

2024



AP[®] English Literature and Composition

Free-Response Questions Set 1

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

3 Questions

Question 1

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

In John Rollin Ridge’s poem “To a Star Seen at Twilight,” published in 1868, the speaker admires a solitary star shining at twilight and considers its significance. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Ridge uses literary elements and techniques to convey the speaker’s complex reflection on the star.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

To a Star Seen at Twilight

<p>Hail solitary star! That shinest from thy far blue height, And overlookest Earth <i>Line</i> And Heaven, companionless in light! 5 The rays around thy brow Are an eternal wreath for thee; Yet thou’rt not proud, like man, Though thy broad mirror is the sea, And thy calm home eternity!</p> <p>10 Shine on, night-bosomed star! And through its realms thy soul’s eye dart, And count each age of light, For their eternal wheel thou art.</p> <p>Thou dost roll into the past days, 15 Years, and ages too, And naught thy giant progress stays.</p>	<p>I love to gaze upon Thy speaking face, thy calm, fair brow, And feel my spirit dark 20 And deep, grow bright and pure as thou. Like thee it stands alone; Like thee its native home is night, But there the likeness ends,— It beams not with thy steady light. 25 Its upward path is high, But not so high as thine—thou’rt far Above the reach of clouds, Of storms, of wreck, oh lofty star! I would all men might look 30 Upon thy pure sublimity, And in their bosoms drink Thy loveliness and light like me; For who in all the world Could gaze upon thee thus, and feel 35 Aught in his nature base, Or mean, or low, around him steal!</p>
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Shine on companionless
As now thou seem'st. Thou art the throne
Of thy own spirit, star!
40 And mighty things must be alone.
Alone the ocean heaves,
Or calms his bosom into sleep;
Alone each mountain stands
Upon its basis broad and deep;
45 Alone through heaven the comets sweep,
Those burning worlds which God has thrown
Upon the universe in wrath,
As if he hated them—their path
No stars, no suns may follow, *none*—
50 'Tis great, 'tis great to be alone!

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 2

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

The following excerpt is from Mavis Gallant’s short story “One Morning in June,” published in 1952. In this passage, Mike Cahill is in France for one year to explore his talent for art. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Gallant uses literary elements and techniques to convey Mike’s complex experience of studying painting.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Line He had come to France because the words “art”
and “Paris” were unbreakably joined in his family’s
imagination, the legend of Trilby’s Bohemia¹
persisting long after the truth of it had died. When his
5 high school art teacher, a young woman whose
mobiles² had been praised, pronounced that his was a
talent not to be buried under the study of medicine or
law, his family had decided that a year in Paris would
show whether or not his natural bent was toward
10 painting. It was rather like exposing someone to a
case of measles and watching for spots to break out.

In Paris, Mike had spent the first three weeks
standing in the wrong queue at the Beaux-Arts,³ and
when no one seemed able to direct him to the right
15 one, he had given up the Beaux-Arts entirely and
joined a class instructed by an English painter called
Chitterley, whose poster advertisement he had seen in
a café. It was Mr. Chitterley’s custom to turn his
young charges loose on the city and then, once a week
20 or so, comment on their work in a borrowed studio on
the Quai d’Anjou.⁴ Mike painted with sober patience
the bridges of the Seine, the rain-soaked lawns of the
Tuileries, and a head-on view of Notre Dame. His
paintings were large (Mr. Chitterley was nearsighted),
25 askew (as he had been taught in the public schools of
New York), and empty of people (he had never been
taught to draw, and it was not his nature to take
chances).

“Very *interesting*,” said Mr. Chitterley of Mike’s
30 work. Squinting a little, he would add, “Ah! I *see* what
you were trying to do here!”

“You do?” Mike wished he would be more specific,
for he sometimes recognized that his pictures were

flat, empty, and the color of cement. At first, he had
35 blamed the season, for the Paris winter had been
sunless; later on, he saw that its gray contained every
shade in a beam of light, but this effect he was unable
to reproduce. Unnerved by the pressure of time, he
watched his work all winter, searching for the clue
40 that would set him on a course. Prodded in the
direction of art, he now believed in it, enjoying, above
all, the solitude, the sense of separateness, the
assembling of parts into something reasonable. He
might have been equally happy at a quiet table,
45 gathering into something ticking and ordered the
scattered wheels of a watch, but this had not been
suggested, and he had most certainly never given it a
thought. At last, when the season had rained itself to
an end (and his family innocently were prepared to
50 have him exhibit his winter’s harvest in some garret⁵
of the Left Bank and send home the critics’ clippings),
he approached Mr. Chitterley and asked what he
ought to do next.

“Why, go to the country,” said Mr. Chitterley, who
55 was packing for a holiday with the owner of the Quai
d’Anjou studio. “Go south. Don’t stop in a hotel but
live on the land, in a tent, and paint, paint, paint, paint,
paint!”

“I can’t afford it,” Mike said. “I mean I can’t afford
60 to buy the tent and stuff. But I can stay over here until
August, if you think there’s any point. I mean is it
wasting time for me to paint, paint, paint?”

Mr. Chitterley shot him an offended look and then
a scornful one, which said, How like an American!
65 The only measuring rods, time and money. Aloud, he
suggested Menton.⁶ He had stayed there as a child,

and he remembered it as a paradise of lemon ice and sunshine. Mike, for want of a better thought, or even a contrastive one, took the train there a day later.

¹ *Trilby*, a popular 1894 novel by George du Maurier, focuses on the unconventional lifestyles of artists and musicians in 1850s Paris.

² suspended decorative sculptures designed to move with air currents

³ a famous art school in Paris

⁴ a neighborhood on the Île Saint-Louis, an island in the Seine river in Paris

⁵ a small, dismal attic room

⁶ a town on the French Riviera

“One Morning in June” by Mavis Gallant. Copyright © 1952 by Mavis Gallant. First appeared in the June 7, 1952 issue of *The New Yorker*. Reprinted by permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc., on behalf of the author’s estate. All rights reserved.

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

Question 3

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

Many works of literature feature a character who may be reluctant to make a decision, unable to make a decision, or is resistant to doing so. This indecision can have broader implications for that character or other characters. Such implications may include changes to a character’s relationships, social and/or financial stability, well-being, or any other aspects of the character’s existence.

Either from your own reading or from the list below, choose a work of fiction in which a character delays or avoids making a decision. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how the impact of this indecision contributes to an interpretation of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Provide evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

The Age of Innocence
An American Marriage
Anna Karenina
The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman
Beloved
Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage
Corelli’s Mandolin
Dubliners
Emma
Frankenstein
George Washington Gómez
Indian Horse
Interior Chinatown
Jane Eyre
The Kite Runner
Little Fires Everywhere
A Long Petal of the Sea
Love in the Time of Cholera
Madame Bovary

The Metamorphosis
The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez
The Namesake
The Night Watchman
North and South
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest
Pipeline
The Professor’s House
Quicksand
A Raisin in the Sun
Rebecca
A Room with a View
The Stranger
A Tale of Two Cities
Tess of the d’Urbervilles
Topdog/Underdog
Waiting
Whereabouts
Wuthering Heights

Begin your response to this question at the top of a new page in the separate Free Response booklet and fill in the appropriate circle at the top of each page to indicate the question number.

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