Analyzing and Interpreting Literature

Description of the Examination

The Analyzing and Interpreting Literature examination covers material usually taught in a general undergraduate course in literature. Although the examination does not require familiarity with specific works, it does assume that candidates have read widely and perceptively in poetry, drama, fiction and nonfiction. The questions are based on passages supplied in the test. These passages have been selected so that no previous experience with them is required to answer the questions. The passages are taken primarily from American and British literature.

The examination contains approximately 80 multiple-choice questions to be answered in 98 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored.

An optional essay section can be taken in addition to the multiple-choice test. The essay section requires that two essays be written during a total time of 90 minutes. For the first essay, candidates are asked to analyze a short poem. For the second essay, candidates are asked to apply a generalization about literature (such as the function of a theme or a technique) to a novel, short story or play that they have read.

Candidates are expected to write well-organized essays in clear and precise prose. The essay section is scored by faculty at the institution that requests it and is still administered in paper-and-pencil format. There is an additional fee for taking this section, payable to the institution that administers the exam.

Knowledge and Skills Required

Questions on the Analyzing and Interpreting Literature examination require candidates to demonstrate the following abilities.

- Ability to read prose, poetry and drama with understanding
- Ability to analyze the elements of a literary passage and to respond to nuances of meaning, tone, imagery and style
- Ability to interpret metaphors, to recognize rhetorical and stylistic devices, to perceive relationships between parts and wholes, and to grasp a speaker's or author's attitudes
- Knowledge of the means by which literary effects are achieved
- Familiarity with the basic terminology used to discuss literary texts

The examination emphasizes comprehension, interpretation and analysis of literary works. A specific knowledge of historical context (authors and movements) is not required, but a broad knowledge of literature gained through reading widely and a familiarity with basic literary terminology is assumed. The following outline indicates the relative emphasis given to the various types of literature and the periods from which the passages are taken. The approximate percentage of exam questions per classification is noted within each main category.

**Genre**

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<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35%–45%</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<td>35%–45%</td>
<td>Prose (fiction and nonfiction)</td>
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<td>15%–30%</td>
<td>Drama</td>
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**National Tradition**

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<td>30%–45%</td>
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**Period**

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<td>20%–30%</td>
<td>Renaissance and 17th Century</td>
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<tr>
<td>35%–45%</td>
<td>18th and 19th Centuries</td>
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<td>25%–35%</td>
<td>20th and 21st Centuries</td>
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Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions do not appear on an actual CLEP examination. They are intended to give potential test-takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the examination and to provide content for practice and review. Knowing the correct answers to all of the sample questions is not a guarantee of satisfactory performance on the exam. The date printed at the end of each passage is the original publication date or, in some cases, the first performance of a play or estimated date of composition.

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

Questions 1–5

CHORAGOS: Men of Thebes: look upon Oedipus. This is the king who solved the famous riddle And towered up, most powerful of men.

No mortal eyes but looked on him with envy,
Yet in the end ruin swept over him.

Let every man in mankind’s frailty
Consider his last day; and let none
Presume on his good fortune until he find
Life, at his death, a memory without pain.

(c. 429 BCE)

1. Line 3 primarily suggests that Oedipus
   (A) was an unusually tall and intimidating man
   (B) became a figure of great fame and authority
   (C) waged war against the men of Thebes
   (D) was stronger and more agile than other men
   (E) proved to be a persuasive, if corrupt, politician

2. Which of the following is the best paraphrase of “No mortal eyes but looked on him with envy” (line 4)?
   (A) Even the gods were envious of him.
   (B) The gods considered him an envious person.
   (C) Everyone wished to have his advantages.
   (D) Only envious people would seek him.
   (E) Everyone longed to be immortal like him.

3. The speaker assumes that “every man” (line 6) is
   (A) averse to idolizing other men as gods
   (B) likely to underestimate his own abilities
   (C) prone to turn down a challenge too quickly
   (D) vulnerable to fate and his own destiny
   (E) capable of accomplishing great feats

4. In the context of the passage, to “Presume on his good fortune” (line 8) is best interpreted as
   (A) assume bad luck must turn to good
   (B) believe that happiness will endure
   (C) try to gain wealth and prosperity
   (D) plan for good fortune before it comes
   (E) make judgments on those who are poor or unlucky

5. The passage can best be described as
   (A) a warning against hubris or pride
   (B) a poetic rejection of bad fortune
   (C) an acceptance of catharsis
   (D) a poetic affirmation that all is vanity
   (E) God’s promise of final happiness
Questions 6–11

That outward beauty which the world commends
Is not the subject I will write upon,
Whose date expired, that tyrant time soon ends;
Those gaudy colours soon are spent and gone,
But those fair virtues which on thee attends
Are always fresh, they never are but one:
They make thy beauty fairer to behold
Than was that queen's for whom proud Troy was sold.

As for those matchless colours red and white,
Or perfect features in a fading face,
Or due proportion pleasing to the sight;
All these do draw but dangers and disgrace.
A mind enriched with virtue shines more bright,
Adding everlasting beauty, gives true grace,
Frames an immortal goddess on the earth,
Who though she dies, yet fame gives her new birth.

That pride of nature which adorns the fair,
Like blazing comets to allure all eyes,
Is but the thread, that weaves their web of care
Who glories most, where most their danger lies.
For greatest perils do attend the fair,
When men do seek, attempt, plot and devise
How they may overthrow the chastest dame
Whose beauty is the white whereat they aim.

(1611)

6. The poem as a whole presents beauty as
   (A) hypnotic and deceitful
   (B) fleeting and dangerous
   (C) empty and insignificant
   (D) seductive and entertaining
   (E) shallow and awkward

7. In each of the first two stanzas, the structure
draws attention to a
   (A) stubborn ambivalence
   (B) misleading contradiction
   (C) temporary confusion
   (D) personal dilemma
   (E) central contrast

8. Lines 7–8 contain which of the following?
   (A) A literary allusion
   (B) A sentence fragment
   (C) A witty digression
   (D) An extended metaphor
   (E) An implicit paradox

9. In line 11, “due proportion” refers most directly
to a woman’s
   (A) lovely eyes
   (B) courtly conduct
   (C) common sense
   (D) overall appearance
   (E) demure garments

10. The statement in line 20 (“Who . . . lies”) is best
described as an example of
    (A) understatement
    (B) aphorism
    (C) irony
    (D) euphemism
    (E) oxymoron

11. The speaker indicates that virtue confers all of
the following benefits EXCEPT
    (A) poise in every situation
    (B) genuine beauty
    (C) strength of character
    (D) attainment of goals
    (E) admiration from others
Questions 12–19

“A clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rigor of the game.” This was the celebrated wish of old Sarah Battle (now with God) who, next to her devotions, loved a good game at whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half-and-half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game, and lose another; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary, who has slipt a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said, that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul; and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favors. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her sword (her cards) “like a dancer.” She sat bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours.

All people have their blind side—their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose,* that Hearts was her favourite suit.

* sub rosa, in confidence

12. The phrase “now with God” (line 3) reveals that Sarah Battle
   (A) was a religious person
   (B) had an unexpected religious experience
   (C) placed devotion to God ahead of whist
   (D) has decided to give up cards
   (E) is no longer alive

13. In line 3, “next to” is best paraphrased as
   (A) second only to
   (B) besides
   (C) before
   (D) in addition to
   (E) even more than

14. To Sarah Battle, the most significant characteristic of the triflers described in lines 5–15 is their
   (A) amiable sociability
   (B) generosity toward their opponents
   (C) nonchalant attitude toward whist
   (D) ability to keep the game in perspective
   (E) inability to play whist well

15. It can be inferred from the description of Sarah Battle’s behavior at the whist table that she
   (A) would respect a superior opponent
   (B) had an ironic sense of humor
   (C) would do anything to win
   (D) did not really enjoy playing whist
   (E) enjoyed being catered to in whist
16. The most apparent metaphor in this character sketch is drawn from

(A) nature
(B) religion
(C) finance
(D) swordplay
(E) gamesmanship

17. The attitude of the narrator toward Sarah Battle is chiefly one of

(A) sarcastic anger
(B) affectionate respect
(C) tolerant understanding
(D) arrogant condescension
(E) fearful regard

18. The passage suggests all of the following about the narrator EXCEPT that the narrator

(A) has a sense of humor
(B) has spent time in Sarah Battle’s presence
(C) is an excellent whist player
(D) scorns casual whist players
(E) sees Sarah Battle’s weakness

19. Which of the following best summarizes the structure of the passage?

(A) The first paragraph concentrates on Sarah Battle’s serious side; the second, on her fun-loving side.
(B) The first paragraph defines Sarah Battle by what she is not; the second, by what she is.
(C) The passage interprets, in turn, what Sarah Battle would regard as “A clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rigor of the game” (lines 1–2).
(D) The passage moves from a discussion of the refinements of whist to an explanation of what makes Sarah Battle like the game.
(E) The first paragraph describes Sarah Battle as a gambler; the second, as a soldier of reform.
Questions 20–24

HAMLET: Horatio, thou art e’en as just a man
As e’er my conversation coped withal.
HORATIO: O, my dear lord—

HAMLET: Nay, do not think I flatter,
(5) For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be
flattered?
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
(10) Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish her election,
Sh’ hath sealed thee for herself, for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
(15) A man that Fortune’s buffets and rewards
Hast ta’en with equal thanks; and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commedled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune’s finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
(20) That is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him
In my heart’s core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.

(c. 1602)

22. As used in line 13, “sealed” most nearly means
(A) copied
(B) surrounded
(C) designated
(D) dispatched
(E) imprisoned

23. Those who “are not a pipe for Fortune’s finger/
To sound what stop she please” (lines 18–19) are
(A) unable to appreciate aesthetic beauty
(B) incapable of making rational judgments
(C) enemies of the speaker
(D) able to cope with the good and the bad in life
(E) spontaneous and eager for unusual experiences

24. Which of the following is personified in the passage?
(A) “advancement” (line 5)
(B) “the poor” (line 7)
(C) “soul” (line 11)
(D) “judgment” (line 17)
(E) “heart” (line 21)
Questions 25–29

Besides the neutral expression that she wore when she was alone, Mrs. Freeman had two others, forward and reverse, that she used for all her human dealings. Her forward expression was steady and driving like the advance of a heavy truck. Her eyes never swerved to left or right but turned as the story turned as if they followed a yellow line down the center of it. She seldom used the other expression because it was not often necessary for her to retract a statement, but when she did, her face came to a complete stop, there was an almost imperceptible movement of her black eyes, during which they seemed to be receding, and then the observer would see that Mrs. Freeman, though she might stand there as real as several grain sacks thrown on top of each other, was no longer there in spirit. As for getting anything across to her when this was the case, Mrs. Hopewell had given it up. She might talk her head off. Mrs. Freeman could never be brought to admit herself wrong on any point. She would stand there and if she could be brought to say something, it was something like, “Well, I wouldn’t of said it was and I wouldn’t of said it wasn’t,” or letting her gaze range over the top shelf where there was an assortment of dusty bottles, she might remark, “I see you ain’t ate many of them figs you put up last summer.”

(1955)

26. What quality of Mrs. Freeman’s character does the controlling image of the passage suggest?
   (A) Her forbearance
   (B) Her insecurity
   (C) Her rigidity
   (D) Her proper manners
   (E) Her sense of irony

27. That Mrs. Freeman “might stand there as real as several grain sacks thrown on top of each other” (lines 15–16) suggests that she is all of the following EXCEPT
   (A) plain and down-to-earth
   (B) undecided in her opinions
   (C) clearly visible
   (D) part of the country scene
   (E) closed and contributing nothing at present

28. Mrs. Freeman’s remark in lines 23–24 can best be described as
   (A) a cliché
   (B) a paradox
   (C) an equivocation
   (D) a circular argument
   (E) a metaphoric contrast

29. Mrs. Freeman’s remarks are best described as
   (A) self-protective
   (B) self-censuring
   (C) self-analytical
   (D) aggressive
   (E) contemptuous
Questions 30–34

The Child at Winter Sunset

The child at winter sunset,
Holding her breath in adoration of the peacock’s tail
That spread its red—ah, higher and higher—
Wept suddenly. “It’s going!”

Line
(5) The great fan folded;
Shortened; and at last no longer fought the cold, the dark.
And she on the lawn, comfortless by her father,
Shivered, shivered, “It’s gone!”

“Yes, this time. But wait,
(10) Darling. There will be other nights—some of them
even better.”
“Oh, no. It died.” He laughed. But she did not.
It was her first glory.

Laid away now in its terrible
Lead coffin, it was the first brightness she had ever
(15) Mourned. “Oh, no, it’s dead.” And he her father
Mourned too, for more to come.

(1963)

“The Child at Winter Sunset” from COLLECTED AND NEW POEMS
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32. The image of the lead coffin (line 14)
functions to

(A) diminish and caricature the child’s sorrow at
the sunset
(B) confirm the significance of the child’s
feelings of loss
(C) indicate that the sunset symbolizes the child’s
own death
(D) suggest that the father is now mourning his
dead child
(E) represent the specter of death hovering over
the father

33. The last two lines of the poem suggest that
the father

(A) laments his own losses, both past and future
(B) fears that he will ultimately lose his
daughter
(C) has come to mourn the sunset in the same
way that his daughter does
(D) dreads his own inevitable death
(E) realizes that his child faces future sorrows
that he cannot prevent

34. At the end of the poem, the father’s attitude
toward his daughter’s crying is best
categorized as

(A) patronizing and selfish
(B) patient but stern
(C) sympathetic and understanding
(D) condescending and detached
(E) good-humored but naïve

30. The central subject of the poem is

(A) the indifference of fathers to the sensibilities
of their daughters
(B) facing one’s own death
(C) dealing with loss and sorrow
(D) the cruelty of time and the seasons
(E) the difficulty parents have in understanding
their children

31. Which of the following lines most clearly
presents the difference in perspective between
the father and the daughter?

(A) “And she on the lawn, comfortless by her
father” (line 7)
(B) “Darling. There will be other nights—some
of them even better.” (line 10)
(C) “Oh, no. It died.’ He laughed. But she did
not.” (line 11)
(D) “It was her first glory.” (line 12)
(E) “And he her father / Mourned too, for more
to come.” (lines 15–16)
Questions 35–38

In My Craft or Sullen Art

In my craft or sullen art
Exercised in the still night
When only the moon rages
And the lovers lie abed
(5) With all their griefs in their arms,
I labour by singing light
Not for ambition or bread
Or the strut and trade of charms
On the ivory stages
(10) But for the common wages
Of their most secret heart.

Not for the proud man apart
From the raging moon I write
On these spindrift* pages
(15) Nor for the towering dead
With their nightingales and psalms
But for the lovers, their arms
Round the griefs of the ages.
Who pay no praise or wages
(20) Nor heed my craft or art.

* wind-blown sea spray

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36. Which of the following is the antecedent of “their” (line 11)?
(A) “lovers” (line 4)
(B) “griefs” (line 5)
(C) “strut and trade of charms” (line 8)
(D) “ivory stages” (line 9)
(E) “wages” (line 10)

37. The phrase “the towering dead / With their
nightingales and psalms” (lines 15–16) alludes to the
(A) oppressive weight of time and eternity
(B) poet’s physical and spiritual future
(C) voices of nature and the supernatural
(D) artificiality and futility of human institutions
(E) great poets and poetry of the past

38. How does the speaker feel about the response of
the lovers to his efforts?
(A) The speaker wishes to get vengeance by
revealing the secrets of the lovers.
(B) The speaker will stop writing out of
resentment for their indifference.
(C) The speaker will seek a new audience and
relegate the lovers to the position of the
proud man.
(D) The speaker will continue to write for the
lovers regardless of their response.
(E) The speaker really writes only for himself
and does not desire an audience.
Questions 39–44

Now Winter Nights Enlarge

Now winter nights enlarge
The number of their hours;
And clouds their storms discharge
Upon the airy towers.

(5) Let now the chimneys blaze
And cups o’erflow with wine,
Let well-tuned words amaze
With harmony divine.

Now yellow waxen lights
(10) Shall wait on honey love
While youthful revels, masques, and courtly sights
Sleep’s leaden spells remove.

This time doth well dispense
With lovers’ long discourse;

(15) Much speech hath some defense,
Though beauty no remorse.

All do not all things well;
Some measures comely tread,
Some knotted riddles tell,

(20) Some poems smoothly read.
The summer hath his joys,
And winter his delights;
Though Love and all his pleasures are but toys,
They shorten tedious nights.

(1617)

40. In context, lines 7–8 are best understood as a call for

(A) shocking revelations of truth
(B) stimulating intellectual debates
(C) informal discussions of religious issues
(D) poetry in honor of the natural world
(E) pleasing and compelling songs

41. In context, “leaden spells” (line 12) implies that sleep is

(A) a period of dullness
(B) detrimental to health
(C) one way to endure the night
(D) subtly bewitching
(E) an occasion for fantasy

42. Lines 13–14 suggest that winter nights are suitable times for

(A) lovers to talk less
(B) lovers to say goodbye
(C) lovers to meet
(D) talking about lovers
(E) not talking at all

43. In lines 21–22, “his” refers to the

(A) lover talking with his beloved in lines 13–16
(B) person who has none of the talents described in lines 18–20
(C) “Love” described in line 23
(D) summer and winter seasons, respectively
(E) lover whose pleasures have been cut short by each season in turn

44. The speaker’s attitude toward winter nights is characterized by

(A) dread of their loneliness and cold
(B) regret that they will never return
(C) anticipation of the joy they afford
(D) fear that they will be lengthy
(E) criticism of how wastefully they can be spent

39. In the first stanza (lines 1–12), the poet contrasts the

(A) cold weather during winter with the heat of summer
(B) experience of living alone with that of receiving guests
(C) beginning of the winter season with its ending
(D) energy of the natural world with the relative stupor of civilization
(E) stark chill outdoors with the warm cheer indoors
Questions 45–50

About my interests: I don’t know if I have any, unless the morbid desire to own a sixteen-millimeter camera and make experimental movies can be so classified. Otherwise, I love to eat and drink—it’s my melancholy conviction that I’ve scarcely ever had enough to eat (this is because it’s impossible to eat enough if you’re worried about the next meal)—and I love to argue with people who do not disagree with me too profoundly, and I love to laugh. I do not like bohemia, or bohemians, I do not like people whose principal aim is pleasure, and I do not like people who are earnest about anything. I don’t like people who like me because I’m a Negro; neither do I like people who find in the same accident grounds for contempt. I love America more than any other country in the world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually. I think all theories are suspect, that the finest principles may have to be modified, or may even be pulverized by the demands of life, and that one must find, therefore, one’s own moral center and move through the world hoping that this center will guide one aright. I consider that I have many responsibilities, but none greater than this: to last, as Hemingway says, and get my work done.

I want to be an honest man and a good writer.

(1955)

45. Which of the following best describes the passage?

(A) A literary tribute to the writer’s profession
(B) A detailed chronicle of the writer’s past experiences
(C) A personal statement revealing the writer’s character
(D) A critique of various philosophical outlooks
(E) A plea for the reader to examine the meaning of existence

46. In line 15, “accident” is best understood to refer to

(A) education
(B) ethnicity
(C) mood
(D) behavior
(E) philosophy

47. In line 23, “moral center” refers to an individual’s

(A) sense of dismay at the world’s injustices
(B) values shared with like-minded people
(C) obsession with ethical issues
(D) essential beliefs that govern actions
(E) attitude about extreme views

48. The last sentence in the first paragraph (lines 24–27) suggests that the speaker

(A) realizes he will never achieve literary fame
(B) views life as a struggle in which only the fit survive
(C) thinks that he is exempt from the laws followed by others
(D) respects the writings of others more than he does his own
(E) sees his writing as his most important contribution

49. It can be inferred from the passage that the speaker would disapprove most strongly of

(A) crusaders who are zealously devoted to their cause
(B) American citizens who criticize national policy
(C) those who fail to explain the moral principles underlying their actions
(D) young rebels who refuse to listen to wiser, more experienced advisers
(E) those who insist that experience is the best teacher of moral values

50. The tone of the passage is best described as

(A) cynical
(B) flippant
(C) reflective
(D) agitated
(E) nostalgic
Questions 51–57

Time to Be Wise

Yes; I write verses now and then,
But blunt and flaccid is my pen,
No longer talk'd of by young men
As rather clever;
(5) In the last quarter are my eyes,
You see it by their form and size;
Is it not time then to be wise?
Or now or never.
Fairest that ever sprang from Eve!
(10) While Time allows the short reprieve,
Just look at me! would you believe
'T was once a lover?
I cannot clear the five-bar gate;
But, trying first its timber's state,
(15) Climb stiffly up, take breath, and wait
To trundle over.
Through gallopade¹ I cannot swing
The entangling blooms of Beauty's spring:
I cannot say the tender thing,
(20) Be 't true or false,
And am beginning to opine
Those girls are only half divine
Whose waists yon wicked boys entwine
In giddy waltz.
(25) I fear that arm above that shoulder;
I wish them wiser, graver, older,
Sedater, and no harm if colder,
And panting less.
Ah! people were not half so wild
(30) In former days, when, stanchly mild,
Upon her high-heel'd Essex smil'd
The brave Queen Bess.²

51. The speaker of the poem specifically addresses
(A) an unnamed woman
(B) lusty young men
(C) Queen Bess
(D) an admirer of his poems
(E) a noble patron

52. The "entangling blooms of Beauty's spring" (line 18) are best understood as
(A) beautiful flowers
(B) lush gardens
(C) lovely young women
(D) violent passions
(E) dangerous delusions

53. In context, lines 21–24 suggest that the
(A) speaker's eyesight is failing
(B) speaker's beloved is no longer beautiful
(C) speaker has trouble choosing only one lover
(D) speaker's attitude toward women has changed over time
(E) speaker treats girls as though they were goddesses

54. In context, the tone of the phrase "yon wicked boys" (line 23) is best described as
(A) self-deprecatory
(B) mock moral
(C) apologetic
(D) obsequious
(E) euphoric

¹ a lively dance
² Queen Elizabeth I; the Earl of Essex was a favorite of the queen.
55. In the last lines of the poem, the speaker suggests that the era of “brave Queen Bess” (line 32) would have been
(A) too peaceful for him
(B) too conscious of hierarchy and nobility
(C) more conducive to amorous adventures
(D) more suitable for him given his present condition
(E) more appealing to the young people of his own time

56. The poem as a whole can best be described as
(A) a fond remembrance of one man’s youthful days
(B) a tearful complaint about the indignities of old age
(C) an ironic commentary on the traps beauty sets for the unwary
(D) a dispassionate analysis of the changes that took place in an ill-fated romantic relationship
(E) a wry reflection on the changes age has wrought in a man who once considered himself a lover

57. The speaker’s attitude in the poem is primarily one of
(A) wretchedness and despair
(B) regret tempered by mature insights
(C) envy of the passions of younger men
(D) moral disapproval of young lovers
(E) mockery of polite courtship conventions
Questions 58–63

Dr. Trench is engaged to marry Blanche, the daughter of Mr. Sartorius.

SARTORIUS: Live on your income! Impossible: my daughter is accustomed to a proper establishment. Did I not expressly undertake to provide for that? Did she not tell you I promised her to do so?

TRENCH: Yes, I know all about that, Mr Sartorius; and I'm greatly obliged to you; but I'd rather not take anything from you except Blanche herself.

SARTORIUS: And why did you not say so before?

TRENCH: No matter why. Let us drop the subject.

SARTORIUS: But it does matter, sir. I insist on an answer. Why did you not say so before?

TRENCH: I didn't know before.

SARTORIUS [provoked] Then you ought to have known your own mind on a point of such vital importance.

TRENCH [much injured] I ought to have known! Coke: is this reasonable? [Cokane's features are contorted by an air of judicial consideration; but he says nothing; and Trench again addresses Sartorius, this time with a marked diminution of respect]. How the deuce could I have known? You didn't tell me.

SARTORIUS: You are trifling with me, sir. You said that you did not know your own mind before.

TRENCH: I said nothing of the sort. I say that I did not know where your money came from before.

SARTORIUS: That is not true, sir. I—

COKANE: Gently, my dear sir. Gently, Harry, dear boy. Suaviter in modo: fortiter—*

TRENCH: Let him begin, then. What does he mean by attacking me in this fashion?

SARTORIUS: Mr Cokane: you will bear me out. I was explicit on the point. I said I was a self-made man; and I am not ashamed of it.

TRENCH: You are nothing of the sort. I found out this morning from your man—Lickcheese, or whatever his confounded name is—that your fortune has been made out of a parcel of unfortunate creatures that have hardly enough to keep body and soul together—made by screwing, and bullying, and threatening, and all sorts of petitfogging tyranny.

SARTORIUS [outraged] Sir! [They confront one another threateningly].

COKANE [softly] Rent must be paid, dear boy. It is inevitable, Harry, inevitable. [Trench turns away petulantly. Sartorius looks after him reflectively for a moment, then resumes his former deliberate and dignified manner, and addresses Trench with studied consideration, but with a perceptible condescension to his youth and folly].

"The first part of a Latin proverb meaning "gently in manner: fiercely in deed"

58. The passage is most concerned with

(A) a plea for help
(B) a clash of values
(C) an argument for austerity
(D) a denunciation of pride
(E) an examination of marriage conventions

59. In context, the phrase “proper establishment” (line 2) means

(A) appropriate home and standard of living
(B) socially prominent family and friends
(C) respectable work and business associates
(D) access to the finest modern university education
(E) involvement in charitable and philanthropic activities

60. The tone of Trench’s responses to Sartorius in lines 5–7 (“Yes . . . hersel”) is best described as

(A) reproachful
(B) inquisitive
(C) embarrassed
(D) enthusiastic
(E) courteous
61. The stage directions in lines 44–50 ("Trench... folly") suggest that

(A) Trench is looking forward to a discussion with Sartorius
(B) Trench is reserved and Sartorius is preparing to be aggressive
(C) Trench is sulking and Sartorius is preparing to patronize him
(D) Sartorius is about to compliment Trench’s ethical stance
(E) Sartorius is determined to make Trench end the engagement

62. Cokane’s role in this scene is best described as

(A) a bully
(B) a referee
(C) an antagonist
(D) a legal expert
(E) a social commentator

63. The movement of the passage is from

(A) polite disagreement to angry disputation to possible resolution
(B) furious confrontation to reasoned discourse to full agreement
(C) controlled anger to open discussion to deep empathy
(D) physical threats to dignified atonement
(E) rational analysis to self-recrimination
Questions 64–68

The first sparrow of spring! The year beginning with younger hope than ever! The faint silvery warblings heard over the partially bare and moist fields from the bluebird, the song-sparrow, and the redwing, as if the last flakes of winter tinkled as they fell! What at such a time are histories, chronologies, traditions, and all written revelations? The brooks sing carols and glee to the spring. The marsh-hawk sailing low over the meadow is already seeking the first slimy life that awakes. The sinking sound of melting snow is heard in all dells, and the ice dissolves apace in the ponds. The grass flames up on the hillsides like a spring fire—"et primitus oritur herba imbris primoribus evocata"—as if the earth sent forth an inward heat to greet the returning sun; not yellow but green is the color of its flame; the symbol of perpetual youth, the grass-blade, like a long green ribbon, streams from the sod into the summer, checked indeed by the frost, but anon pushing on again, lifting its spear of last year's hay with the fresh life below. It grows as steadily as the rill oozes out of the ground. It is almost identical with that, for in the growing days of June, when the rills are dry, the grass blades are their channels, and from year to year the herds drink at this perennial green stream, and the mower draws from it betimes their winter supply. So our human life but dies down to its root, and still puts forth its green blade to eternity.

(1854)

* and for the first time the grass arises, called forth by the earliest rains

65. In lines 6–7, the author's attitude toward written human history is best described as

(A) reverent
(B) respectful
(C) uncertain
(D) dismissive
(E) condemnatory

66. The observation that the "grass flames up on the hillsides like a spring fire" (lines 12–13) calls attention to the

(A) dangers inherent in spring weather
(B) power and energy of the grass
(C) unexpected change from winter to spring
(D) ambiguous nature of the grass
(E) ultimate fate of the grass at the end of the season

67. The passage presents death for humans as

(A) the doorway to the afterlife
(B) the pathway to revelation
(C) a sobering finality
(D) a cause for fear
(E) part of a natural cycle

68. The mood of the passage is both

(A) celebratory and reflective
(B) anxious and elated
(C) curious and cynical
(D) optimistic and fearful
(E) welcoming and guarded
Questions 69–73

Not They Who Soar

Not they who soar, but they who plod
Their rugged way, unhelped, to God
Are heroes; they who higher fare,

And, flying, fan the upper air,

Miss all the toil that hugs the sod.
*Tis they whose backs have felt the rod,
Whose feet have pressed the path unshod,
May smile upon defeated care,
Not they who soar.

High up there are no thorns to prod,
Nor boulders lurking 'neath the clod
To turn the keenness of the share,*
For flight is ever free and rare;
But heroes they the soil who've trod,
Not they who soar!

*the part of the plow that cuts the furrow

71. “To turn the keenness of the share” (line 12) is best taken to mean
(A) to uncover something surprising
(B) to dig deeper than necessary
(C) to blunt the sharpness of the blade
(D) to remove the obstacle from the path
(E) to injure the worker doing the plowing

72. The poem structures its argument around an extended antithesis between imagery of
(A) triumph and failure
(B) heroism and villainy
(C) mortals and angels
(D) earth and air
(E) hopefulness and despair

73. The speaker’s tone is best described as one of
(A) deep feeling
(B) sincere regret
(C) melancholy contemplation
(D) smug satisfaction
(E) anxious ambivalence
Questions 74–78

The wood was green as mosses of the Icy Glen; the trees stood high and haughty, feeling their living sap; the industrious earth beneath was as a weaver’s loom, with a gorgeous carpet on it, whereof the ground-vine tendrils formed the warp and woof, and the living flowers the figures. All the trees, with all their laden branches; all the shrubs and ferns, and grasses; the message-carrying air; all these unceasingly were active. Through the lacings of the leaves, the great sun seemed a flying shuttle weaving the unweariest verdure. Oh, busy weaver! unseen weaver!—pause!—One word! whither flows the fabric? what palace may it deck? wherefore all these ceaseless toilings? Speak, weaver!—stay thy hand!—but one single word with thee! Nay—the shuttle flies—the figures float from forth the loom; the freshet-rushing carpet for ever slides away. The weaver-god, he weaves; and by that weaving is he deafened, that he hears no mortal voice; and by that humming, we, too, who look on the loom are deafened; and only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through it.

(1851)

74. The speaker uses the metaphor of a loom to represent the

(A) source of artistry in human nature
(B) role of religion in modern society
(C) context within which imagination evolves
(D) method by which people run their lives
(E) framework within which life is created

75. In line 16, the clause “the figures float from forth the loom” contains which of the following?

(A) Irony
(B) Understatement
(C) Alliteration
(D) Antithesis
(E) Onomatopoeia

76. The speaker’s attitude toward the “weaver-god” (line 18) is best described as one of

(A) indulgence
(B) awe
(C) indifference
(D) confidence
(E) amusement

77. In the last sentence (lines 17–22), the speaker emphasizes which of the following?

(A) The difficulty of understanding the meaning of life
(B) The importance of honest toil
(C) The guilt incurred in attempting to interpret nature
(D) The importance of responding to the needs of others
(E) The spiritual reward for good deeds

78. The passage moves from

(A) lyrical representation to factual reporting
(B) objective presentation to emotional interpretation
(C) realistic evocation to imaginative improvisation
(D) depiction of nature to philosophical assertion
(E) description of scenery to logical analysis
Study Resources

The most relevant preparation for the Analyzing and Interpreting Literature exam is attentive and reflective reading of the various literary genres of poetry, drama and prose. You can prepare for the test by:

1. Reading a variety of poetry, drama, fiction and nonfiction
2. Reading critical analyses of various literary works
3. Writing analyses and interpretations of the works you read
4. Discussing with others the meaning of the literature you read

Textbooks and anthologies used for college courses in the analysis and interpretation of literature contain a sampling of literary works in a variety of genres. They also contain material that can help you comprehend the meanings of literary works and recognize the devices writers use to convey their sense and intent. To prepare for the exam, you should study the contents of at least one textbook or anthology, which you can find in most college bookstores. You would do well to consult two or three texts because they do vary somewhat in content, approach and emphases.

Visit clep.collegeboard.org/test-preparation for additional literature and writing resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the Official Study Guide. In addition, many college faculty post their course materials on their schools’ websites.

Answer Key

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