

# English Common Core Exam

## PART I

**In this section, you read three passages (A, B & C) and answer 24 Multiple Choice Questions.**



### **OVERVIEW:**

*The first part of the Common Core Regents is reading two passages and answering 24 multiple-choice questions. Read closely, annotating for the gist, circling names (and words you don't know) and underlining important ideas. Then, use your annotation and multiple-choice strategies to answer the multiple-choice questions.*

### **Suggested steps for Success:**

1<sup>st</sup> **Chunk the text** by drawing an arrow on the right.

2<sup>nd</sup> Read each chunk carefully, annotating by **underlining important words and phrases and circling character or person names**. Also circle unfamiliar words.

3<sup>rd</sup> For each paragraph/chunk, **write the GIST**. The GIST is the general idea of what's happening in that chunk of text.

- *What type of noun is it (Person, Place, Thing or Idea)?*
- *What is being said about the noun?*

4<sup>th</sup> **Answer the multiple-choice** questions. Use the strategies

- "Skip and Come back"
- "Predict Before You Peek"
- "Process of elimination...beware of the Fancy Answer."
- "Thumb rule for line questions"

## **MULTIPLE CHOICE STRATEGIES:**

### **A. Predict Before You Peek**

- Read the question stem, but DO NOT look at the answer choices. Cover them with your hand if you're too tempted!
- Use your GISTs to find the answer to the question.
- Predict the answer (write it)
- Look at the answer choices and choose the one that best matches what you predicted. If you cannot predict the answer, then go back to the text.

### **B. The "Thumb Rule" For Line Questions**

- For this strategy I'm referring to line questions, (A question that asks you to look back at particular lines to help you respond...e.g "In lines 14-20 the author's tone suggests...)
- When you get to this type of question, go back to the text and read a bit before and a bit after the lines. This is essential to have context. It's called the thumb rule because you should read about a thumb's width up and a thumb's width past the last line (So for lines 14-20 I would read from about 11 to 24)

### **C. Process of Elimination...beware of the "Almost right" Answer**

- Here is a way to think about process of elimination:
  - First, find the two absolute wrong answers. (Hint: These answers often have extreme words, such as "only" or "never.")
  - Now that you have narrowed it down to two answer choices, determine which one is the "almost right" answer – the answer that kind of seems right because it contains a fact from the text or some facet of truth, though it is not the BEST answer. They are trying to get you to pick this answer. Eliminate this one and double check that the other one works.

### **D. Skip and Come Back**

- This is the most powerful strategy that often goes overlooked. If you spend a little bit on a question and try predicting and eliminating but you are still not sure, or have narrowed it down to two and can't pick...MOVE ON and come back to the question

### **ALSO:**

- 1. DO NOT LEAVE ANY BLANK. IF YOU HAVE TO GUESS, GUESS, but WAIT UNTIL THE VERY VERY END TO DO SO! (Skip and come back helps with this)**
- 2. DO NOT READ THE QUESTIONS FIRST☺**
- 3. START WITH A READING YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT. YOU PICK THE ORDER!**

## Part 1

# Let's Practice!

**Directions** (1–24): Closely read each of the three passages below. After each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you. You may use the margins to take notes as you read.

### Reading Comprehension Passage A

Nine years ago Pyotr Sergeyitch, the deputy prosecutor, and I were riding towards evening in haymaking time to fetch the letters from the station.

5 The weather was magnificent, but on our way back we heard a peal of thunder, and saw an angry black storm-cloud which was coming straight towards us. The storm-cloud was approaching us and we were approaching it. ...

Then the first wave raced through the rye and a field of oats, there was a gust of wind, and the dust flew round and round in the air. Pyotr Sergeyitch laughed and spurred on his horse. "It's fine!" he cried, "it's splendid!"

10 Infected by his gaiety, I too began laughing at the thought that in a minute I should be drenched to the skin and might be struck by lightning.

Riding swiftly in a hurricane when one is breathless with the wind, and feels like a bird, thrills one and puts one's heart in a flutter. By the time we rode into our courtyard the wind had gone down, and big drops of rain were pattering on the grass and on the roofs. There was not a soul near the stable. ...

15 "What a crash!" said Pyotr Sergeyitch, coming up to me after a very loud rolling peal of thunder when it seemed as though the sky were split in two. "What do you say to that?"

He stood beside me in the doorway and, still breathless from his rapid ride, looked at me. I could see that he was admiring me.

20 "Natalya Vladimirovna," he said, "I would give anything only to stay here a little longer and look at you. You are lovely to-day."

His eyes looked at me with delight and supplication,<sup>1</sup> his face was pale. On his beard and moustache were glittering raindrops, and they, too, seemed to be looking at me with love.

25 "I love you," he said. "I love you, and I am happy at seeing you. I know you cannot be my wife, but I want nothing, I ask nothing; only know that I love you. Be silent, do not answer me, take no notice of it, but only know that you are dear to me and let me look at you." ...

"You say nothing, and that is splendid," said Pyotr Sergeyitch. "Go on being silent."

30 I felt happy. I laughed with delight and ran through the drenching rain to the house; he laughed too, and, leaping as he went, ran after me.

Both drenched, panting, noisily clattering up the stairs like children, we dashed into the room. My father and brother, who were not used to seeing me laughing and lighthearted, looked at me in surprise and began laughing too. ...

35 When I went to bed I lighted a candle and threw my window wide open, and an undefined feeling took possession of my soul. I remembered that I was free and healthy, that I had rank and wealth, that I was beloved; above all, that I had rank and wealth, rank and wealth, my God! how nice that was!... Then, huddling up in bed at a touch of cold which reached me from the garden with the dew, I tried to discover whether I loved Pyotr Sergeyitch or not,... and fell asleep unable to reach any conclusion. ...

<sup>1</sup>supplication — a humble plea

40 And what happened afterwards? Why—nothing. In the winter when we lived in town  
Pyotr Sergeyitch came to see us from time to time. Country acquaintances are charming  
only in the country and in summer; in the town and in winter they lose their charm. When  
you pour out tea for them in the town it seems as though they are wearing other people’s  
45 coats, and as though they stirred their tea too long. In the town, too, Pyotr Sergeyitch spoke  
sometimes of love, but the effect was not at all the same as in the country. In the town we  
were more vividly conscious of the wall that stood between us: I had rank and wealth, while  
he was poor, and he was not even a nobleman, but only the son of a deacon and a deputy  
50 public prosecutor; we both of us—I through my youth and he for some unknown reason—  
thought of that wall as very high and thick, and when he was with us in the town he would  
criticize aristocratic society with a forced smile, and maintain a sullen silence when there  
was anyone else in the drawing-room. There is no wall that cannot be broken through, but  
the heroes of the modern romance, so far as I know them, are too timid, spiritless, lazy, and  
55 oversensitive, and are too ready to resign themselves to the thought that they are doomed  
to failure, that personal life has disappointed them; instead of struggling they merely  
criticize, calling the world vulgar and forgetting that their criticism passes little by little into  
vulgarity.

I was loved, happiness was not far away, and seemed to be almost touching me; I went  
on living in careless ease without trying to understand myself, not knowing what I expected  
or what I wanted from life, and time went on and on.... People passed by me with their  
60 love, bright days and warm nights flashed by, the nightingales sang, the hay smelt fragrant,  
and all this, sweet and overwhelming in remembrance, passed with me as with everyone  
rapidly, leaving no trace, was not prized, and vanished like mist.... Where is it all?

My father is dead, I have grown older; everything that delighted me, caressed me, gave me  
hope—the patter of the rain, the rolling of the thunder, thoughts of happiness, talk of  
65 love—all that has become nothing but a memory, and I see before me a flat desert distance;  
on the plain not one living soul, and out there on the horizon it is dark and terrible. ...

A ring at the bell.... It is Pyotr Sergeyitch. When in the winter I see the trees and  
remember how green they were for me in the summer I whisper:

“Oh, my darlings!”

70 And when I see people with whom I spent my spring-time, I feel sorrowful and warm  
and whisper the same thing. ...

Not knowing what to say I ask him:

“Well, what have you to tell me?”

“Nothing,” he answers. ...

75 I thought of the past, and all at once my shoulders began quivering, my head dropped,  
and I began weeping bitterly. I felt unbearably sorry for myself and for this man, and  
passionately longed for what had passed away and what life refused us now. And now I did  
not think about rank and wealth.

I broke into loud sobs, pressing my temples, and muttered:

80 “My God! my God! my life is wasted!”

And he sat and was silent, and did not say to me: “Don’t weep.” He understood that I  
must weep, and that the time for this had come. ...

—Anton Chekhov  
excerpted from “A Lady’s Story”  
The Schoolmistress and Other Stories, 1920  
translated by Constance Garnett  
Chatto & Windus

- 1 The primary function of lines 1 and 2 is to
    - (1) establish a setting of the story
    - (2) present the central idea of the story
    - (3) provide analysis of new characters
    - (4) create a mysterious atmosphere
  
  - 2 Pyotr’s reaction to the storm in lines 7 and 8 reflects his
    - (1) calm manner                      (3) excessive pride
    - (2) unworthy character              (4) carefree attitude
  
  - 3 What is revealed about the narrator in lines 32 and 33?
    - (1) She rarely reveals her intelligence.
    - (2) She is usually a very serious person.
    - (3) She does not want to alarm her father.
    - (4) She is unwilling to act like an adult.
  
  - 4 The reference to Pyotr’s “forced smile” and “sullen silence” in line 50 reveals his
    - (1) contempt for status
    - (2) indifference to wealth
    - (3) fear of commitment
    - (4) lack of confidence
  
  - 5 Lines 59 through 62 contribute to a central idea in the text by depicting the
    - (1) passing of youth
    - (2) uncertainty of love
    - (3) futility of hope
    - (4) intolerance of society
  
  - 6 In line 65, the phrase “flat desert distance” is used by the narrator to describe her
    - (1) physical location                      (3) foreseeable future
    - (2) social mobility                      (4) unfeeling nature
  
  - 7 Why does Natalya “not think about rank and wealth” in line 78?
    - (1) She has lost her father.
    - (2) She has wasted her inheritance.
    - (3) She has followed her conviction.
    - (4) She has realized her mistake.
  
  - 8 Lines 81 and 82 develop a central idea by depicting a
    - (1) sense of loss
    - (2) lack of comfort
    - (3) desire for memories
    - (4) longing for attention
  
  - 9 The author structures the text around references to
    - (1) similar locations
    - (2) changing seasons
    - (3) family interactions
    - (4) societal interferences
-

## Reading Comprehension Passage B

### ON LIVING

#### I

Living is no laughing matter:

you must live with great seriousness  
like a squirrel, for example—

I mean, without looking for something beyond and above living,

5 I mean living must be your whole life.

Living is no laughing matter:

you must take it seriously,  
so much so and to such a degree

10 that, for example, your hands tied behind your back,  
your back to the wall,

or else in a laboratory

in your white coat and safety glasses,  
you can die for people—

15 even for people whose faces you've never seen,

even though you know living

is the most real, the most beautiful thing.

I mean, you must take living so seriously

that even at seventy, for example, you'll plant olive trees—  
and not for your children, either,

20 but because although you fear death you don't believe it,  
because living, I mean, weighs heavier.

#### II

Let's say we're seriously ill, need surgery—

which is to say we might not get up  
from the white table.

25 Even though it's impossible not to feel sad  
about going a little too soon,

we'll still laugh at the jokes being told,  
we'll look out the window to see it's raining,  
or still wait anxiously

30 for the latest newscast...

Let's say we're at the front—

for something worth fighting for, say.

There, in the first offensive, on that very day,  
we might fall on our face, dead.

35 We'll know this with a curious anger,  
but we'll still worry ourselves to death  
about the outcome of war, which could last years.

Let's say we're in prison  
and close to fifty,

40 and we have eighteen more years, say,  
before the iron doors will open.

**GO RIGHT ON TO THE NEXT PAGE ➡**

We'll still live with the outside,  
with its people and animals, struggle and wind—  
I mean with the outside beyond the walls.

45 I mean, however and wherever we are,  
we must live as if we will never die.

### III

This earth will grow cold,  
a star among stars  
and one of the smallest,  
50 a gilded mote on blue velvet—  
I mean *this*, our great earth.

This earth will grow cold one day,  
not like a block of ice  
or a dead cloud even

55 but like an empty walnut it will roll along  
in pitch-black space...

You must grieve for this right now  
—you have to feel this sorrow now—  
for the world must be loved this much

60 if you're going to say "I lived"...

—Nazim Hikmet

*Poems of Nazim Hikmet*, 1994

translated by Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk

Persea Books

10 The narrator's purpose in the first stanza is to

- (1) explain the importance of science
- (2) determine the reason people die
- (3) propose an attitude toward life
- (4) encourage an appreciation of nature

11 The words "weighs heavier" (line 21) imply that

- (1) aging is a challenge
- (2) family is a burden
- (3) the future is impossible to predict
- (4) life is a greater responsibility than death

12 Lines 38 through 46 illustrate the narrator's belief that prison

- (1) prevents the full understanding of life
- (2) confines the body but should not confine the spirit
- (3) demands many years but should not lead to death
- (4) leads to the acceptance of death

13 As used in line 50, the word "mote" is closest in meaning to a

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| (1) globe  | (3) speck  |
| (2) vision | (4) planet |

14 Which lines best reflect a central theme in the text?

- (1) "I mean living must be your whole life. / Living is no laughing matter:" (lines 5 and 6)
- (2) "you can die for people— / even for people whose faces you've never seen," (lines 13 and 14)
- (3) "Let's say we're at the front— / for something worth fighting for, say." (lines 31 and 32)
- (4) "This earth will grow cold, / a star among stars" (lines 47 and 48)

## Reading Comprehension Passage C

A few years ago the City Council of Monza, Italy, barred pet owners from keeping goldfish in curved fishbowls. The sponsors of the measure explained that it is cruel to keep a fish in a bowl because the curved sides give the fish a distorted view of reality. Aside from the measure's significance to the poor goldfish, the story raises an interesting philosophical question: How do we know that the reality we perceive is true?

The goldfish is seeing a version of reality that is different from ours, but can we be sure it is any less real? For all we know, we, too, may spend our entire lives staring out at the world through a distorting lens.

In physics, the question is not academic. Indeed, physicists and cosmologists are finding themselves in a similar predicament to the goldfish's. For decades we have strived to come up with an ultimate theory of everything—one complete and consistent set of fundamental laws of nature that explain every aspect of reality. It now appears that this quest may yield not a single theory but a family of interconnected theories, each describing its own version of reality, as if it viewed the universe through its own fishbowl.

This notion may be difficult for many people, including some working scientists, to accept. Most people believe that there is an objective reality out there and that our senses and our science directly convey information about the material world. Classical science is based on the belief that an external world exists whose properties are definite and independent of the observer who perceives them. In philosophy, that belief is called realism. ...

### Do Not Attempt To Adjust The Picture

The idea of alternative realities is a mainstay of today's popular culture. For example, in the science-fiction film *The Matrix* the human race is unknowingly living in a simulated virtual reality created by intelligent computers to keep them pacified and content while the computers suck their bioelectrical energy (whatever that is). How do we know we are not just computer-generated characters living in a Matrix-like world? If we lived in a synthetic, imaginary world, events would not necessarily have any logic or consistency or obey any laws. The aliens in control might find it more interesting or amusing to see our reactions, for example, if everyone in the world suddenly decided that chocolate was repulsive or that war was not an option, but that has never happened. If the aliens did enforce consistent laws, we would have no way to tell that another reality stood behind the simulated one. It is easy to call the world the aliens live in the "real" one and the computer-generated world a false one. But if—like us—the beings in the simulated world could not gaze into their universe from the outside, they would have no reason to doubt their own pictures of reality.

The goldfish are in a similar situation. Their view is not the same as ours from outside their curved bowl, but they could still formulate scientific laws governing the motion of the objects they observe on the outside. For instance, because light bends as it travels from air to water, a freely moving object that we would observe to move in a straight line would be observed by the goldfish to move along a curved path. The goldfish could formulate scientific laws from their distorted frame of reference that would always hold true and that would enable them to make predictions about the future motion of objects outside the bowl. Their laws would be more complicated than the laws in our frame, but simplicity is a matter of taste. If the goldfish formulated such a theory, we would have to admit the goldfish's view as a valid picture of reality. ...

### Glimpses Of The Deep Theory

In the quest to discover the ultimate laws of physics, no approach has raised higher hopes—or more controversy—than string theory. String theory was first proposed in the 1970s as an attempt to unify all the forces of nature into one coherent framework and,



in particular, to bring the force of gravity into the domain of quantum<sup>1</sup> physics. By the early 1990s, however, physicists discovered that string theory suffers from an awkward issue: there are five different string theories. For those advocating that string theory was the unique theory of everything, this was quite an embarrassment. In the mid-1990s  
50 researchers started discovering that these different theories—and yet another theory called supergravity—actually describe the same phenomena, giving them some hope that they would amount eventually to a unified theory. The theories are indeed related by what physicists call dualities, which are a kind of mathematical dictionaries for translating concepts back and forth. But, alas, each theory is a good description of phenomena only  
55 under a certain range of conditions—for example at low energies. None can describe every aspect of the universe.

String theorists are now convinced that the five different string theories are just different approximations to a more fundamental theory called M-theory. (No one seems to know what the “M” stands for. It may be “master,” “miracle” or “mystery,” or all three.)  
60 People are still trying to decipher the nature of M-theory, but it seems that the traditional expectation of a single theory of nature may be untenable<sup>2</sup> and that to describe the universe we must employ different theories in different situations. Thus, M-theory is not a theory in the usual sense but a network of theories. It is a bit like a map. To faithfully represent the entire Earth on a flat surface, one has to use a collection of maps, each of which covers  
65 a limited region. The maps overlap one another, and where they do, they show the same landscape. Similarly, the different theories in the M-theory family may look very different, but they can all be regarded as versions of the same underlying theory, and they all predict the same phenomena where they overlap, but none works well in all situations.

Whenever we develop a model of the world and find it to be successful, we tend to  
70 attribute to the model the quality of reality or absolute truth. But M-theory, like the goldfish example, shows that the same physical situation can be modeled in different ways, each employing different fundamental elements and concepts. It might be that to describe the universe we have to employ different theories in different situations. Each theory may have its own version of reality, but according to model-dependent realism, that diversity is  
75 acceptable, and none of the versions can be said to be more real than any other. It is not the physicist’s traditional expectation for a theory of nature, nor does it correspond to our everyday idea of reality. But it might be the way of the universe.

—Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow  
excerpted from “The (Elusive) Theory of Everything”  
*Scientific American*, October 2010

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<sup>1</sup>quantum — a small, indivisible unit of energy

<sup>2</sup>untenable — indefensible

- 15 The authors' anecdote about pet owners in Monza, Italy, serves to introduce a
- (1) proof of a universal world view
  - (2) measure that is objectionable to scientists
  - (3) central question about the way we see
  - (4) philosophical question about what we value
- 16 The primary purpose of lines 9 through 14 is to clarify the
- (1) need for a single theory
  - (2) role of the senses in understanding
  - (3) possibility of other life in the universe
  - (4) origin of alternative theories
- 17 How do lines 17 through 19 develop a claim?
- (1) by providing details about a philosophical challenge faced by scientists
  - (2) by showing how scientists should handle alternate realities
  - (3) by arguing for an approach that scientists have always followed
  - (4) by explaining how scientists should view a philosophical approach
- 18 The reference to *The Matrix* in lines 20 through 24 is used to emphasize the questioning of our
- (1) virtues
  - (2) perception
  - (3) education
  - (4) ideals
- 19 The references to goldfish in lines 33 through 42 contribute to the authors' purpose by suggesting that
- (1) people's theories are influenced by their viewpoints
  - (2) nature's mysteries are best left undiscovered
  - (3) reality can only be determined by an outside perspective
  - (4) light must be viewed under similar circumstances
- 20 As used in line 45 of the text, what does the word "coherent" mean?
- (1) balanced
  - (2) indisputable
  - (3) popular
  - (4) understandable
- 21 The authors' reference to "a collection of maps" (line 64) is used to help clarify
- (1) a complex theory
  - (2) a historical concept
  - (3) the representation of space
  - (4) the limitations of previous theories
- 22 The function of lines 73 through 77 is to
- (1) argue for a specific theory
  - (2) suggest that theories relate to expectations
  - (3) describe the way differing theories should co-exist
  - (4) evaluate theories based on specific needs
- 23 With which statement would the authors most likely agree?
- (1) The perception of the universe can never be questioned.
  - (2) There is a single, agreed upon theory of reality.
  - (3) There are multiple realities that are possible to prove.
  - (4) The understanding of the universe continues to change.
- 24 The authors attempt to engage the audience through the use of
- (1) absolute statements
  - (2) real world examples
  - (3) detailed descriptions
  - (4) simple questions

## Correct Answers

### Part 1

1 ..... **1** .....      6 ..... **3** .....

2 ..... **4** .....      7 ..... **4** .....

3 ..... **2** .....      8 ..... **1** .....

4 ..... **1** .....      9 ..... **2** .....

5 ..... **1** .....

10 ..... **3** .....

11 ..... **4** .....

12 ..... **2** .....

13 ..... **3** .....

14 ..... **1** .....

15 ..... **3** .....

16 ..... **4** .....

17 ..... **1** .....

18 ..... **2** .....

19 ..... **1** .....

20 ..... **4** .....

21 ..... **1** .....

22 ..... **3** .....

23 ..... **4** .....

24 ..... **2** .....

WHAT DO I NEED TO REVIEW?