

Directions: This test consists of selections from literary works and questions on their content, form, and style. After each passage or poem, choose the best answer to each question.

Now try the techniques out on this next poem. Instead of writing down answers to questions, think about alliteration, rhythm, personification, theme, etc., while you're reading. Don't forget to do the specific questions first.

“The Dying Christian to His Soul”

Vital spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
Line O the pain, the bliss of dying!
5 Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.
Hark! they whisper; angels say,
Sister Spirit, come away!
What is this absorbs me quite?
10 Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?
The world recedes; it disappears!
Heav'n opens on my eyes! my ears
15 With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O Grave! where is thy victory?
O Death! where is thy sting?

(c. 1712)

FYI, the poem is by Alexander Pope, who lived from 1688-1744.

1. The author of the poem uses all of the following EXCEPT

- A. expressive punctuation
- B. a particular rhyme scheme
- C. regular meter
- D. adjectives
- E. Dickensian allusion

2. The question "O Death! where is thy sting?" can best be described as

- A. harshly rhetorical
- B. dubiously questioning
- C. gently taunting

- D. gravely earnest
- E. paradoxical

3. Which of the following is NOT an active verb?

- A. Quit (line 2)
- B. Draws (line 11)
- C. Tell (line 12)
- D. Sounds (line 15)
- E. Ring (line 15)

4. The three stanzas differ in that

- A. the first is directed at nature, the second at the soul, and the third at angels
- B. the first speaks of dying, the second speaks of the loss of sense, and the third speaks of life after death
- C. the first stanza describes death as purely painful, the second describes the loss of sense, and the third describes angels
- D. the speaker of the first stanza is mortal, the speaker of the second is angelic, and the speaker of the third is death
- E. the first stanza welcomes death, the second stanza taunts it, and the third stanza reluctantly accepts it

5. By "frame" (line 2), the author most likely means

- A. a picture of the world
- B. a previously held image of death
- C. a cage for the soul
- D. a metaphorical skeleton
- E. the mortal body

6. The overall theme of the poem is best stated as

- A. death is sublime even though it is painful
- B. death is the victory of heaven over the soul
- C. death can be resisted but it always eventually wins
- D. even if one suffers in this life, the next life will be better
- E. pain is only temporary; death is eternal

7. The style of the poem can best be described as

- A. ornately romantic
- B. playfully suggestive
- C. harshly critical
- D. elaborately descriptive
- E. emotionally cryptic

8. The questions in the last two lines serve mainly to emphasize

- A. the speaker's surprise at how little death hurts
- B. the mental ecstasy of death overshadowing physical pain

- C. the battle that is fought between the body and the soul
- D. the speaker's antagonistic relationship with death
- E. the transient nature of death

Directions: This test consists of selections from literary works and questions on their content, form, and style. After each passage or poem, choose the best answer to each question.
Let's try a more recent poem.

“Madman’s Song”

Better to see your cheek grown hollow,
Better to see your temple worn,
Than to forget to follow, follow,
After the sound of a silver horn.

Line

5 Better to bind your brow with willow
And follow, follow until you die,
Than to sleep with your head on a golden pillow,
Nor lift it up when the hunt goes by.
Better to see your cheek grown fallow

10 And your hair grown gray, so soon, so soon,
Than to forget to hallo, hallo,
After the milk-white hounds of the moon.

(c. 1921)

By the way, "Madman's Song" was written by William Rose Benét in 1921.

1. What is the effect of using "silver" to describe the "horn" (line 4)?

- A. To imply that the horn is not as valuable as a golden horn
- B. To foreshadow any item that may be used in the "hunt" (line 8)
- C. To be alliterative with the word "sound"
- D. To indicate that the image would be bright
- E. To symbolize the beauty of wealth

2. Given in context, the word "hallo" (line 11) is probably meant to convey which of the following?

- A. A form of greeting
- B. Another form of the word "hollow" (line 1)
- C. An echo
- D. A sound that hounds might make such as baying at the moon
- E. A variation on the word "halo"

3. The attitude of the author toward the reader is best described as

- A. openly hostile
- B. gently insistent
- C. didactic
- D. ambivalent
- E. disgusted

4. The author is most likely addressing the poem to someone

- A. who has lost touch with what is important
- B. who is ashamed of her background
- C. who has become very wealthy
- D. who is about to die
- E. who is vain

5. In this poem, the images are meant to convey which of the following?

I. Someone who has been committed to an insane asylum

II. Someone who has lost passion for life

III. Someone who has been filled with passion

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

6. The repetition in the poem most likely

- A. helps the rhyme scheme
- B. emphasizes the main theme
- C. chastises the reader
- D. reveals the speaker's anger
- E. contrasts the laziness of the person addressed

Directions: This test consists of selections from literary works and questions on their content, form, and style. After each passage or poem, choose the best answer to each question.

Try some of the techniques you learned in the chapters on poetry and prose to complete this drama exercise. Do the specific questions first and the general ones next.

ELIZA (*overwhelmed*): Ah-ah-ow-oo!

HIGGINS: There! That's all you'll get out of Eliza. Ah-ah-ow-oo! No use explaining. As a military man you ought to know that. Give her orders: that's what she wants. Eliza: you are to live here

Line

5

for the next six months, learning how to speak

beautifully, like a lady in a florist's shop. If you're good and do whatever you're told, you shall sleep in a proper bedroom, and have lots to eat, and money to buy chocolates and take
10 rides in taxis. If you're naughty and idle, you will sleep in the back kitchen among the black beetles, and be walloped by Mrs. Pearce with a broomstick. At the end of six months you shall go to Buckingham Palace in a carriage, beautifully
15 dressed. If the King finds out you're not a lady, you will be taken to the Tower of London, where your head will be cut off as a warning to other presumptuous flower girls. If you are not found out, you shall have a present of seven and six
20 pence to start life with as a lady in a shop. If you refuse this offer you will be a most ungrateful and wicked girl, and the angels will weep for you.

(1916)

This excerpt is from *Pygmalion*, by George Bernard Shaw.

1. The central contrasts in the passage are expressed in all of the following pairs EXCEPT

- A. A lady in a florist's shop ... "flower girls"
- B. Buckingham Palace ... "the Tower of London"
- C. Mrs. Pearce ... "the King"
- D. proper bedroom ... "the back kitchen"
- E. good and do whatever you're told ... "naughty and idle"

2. From his speech, it seems clear that Higgins views Eliza as

- A. a naïve child
- B. an obedient servant
- C. a potential wife
- D. a futile project
- E. a tenacious competitor

3. According to the passage, all of the following are characteristic of a "lady" EXCEPT

- A. articulate speech
- B. employment in a florist's shop
- C. private transportation

- D. fine clothing
- E. the leisure not to work

4. The first four lines of Higgins' speech imply

- A. the discipline developed in a military background like Eliza's
- B. Higgins' prejudice about people of different social classes
- C. Higgins' long familiarity with Eliza and her character
- D. the insight Higgins has into what motivates women
- E. Eliza's preference for direction over explanation

5. Higgins's speech can best be described as

- A. condescending
- B. didactic
- C. instructive
- D. explicatory
- E. apathetic

6. From the passage, Higgins may accurately be described as all of the following EXCEPT

- A. presumptuous
- B. generous
- C. arrogant
- D. self-important
- E. determined