

AP English Lit & Comp: MC Practice 3

	Guess	A	B	C	Questions Type	Vocabulary, Notes....
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Multiple-Choice Sample Questions: Passage 3

If the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, “tradition” should positively be discouraged. We have seen many such simple currents soon lost in the sand; and novelty is better than repetition. Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a writer beyond his twenty-fifth year; and this historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity . . .

To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the writer to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period. The first course is inadmissible, the second is an important experience of youth, and the third is a pleasant and highly desirable supplement. The writer must be very conscious of the main current, which does not at all flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations. He must be quite aware of the obvious fact that art never improves, but that the material of art is never quite the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe--the mind of his own country--a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind--is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement. Perhaps not even an improvement from the point of view of the psychologist or not to the extent which we imagine; perhaps only in the end based upon a complication in economics and machinery. But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past’s awareness of itself cannot show.

Someone said: “The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did.” Precisely, and they are that which we know . . .

26. The primary distinction made in the first paragraph is one between
- (A) a narrow definition of tradition and a more inclusive one
 - (B) the concerns of a contemporary writer and those of one from the past
 - (C) an understanding of the past and a rejection of the present
 - (D) the literature of Renaissance Europe and that of ancient Greece
 - (E) a literary tradition and a historical period
27. Which of the following best describes the function of the first sentence of the passage?
- (A) It states the main thesis of the passage as a whole.
 - (B) It provides concrete evidence to support the central idea of the first paragraph.
 - (C) It clears the way for serious discussion by dismissing a common misconception.
 - (D) It poses a rhetorical question that is debated throughout the passage.
 - (E) It establishes the reliability of the author as an impartial arbiter.
28. The phrase “lost in the sand” (line 6) is best read as a metaphor relating to
- (A) forgotten masterpieces
 - (B) prehistoric times
 - (C) ephemeral trends
 - (D) the sense of the timeless
 - (E) literary enigmas
29. In context, the clause “anyone who would continue to be a writer beyond his twenty-fifth year” (lines 11-12) suggests which of the following?
- I. Mature writers need to have a historical sense.
 - II. Few writers can improve their perceptions after their twenty-fifth year.
 - III. Young writers cannot be expected to have a developed historical sense.
- (A) I only
 - (B) II only
 - (C) III only
 - (D) I and II only
 - (E) I and III only
30. According to the passage, writers who are most aware of their own contemporaneity would be those who
- (A) have rejected the sterile conventions of earlier literature in order to achieve self-expression
 - (B) have refused to follow the ways of the immediately preceding generation in favor of novelty and originality
 - (C) have an intimate acquaintance with past and present literary works
 - (D) understand that contemporary works are likely to lose their popularity in time
 - (E) prefer the great literature of the past to the works of modern writers

31. In the first paragraph, the author is most concerned with
- (A) explaining how writers may be aware of their own contemporaneity
 - (B) defining the historical sense as it relates to writing
 - (C) berating those who dismiss the notion of tradition
 - (D) developing a theory of what is durable in literature
 - (E) summarizing historical trends in literary criticism
32. In lines 21-22, the repeated linkage of the words “timeless” and “temporal” can be interpreted as an emphasis on the
- (A) author’s assumption that the two words are used carelessly by contemporary writers
 - (B) necessity of allying two concepts usually thought of as opposites
 - (C) ironic conclusion that all that is temporal is meaningless
 - (D) author’s disgust that contemporary writers have focused only on the timeless
 - (E) unresolved debate as to which of the two concepts is more important
33. According to lines 27-34, which of the following would be natural and tolerable attitude for a young writer to hold?
- (A) The opinion that older literature is probably irrelevant to contemporary men and women.
 - (B) The idea that writing is more a matter of natural talent than of hard work.
 - (C) The idea that Shakespeare and Dickens are the only writers that he or she need use as models.
 - (D) The notion that older literature is inherently superior to the works of contemporary writers.
 - (E) The belief that genius is more likely to spring from one region or historical period than from another.
34. The author implies that the “first course is inadmissible” (lines 31-32) because following it leads to
- (A) failure to discriminate among the various literary works of past centuries
 - (B) abandonment of the commitment to read older literature
 - (C) relaxation of the standards that make a work of art likely to endure
 - (D) neglect of the study of present-day writers who will become part of the tradition
 - (E) forgetting that writer’s first duty is to preserve his or her integrity.
35. The “main current” (line 35) is best understood as that which
- (A) changes and improves constantly
 - (B) is and has been durable in literature
 - (C) has had wide popular appeal
 - (D) is suitable for stylistic imitation
 - (E) epitomizes the characteristics of one period
36. In lines 42-43, the “mind which changes” refers to which of the following?
- I. “the mind of Europe” (line 40)
 - II. “the mind of his own country” (line 40)
 - III. “his own private mind” (line 42)
- (A) I only
 - (B) III only
 - (C) I and II only
 - (D) I and III only
 - (E) I, II, and III
37. In line 46, the author refers to the “rock drawing of Magdalenian draughtsmen” as
- (A) an example of an artistic style that has been imitated by contemporary artists
 - (B) a part of a continuing artistic tradition that is still changing
 - (C) evidence of the kind of re-evaluation that takes place when new critical theories are proposed
 - (D) an example of art that had no self-consciousness about being part of an artistic tradition
 - (E) evidence of the need to use the same standards in evaluating literature and painting
38. Which of the following is implicit before “That this development . . . improvement” (lines 47-49) ?
- (A) The difference between the past and the present is
 - (B) We all unconsciously believe
 - (C) The significance of art is
 - (D) The writer must be aware
 - (E) A historian would deny
39. The function of the quotation in lines 57-58 is primarily to
- (A) support ironically an idea different from the one apparently intended by “Someone”
 - (B) refute the idea that art does not improve
 - (C) ridicule the idea that writers of the past were ignorant
 - (D) show that although “Someone’s” ideas are obviously to be respected, literary critics do often have disagreements
 - (E) add a new definition to the concept of ‘remoteness,’ while subtly indicating approval of the ideas expressed
40. The development of the argument can best be described as progressing from the
- (A) assertion of an idea to an elaboration of its meaning
 - (B) summary of an argument to an analysis of the logic of the conflicting sides
 - (C) statement of a hypothesis to a summary of possible objections to it
 - (D) criticism of a process to a defense of its value
 - (E) description of an abstract idea to a compilation of concrete examples of it
41. Taken as a whole, the passage is best described as
- (A) a narrative with a historical perspective
 - (B) a technical discussion of a point of literary criticism
 - (C) an argument developed through the use of anecdotes
 - (D) an expository passage largely concerned with definition
 - (E) a descriptive passage that makes use of concrete examples