

COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

Session Two

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

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH SESSION TWO

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 Two” and fill in the heading of each page of your essay booklet.

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

Part A

Directions: Read the passages on the following pages (an excerpt from a novel and a poem). Write the number of the answer to each multiple-choice question on your answer sheet. Then write the essay in your essay booklet as described in **Your Task**. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

Your Task:

After you have read the passages and answered the multiple-choice questions, write a unified essay about the compassion of strangers. In your essay, use ideas from *both* passages to establish a controlling idea about the compassion of strangers. Using evidence from *each* passage, develop your controlling idea and show how the author uses specific literary elements or techniques to convey that idea.

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Use ideas from *both* passages to establish a controlling idea about the compassion of strangers
- Use specific and relevant evidence from *each* passage to develop your controlling idea
- Show how each author uses specific literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, structure, point of view) or techniques (for example: symbolism, irony, figurative language) to convey the controlling idea
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Use language that communicates ideas effectively
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Passage I

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**

Passage II

Hate

My enemy came nigh,
And I
Stared fiercely in his face.
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
5 And stern I watched him with a narrow eye.
Then, as I turned away, my enemy,
That bitter heart and savage, said to me:
"Some day, when this is past,
When all the arrows that we have are cast,
10 We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate.
It may seem then to us a mystery
That we should hate each other."
 Thus said he,
15 And did not turn away,
Waiting to hear what I might have to say,
But I fled quickly, fearing had I stayed
I might have kissed him as I would a maid.

--James Stephens
The New Poetry: An Anthology, 1917
New York: MacMillian

Multiple-Choice Questions

Directions (1–10): Select the best suggested answer to each question and write its number in the space provided on the answer sheet. The questions may help you think about the ideas and information you might want to use in your essay. You may return to these questions anytime you wish.

Passage I (the biography)—Questions 1-6 refer to Passage I.

- 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.

6. How would you characterize Greg by the end of Passage I?

- ungrateful
- indifferent
- appreciative
- pessimistic

Passage II (the poem)—Questions 7-9 refer to Passage II.

- The use of the term "enemy" in Line 1 is ironic, because the speaker's enemy is
 - actually a wise person who does not wish to fight the speaker.
 - is a clever person who lulls the speaker into a false sense of security so that he can kill the speaker.
 - a savage who is bent on the speaker's destruction.
 - The speaker's enemy is confused, as he does not know whether to kill the speaker or let him flee.
- The speaker reacts to his enemy's speech by
 - killing the savage immediately.
 - fleeing in fear that he might actually like and respect the savage.
 - capturing the savage and imprisoning him.
 - going home to spend time with his girlfriend.
- Line 18, "I might have kissed him as I would a maid," is an example of what literary device?
 - metaphor
 - allusion
 - personification
 - simile

Question 10 refers to both passages.

- The situation found in Passage I is similar to that of Passage II in that both
 - show the power that kindness from strangers can have in changing a person's life for the better.
 - provide sound reasons why you should not be kind to those you do not know.
 - demonstrate the everlasting hatred people will have towards one another.
 - prove that kindness from a stranger only affects you momentarily and is soon forgotten.