

SAT LITERATURE SUBJECT TEST PRACTICE PAPER 2

A. Now test your skill on this passage.

“Try and make a clever woman of her, Lavinia; I should like her to be a clever woman.”

Line Mrs. Penniman, at this, looked thoughtful a mo-
ment. “My dear Austin,” she then inquired, “do you
5 think it is better to be clever than to be good?”

“Good for what?” asked the Doctor. “You are good for nothing unless you are clever.”

From this assertion Mrs. Penniman saw no reason to dissent; she possibly reflected that her own
10 great use in the world was owing to her aptitude for many things.

“Of course I wish Catherine to be good,” the Doctor said next day; “but she won’t be any the less virtuous for not being a fool. I am not afraid of her
15 being wicked; she will never have the salt of malice in her character. She is ‘as good as good bread,’ as the French say; but six years hence I don’t want to have to compare her to good bread-and-butter.”

“Are you afraid she will be insipid? My dear
20 brother, it is I who supply the butter; so you needn’t fear!” said Mrs. Penniman, who had taken in hand the child’s “accomplishments,” overlooking her at the piano, where Catherine displayed a certain talent, and going with her to the dancing-class, where
25 it must be confessed that she made but a modest figure.

Mrs. Penniman was a tall, thin, fair, rather faded woman, with a perfectly amiable disposition, a high standard of gentility, a taste for light literature, and a
30 certain foolish indirectness and obliquity of char-

acter. She was romantic; she was sentimental; she had a passion for little secrets and mysteries—a very innocent passion, for her secrets had hitherto always been as unpractical as addled eggs.

(1881)

1. The word "overlooking" (line 22) is meant to suggest that Mrs. Penniman does which of the following?

- A. Ignores Catherine's talent
- B. Teaches Catherine how to play the piano
- C. Supervises Catherine's piano playing
- D. Discourages Catherine
- E. Hires Catherine's tutors

2. Which of the following does Mrs. Penniman use metaphorically to talk about her influence on Catherine?

- A. Addled eggs
- B. Butter
- C. Bread
- D. Salt
- E. A fool

3. What does the author imply by the terms "it must be confessed that she made but a modest figure" (lines 25-26)?

- A. Catherine was trim and fit.
- B. Catherine was unaware of her talent.
- C. Catherine was unlikely to brag.
- D. Catherine was a talented dancer.
- E. Catherine was just an average dancer.

4. The narrative tone in the above piece can best be described as

- A. melodramatic
- B. ironic
- C. sardonic
- D. didactic
- E. observant

5. The narrative point of view in the above passage is that of a

- A. third person
 - B. protagonist
 - C. second person
 - D. sarcastic first person
 - E. detached first person
6. In this context, "addled" (line 34) most nearly means
- A. confused
 - B. rotten
 - C. scrambled
 - D. burdened
 - E. useful

B. Try out some questions about the anonymous poem you read earlier.

“A Pilgrim’s Solace”

Stay, O sweet, and do not rise!
The light that shines comes from thine eyes;
The day breaks not: it is my heart,
Because that you and I must part.
 Stay! Or else my joys will die
 And perish in their infancy.

7. Which of the following can be found in the poem?
- A. Onomatopoeia
 - B. Ascertainable rhyme scheme
 - C. Oxymoron
 - D. Change in perspective
 - E. Alliteration
8. Which of the following can be inferred from the poem?
- A. It is sunset.
 - B. There will be trouble if she is found in his room.
 - C. The woman will follow his wishes.
 - D. They are both hungry.
 - E. She makes him happy.

C. Let's take a look at some modern poetry.

“Brass Spittoons”*

Clean the spittoons, boy.

Detroit,

Chicago,

Line Atlantic City,

5 Palm Beach.

Clean the spittoons.

The steam in hotel kitchens,

And the smoke in hotel lobbies,

And the slime in hotel spittoons:

10 Part of my life.

Hey, boy!

A nickel,

A dime,

A dollar,

15 Two dollars a day.

Hey, boy!

A nickel,

A dime,

A dollar,

20 Two dollars

Buys shoes for the baby.

House rent to pay.

God on Sunday.

My God!

25 Babies and church

and women and Sunday

all mixed up with dimes and

dollars and clean spittoons

and house rent to pay.

30 Hey, boy!

A bright bowl of brass is beautiful to the Lord.
Bright polished brass like the cymbals
Of King David's dancers,
Like the wine cups of Solomon.

35 Hey, boy!

A clean spittoon on the altar of the Lord.
A clean bright spittoon all newly polished,—
At least I can offer that.
Com'mere boy!

(1927)

* a spittoon is a receptacle for spit (usually in a public place)

By the way, "Brass Spittoons" was written by Langston Hughes, one of the most prominent figures of the Harlem Renaissance.

1. In line 31, "a bright bowl of brass is beautiful to the Lord," the author is most likely

- A. making an analogy
- B. describing a glorious church scene
- C. using alliteration to emphasize a point
- D. comparing the bowls to the cymbals on the following line
- E. suggesting that poetry is like prayer

2. The list of cities in lines 2-5 implies

- A. the narrator is educated in geography
- B. the narrator is reading a newspaper
- C. the poem could be occurring in any of these cities
- D. the poem is an extended analogy
- E. the cities are symbols of oppressed people

3. In lines 20-21, "Two dollars buys shoes for the baby" is an example of

- A. personification
- B. haphazard alliteration
- C. repetition of a phrase
- D. economic calculation
- E. illustrative allusion

4. The narrator of the poem is most likely

- A. in charge of the hotel maids and janitors
- B. generous with his tips
- C. proud of his work

- D. an outspoken critic
- E. a stingy father

5. The narrator is best characterized as

- A. honest and reverent
- B. selfish and complaining
- C. ignorant and obliging
- D. hard-working and dutiful
- E. religious and childlike

6. Which of the following best describes the nature of the poem in its entirety?

- A. A realistic pastoral scene
- B. An eloquent description of a place
- C. A religious allegory
- D. A didactic narrative
- E. An impassioned portrait

7. The rhythm of the poem adds to the poem's theme in which of the following ways?

I. It mimics the actions of the speaker.

II. It contrasts the secular with the divine.

III. It adds to the lyricism of the poem.

- A. I only
- B. II only
- C. III only
- D. I and II only
- E. I, II, and III

8. The last three lines emphasize which of the following?

- A. The hopelessness of the speaker's situation
- B. The emptiness of the speaker's job
- C. The fragility of the speaker's faith
- D. The speaker's perseverance
- E. The comfort the speaker finds in his spirituality

9. The lines "Hey, boy!" (11, 16, 30, 35) are most likely

- A. the speaker calling his son
- B. a derogatory command
- C. an impolite greeting

- D. an urban colloquialism
- E. the speaker's conscience

10. The poem suggests that

- A. poverty is arduous
- B. thriftiness is a virtue
- C. brass is a recently discovered metal
- D. imagination offers escape
- E. good things come to those who wait