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# **AP<sup>®</sup> English Literature and Composition 2016 Free-Response Questions**

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**ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**

**SECTION II**

**Total time—2 hours**

**Question 1**

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

Read carefully the following poem by Richard Wilbur, first published in 1949. Then, write an essay in which you analyze how the speaker describes the juggler and what that description reveals about the speaker. You may wish to consider poetic elements such as imagery, figurative language, and tone.

Unfortunately, we do not have permission to reproduce “Juggler” by Richard Wilbur on this website.

The poem is published in Wilbur’s *New and Collected Poems*.

Question 2

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

In this excerpt from Thomas Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), Michael Henchard and his daughter Elizabeth-Jane are reunited after years of estrangement. During this separation, Henchard has risen from poor seasonal farmworker to wealthy mayor of a small country town, while Elizabeth has supported herself by waiting on tables at a tavern.

Read the passage carefully. Paying particular attention to tone, word choice, and selection of detail, compose a well-written essay in which you analyze Hardy’s portrayal of the complex relationship between the two characters.

Line 5 Of all the enigmas which ever confronted a girl there can have been seldom one like that which followed Henchard’s announcement of himself to Elizabeth as her father. He had done it in an ardour and an agitation which had half carried the point of affection with her; yet, behold, from the next morning onwards his manner was constrained as she had never seen it before.

10 The coldness soon broke out into open chiding. One grievous failing of Elizabeth’s was her occasional pretty and picturesque use of dialect words—those terrible marks of the beast to the truly genteel.

15 It was dinner-time—they never met except at meals—and she happened to say when he was rising from table, wishing to show him something, “If you’ll bide where you be a minute, Father, I’ll get it.”

20 “‘Bide where you be,’” he echoed sharply. “‘Good God, are you only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough, that ye use such words as those?’”

She reddened with shame and sadness.

“I meant ‘Stay where you are,’ Father,” she said, in a low, humble voice. “I ought to have been more careful.”

25 He made no reply, and went out of the room.

30 The sharp reprimand was not lost upon her, and in time it came to pass that for “fay” she said “succeed”; that she no longer spoke of “dumbledores” but of “humble-bees”; no longer said of young men and women that they “walked together,” but that they were “engaged”; that she grew to talk of “greggles” as “wild hyacinths”; that when she had not slept she did not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she had been “hag-rid,” but that she had “suffered from indigestion.”

40 These improvements, however, are somewhat in advance of the story. Henchard, being uncultivated himself, was the bitterest critic the fair girl could possibly have had of her own lapses—really slight now, for she read omnivorously. A gratuitous ordeal

was in store for her in the matter of her handwriting. She was passing the dining-room door one evening, and she had occasion to go in for something. It was not till she had opened the door that she knew the Mayor was there in the company of a man with whom he transacted business.

45 “‘Here, Elizabeth-Jane,’” he said, looking round at her, “‘just write down what I tell you—a few words of an agreement for me and this gentleman to sign. I am a poor tool with a pen.’”

50 “‘Be jowned, and so be I,’” said the gentleman.

She brought forward blotting-book, paper, and ink, and sat down.

55 “‘Now then—An agreement entered into this sixteenth day of October—write that first.’”

60 She started the pen in an elephantine march across the sheet. It was a splendid round, bold hand of her own conception, a style that would have stamped a woman as Minerva’s own in more recent days. But other ideas reigned then: Henchard’s creed was that proper young girls wrote ladies’-hand—nay, he believed that bristling characters were as innate and inseparable a part of refined womanhood as sex itself. Hence when, instead of scribbling like the Princess Ida,

In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East,

70 Elizabeth-Jane produced a line of chain-shot and sandbags, he reddened in angry shame for her, and, peremptorily saying, “‘Never mind—I’ll finish it,’” dismissed her there and then.

75 Her considerate disposition became a pitfall to her now. She was, it must be admitted, sometimes provokingly and unnecessarily willing to saddle herself with manual labors. She would go to the kitchen instead of ringing, “not to make Phoebe come up twice.” She went down on her knees, shovel in hand, when the cat overturned the coal-scuttle;

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moreover, she would persistently thank the parlour-  
80 maid for everything, till one day, as soon as the girl  
was gone from the room, Henchard broke out with,  
“Good God, why dostn’t leave off thanking that girl  
as if she were a goddess born! Don’t I pay her a dozen  
85 pound a year to do things for ’ee?” Elizabeth shrank  
so visibly at the exclamation that he became sorry a  
few minutes after, and said that he did not mean to be  
rough.

These domestic exhibitions were the small  
protruding needle-rocks which suggested rather than  
90 revealed what was underneath. But his passion had  
less terror for her than his coldness. The increasing  
frequency of the latter mood told her the sad news  
that he disliked her with a growing dislike. The more  
interesting that her appearance and manners became  
95 under the softening influences which she could now  
command, and in her wisdom did command, the more  
she seemed to estrange him.

**Question 3**

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

Many works of literature contain a character who intentionally deceives others. The character's dishonesty may be intended either to help or to hurt. Such a character, for example, may choose to mislead others for personal safety, to spare someone's feelings, or to carry out a crime.

Choose a novel or play in which a character deceives others. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the motives for that character's deception and discuss how the deception contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

You may choose a work from the list below or another work of comparable literary merit. Do not merely summarize the plot.

*Anna Karenina*  
*As You Like It*  
*Atonement*  
*Beloved*  
*The Blind Assassin*  
*The Bonesetter's Daughter*  
*The Burgess Boys*  
*Catch-22*  
*The Color Purple*  
*Crime and Punishment*  
*The Crucible*  
*A Doll House*  
*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*  
*The Great Gatsby*  
*Hamlet*  
*Heart of Darkness*  
*In the Lake of the Woods*  
*Invisible Man*  
*Jane Eyre*

*Jude the Obscure*  
*The Kite Runner*  
*M. Butterfly*  
*Madame Bovary*  
*The Memory Keeper's Daughter*  
*Middlesex*  
*Much Ado About Nothing*  
*Never Let Me Go*  
*Oryx and Crake*  
*Othello*  
*The Picture of Dorian Gray*  
*The Portrait of a Lady*  
*Pride and Prejudice*  
*Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*  
*Twelfth Night*  
*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*  
*The Women of Brewster Place*  
*Wuthering Heights*  
*A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*

**STOP**

**END OF EXAM**