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## Reading Comprehension & AP<sup>1</sup> Multiple Choice Strategies

General Instructions: The multiple choice section of the recent exams consists of 50-55 questions on four to six passages which have to be answered in one hour. Strategies that help students consist of reading comprehension practices and familiarity with the exam structure.

1. The directions are always the same for each section: “Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answer. Remember that the questions that say “Not, Least, and Except are really well crafted true/false or yes/no questions which are time bandits.
2. Skim the questions or the passage, **not the choices or distracters**, to identify the focus of the passage.
3. Read the introductory paragraph and the last paragraph and mark the key topic.
4. Mark any rhetorical shifts usually indentified with conjunctions such as But, Although, Since, etc.
5. Read the passages actively by circling the items that seem to be addressed in the questions. Draw lines from the question to the line reference in the passage to save time finding the lines later.
6. Read a few lines before and a few lines after a line question (usually a sentence) to make sure your inference is correct.
7. Read the questions crossing out obvious wrong answers: a question that contradicts the passage, is irrelevant to the passage, or repeats the same information in more than one question. Remember: Read all the choices, but there is only one right answer: mark and move on.
8. All questions follow the order of appearance in the passage; nothing is out of sequence.
9. In paired passages the first questions address the first passage; then, the second passage is addressed. Questions that deal with both passages are at the end of the selection.
10. Watch your time by avoiding a re-reading the passage. **READ CAREFULLY** the first time.

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## Exam Question Types

### Vocabulary

- Define a word in context

### Point of View

- Narrator's/Speaker's purpose
- What is the tone of given lines or parts
- Narrator's/Speaker's attitude

### Grammar

- Pronoun/Antecedent
- Subject of a sentence is. . .

### Characters share attributes that are

- Typical or believable
- Universal
- Individual
  - Have a purpose
  - Described according to purpose and conduct
  - Stay within the possibilities of the situation

### Purpose

- Organization of details in paragraphs
- Express an emotion
- Tell a story
- Create an atmosphere or mood
- Describe a person
- Amuse with wit
- Satirize

### Stylistic Devices

- Diction
  - Synonyms
  - Adjectives
  - Unusual words
  - Colloquial language
  - Lofty language
  - Allusions
  - Irony
  - Paradox
  - Comic language
  - Selection of detail
- Syntax
  - Schemes
    - All arrangements including sound
    - Repetitions of symbols or images
- Tropes
  - Figurative language

### Imagery

- Concrete
- Sensory

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**As you listen or read the soliloquy to hear the cadence and variations, mark or annotate the shifts in Richard's voice:**

- Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this son of York;  
And all the clouds that low'r'd upon our house  
Line In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
(5) Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,  
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments.  
Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,  
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
Grim-visag'd War hath smooth(' his wrinkled front;  
(10) And now, in stead of mounting barbed steeds  
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,  
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.  
But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,  
(15) Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty'  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
(20) Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable  
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them —  
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,  
(25) Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to see my shadow in the sun  
And descant on mine own deformity.  
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
(30) I am determin'd to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

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**Questions to Answer and Annotate  
Active Reading Process**

After listening to Conrad Nelson rehearsing the opening soliloquy from *Richard III*, answer the questions from his reading of the lines (4 sentences):

- Who is the speaker?
- What is the “dramatic” situation?
- What is the defining structure?
- What are the shifts that show Richard's progression of thought?
- Where is the setting or location; what its significance?
- What are the prevailing images? Figurative Language?
- What is the predominant tone and how do you know?
- What is the theme or purpose?

Now is the winter of our discontent  
 Made glorious summer by this son of York;  
 And all the clouds that low'r'd upon our house  
 In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
 Line (5) Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,  
 Our bruised arms hung up for monuments.  
 Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,  
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
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 I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty'  
 To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
 I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
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Richard, the duke of Gloucester, speaks in a monologue addressed to himself and to the audience. After a lengthy civil war, he says, peace at last has returned to the royal house of England. Richard says that his older brother, King Edward IV, now sits on the throne, and everyone around Richard is involved in a great celebration. But Richard himself will not join in the festivities. He complains that he was born deformed and ugly, and bitterly laments his bad luck. He vows to make everybody around him miserable as well. Moreover, Richard says, he is power-hungry, and seeks to gain control over the entire court. He implies that his ultimate goal is to make himself king.

### **A Closer Look at Text: Act I, Scene i**

Begin with understanding Lines 1-9:

Now is the winter of our discontent  
 Made glorious summer by this son of York;  
 And all the clouds that loured upon our house  
 In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
 Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,  
 Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,  
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
 Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front;  
 . . .

What is Richard's attitude about stopping war? What is Richard's complaint in lines 1-9?

What is the difference between the attitude and the tone of this selection?

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In the line 12, "He capers nimbly in the lady's chamber," how is war personified?

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Richard speaks these lines to the audience at the beginning of the play. His speech serves a number of very important purposes. It sets the scene, informing the audience that the play begins shortly after the death of Henry VI with King Edward IV, The Sun King, restored to the throne of England. Richard speaks of recent fighting, and says that "All the clouds that loured upon our house"—that is, the house of York—have been dispelled by the "son of York," King Edward, whose symbol was the sun. Richard paints a vivid picture in which the English have put aside their arms and armor and celebrate in peace and happiness, culminating in the image of the god of war smoothing his rough and fierce appearance and playing the part of a lover in a woman's chamber. Justification for his position occurs in lines 14-23 when he counters peace with his reason:

But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,  
 Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
 I, that am rudely stamp'd and want love's majesty

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To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtai'd of this fair proportion  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce have made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable  
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them—

The parallel structure tirade of lines 14-20 shows Richard's reasoning. What is it?

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Why in the closing lines of Richard's soliloquy does he so dislike the sun and the idea of the sun king on the throne so much that he wishes to become a villain?

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**Multiple Choice<sup>2</sup>**

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

**Directions:** This section consists of literary works and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage or poem, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding space on the answer sheet.

**Note:** Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

**Questions 1-14**

Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

- Now is the winter of our discontent  
 Made glorious summer by this son of York;  
 And all the clouds that low'r'd upon our house  
 Line In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
- (5) Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,  
 Our bruised arms hung up for monuments.  
 Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,  
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
 Grim-visag'd War hath smooth(' his wrinkled front;
- (10) And now, in stead of mounting barbed steeds  
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,  
 He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.  
 But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
- (15) Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
 I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty'  
 To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
 I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
 Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
- (20) Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
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 That dogs bark at me as I halt by them —  
 Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
- (25) Have no delight to pass away the time,  
 Unless to see my shadow in the sun  
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In the first thirteen lines of this passage, the speaker describes
- the coming of winter
  - the coming of war
  - a new political instability
  - a change from war to peace
  - a decline in morals
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In lines 1-8, the word most likely to be a pun is
- “our” (line 1)
  - “son” (line 2)
  - “low’r’d” (line 3)
  - “merry” (line 7)
  - “measures” (line 8)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The images “bruised arms” (line 6), “stern alarums” (line 7), and “dreadful marches” (line 8) are contrasted with images of
- peace and harmony
  - the rigors of war
  - cold and winter
  - manly fortitude
  - women and fashion
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Line 4, “In the deep bosom of the ocean buried,” and line 9, “grim-vsag’d War hath smooth’d his wrinkled front,” both contain examples of
- simile
  - onomatopoeia
  - personification
  - apostrophe
  - antithesis
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In line 12, “He refers to
- “winter” (line 1)
  - “this son of York” (line 2)
  - “Grim-visag’d War” (line 9)
  - a barbed steed (line 10)
  - a fearful adversary (line 11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Judging from the tone of the whole passage, it is clear that the speaker regards the “glorious summer” with its “merry meetings” and “delightful measures” with
- nostalgia
  - wistful jealousy
  - unabashed joy
  - malevolent contempt
  - quiet resignation

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- \_\_\_ 7. In line 14, “sportive tricks” refers most directly to which of the following phrases?
- “bound with victorious wreaths” (line 5)
  - “arms hung up for monuments” (line 6)
  - “smooth’d his wrinkled front” (line 9)
  - “mounting barbed steeds” (line 10)
  - “capers nimbly in a lady’s chamber” (line 12)
- \_\_\_ 8. Which of the following accurately describes a device used in the passage?
- In line 5, “brows” is used to represent the whole soldier.
  - In lines 7-8, the contrast between war and peace is emphasized by the use of the parallel and balanced phrases.
  - In line 17, the phrase “wanton ambling nymph” refers to Diana, goddess of the hunt.
  - In line 23, “dogs” is used as a metaphor for churlish courtiers.
  - In line 24, the phrase “weak piping time of peace” accurately imitates the musical sound of pipes.
- \_\_\_ 9. The chief subject treated in lines 14-27 is
- nostalgia for the dangers of war
  - the delights of peace that the speaker scorns
  - the uncertainties of an uneasy peace
  - the speaker’s timid, self-pitying state of mind
  - the speaker’s view of himself in relation to the times
- \_\_\_ 10. Of the following, the best paraphrase of “rudely stamp’d” (line 16) is
- mistreated, trampled upon
  - rejected, unfairly labeled
  - misshapen, badly molded
  - foiled, kept from deserved honor
  - reviled, churlishly abused
- \_\_\_ 11. In the passage, love is depicted in imagery that makes it seem
- trivial and lewd
  - essentially tragic
  - warm and romantic
  - wicked and treacherous
  - healthy and natural
- \_\_\_ 12. The speaker probably calls nature “dissembling” (line 19) because he
- resembles a force of nature in his evil
  - considers himself unnatural, although formed by nature
  - feels that only he can understand nature’s secrets
  - denies nature’s influence on him
  - denies any imperfections in nature
- \_\_\_ 13. In lines 28-31, the speaker does which of the following?

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- a. Begins an explanation.
- b. Announces a reasoned decision.
- c. Protests a physical condition.
- d. Begins a description.
- e. Contradicts a previous argument.

\_\_\_\_\_ 14. Which of the following best explains the motivation of the speaker to be a villain?

- a. He has suffered defeat in battle.
- b. He has been the victim of political machinations.
- c. He is clearly intelligent and vigorous, yet considers himself unlovable
- d. He realizes that the evil of the world is too much for him and decides to strike out against it.
- e. As a soldier, he understands the efficacy of military activity and decides to use warlike methods in times of peace.

1) D; 2) B; 3) A; 4) C; 5) C; 6) D; 7) E; 8) B; 9) E; 10) C; 11) A; 12) B 13) B; 14) C

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## AP<sup>1</sup>Literature Prose, *White Noise*

### Multiple Choice

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

**Directions:** This section consists of selections from literary works and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage or poem, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.

**Note:** Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

**Questions 1-15.** Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The station wagons arrived at noon, a long shining line that coursed through the west campus. In single file they eased around the orange I-beam sculpture and moved toward the dormitories. The roofs of the station wagons were loaded down with carefully secured suitcases full of light and heavy clothing; with boxes of blankets, boots and shoes, stationery and books, sheets, pillows, quilts; with rolled-up rugs and sleeping bags; with bicycles, skis, rucksacks, English and Western saddles, inflated rafts. As cars slowed to a crawl and stopped, students sprang out and raced to the rear doors to begin removing the objects inside; the stereo sets, radios, personal computers; small refrigerators and table ranges; the cartons of phonograph records and cassettes; the hair dryers and styling irons; the tennis rackets, soccer balls, hockey and lacrosse sticks, bows and arrows, the controlled substances, the birth control pills and devices; the junk food still in shopping bags—onion-and-garlic chips, nacho thins, peanut creme patties, Waffelos and Kabooms, fruit chews and toffee popcorn; the Dum-Dum pops, the Mystic mints.

I've witnessed this spectacle every September for twenty-one years. It is a brilliant event, invariably. The students greet each other with comic cries and gestures of sodden collapse. Their summer has been bloated with criminal pleasures, as always. The parents stand sun-dazed near their automobiles, seeing images of themselves in every direction. The conscientious suntans. The well-made faces and wry looks. They feel a sense of renewal, of communal recognition. The women crisp and alert, in diet trim, knowing people's names. Their husbands content to measure out the time, distant but ungrudging, accomplished in parenthood, something about them suggesting massive insurance coverage. This assembly of station wagons, as much as anything they might do in the course of the year, more than formal liturgies or laws, tells the parents they are a collection of the like-minded and the spiritually akin, a people, a nation.

*White Noise* is the eighth novel by Don DeLillo and is an example of postmodern literature. Widely considered his "breakout" work, the book won the National Book Award in 1985 and brought him to the attention of a much larger audience. Time Magazine included the novel in its *TIME 100 Best English-language Novels from 1923 to 2005*.

Consider:

Analyze and interpret: Phenomena that are difficult to understand or explain. Why *White Noise*?

Who is the speaker?

What is the commentary from the speaker?

What is the narrator's final remark about this event each fall?

What is the organization of details? What are the patterns?

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The speaker of the passage is most likely a
- student
  - parent of a student
  - law enforcement officer
  - resident of a college town
  - returning college graduate
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the first paragraph, the speaker characterizes the students primarily by describing their
- attitudes
  - possessions
  - physical appearance
  - interactions with each other
  - interactions with their parents
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The dominant technique in the first paragraph is the use of
- hyperbole
  - puns
  - lists
  - euphemisms
  - abstraction
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which of the following best describes the order in which objects are presented in paragraph one?
- Old to new
  - Masculine to feminine
  - Large to small
  - Familiar to exotic
  - Personal to impersonal
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In context, "brilliant" (line 23) is best interpreted as
- splendid
  - scholarly
  - important
  - honorable
  - unique
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The words "invariably" (line 23) and "as always" (line 26) contribute which of the following to the development of the passage?
- They characterize the speaker as an experienced observer.
  - They introduce a sense of continuity relevant to the conclusion of the paragraph.
  - They provide an indirect comment on the description in the first paragraph.
- I only
  - II only
  - I and III only
  - II and III only
  - I, II, and III

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The students and parents are characterized in terms of which of the following aspects of their lives?
- I. Social
  - II. Physical
  - III. Financial
  - IV. Intellectual
- a. I and II only
  - b. I and III only
  - c. II and IV only
  - d. I, II, and III only
  - e. I, II, III, and IV
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The characterization of the parents in lines 26-34 is marked by
- a. hints of changes that will occur in their lives
  - b. repetition of descriptive terms
  - c. implications about the nature of their lives
  - d. an emphasis on their alienation from the scene in the passage
  - e. a stress on the conflicts between the women and their husbands
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In line 35, "they" refers to
- a. "students" (line 24)
  - b. "people's names" (line 31)
  - c. "station wagons" (line 35)
  - d. "liturgies or laws" (line 37)
  - e. "parents" (line 37)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. In the second paragraph, the author develops a contrast between
- a. the energy of youth and the infinnity of age
  - b. worldly possessions and democratic idealism
  - c. academic success and extracurricular activities
  - d. the speaker's sophistication and the students' naïveté
  - e. the parents' smug views and the speaker's implied disapproval of them
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. In the second paragraph, the speaker characterizes the parents primarily by describing their
- a. attitudes
  - b. possessions
  - c. apparel
  - d. differences from their children
  - e. interactions with their children
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The primary rhetorical purpose of the passage is to
- a. characterize a group of people
  - b. defend the value of a certain life-style
  - c. dramatize the importance of various possessions
  - d. illustrate the variety of amusements valued by most people
  - e. condemn parents' attitudes toward their children

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Which of the following best describes the organization of the passage?
- Specific description leading to a generalization
  - Illustration of an abstract idea by extended definition
  - Application of a theory to a particular situation
  - Amassment of imagery to convey a sense of chaos
  - Narration of a series of events leading to a conflict
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The speaker is best described as
- a resentful victim
  - an unwelcome visitor
  - an ironic commentator
  - a curious investigator
  - an apologetic participant
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. It can be inferred that the rhythm and diction of the concluding lines ("a collection ... a nation") are intended to reflect
- the students' philosophies of life
  - the speaker's deep-seated beliefs
  - an objective summary of the day's events
  - the parents' views of their own importance
  - the outsiders' scorn for university graduates

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## Literature Prose, *White Noise* Answer Section

### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. ANS: D

The objective viewpoint in this passage from Don DeLillo's *White Noise* identifies the speaker as a resident of the town. He speaks of witnessing this event every September for twenty-one years which eliminates choices A, B, and E. A student, parent of a student, and returning college graduate would not be witnessing this "spectacle" for consecutive years. Only distracter E has some logical connection as a "returning college graduate," but is not the best answer choice considering that the speaker has "witnessed...every September for twenty-one years. The closing sentence tells the reader that the parents are "a collection of the like-minded and the spiritually akin, a people, a nation" which implies their superior attitudes over the townspeople.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Easy                      MSC: 93% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #1

2. ANS: B

The choices of C, D, and E can be eliminated because none of these descriptions are in the passage. Only what the station wagons contain in material items characterizes the students as obviously having access to financial resources. But having access does not identify their attitudes about their possessions, or choice A. The second paragraph reasons that the wealth resulting in some need to buy possessions for college because the parents see a "communal" recognition of tanned faces and wry (incredible) looks and "something about them suggesting massive insurance coverage." Ninety-nine percent of the students understood this question.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Easy                      MSC: 99% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #2

3. ANS: C

From line 4 until line 10, one sentence is a list of what students can't live without; all secured on the roof of the station wagons. After the students "sprang out" of the vehicles (line 11) they begin to remove another huge list (line 12) of more personal items, play equipment, and junk food until the end of the paragraph. All is in factual reporting of a list, making choice C, lists, the best answer. Hyperbole, puns, and euphemism are not in the list. These items are concrete, not abstract ideas or thoughts.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Easy                      MSC: 93% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #3

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4. ANS: C

This question challenged forty percent of the students. The items are arranged from those on the roof and inside the station wagon. Those on the roof are too large to go into the extended back of the car. The larger suitcases and boxes that contain smaller objects had to go on the roof with the bicycles, skis, and rucksacks, saddles, and rafts. The objects inside are smaller and more fragile including a “small” refrigerator along with the hair dryers, cassettes, styling irons, etc. Finally, “the controlled substances and junk food” are listed down to fruit chews and toffee popcorn and Dum-Dum pops, even mints. The correct answer of large to small (C) explains this tool of organization for writing the paragraph. Considering the list as a whole, the items are not old to new, masculine to feminine, familiar to exotic or personal to impersonal. The boxes and suitcases are large even though they contain many small items.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Medium            MSC: 40% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #4

5. ANS: A

In rhetorical analysis the “context” of a passage is a very important consideration. This parade of station wagons that occurs every fall is “a brilliant event,” as stated in line 23 for a connotative use of the word. Remember, speakers have to consider how to approach their subjects, what evidence to provide (in this passage—listing details) and how to connect with the audience. Context is the occasion or the time and place it was written with the purpose that the speaker wants to achieve. The speaker is calling this brilliant as in brilliant sunshine or brilliant smile where someone else might call it dazzling or amazing all synonyms for the same word, choice A. This speaker is using it as imposingly splendid or magnificent with sarcasm, especially tied to the closing word of that sentence “invariably.” If the context changed to another event the connotation of brilliant could mean choice B, scholarly. Important, honorable, or unique are not supported anywhere in the passage.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Medium            MSC: 55% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #5

6. ANS: E

Question 6 is a “time bandit” in that the student spends too much time going back to check each of I, II, and III statements instead of seeing this type of question as a simple true/false or yes/no response from the initial reading. Since only 36% answered this question correctly the distracters of I only, II only, I and III only, and II and III worked well but caused the confusion. “Invariably” and “as always” are ordinary vocabulary words that apply to all three statements: characterize the speaker as an experienced observer, give continuity to the concluding paragraph, and provide a comment on the description in the first paragraph. The answer E is the only choice that lists I, II, and III.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Hard                MSC: 36% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #6

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## 7. ANS: D

This question has the same analysis process as the previous question. Parents in the stem of the question are characterized as I, II, and III or as socially, physically, and financially similar. The townspeople did not state or imply any intellectual achievements or endeavors of the parents or mention any of the students—not even the SAT scores reported for admissions. The speaker describes their like-mindedness, both supporting and implying that they all had the same type of social contacts, physical characteristics, and bank accounts, leaving out any suggestion of attending the college for intellectual growth.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Medium                      MSC: 42% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #7

## 8. ANS: C

Please remember that the examiner has to address the elements of literature and stay within the passage chosen, restricting the type of questions that can be asked. Both questions 7 and 8 address the element of characterization. Question 7's choices, called distracters, already give the labels of social, physical, and financial which quickly identifies the answer for question 8 as "C." This question is asking for the "implications about the nature of their lives" and gives the additional information as being intellectually unconcerned. They are involved with their kids just for the planning for this big event in their lives "as important to be seen in the right crowd." The choices for A, D and E are not in the passage leaving a weak possibility for B easily eliminated because of a lack of any identifiable "descriptive terms" used.

PTS: 1                      DIF: Medium                      MSC: 65% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #8

## 9. ANS: E

The speaker's purpose in this paragraph focuses us on the parents' superiority and expectation to be part of the social event ritual. The subject turns from the students in a few short lines to the parents (line 26) and is used as the antecedent with the continual use of the pronouns "they" and "their" in descriptions referring to them. In line 37 the speaker uses the word "parents" as the object of the verb "tells" that validates for the parents their position of social self-importance to this annual event. Choice "D" verifies for the parents that this event is more important than even the parenthetical "liturgies or laws." Have the students use the testing technique of substituting the words in choices A, B, and C to see that the sentence no longer coheres or makes sense as in "more than anything [station wagons or people's names] might do in the course of the year."

PTS: 1                      DIF: Medium                      MSC: 59% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #9

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10. ANS: E

The purpose of the passage and focus of this question is to contrast the parents' smug views and the speaker's disapproval of them, choice E. In the second paragraph, youth and age, or choice A, is not the focus or purpose of the speaker. Since education could be founded on democratic idealism and contrasted to worldly possessions, choice B, is a fair distracter or possible choice of the speaker's. Already established in earlier questions, academic success and activities, choice C, are not mentioned anywhere in the passage. Choice D, the speaker's sophistication is neither relevant nor contrasted to anything the students say and would be the weak choice like youth and infirmity. The speaker is talking of the parents, and we infer his disapproval of them and "their event." The parents see "images of themselves in every direction" so democratic idealism or academic success is overshadowed and lost in the purpose of the speaker.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Hard                    MSC: 16% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #10

11. ANS: A

The second paragraph has multiple references to the parents' attitudes about their social status with "a sense of renewal, of communal recognition..." by "knowing people's names" which they believe makes them "distinct but ungrudging, accomplished in parenthood" with "something about them suggesting massive insurance coverage." Again, choice C is the best response to characterizing the parents as shallow or superficial. This description shows the speaker's attitude toward them as condescending or contemptuous. The distracters are about what they are wearing or the numerous possessions stuffed into the wagons. Not once is there any interaction with others or their children, just a parade of parent social superiority.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 76% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #11

12. ANS: A

The primary rhetorical purpose of the passage is to characterize a group of people, choice A. The complexity of the speaker's purpose in narrating this event could suggest a defense of a certain life-style and the importance of various possessions, but the language of the speaker shows sarcasm by using words such as "spectacle" and "invariably." The passage begins with a list of what these families consider necessary to start the fall semester and becomes more specific about why they think these items are important. These are the necessary trappings for the social interaction of their children to "fit" into this select society where they belong: "a collection of the like-minded."

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 75% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #12

13. ANS: A

The passage begins with a list of what these families consider necessary to start the fall semester and becomes—through the speaker—more generalized, choice A, or self-interested about why they think these items are important. The passage does not contain an illustration of an abstract idea; rather the whole passage becomes an illustration of the parents' intentions. The event is very orderly in appearance and no conflict takes place eliminating choices B, C, D, and E.

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PTS: 1                    DIF: Medium                    MSC: 62% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #13

14. ANS: C

The best choice for the speaker is C, an ironic commentator. He is narrating the event, not investigating it (choice D). He is neither a participant (E) because he “witnessed” this each year; nor a visitor (B) since he sees the annual event (B); nor a victim (A) since nothing actually happens to him in the passage.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Easy                    MSC: 67% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #14

15. ANS: D

The two most important syntactical arrangements in prose are the beginning and the concluding sentences. The controlled language and rhythm of the concluding sentence “a collection of the like-minded and the spiritually akin, a people, a nation” is a very shortened pacing for emphasis where the key point is near the period “a nation” for those who belong. If you compare this pacing to the opening sentence of “a long shining line that coursed through the west campus” is a looser construction with the modifiers after the independent and short key point “the station wagons arrived at noon.” The author starts with an event and ends with self-importance.

PTS: 1                    DIF: Hard                    MSC: 38% answered correctly  
NOT: 1991 #15

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