



AP[®] English Literature and Composition 2010 Free-Response Questions

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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.)

Read carefully the following poem by Marilyn Nelson Waniek. Then write an essay analyzing how Waniek employs literary techniques to develop the complex meanings that the speaker attributes to The Century Quilt. You may wish to consider such elements as structure, imagery, and tone.

The Century Quilt

for Sarah Mary Taylor, Quilter

<p>Line 5</p>	<p>My sister and I were in love with Meema’s Indian blanket. We fell asleep under army green issued to Daddy by Supply. When Meema came to live with us she brought her medicines, her cane, and the blanket I found on my sister’s bed the last time I visited her. I remembered how I’d planned to inherit that blanket, how we used to wrap ourselves at play in its folds and be chieftains and princesses.</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>among her yellow sisters, their grandfather’s white family nodding at them when they met. When their father came home from his store they cranked up the pianola and all of the beautiful sisters giggled and danced. She must have dreamed about Mama when the dancing was over: a lanky girl trailing after her father through his Oklahoma field. Perhaps under this quilt I’d dream of myself, of my childhood of miracles, of my father’s burnt umber² pride, my mother’s ochre³ gentleness. Within the dream of myself perhaps I’d meet my son or my other child, as yet unconceived. I’d call it The Century Quilt, after its pattern of leaves.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Now I’ve found a quilt¹ I’d like to die under; Six Van Dyke brown squares, two white ones, and one square the yellowbrown of Mama’s cheeks. Each square holds a sweet gum leaf whose fingers I imagine would caress me into the silence.</p>	<p>40</p>	
<p>20</p>	<p>I think I’d have good dreams for a hundred years under this quilt, as Meema must have, under her blanket, dreamed she was a girl again in Kentucky</p>	<p>45</p>	

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from *Mama’s Promises* by Marilyn Nelson Waniek.
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¹ A quilt is a type of bedcovering often made by stitching together varied pieces of fabric.

² Burnt umber is a shade of brown.

³ Ochre refers to a shade of yellow.

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Question 2

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

In the following passage from Maria Edgeworth's 1801 novel, *Belinda*, the narrator provides a description of Clarence Hervey, one of the suitors of the novel's protagonist, Belinda Portman. Mrs. Stanhope, Belinda's aunt, hopes to improve her niece's social prospects and therefore has arranged to have Belinda stay with the fashionable Lady Delacour.

Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze Clarence Hervey's complex character as Edgeworth develops it through such literary techniques as tone, point of view, and language.

Clarence Hervey might have been more than a pleasant young man, if he had not been smitten with the desire of being thought superior in every thing, and of being the most admired person in all companies. He had been early flattered with the idea that he was a man of genius; and he imagined that, as such, he was entitled to be imprudent, wild, and eccentric. He affected singularity, in order to establish his claims to genius. He had considerable literary talents, by which he was distinguished at Oxford; but he was so dreadfully afraid of passing for a pedant, that when he came into the company of the idle and the ignorant, he pretended to disdain every species of knowledge. His chameleon character seemed to vary in different lights, and according to the different situations in which he happened to be placed. He could be all things to all men—and to all women. He was supposed to be a favourite with the fair sex; and of all his various excellencies and defects, there was none on which he valued himself so much as on his gallantry. He was not profligate; he had a strong sense of humour, and quick feelings of humanity; but he was so easily led, or rather so easily excited by his companions, and his companions were now of such a sort, that it was probable he would soon become vicious. As to his connexion with Lady Delacour, he would have started with horror at the idea of disturbing the peace of a family; but in her family, he said, there was no peace to disturb; he was vain of having it seen by the world that he was distinguished by a lady of her wit and fashion, and he did not think it incumbent on him to be more scrupulous or more attentive to appearances than her ladyship. By Lord Delacour's jealousy he was sometimes provoked, sometimes amused, and sometimes flattered. He was constantly of all her ladyship's parties in public and private; consequently he saw Belinda almost every day, and every day he saw her with increasing admiration of her beauty, and with increasing dread of being taken in to marry a niece of 'the *catch-match-maker*,' the name by which Mrs Stanhope was known amongst the men of his acquaintance. Young ladies who have the misfortune to be *conducted* by these artful dames, are always supposed to be partners in all the speculations, though their names may not appear in the firm. If he had not been prejudiced by the character of her aunt, Mr Hervey would have thought Belinda an undesigning, unaffected girl; but now he suspected her of artifice in every word, look, and motion; and even when he felt himself most charmed by her powers of pleasing, he was most inclined to despise her, for what he thought such premature proficiency in scientific coquetry. He had not sufficient resolution to keep beyond the sphere of her attraction; but frequently, when he found himself within it, he cursed his folly, and drew back with sudden terror.

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Question 3

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

Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.” Yet Said has also said that exile can become “a potent, even enriching” experience.

Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from “home,” whether that home is the character’s birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character’s experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. You may choose a work from the list below or one of comparable literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

The American
Angle of Repose
Another Country
As You Like It
Brave New World
Crime and Punishment
Doctor Zhivago
Heart of Darkness
Invisible Man
Jane Eyre
Jasmine
Jude the Obscure
King Lear
The Little Foxes
Madame Bovary
The Mayor of Casterbridge
My Ántonia

Obasan
The Odyssey
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich
The Other
Paradise Lost
The Poisonwood Bible
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
The Road
Robinson Crusoe
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
Sister Carrie
Sister of My Heart
Snow Falling on Cedars
The Tempest
Things Fall Apart
The Women of Brewster Place
Wuthering Heights

STOP

END OF EXAM