



AP English Language & Composition 1999 Free-Response Questions

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1999

The College Board

Advanced Placement Examination

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1

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

Read the following two passages about Florida's Okefenokee Swamp carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the distinctive style of each passage reveals the purpose of its writer.

Passage 1

Okefenokee Swamp, primitive swamp and wildlife refuge in southeastern Georgia and northern Florida, is a shallow, saucer-shaped depression approximately
Line 25 mi wide and 40 mi long and covers an area of
(5) more than 600 sq mi. Lying about 50 mi inland from the Atlantic Coast, the swamp is bounded on the east by the low, sandy Trail Ridge, which prevents direct drainage into the Atlantic. The swamp is partially drained southward into the Atlantic by the Suwannee
(10) and St. Mary's rivers. The Okefenokee Swamp includes low, sandy ridges, wet grassy savannas, small islands (called hummocks) surrounded by marshes, and extensive "prairies," or dark water areas covered by undergrowth and trees. Vegetation is
(15) dense in the swamp and includes giant tupelo and bald cypress trees festooned with Spanish moss, brush, and vines: where sandy soil is above the water, pine trees predominate. Meandering channels of open water form an intricate maze. Exotic flowers,
(20) among them floating hearts, lilies, and rare orchids, abound. The swamp is populated with diverse and abundant wildlife, with about 175 species of birds and at least 40 species of mammals, which include raccoons, black bear, white-tail deer, bobcats, fox, and otter. Alligators are also present.

(1988)

Passage 2

Vast and primeval, unfathomable, unconquerable, bastion of cottonmouth, rattlesnake and leech, mother of vegetation, father of mosquito, soul of silt, the
Line Okefenokee is the swamp archetypal, the swamp of
(5) legend, of racial memory, of Hollywood. It gives birth to two rivers, the St. Mary's and the Suwannee, fanning out over 430,000 leaf-choked acres, every last one as sodden as a sponge. Four hundred and thirty thousand acres of stinging, biting and boring insects,
(10) of maiden cane and gum and cypress, of palmetto, slash pine and peat, of muck, mud, slime and ooze. Things fester here, things cook down, decompose, deliquesce. The swamp is home to two hundred and twenty-five species of birds, forty-three of mammals,
(15) fifty-eight of reptiles, thirty-two of amphibians and thirty-four of fish—all variously equipped with beaks, talons, claws, teeth, stingers and fangs—not to mention the seething galaxies of gnats and deerflies and no-see-ums, the ticks, mites,
(20) hookworms and paramecia that exist only to compound the misery of life. There are alligators here, bears, puma, bobcats and bowfin, there are cooters and snappers, opossum, coon and gar. They feed on one another, in the sludge and muck and on the
(25) floating mats of peat they bury eggs, they scratch and stink and sniff at themselves, caterwauling and screeching through every minute of every day and night till the place reverberates like some hellish zoo.

(1990)

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Question 2

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

The passage below (on this page and on the following page) is from the opening of an essay, “On Seeing England for the First Time,” by Jamaica Kincaid. Kincaid grew up on the Caribbean island of Antigua before it became independent from England in 1981. Read the entire passage carefully. Then write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies Kincaid employs to convey her attitude toward England.

Unfortunately, we have been denied permission to reprint online the passage that accompanies Question 2 of the 1999 AP English Language free-response question. The essay "On Seeing England for the First Time" can be found in *Best American Essays, 1992*, edited by Susan Sontag and published by Ticknor and Fields, 1992.

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Question 3

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

In the following excerpt from *Antigone*, by the classical Greek playwright Sophocles, the wise Teiresias observes

Think: all men make mistakes,
But a good man yields when he
Knows his course is wrong,
And repairs the evil: The only
Crime is pride.

Take some time to think about the implications of the quotation. Then write a carefully reasoned essay that explores the validity of the assertion, using examples from your reading, observation, or experience to develop your position.

END OF EXAMINATION