects of an issue raised in the first paragraph.
 - (C) The second paragraph questions the logic of an idea expressed in the first paragraph.
 - (D) The second paragraph considers factors that could remedy the situation discussed in the first paragraph.
 - (E) The second paragraph lists the practical applications of a theory proposed in the first paragraph.

6. The author cites a Chinese saying (lines 44-46) to emphasize the
 - (A) contrast between Eastern and Western science
 - (B) intricacy of the relationships that unite living beings
 - (C) necessity of using scientific knowledge in a responsible manner
 - (D) importance of taxonomy as a field of study
 - (E) danger of postponing biological research

7. The author uses the word “obscure” in line 48 to mean
 - (A) ambiguous
 - (B) incomprehensible
 - (C) not well known
 - (D) uncertain
 - (E) unusually small

8. The third paragraph (lines 47-61) serves which of the following functions?
 - (A) It explains the results of a controversial study.
 - (B) It compares examples that illustrate a point.
 - (C) It explores social and historical contexts.
 - (D) It speculates about a potential improvement.
 - (E) It presents an opposing point of view.

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The general neglect of expertise in the face of overwhelming need and opportunity rebounds to the weakness of many other enterprises in science and
30 education. Museums are understaffed, with too few biologists to develop research collections and prepare exhibitions. Systematics, the branch of biology that employs taxonomy and the study of similarities among species to work out the evolution of groups of
35 organisms, is able to address only a minute fraction of life. Biogeography, the analysis of the distribution of organisms, is similarly hobbled. So is ecology, the extremely important discipline that explores the

relationships of organisms to their environment and to
40 one another. A great deal of the future of biology depends on the strengthening of taxonomy, for if you can't tell one kind of plant or animal from another, you are in trouble. Some kinds of research may be held up indefinitely. As the Chinese say, the
45 beginning of wisdom is getting things by their right names.

The study of classification and expertise on "obscure" groups of organisms such as periwinkles, leeches, springtails and mites may receive the needed
50 boost by association with what has come to be known as biodiversity studies. Biodiversity studies constitute a hybrid discipline that took solid form during the 1980s. They can be defined (a bit formally, I admit, but bear with me) as follows: the systematic
55 examination of the full array of organisms and the origin of this diversity, together with the technology by which diversity can be maintained and utilized for the benefit of humanity. Thus biodiversity studies are both scientific in nature, a branch of pure evolutionary
60 biology, and applied studies, a branch of biotechnology.

Two events during the past quarter-century brought biodiversity to center stage and encouraged the deliberately hybrid form of its analysis. The first was
65 the recognition that human activity threatens the extinction of not only a few "star" species such as giant pandas and California condors, but also a large fraction of all the species of plants and animals on earth. At least one-quarter of the species on earth are
70 likely to vanish due to the cutting and burning of tropical rainforests alone if the current rate of destruction continues. The second reason for the new prominence of biodiversity studies is the recognition that extinction can be slowed and eventually halted
75 without significant cost to humanity. *Extinction is not a price we are compelled to pay for economic progress.* Quite the contrary: As the examples of the rosy periwinkle and medicinal leech suggest, conservation can promote human welfare. Ultimately
80 conservation might even be necessary for continued progress in many realms of human endeavor.

9. Which of the following is true of the position presented in lines 72-77 ("The second . . . progress") ?
- (A) It is based on information provided at the beginning of the passage.
 - (B) It takes issue with the claims made in the previous sentence.
 - (C) It acknowledges that the solution to the problem will involve painful choices.
 - (D) It emphasizes that immediate action is essential for success.
 - (E) It suggests that an assumption held by many people may be incorrect.
10. One important purpose of the passage is to
- (A) urge the public to contribute money to a proposed taxonomy project
 - (B) argue that the public should focus on identifying and saving a few key species
 - (C) suggest that ecological conservation is a beneficial enterprise
 - (D) question why some species are better protected than others
 - (E) promote specific organizations devoted to improving global well-being
11. The primary rhetorical strategy in the passage is the
- (A) exemplification of key concepts and ideas
 - (B) narration of stories and use of personal references
 - (C) description of research methodologies
 - (D) comparison and contrast of differing viewpoints
 - (E) reevaluation of traditional notions of cause and effect
12. In the passage, italics are used to highlight
- (A) citations from different authorities
 - (B) ideas that scientists consider outdated
 - (C) the hypotheses that the author challenges
 - (D) trends that the author has encouraged
 - (E) the major points of the author's argument
13. The author's tone is best described as
- (A) polite yet condescending
 - (B) concerned yet hopeful
 - (C) critical and indignant
 - (D) eager and amazed
 - (E) pessimistic and discouraged
14. The passage is most likely excerpted from
- (A) an educational article promoting awareness of a critical scientific issue
 - (B) a scholarly essay substantiating the veracity of a recent scientific discovery
 - (C) a historical document describing public funding for biodiversity studies
 - (D) a research report criticizing the behavior of both sides in a current scientific debate
 - (E) an informational pamphlet discussing exhibits in a natural history museum
15. It can be inferred from the passage that the author assumes the reader is
- (A) an expert questioning every aspect of the author's argument
 - (B) a generalist who needs an explanation of specialized concepts
 - (C) a student seeking facts in order to develop a testable thesis
 - (D) a colleague evaluating a proposal for a research project
 - (E) an enthusiast aware of current discoveries and debates

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION I

Time — 1 hour

Directions: This part consists of selections from prose works and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question and completely fill in the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.

Note: Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

Questions 1-13. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The passage below is from Queen Elizabeth's speech to her last Parliament in 1601.

To be a King, and wear a Crown, is a thing more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasant to them that bear it: for my self, I never was so much inticed
Line with the glorious name of a King, or the royal authority
(5) of a Queen, as delighted that God hath made me His Instrument to maintain His Truth and Glory, and to defend this kingdom from dishonor, damage, tyranny, and oppression. But should I ascribe any of these things unto my self, or my sexly weakness, I were not worthy
(10) to live, and of all most unworthy of the mercies I have received at God's hands, but to God only and wholly all is given and ascribed.

The cares and troubles of a Crown I cannot more fitly resemble than to the drugs of a learned physician, per-
(15) fumed with some aromatical savour, or to bitter pills gilded over, by which they are made more acceptable or less offensive, which indeed are bitter and unpleasant to take, and for my own part, were it not for conscience sake to discharge the duty that God hath laid upon me,
(20) and to maintain His glory and keep you in safety, in mine own disposition I should be willing to resign the place I hold to any other, and glad to be freed of the glory with the labors, for it is not my desire to live nor to reign longer than my life and reign shall be for your good. And though you have had and may have many
(25) mightier and wiser Princes sitting in this Seat, yet you never had nor shall have any that will love you better.

Thus Mr. Speaker, I commend me to your loyal loves, and yours to my best care and your further counsels,
(30) and I pray you Mr. Controllor, and Mr. Secretary, and you of my Councell, that before these Gentlemen depart unto their countries, you bring them all to kiss my hand.

1. The point of Elizabeth's statement that to wear a crown "is a thing more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasant to them that bear it" (lines 1-3) is to:
 - (A) suggest that it is difficult to look upon power without being dazzled
 - (B) assert that she is fulfilled and happy in ruling her people
 - (C) emphasize the burdensome responsibilities of her position
 - (D) reveal the foreknowledge she has of the treachery and betrayal of some of her captains
 - (E) refute the charges of those who think she is weak
2. In using the word "Instrument" (line 6), Elizabeth specifically emphasizes:
 - (A) her obedience to God's will
 - (B) her political power as the monarch
 - (C) her resolve to discharge her duties in a regal manner
 - (D) her ambition to surpass the achievements of her predecessors
 - (E) the equality of men and women in God's eyes
3. In lines 3-8, Elizabeth contrasts what she sees as the source of true delight with:
 - (A) religious devotion
 - (B) exalted earthly power
 - (C) the evils that can befall a kingdom
 - (D) her own weaknesses of character
 - (E) her political and diplomatic skills

4. Elizabeth asserts that she would not be "worthy to live" (lines 9-10) if she were to
- (A) be less imperious than certain male rulers
 - (B) fail to take responsibility for all her actions
 - (C) take personal credit for her success as a ruler
 - (D) fail to maintain the outward appearances of royalty
 - (E) show mercy to the enemies of her kingdom
5. As controlled by context, the phrase "fitly resemble" (lines 13-14) is best understood to mean
- (A) precisely describe
 - (B) truthfully speak
 - (C) justly assume
 - (D) angrily refute
 - (E) accurately compare
6. The metaphor developed in the second paragraph suggests primarily that
- (A) a ruler often must make decisions that the people find sacrilegious
 - (B) God's will is really inscrutable to people who hold power
 - (C) the privileges of power are insufficient compensation for the burdens associated with office
 - (D) power often corrupts rulers and betrays them into a life of self-indulgence and luxury
 - (E) weak monarchs who rule indecisively are an offense in God's eyes
7. Pills that are "bitter and unpleasant to take" (lines 17-18) are best understood as a metaphor for
- (A) the advice and diagnoses of doctors
 - (B) attacks on a monarch from foreign enemies
 - (C) the jealousy and envy of other princes
 - (D) the duties and obligations of a sovereign
 - (E) the pain and suffering that characterize an illness
8. As used in line 19 "discharge" most nearly means
- (A) fire
 - (B) cancel
 - (C) fulfill
 - (D) remove from
 - (E) pour forth
9. The most probable reason that Elizabeth says, "in mine own disposition I should be willing to resign the place I hold to any other," (lines 20-22) is to
- (A) defend herself against charges that she has usurped the authority of others
 - (B) strengthen the idea that she rules in accordance with divine will
 - (C) hint at her plan to resign and make way for another ruler
 - (D) suggest that her confidence in her ability to be a strong ruler is weakening
 - (E) signal the fact that she is gradually losing the support of her people
10. In line 22, the word "other" most probably refers to
- (A) the challengers in her audience
 - (B) any potential and viable ruler
 - (C) former rulers now deposed
 - (D) any leader among her subjects
 - (E) any designated royal office
11. The rhetorical strategy employed in lines 25-27 is best described as
- (A) extending a metaphor to close the argument
 - (B) reducing the argument to an acceptable paradox
 - (C) marshaling facts to support the central idea
 - (D) making an abstraction concrete by use of analogy
 - (E) counterbalancing a possible weakness with a greater virtue
12. In context, "Thus . . . I commend me to your loyal loves" (line 28) most nearly means
- (A) because of this you must obey me
 - (B) this proves my devotion to you
 - (C) for this reason I ask that you do your part
 - (D) I ask your friends and families to think well of me
 - (E) in this way I ask your continued allegiance
13. The most apparent goal of Elizabeth's rhetoric and reasoning is to
- (A) explain the need to share authority with her Parliament
 - (B) elicit sympathy and support for her foreign policy in spite of her mistakes
 - (C) establish her kinship with the members of her Parliament
 - (D) convince her audience of the purity and altruism of her motives
 - (E) dissipate the increasing hostility of her subjects

Questions 13-28. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

Line
5 But a far more important correction, applicable to the common vague idea of literature, is to be sought, not so much in a better definition of literature, as in a sharper distinction of the two functions which it fulfils. In that great social organ which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices, that may blend and often *do* so, but capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge*, and, secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is to *teach*; the function of the second is to *move*: the first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding, or reason, but always *through* affections of pleasure and sympathy. Remotely it may travel towards an object seated in what Lord Bacon calls *dry* light; but proximately it does and must operate-else it ceases to be a literature of *power-on* and through that *humid* light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering *iris*'s of human passions, desires, and genial emotions. Men have so little reflected on the higher functions of literature as to find it a paradox if one should describe it as a mean or subordinate purpose of books to give information. But this is a paradox only in the sense which makes it honorable to be paradoxical. Whenever we talk in ordinary language of seeking information or gaining knowledge, we understand the words as connected with something of absolute novelty. But it is the grandeur of all truth which *can* occupy a very high place in human interests that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds: it exists eternally, by way of germ or latent principle, in the lowest as in the highest, needing to be developed but never to be planted. To be capable of transplantation is the immediate criterion of a truth that ranges on a lower scale. Besides which, there is a rarer thing than truth, namely, *power*, or deep sympathy with truth. What is the effect, for instance, upon society, of children? By the pity, by the tenderness, and by the peculiar modes of admiration, which connect themselves with the helplessness, with the innocence, and with the simplicity of children, not only are the primal affections strengthened and continually renewed, but the qualities which are dearest in the sight of heaven-the frailty, for instance, which

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appeals to forbearance, the innocence which symbolizes
the heavenly, and the simplicity which is most
50 alien from the worldly—are kept up in perpetual
remembrance, and their ideals are continually
refreshed. A purpose of the same nature is answered
by the higher literature, viz., the literature of power.
What do you learn from *Paradise Lost*? Nothing at
55 all. What do you learn from a cookery-book? Something
new, something that you did not know before,
in every paragraph. But would you therefore put
the wretched cookery-book on a higher level of
estimation than the divine poem? What you owe
60 to Milton is not any knowledge, of which a million
separate items are still but a million of advancing
steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is
power, that is, exercise and expansion to your own
latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where
65 every pulse and each separate influx is a step upwards,
a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder² from earth
to mysterious altitudes above the earth. *All* the steps
of knowledge, from first to last, carry you further on
the same plane, but could never raise you one foot
70 above your ancient level of earth; whereas the very
first step in power is a flight, is an ascending move-
ment into another element where earth is forgotten.

(1848)

¹ Rainbow

² In the Bible, Jacob has a vision of angels ascending and descending a ladder to Heaven.

- _____ 13. The speaker's primary purpose in the passage is to
- a. propose a change
 - b. describe a process
 - c. explain an idea
 - d. criticize the taste of readers
 - e. praise a work of literature
- _____ 14. Throughout the passage, "literature" is used to mean
- a. works of poetry and prose fiction
 - b. books that are likely to become classics
 - c. publications that are intended to provide entertainment
 - d. all the writing in one particular field
 - e. written works in general

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- _____ 15. Which of the following best describes the function of the first sentence of the passage?
- It introduces an argument and asks the reader to take a side.
 - It provides specific details to support the central idea of the passage.
 - It discusses the flaws of a common misconception.
 - It establishes the speaker's credentials as an expert on the subject of the passage.
 - It prepares for the central topic by dismissing another topic as less promising.
- _____ 16. In context, the word "offices" (line 7) is best understood to mean
- actions performed on behalf of another
 - functions or duties assigned to someone or something
 - positions of trust or authority
 - buildings in which business affairs are carried out
 - religious or social ceremonies
- _____ 17. Which words, when inserted between "but" and "capable" (lines 7-8), best clarify the meaning of the second sentence?
- as if
 - becoming more
 - by being
 - which were
 - that are
- _____ 18. In lines 1-22, all of the following are presented as oppositions between the literatures of *power* and *knowledge* EXCEPT
- severe insulation .. reciprocal repulsion (lines 8-9)
 - to *teach* .. to *move* (lines 11-12)
 - rudder .. oar (lines 12-13)
 - discursive understanding .. higher understanding (lines 14-15)
 - dry* light .. *humid* light (lines 18-21)
- _____ 19. In lines 23-26 ("Men have so ... give information"), the speaker asserts that the
- public is suspicious of those who theorize about the nature of literature
 - public has failed to consider literature except as a source of information
 - higher function of literature is primarily to convey information
 - higher functions of literature are dismissed as paradoxical
 - higher functions of literature are understood but not discussed by the public
- _____ 20. The antecedent of "it" (line 33) is
- "ordinary language" (line 28)
 - "absolute novelty" (lines 30-31)
 - "all truth" (line 31)
 - "a very high place" (line 32)
 - "meanest of minds" (line 33)

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- _____ 21. In lines 31-38, all of the following words contribute to the same metaphor EXCEPT
- "gem" (line 34)
 - "developed" (line 35)
 - "planted" (line 36)
 - "transplantation" (lines 36-37)
 - "scale" (line 38)
- _____ 22. The speaker associates children with the literature of *power* because they both
- link us emotionally rather than rationally with truth
 - symbolize the redemptive power of innocence
 - illustrate the paradoxical relationship of power and weakness
 - require us to rely on instinct rather than experience to understand them
 - are judged somewhat leniently by most people
- _____ 23. The response "Nothing at all" to the question "What do you learn from *Paradise Lost*?" (line 54) is meant to
- suggest that the value of *Paradise Lost* is not in the knowledge it conveys
 - undercut the value that literary critics have placed on *Paradise Lost*
 - imply that the style of *Paradise Lost* makes the poem too difficult for most readers
 - criticize the notion that works of literature should serve a moral purpose
 - summarize the differing effects on human sensibility of children and higher literature
- _____ 24. The speaker views Milton as a writer whose works can
- enlarge one's deep sympathy with truth
 - teach one how to recognize good literature
 - give instruction about the nature of life on Earth
 - speak to one's discursive understanding
 - both inform and inspire
- _____ 25. In the passage, the "cookery-book" (line 55) is used primarily as an example of writing that is
- boring
 - repetitive
 - awkward
 - informative
 - innovative
- _____ 26. In the final sentences of the passage (lines 57-72), the speaker uses which of the following to characterize the literatures of *knowledge* and *power*?
- An extended analogy
 - A paradox
 - A balance of overstatement and understatement
 - A witty anecdote
 - An appeal to authority

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27. The tone of lines 59-72 can best be described as
- a. tentative and prudent
 - b. detached and ironic
 - c. fervent and emphatic
 - d. defensive and self-aware
 - e. supportive and reassuring
28. The intended audience for this passage is most probably
- a. pious readers
 - b. educated adults
 - c. amateur writers
 - d. professional poets
 - e. book publishers

