



**AP[®] English Literature and Composition
2009 Free-Response Questions
Form B**

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2009 AP[®] ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS (Form B)

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

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

The following poem, written by Edward Field, makes use of the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus.* Read the poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how Field employs literary devices in adapting the Icarus myth to a contemporary setting.

Icarus

Only the feathers floating around the hat
Showed that anything more spectacular had occurred
Than the usual drowning. The police preferred to ignore
Line The confusing aspects of the case,
5 And the witnesses ran off to a gang war.
So the report filed and forgotten in the archives read simply
“Drowned,” but it was wrong: Icarus
Had swum away, coming at last to the city
Where he rented a house and tended the garden.

10 “That nice Mr. Hicks” the neighbors called him,
Never dreaming that the gray, respectable suit
Concealed arms that had controlled huge wings
Nor that those sad, defeated eyes had once
Compelled the sun. And had he told them
15 They would have answered with a shocked, uncomprehending stare.
No, he could not disturb their neat front yards;
Yet all his books insisted that this was a horrible mistake:
What was he doing aging in a suburb?
Can the genius of the hero fall
20 To the middling stature of the merely talented?

And nightly Icarus probes his wound
And daily in his workshop, curtains carefully drawn,
Constructs small wings and tries to fly
To the lighting fixture on the ceiling:
25 Fails every time and hates himself for trying.

He had thought himself a hero, had acted heroically,
And dreamt of his fall, the tragic fall of the hero;
But now rides commuter trains,
Serves on various committees,
30 And wishes he had drowned.

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*Daedalus and his son, Icarus, fashioned wings of feathers and wax in an attempt to escape from prison by flying across the sea. Before their flight, Daedalus warned his son not to fly too close to the sun. But, caught up in the experience of flying, Icarus ignored the warning and soared upward. The heat of the sun melted the wax, the wings fell off, and he plunged to his death in the sea.

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Question 2

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

The passage below is the opening of *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948), a novel written by Zora Neale Hurston. Read the passage carefully. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze the literary techniques Hurston uses to describe Sawley and to characterize the people who live there.

Sawley, the town, is in west Florida, on the famous Suwanee River. It is flanked on the south by the curving course of the river which Stephen Foster* made famous without ever having looked upon its waters, running swift and deep through the primitive forests, and reddened by the chemicals leached out of drinking roots. On the north, the town is flanked by cultivated fields planted to corn, cane, potatoes, tobacco and small patches of cotton.

However, few of these fields were intensively cultivated. For the most part they were scratchy plantings, the people being mostly occupied in the production of turpentine and lumber. The life of Sawley streamed out from the sawmill and the “teppentime ‘still.” Then too, there was ignorance and poverty, and the ever-present hookworm. The farms and the scanty flowers in front yards and in tin cans and buckets looked like the people. Trees and plants always look like the people they live with, somehow.

This was in the first decade of the new century, when the automobile was known as the horseless carriage, and had not exerted its tremendous influence on the roads of the nation. There was then no U.S. 90, the legendary Old Spanish Trail, stretching straight broad concrete from Jacksonville on the Atlantic to San Diego on the Pacific. There was the sandy pike, deeply rutted by wagon wheels over which the folks of Sawley hauled their tobacco to market at Live Oak, or fresh-killed hogmeat, corn and peanuts to Madison or Monticello on the west. Few ever dreamed of venturing any farther east nor west.

Few were concerned with the past. They had heard that the stubbornly resisting Indians had been there where they now lived, but they were dead and gone. Osceola, Miccanope, Billy Bow-Legs were nothing more than names that had even lost their bitter flavor. The conquering Spaniards had done their murdering, robbing, and raping and had long ago withdrawn from the Floridas. Few knew and nobody cared that the Hidalgos under De Sota had moved westward along this very route. The people thought no more of them than they did the magnolias and bay and other ornamental trees which grew so plentifully in the swamps along the river, nor the fame of the stream. They knew that there were plenty of black bass, locally known as trout, in the Suwanee, and bream and perch and cat-fish. There were soft-shell turtles that made a mighty nice dish when stewed down to a low gravy, or the “chicken meat” of those same turtles fried crisp and brown. Fresh water turtles were a mighty fine article of food anyway you looked at it. It was commonly said that a turtle had every kind of meat on him. The white “chicken meat,” the dark “beef” and the in-between “pork.” You could stew, boil and fry, and none of it cost you a cent. All you needed was a strip of white side-meat on the hook, and you had you some turtle meat.

*American songwriter (1826-1864) whose song “Old Folks at Home” begins “Way down upon the Swanee River”

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Question 3

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

Many works of literature deal with political or social issues. Choose a novel or play that focuses on a political or social issue. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses literary elements to explore this issue and explain how the issue contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

You may choose a work from the list below or another novel or play of similar literary merit.

<i>All the King's Men</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>American Pastoral</i>	<i>The Jungle</i>
<i>Angels in America</i>	<i>Main Street</i>
<i>Anna Karenina</i>	<i>Major Barbara</i>
<i>Antigone</i>	<i>"Master Harold" . . . and the Boys</i>
<i>The Awakening</i>	<i>Moll Flanders</i>
<i>The Bluest Eye</i>	<i>Mrs. Warren's Profession</i>
<i>Brave New World</i>	<i>Native Son</i>
<i>Broken for You</i>	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>
<i>Ceremony</i>	<i>1984</i>
<i>Copenhagen</i>	<i>The Octopus</i>
<i>The Crucible</i>	<i>Oliver Twist</i>
<i>Cry, the Beloved Country</i>	<i>A Passage to India</i>
<i>A Doll House</i>	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>
<i>Equus</i>	<i>Reservation Blues</i>
<i>Germinal</i>	<i>Rhinoceros</i>
<i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i>	<i>Sister Carrie</i>
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	<i>Sophie's Choice</i>
<i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	<i>The Things They Carried</i>
<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
<i>Hard Times</i>	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
<i>House Made of Dawn</i>	<i>USA</i>
<i>Invisible Man</i>	<i>The Women of Brewster Place</i>
<i>Jude the Obscure</i>	

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END OF EXAM