



## AP English Literature 2000 Student Samples

**The materials included in these files are intended for non-commercial use by AP teachers for course and exam preparation; permission for any other use must be sought from the Advanced Placement Program. Teachers may reproduce them, in whole or in part, in limited quantities, for face-to-face teaching purposes but may not mass distribute the materials, electronically or otherwise. These materials and any copies made of them may not be resold, and the copyright notices must be retained as they appear here. This permission does not apply to any third-party copyrights contained herein.**

These materials were produced by Educational Testing Service (ETS), which develops and administers the examinations of the Advanced Placement Program for the College Board. The College Board and Educational Testing Service (ETS) are dedicated to the principle of equal opportunity, and their programs, services, and employment policies are guided by that principle.

The College Board is a national nonprofit membership association dedicated to preparing, inspiring, and connecting students to college and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 3,900 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves over three million students and their parents, 22,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges, through major programs and services in college admission, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT<sup>®</sup>, the PSAT/NMSQT<sup>™</sup>, the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>), and Pacesetter<sup>®</sup>. The College Board is committed to the principles of equity and excellence, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

Copyright © 2001 by College Entrance Examination Board. All rights reserved. College Board, Advanced Placement Program, AP, and the acorn logo are registered trademarks of the College Entrance Examination Board.

Question 2

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

Joseph Addison's character represents a remarkable amount of satire and ironic social commentary in the writing of his diary, for it is there that he reveals the true and truly ridiculous nature of the "standard" style of life at the time. Via peculiar juxtapositions of irrelevant and overly-detailed events with world news (and his friends' opinions thereof), Addison makes both his character and his daily schedule seem ridiculous. The detailed accounts of things that anyone else would clearly find arbitrary and irrelevant expose the character's self-absorption and concern with obviously petty issues, and set up the entire idea of keeping this sort of diary for ridicule.

The character's predilection for recording the absolutely commonplace happenings of his day in his diary speaks volumes about the character's priorities in life. Nowhere is there evidence of a great deal of motivation to do work, or, indeed, anything productive whatsoever. Whereas a "standard" diary is generally one that records feelings or any unusual happenings, this character's diary serves to ridicule the entire institution of keeping a diary, simply by framing the most useless pieces of information as great news and significant happenings. Repetition is used widely by Addison in the passage to emphasize the silliness of his character's diary-keeping; going to bed every night at ten precisely, eating dinner at two o'clock daily, rapping at three, and clubbing ~~it~~ in the evening were standard activities of this gentleman, and even if the event was precisely the same as on the day before at precisely the same time, he felt the need to write it

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

2 (cont'd)

down. This characterizes the diarist as a bit of an obsessive-compulsive, and also serves to mock a sedentary lifestyle so mind-numbingly repetitious that even the slightest changes are considered important and noteworthy.

At the same time as ~~the~~ Addison's portrayal of his character mocked the character himself and his seemingly ludicrous personal schedule, it also mocked Addison's society at large. By ~~stating~~ implying that his character was an "everyman" by not naming him and not having him do anything particularly unusual or exciting, Addison implied that this man's repetitive, bland, un-exciting life was typical of other, real Englishmen of the time. If the highlights of Addison's character's life are written (as per standard) in his diary, and the 'highlights' include what varying drinks he indulged in and whether or not his dinners were prepared to his liking, it makes a pretty poor statement about the rest of the 'typical gentlemen' that this character represents, and shows an embarrassing reflection of the type of lifestyle of the 'everyman' in England in Addison's time. Finally, this passage satirizes English society for its mis-prioritizing of events; the placement of, for instance, the news headline that the Grand Vizier of the mighty Ottoman Empire was assassinated next to drinking "a dish of twist" has two effects. The placing of an event of such obvious international concern next to an item of such obvious irrelevance both elevates the drinking of twist to that level and drops the importance of the Vizier's assassination to the level of importance of taking a drink. This simultaneously mocks a society

2 (cont'd)

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

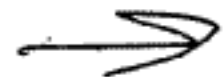
which values its beverage selection as much as its international affairs, and mocks a system of social prioritizing that places these two so obviously different events on an equal level of importance. Mr. Nisby's reflections only serve to drive the point home.

Addison's mocking tone comes through clearly in his imaginary diary of a dull life. Addison skillfully uses the tricks of irrelevant and superfluous detail and of repetition of arbitrary and dull events to forcefully drive home the point that society is becoming lazy and self-centered before his eyes, concentrating so on the details of a mechanized and uninteresting lifestyle that it fails to see how much more could be done with a life than eat the same dinners and go to the club every night. Addison's gentleman, and hence the rest of his 'everyman' real-life society, embodies the lack of perspective of the English in Addison's time, and their lack of seeing the forest of the real world for the trees of their own dull ~~the~~ egocentric lives.

#

The diarist and his society are characterized as cold, unfeeling people who are too set in their everyday routines to notice the world around them change. This sets the tone for the passage. It seems very relaxed and unchanging with no strong emotion. The diarist takes everything in his life with the same amount of concern, from his "walk in the fields" to "Mr. Nisby's opinion about the peace", from "a dish of twist" to the strangulation of the Grand Vizier to a "cookmaid in love." Life, love, death, and coffee all are of equal concern (or lack thereof) to the diarist. This satirizes the way that society tends to take disaster and tragedy as little more than newspaper made to give a person something to do while he sips his coffee.

The constant repetition of the diarist's life also adds to this effect. Every day is exactly the same for him, and the only things he takes note of are causes for complaint ("sprouts wanting", "cookmaid in love, and grain careless", "too many plums and no suet", Sir Timothy "did not bring me my annuity according to his promise"). While he takes note of all of these things, he refuses to take responsibility for any of them, casting the blame on everyone but himself. The repetition also helps convey the image of his apathy towards the world around him. He never details any conversations with Mr. Nisby or Sir Timothy, nor does he explain why he boxes Ralph's ear or "turned off" his cookmaid. It is this selection of detail which shows his total self-absorption and lack of concern for anything which does not immediately concern



him. The only details which attention are drawn to are his constant complaints. He downplays the things which are "ill in the North", the strangulation of the Grand Vizier, and his cookmaid, who is in love because they do not immediately concern him. These events merely provide a topic of conversation for him and a headline for the "Supplement and Daily Currents".

This passage characterizes and satirizes both the diarist and the society in which he lives. It accentuates the distant and unfeeling nature of society in general, as well as its constant self-absorption and repetition. The very concept of the diary itself acts as a metaphor for <sup>an individual's</sup> ~~society's~~ concern only for himself and the events which he chooses to record. Society causes the diarist, as well as its other members, to become blind to the world and all it has to offer and teaches the individual to have the capability to only see himself and events directly relating to him. Addison's satire is effective in bringing readers to the realization of this fact and causes them to look inside of themselves and relate to the passage, not only in reference to the diarist, but in respect to society as a whole.

#