

Scoring Practice Test 1

Answer Key

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

First Prose Passage

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

First Poem

14. A
15. C
16. B
17. C
18. D
19. E
20. D
21. E
22. A
23. C
24. B
25. D
26. A
27. E
28. A
29. D

Second Prose Passage

- 30. B
- 31. C
- 32. D
- 33. E
- 34. C
- 35. E
- 36. A
- 37. B
- 38. C
- 39. B
- 40. E
- 41. D
- 42. E

Second Poem

- 43. B
- 44. A
- 45. D
- 46. C
- 47. C
- 48. E
- 49. A
- 50. E
- 51. D
- 52. D
- 53. B
- 54. B

Answers and Explanations for Practice Test 1

Section I: Multiple-Choice Questions

First Prose Passage

- 1. B.** An essay is a short composition on a single subject. This is Francis Bacon’s essay “Of Superstition,” written late in the sixteenth century. Most students would find this prose more difficult to read than the other tests in this multiple-choice section. If you do find a first passage hard to deal with, go on to the others and come back to the first section later. Your score is based on the total number of right answers, and you don’t want to waste too much time on one passage at the expense of the rest of the exam. “Of Superstition” is non-fiction, so the two fiction forms, short story (A) and novel (C), can be eliminated. An epistle (D) is a letter, but this passage is not addressed to a specific person. An oration (E) is a formal, public speech.
- 2. C.** Choices A, B, D, and E contradict the passage. Lines 15–21 argue that the atheist is less dangerous to civil order than the superstitious person, because the atheist may be guided to a natural moral virtue by philosophy and sense and by a respect for law and reputation.
- 3. A.** Though none of these paraphrases is ideal, the best of the five choices is A. Remember that the instructions call only for the “best” answer of the five, not the “right,” “correct,” or “ideal” answer. The idiom “were not” of three hundred years ago is now expressed by “there were no.” With questions like this one, you must rely on what has been said already and the immediate context of the phrase.
- 4. D.** Though the common modern use of the verb “to dismount” is as an intransitive verb (a verb without a direct object), as in to dismount from a horse or from gymnastics apparatus, the verb here clearly has an object, “these.” Be sure to look carefully at the text before answering a question like this one. The word “dismounts” could be a plural form of a noun (B) or an intransitive verb (E), and you can discover the right answer only from the context in the passage.
- 5. C.** The allusion is to medieval astronomy in which the outermost sphere of the universe (the *primum mobile*) was believed to control the motions of the other spheres. Even if you are unfamiliar with the notion of the *primum mobile*, the use of “spheres” should suggest astronomy. Choice D is nasty because “spheres” also is a term of solid geometry. The passage uses another analogy from astronomy later on.
- 6. A.** To answer this question, you must first understand the meaning of line 33. The phrase refers to the practice of the superstitious of inventing data to fit events that have already happened. If I spill my soup on Monday and get a parking ticket on Tuesday, I may superstitiously claim that spilling soup leads to parking tickets. The astronomers referred to in

lines 38–42, who wished to confirm what they believed were the orbits of heavenly bodies, invented other motions of the bodies to explain away what did not fit their preconceived ideas.

7. **E.** Bacon accuses the Schoolmen (the medieval university teachers of philosophy and theology) of being “like astronomers, which did feign . . .,” that is, both invented data (“eccentrics and epicycles,” “intricate axioms and theorems”) to fit conclusions they had reached already. Choices **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D** denote an approval of the astronomers and Schoolmen, just the opposite of what the essay says.
8. **E.** In the list of the causes of superstition (lines 46–59), the conclusion is “barbarous times, especially joined with calamities and disasters.” It is possible that a time of political change would be a time of calamity, but “famine and flood” are clearly more explicit examples of disasters.
9. **D.** The sentence is a simile, a comparison with “like” or “as” expressed. The author here uses “as . . . so.” The same figure as a metaphor would be “Good forms are wholesome meats corrupted.” An *ad hominem* argument **E** is one that attacks an opponent rather than discusses the issues.
10. **C.** The passage warns against a “superstition in avoiding superstition,” that is, going too far in the *other* direction in order to avoid an error of superstition. This error may sacrifice the “good” as well as the “bad.” The most plausible of the five answers is **C**, which describes a good (justice) that may be lost by an overzealous suppression of the bad (superstition). Notice that the incorrect answers are not of themselves untrue. They are ideas that are plausible but simply are not relevant to this question. Good wrong answers in multiple-choice exams are often sensible or even profound. Don’t let the ring of moral truth distract you from exactly what the question has asked you.
11. **A.** To answer a question like this, you must look at each of these phrases in context. In this case, the first option, “wary of themselves” in lines 23–24, is used to describe an effect of atheism, which makes men “wary of themselves.” A shrewd test taker would realize that this must be the right answer, because it describes the atheist, not the superstitious. To go through the passage examining options **B**, **C**, **D**, and **E** would waste time. There are some questions where you can’t avoid checking on all five answers. When you find one that you can answer without wasting time, be glad of the discovery and go on to the next question. Unfortunately, the right answer is not always the first one you come to. A mean test writer would put the correct answer here as **E**.
12. **B.** In this phrase, “stratagems,” “prelates,” and “ambition” are all used literally to refer to the deceitful practices of ambitious churchmen. Choice **E** is a simile using “as.” Choices **A**, **C**, and **D** are metaphors, using “monarchy,” “gate,” and “veil” figuratively. A real monarchy cannot exist in the mind, a real gate does not lead to conceits, and superstition cannot wear a real veil.
13. **E.** All three describe differences between Bacon’s essay and modern informal prose. Bacon has clearly not had the advantages of modern instruction in the craft of paragraphing, because his whole essay has only one. His sentences are much longer and often more complex than is usual in modern prose. His allusions — to Plutarch, Saturn, astronomy, Roman history, and medieval philosophy, for example — are likely to be unfamiliar to many modern readers.

First Poem

The poem is John Donne's "Love's Diet."

14. **A.** The first four stanzas imagine a speaker and his love for a woman as two distinct people. The speaker forces the personified love to go on a diet so it will not grow out of his control. This first question of the set is an easy one, and the exam normally begins a set of questions with one of the easier questions. The *conceit* (an ingenious metaphor) of love as a reluctant dieter is the basis of the poem's title and the chief figure of the first four stanzas.
15. **C.** Lines 1–5 can be paraphrased as follows: Unless I had put my love on a diet to decrease its size and keep it manageable, it would have grown gigantic and uncontrollable. The sentence is conditional, and the verb "had grown" is a subjunctive meaning "would have grown," though it looks like a past perfect tense of an indicative verb. The point is that the speaker saw the danger and put love on a diet before it grew too fat.
16. **B.** The figure, or conceit, is a metaphor, not a simile. The comparison of a thing, quality, or idea to a human is also an example of personification. Notice that the pronouns for this love/person are "it," "he," or "him."
17. **C.** To enjoy this poem, we must accept the unlikely situation of a man who does not want to be in love arguing with his personified love for a woman. The speaker hopes to disenchant love by finding fault with the lady. Here, though he admits that lady has sighed, he argues that the sigh is unsound, impaired, or invalid, and not meant for him anyway. Choice **E** contradicts the figure of this stanza; love *can* feed on sighs. The more the lovers sigh, the greater their love will grow. But the speaker argues that her sigh cannot be fattening because it is meant for someone else. The speaker's own sighs are also calorie-free because they are not for love, but sighs for his own faults and fortune.
18. **D.** As stanza 2 is based on the notion of the sigh as the food of lovers, stanza 3 assumes that tears are the drink of lovers. The idea of a lover's sighing and weeping are commonplace in love poetry, as the Romeo of Act I of *Romeo and Juliet* demonstrates. Stanza 3 argues that the salt water on the lady's face is not a tear but sweat. She has been so actively rolling her eyes at every man who passes that her eyes are sweating, not weeping.
19. **E.** The metaphor compares the value of the lady's letters to being "the fortieth name in an entail." An "entail" is the sequence of heirs in a will. If the speaker were fortieth, thirty-nine others would have to die before he would inherit the estate, which is to say that her love letters are of no more value than her sighs or tears. Love will not get fat on them.
20. **D.** Though the poem devalues the sighs, letters, and tears of the lady here, all of them, as well as the man's sighs, are potentially means of increasing love. Discretion, on the other hand, is the worst thing in the world for love, what it "worst endures" (line 6). The basic notion of the poem is that love is irrational, but cold, reasonable behavior can keep it in check.
21. **E.** "Thus" in line 25 refers back to the first four stanzas of the poem. These stanzas describe how the speaker has prevented love from growing, how he has asserted his power by controlling love's diet. The metaphor in line 25 changes from a personified love on a restricted diet to a "buzzard love," love as a bird he has trained by these means (that is, by what lines 1–24 describe). The transition from the diet figure to the bird image will seem

less abrupt if we are aware that falcons were and are trained to hunt by strictly controlling their diet. The word “reclaimed” in line 25 is still listed in dictionaries with its obsolete meaning “to tame or subdue, as a hawk.” This meaning was not obsolete when this poem was written.

- 22. A** With his love wholly in his control, the speaker can do as he pleases, now (that is, sometimes) indifferent to the game of love, and now (that is, at other times) pursuing women just like other predatory men.
- 23. C** The speaker does not feel deeply about love (II); it is a game to him that he can take or leave. The three verbs recall the events of stanzas 2, 3, and 4, and their use here is another structural link between the last stanza and the first part of the poem. The verbs also denote the expected behavior of a lover (III), which this man will use because he knows how the game is to be played but not because he is really in love.
- 24. B** “Negligent” refers to the speaker’s indifference to love. The four other words, “fly,” “spring” (to cause birds to break from their cover), “game,” and “killed” all allude to falconry. The verb “reclaimed” could also be added to the list of words in the stanza that refer to falconry.
- 25. D** The speaker is cynical and complacent throughout the poem. The whole poem is his boast about how clever he is, how fully he has mastered his emotions. If the poem were the first act of a play, we could expect him to fall in love in act two, like Benedict in Shakespeare’s “Much Ado About Nothing.”
- 26. A** You should see at once that the basic organization of the poem is stanzas 1–4 (the diet) and stanza 5 (the falcon). Any organizational scheme that does not separate stanza 5 from the rest of the poem should be eliminated at once. On further consideration, we can see that stanza 1 introduces the idea of the diet and stanzas 2, 3, and 4 deal with a different component of the diet. Much the best description of the organization, then, is 1–2, 3, 4–5.
- 27. E.** Falconry is used in the last stanza. The entail figure in lines 22–24 is drawn from law. The images of stanzas 2 and 3 are from eating and drinking, but there are no images from music.
- 28. A.** Look at the size of these words, all with three or four syllables. Try to say them fast. Their sound and length reflect the size and awkwardness the words denote.
- 29. D.** Though it mocks many of the conventions of love poetry, this poem depends for its comic effect on the reader’s recognizing how a conventional lover will behave. The central idea of a calorie-counting love in danger of gaining too much weight was probably suggested by the conventional notion of the lean and pale lover so in love that he cannot eat. Donne may have noticed that as the lover grows thinner, love grows larger. He alludes to the convention of the sleepless lover (A) in the last line. This lover has no trouble sleeping, whether or not his love-quest is successful. This lover weeps (B) and sighs but not for love. He does not sit alone (C) but socializes (“go talk,” line 30). His letters, like his tears, do not increase his love (E). Choice D is also a conventional notion about lovers but *not* one that Donne exploits in this poem.

Second Prose Passage

The passage is from George Eliot's novel *Adam Bede*.

- 30. B.** The thesis of the paragraph is expressed in its first sentence: "Falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult." The idea is reasserted in the long last sentence of the paragraph. The paragraph does not claim that truth is superior to fiction (**A**), only that it is more difficult. Nor does it attempt to define truth and fiction (**D**) or to claim that truth cannot be attained (**E**).
- 31. C.** In the first paragraph, the griffin represents the fanciful, the untrue that is so much easier to draw than the reality of the lion. In the second paragraph, the angels, prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors are parallel images of figures larger than life that the author finds less precious than the truth of Dutch paintings (**A**) with their spinning wheels (**D**) and old women and clowns (**E**).
- 32. D.** The "lofty-minded" people of the second paragraph are those who snobbishly reject the truthful paintings that the speaker prefers. The author refers to the "lofty-minded" in order to criticize their rejection of the unglamorous truth in art. She would not claim kinship with them and is not concerned to appear to be either humble or fair.
- 33. E.** British English uses "pot" to refer to a vessel for holding a drink, especially beer or ale. In the paintings of village weddings such as this one, the guests would probably be drinking beer or ale from quart pots.
- 34. C.** The passage opposes the speaker and others who welcome the truth of the commonplace in art to those who prefer the idealized, the lofty, the beautiful. The speaker claims kinship with her "fellow mortals" who have lived homely lives. Her antagonists are the "lofty-minded" who despise the truthfulness of Dutch paintings and the "idealistic friend" whose disgust with the painting of the vulgar truth of ordinary village life is expressed at the end of the paragraph.
- 35. E.** Lines 59–79 ("I have a friend...who waddles.") give three examples of people whose existence is "homely" but who are no less cherished. It replies to the complaint at the end of the second paragraph that these clumsy, ugly people are not fit subjects for art with the argument that what is lovable is not always handsome and that more humans are plain than are beautiful. The paragraph concludes with a generalization about beauty and human feeling.
- 36. A.** That the "lords of their kind" should include some squat and ill-shapen men is not quite a *paradox* (an apparent self-contradiction), and there is no personification, simile, or syllogism in the phrase. But by using "even" and the double negative of "not startling exceptions," the author understates what she really believes. The less-than-handsome is, in fact, not the rare exception but the rule.
- 37. B.** The *ironic* word is the one whose intended meaning is the opposite of what is stated. Here "young," "middle," "stature," and "feeble" all mean what they say. These are not "heroes," however; they are ordinary young men who do not marry goddesses but still live happily.
- 38. C.** The series lists three examples of people who are loved although they are not beautiful. Choice **A** is incorrect; the point is that they never were beautiful. The "friend" and "matron" have been observed, but the "wife" is not identified as someone the speaker has known or seen. They are not the objects of satire, for the speaker's point is that love is more important than physical beauty.

- 39. B.** All three of the pronouns (it) in the sentence refer to human feeling. You can eliminate the noun “rivers” immediately because the pronoun is singular.
- 40. E.** The last paragraph makes all three of these points. The speaker tentatively suggests that the majority of the human race may have been ugly. There are several examples of the less-than-beautiful people who are beloved, and the passage ends with the paean to human feeling, whose irresistible flow brings beauty with it.
- 41. D.** As it happens, the author of this passage is a novelist, the great nineteenth-century British realist George Eliot. The passage is outspoken in its preference of “truth,” the “un-exaggerated,” the “real,” praising “faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence.” There is nothing in the passage to suggest a taste for the experimental or the romantic or the symbolic and nothing in the ordered progress of the argument to suggest an interest in a stream-of-consciousness technique.
- 42. E.** All these choices present ideas that the author may endorse, but because it is explicitly stated in the last sentence of the passage (“human feeling...brings beauty with it.”), **E** is the best choice. The writer expresses her admiration of the realism of Dutch painting but stops short of saying this is a painting’s “most important quality.” Though George Eliot may agree with **B**, it is certainly not in this passage, which never alludes to the novel. We cannot prove **C** or **D** wrong from the passage, but we also cannot support either convincingly. The Dutch painters are praised but not judged as “greater” or “greatest.”

Second Poem

The poem is by Jonathan Swift and was written in 1709. You should see right away that this is a much shorter and much less complex poem than the Donne lyric on this exam. Most readers would agree that this is the easiest of the four passages. Try to budget your time in the multiple-choice section so that you don’t have to skip an easier passage because you’ve spent too much time on a harder or longer one. Get a sense of the whole exam before you begin to answer the questions.

- 43. B.** Conditioned as most readers of poetry are by the English romantic poets or American poets of nature like Emerson or Frost, we may be surprised to find a poetic description of the morning without a single flower or birdsong. Swift’s poem does give us the “ruddy morn,” but its focus is entirely urban, not rural.
- 44. A.** The poem does allude to an aristocrat’s gate besieged by bill collectors, to reluctant schoolboys and a youth, and to the inmates of the debtor’s prison, but it gives more examples of working class men and women: Betty, the apprentice, Moll, the youth, the coal seller, and the chimney-sweep.
- 45. D.** Another unusual aspect of this poem is the author’s refusal to make moral judgments. He simply describes the scene and the people with no overt evaluations.
- 46. C.** Though Swift was a clergyman, he has included none in this poem. We have an aristocrat (“his lordship”), a servant (“Betty”), an apprentice, and a peddler (the coal man).

- 47. C.** Line 3 tells that Betty has spent the night in her master's bed but left it at dawn to sneak back to "discompose her own." We are obliged to infer that Betty is disturbing her own bed to give the impression that she spent the night in her own room.
- 48. E.** To dun is to demand payment from a debtor. The noun refers to either an insistent request for payment of a debt or, as is the case here, a person who collects debts. The word is used today as it was in the eighteenth century.
- 49. A.** The turnkey is the jailer at the debtors' prison, who is compared here to a shepherd; the returning prisoners are his flock. Rather than feeding his flock, this good shepherd releases his each night so they can find the money to pay the fees that were charged for room and board at their prison.
- 50. E.** The "flock" of released prisoners returns at daybreak to the debtors' prison.
- 51. D.** Swift employs two meanings of the word "duly" here. The custom of releasing prisoners to enable them to find some money is "duly" observed, and the prison officials no doubt regard the practice as fitting. The time of the release, "a-nights," is also duly observed, that is, punctually.
- 52. D.** A bailiff is an officer of the court, a process-server. The watchful bailiffs here are probably on the lookout for debtors who have defaulted, and if they find their prey, the turnkey's flock will grow larger.
- 53. B.** Like many of the poems of the eighteenth century, this is written in couplets. Line 1 rhymes with line 2, line 3 with line 4, and so on. Nine couplets make up this eighteen-line poem.
- 54. B.** Normally, poetry is distinguished by its use of figurative language. This poem, however, uses hardly any (although there is the "flock" figure in line 15 and the common use of "drowned" in line 12). Rhyme, on the other hand, is used in every line. The poem is made up of a number of realistic details. The meter of the poem, a regular iambic pentameter, is used in every line. Unless one writes gibberish, it is hard not to use syntax.

Section II: Essay Questions

Question 1: Samuel Johnson

This question calls for a reading of Johnson's "evaluation of Savage" and a discussion of the "resources of language" he uses. The phrase "resources of language" allows students to decide what stylistic devices they want to write about; the plural indicates that they must write about more than one. This is, in fact, another example of the archetypal essay question: discuss X's evaluation of Y and the stylistic devices X uses. An essay of three well-developed paragraphs that discusses Johnson's attitude in the first paragraph and deals specifically with two or more stylistic techniques in the second and third paragraphs would do the job well.