
DIAGNOSTIC/MASTER EXAM
ADVANCED PLACEMENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND COMPOSITION

Section I

Total Time—1 hour

Carefully read the following passages and answer the accompanying questions.

Questions 1–12 are based on the following passage from “Samuel Johnson on Pope,” that appeared in *The Lives of the English Poets* (1779–1781).

The person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has compared himself to a spider and, by another, is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy, but he was of a constitution feeble and weak. As bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid. 5

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a “long disease.”

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter. 10

Of his domestic character frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and, therefore, wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expense unsuitable to his fortune.

The great topic of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want everything. 15

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote merely for the people. When he pleased others, he contented himself. He never attempted to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote with little consideration and, once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind. 20

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and, therefore, always endeavored to do his best. Pope did not court the candor, but dared the judgment of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and he retouched every part with diligence, until he had nothing left to be forgiven. 25

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden’s page is a natural field, diversified by the exuberance of abundant vegetation. Pope’s is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and leveled by the roller. 30

If the flights of Dryden are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden’s fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope’s the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight. 35

1. The passage is primarily a(n)
 - A. character sketch of Pope
 - B. discussion of poetic style
 - C. criticism of Dryden
 - D. model for future poets
 - E. opportunity for the writer to show off his own skills
2. The passage discusses a contrast among all of the following except
 - A. prose and poetry
 - B. Pope and Dryden
 - C. body and mind
 - D. poverty and wealth
 - E. body and soul
3. "If the flights" (35) means
 - A. Pope's writing will outlast Dryden's
 - B. both Pope and Dryden are equal
 - C. Pope is not idealistic
 - D. Pope is more wordy
 - E. Pope is not as bright as Dryden
4. The character of Pope is developed by all of the following except:
 - A. examples
 - B. comparison
 - C. contrast
 - D. satire
 - E. description
5. According to the passage, Pope and Dryden are
 - A. rivals
 - B. equally intelligent
 - C. outdated
 - D. equally physically attractive
 - E. in debt
6. From the passage, the reader may infer that Pope
 - A. was extravagant
 - B. was a man of the people
 - C. was jealous of Dryden
 - D. had a desire to be popular
 - E. had a bitter, satirical nature
7. The tone of the passage is
 - A. informal and affectionate
 - B. formal and objective
 - C. condescending and paternalistic
 - D. laudatory and reverent
 - E. critical and negative
8. Lines 20–24 indicate that Dryden was what type of writer?
 - A. one who labored over his thoughts
 - B. one who wrote only for himself
 - C. one who wrote only for the critics
 - D. one who wrote to please Pope
 - E. one who did not revise
9. Using the context of lines 27–29, "punctilious" means
 - A. precise
 - B. timely
 - C. cursory
 - D. scholarly
 - E. philosophical
10. In the context of the passage, "until he had nothing left to be forgiven" (29) means
 - A. Pope outraged his readers
 - B. Pope suffered from writer's block
 - C. Pope exhausted his subject matter
 - D. Pope's prose was revised to perfection
 - E. Pope cared about the opinions of his readers
11. "Shaven" and "leveled" in line 34 indicate that Pope's style of writing was
 - A. natural
 - B. richly ornamented
 - C. highly controlled
 - D. mechanical
 - E. analytical
12. Based on a close reading of the final paragraph of the passage, the reader could infer that the author
 - A. looks on both writers equally
 - B. prefers the work of Pope
 - C. sees the two writers as inferior to his own writing style
 - D. indicates no preference
 - E. prefers the work of Dryden