

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

Session One

The University of the State of New York
REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH SESSION ONE

Friday, April 24 — 11:45 to 12:31 p.m., only

The last page of this booklet is the answer sheet for the multiple-choice questions. Fold the last page along the perforations and, slowly and carefully, tear off the answer sheet. Then fill in the heading of your answer sheet. Now circle “Session One” and fill in the heading of each page of your essay booklet.

This session of the examination has two parts. Part A tests listening skills; you are to answer all six multiple-choice questions and write a response, as directed. For Part B, you are to answer all ten multiple-choice questions and write a response, as directed.

When you have completed this session of the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the end of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the session and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the session. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

The use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

Session One

Part A

Overview: For this part of the test, you will listen to an account about the compassion of strangers, answer some multiple choice questions, and write a response based on the situation described below. You will hear the account twice. You may take notes on the next page anytime you wish during the readings.

The Situation: Your history class is learning about different cultures, and is devoting the entire month's issue of the school newspaper to Greg Morteson's experience in Afghanistan as chronicled in his biography, *Three Cups of Tea*. For your contribution to the issue, you have decided to write an article about how a stranger's compassion can change one's life for the better. In preparation for writing your article, listen to an account by Greg Morteson and David Oliver Relin about Greg Morteson's experience with the Balti people. Then use relevant information from the account to write your article.

Your Task: Write an article for the Cleveland Herald on the power of a stranger's compassion to change one's life for the better.

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Tell your audience what they need to know about the compassion shown by both the Balti people and Greg Morteson during his stay in Afghanistan
- Use specific, accurate, and relevant information from the account to support your description
- Use a tone and level of language appropriate for an article for the Cleveland Herald on the power of compassion and its ability to change one's life for the better
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Indicate any words taken directly from the account by using quotation marks or referring to the narrator
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Notes

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–6): Use your notes to answer the following questions about the passage read to you. Select the best suggested answer and write its number in the space provided on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about ideas and information you might use in your writing. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

- Why does Greg realize that he should have turned Sakina down for the second cup of tea?
 - Greg feels sick after drinking the first cup of tea.
 - Greg feels like he is taking advantage of the Balti woman's kindness.
 - Greg realizes that sugar is a rare commodity in this community, and Sakina graciously puts a lot of sugar in the tea for her guest.
 - Greg did not realize that, by accepting the second cup of tea, he was actually insulting Sakina and her family.
- How would you characterize Haji Ali and his wife, Sakima?
 - indifferent
 - suspicious
 - generous
 - miserly
- Why is the kindness of the Balti so unusual?
 - The Balti are a warlike people who are not inclined to allow people to live.
 - The Balti are isolationists, and avoid contact with outsiders.
 - The Balti are stingy people who are not known for their generosity.
 - The Balti do not know Greg, and yet treat him like a king throughout his stay in their village.
- How would you describe the living condition of the Balti?
 - They suffer from poverty and malnutrition.
 - The Balti are a wealthy and prosperous people.
 - They endure constant war with their neighbors.
 - The Balti are a highly educated people.
- How does Greg repay the Balti for their kindness?
 - Greg builds a new bridge for the Balti, which replaces the old, more dangerous bridge they were using.
 - Greg gives away his belongings to the Balti, and offers his services as a nurse to cure their illnesses.
 - Greg tells the world of the Balti's suffering, which prompts several countries to provide assistance.
 - Greg becomes a teacher in Korphe, providing valuable knowledge that allows the Balti to lead better lives.
- How would you characterize Greg by the end of Passage I?
 - ungrateful
 - indifferent
 - appreciative
 - pessimistic

After you have finished these questions, turn to page 2. Review **The Situation** and read **Your Task** and the **Guidelines**. Use scrap paper to plan your response. Then write your response in Part A, beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet. After you finish your response for Part A, go to page 5 of your examination booklet and complete Part B.

Teacher's Dictation

Someone tucked a heavy quilt over Greg. For the first time in months, he slept indoors. When he woke, he was alone, and blue sky showed through the square hole in the ceiling. Haji Ali's wife, Sakina, brought him lassi, a drink made with yogurt; a flat bread called chapatti; and tea with lots of sugar. Greg wolfed everything down, and Sakina, laughing, brought him more. Greg didn't know at the time how little sugar the Balti had and how precious they considered it. If he had, he would have said no to the second cup of sweet tea.

Sakina left Greg alone, and he looked around the room. Everything from the blackened pots and pans to the oil lanterns looked plain and well used. But not the quilt Greg had slept under. It was made of maroon silk and decorated with tiny mirrors. All the other blankets in the room were thin, worn wool, patched with scraps. Greg realized that his hosts had covered him up with the most valuable thing they owned.

Greg spent the day in Korphe. Late that afternoon, he heard voices calling. He and most of the rest of the village walked to a cliff that overlooked the Braldu River. There he saw someone crossing the river — but not on a bridge. A wooden box hung from a steel cable that had been strung above the water. A person could sit in the box and pull him- or herself along the cable. Crossing the river this way saved the half day of travel needed to walk to the nearest bridge. But it didn't look terribly safe — and a fall would mean certain death.

When the person was halfway across, Greg recognized him — it was Mouzafer, sitting on top of Greg's pack. Once Mouzafer reached the other side, he again slapped Greg on the back, looked him up and down, and shouted, "Allah Akbhar!"

After a meal of roasted chicken at Haji Ali's house, Mouzafer and Greg left Korphe. They met up with Scott Darsney, and the two climbers made the long journey by jeep down to the city of Skardu. But Greg felt something tugging him back to Korphe and returned as soon as he could arrange for a ride. He stayed in Haji Ali's house and rested, recovering his strength. Now that he was out of danger, Greg realized just how weakened he had become. He would walk around the village for a few hours each day, with children holding his hands, and then return to Haji Ali's to sleep or simply lie down, staring at the sky.

As Greg slowly got better, he learned more and more about how people lived in this part of Pakistan, called Baltistan. The village of Korphe was perched on a rocky mountain slope, and the people there worked amazingly hard to grow the food they ate — apricots, barley, potatoes — and to take care of the animals they raised. Greg found out that the nearest doctor lived a week's walk away, and that many of the people in Korphe had diseases that would be easily cured in the United States. Most of the children did not get quite enough to eat and suffered from malnutrition. One out of three children died before the age of one.

Greg knew he owed the people of Korphe more than he could repay. But he was determined to try. He began giving away the things he had brought with him. Small, useful items like Nalgene water bottles or flashlights were precious to the Balti. He gave Sakina, Haji Ali's wife, his camping stove. He handed Twaha, the chief's son, his fleece jacket, even though it was several sizes too big. To Haji Ali he gave the parka that had kept him warm on K2.

But it turned out that the best thing he had to offer the people of Korphe was his knowledge. In the United States, Greg worked as an emergency room nurse, and he had a medical kit with him. He began to go from house to house, doing what he could to cure injuries and illnesses with simple tools — antibiotic ointment to keep wounds from getting infected, painkillers to ease suffering. People in and around Korphe began to call him “Dr. Greg,” no matter how many times he explained that he was really a nurse.

Greg wanted to do more. While he was spending time with the children of Korphe, he felt like his little sister, Christa, was there, too. “Everything about their life was a struggle,” Greg says. “They reminded me of the way Christa ... had a way of just persevering, no matter what life threw at her.” Maybe, he thought, he could get some textbooks or supplies for Korphe’s school. He asked Haji Ali if he could see where the children of Korphe went to learn. Haji Ali seemed reluctant, but finally agreed to take Greg there the next morning.

After breakfast, Haji Ali led Greg up a steep path to an open piece of land. Seventy-eight boys and four girls were kneeling on the frosty ground to study. Haji Ali explained that Korphe had no school building. A teacher cost one dollar a day, which was more than the village could afford to pay. They shared a teacher with a nearby village, and he came to Korphe three days a week. The rest of the time the students were left alone to practice the lessons he had left behind.

Greg watched and listened as the children sang Pakistan’s national anthem to start their school day. He saw Twaha’s seven-year-old daughter, Jahan, standing tall and straight beneath her headscarf as she sang. When the song ended, they sat down in the dirt and began writing out their multiplication tables. A few, like Jahan, had slates on which they wrote with sticks dipped in mud. The rest scratched in the dirt with sticks. “Can you imagine a fourth-grade class in America, alone, without a teacher, sitting there quietly and working on their lessons?” Greg asked later. “I felt like my heart was being torn out. ... I knew I had to do something.”

But what could he do? He had barely enough money left to travel by jeep and bus to Islamabad, Pakistan’s capital, where he would catch an airplane to fly home. Still, there had to be something.

Standing next to Haji Ali, looking at the mountains that he’d come halfway around the world to climb, Greg suddenly felt that reaching the summit of K2 to place a necklace there wasn’t really important. He could do something much better than that to honor his sister, Christa. He put his hands on Haji Ali’s shoulders. “I will build a school,” he said. “I promise.”

**--Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
excerpted from *Three Cups of Tea*, 2007
Penguin Young Readers Group**