

The Sea of Faith Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd. But now I only hear Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, Retreating, to the breath Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear And naked shingles of the world.

1. Which of the following best describes the speaker's tone in these lines from Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach"?

- (A) Discontented
- (B) Reflective
- (C) Joyful
- (D) Motivated
- (E) Livid

2. Influenced by excessive alcohol, a man sells his wife and daughter to a sailor, only to realize his mistake with horror when he is sober the following day. He spends the next two decades trying to conceal what he has done but must ultimately face the consequences for his actions when his wife and daughter reappear in his life.

The 19th-century novel described above is

- (A) *Jude the Obscure*.
- (B) *Oliver Twist*.
- (C) *Northanger Abbey*.
- (D) *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.
- (E) *Women in Love*.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck Like a rush-imbedded swan, Like a lily from the beck, Like a moonlit poplar branch, Like a vessel at the launch When its last restraint is gone.

3. These lines, from Christina Rossetti's poem "Goblin Market," provide an example of which of the following literary techniques?

- (A) Apostrophe
- (B) Simile
- (C) Catachresis
- (D) Onomatopoeia
- (E) Cliché

Questions 4-5 refer to a poem by William Shakespeare.

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing, And like enough thou know'st thy estimate: The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing; My bonds in thee are all determinate. For how do I hold thee but by thy granting? (5) And for that riches where is my deserving? The cause of this fair gift in

me is wanting, And so my patent back again is swerving. Thyself thou gavest, thy own worth then not knowing, Or me, to whom thou gavest it, else mistaking; (10) So thy great gift, upon misprision growing, Comes home again, on better judgment making. Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter, In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

4. The poem above is written in which of the following forms?

- (A) Sonnet
- (B) Haiku
- (C) Idyll
- (D) Elegy
- (E) Limerick

5. The word "misprision" in line 11 most closely means which of the following in the context of the passage?

- (A) Neglect
- (B) Mistake
- (C) Value
- (D) Failure
- (E) Reward

Questions 6-7

One kingdom;-but who is to be its king? Is there to be no king in it, think you, and every man to do that which is right in his own eyes? Or only kings of terror, and the obscene empires of Mammon and Belial? Or will you, youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace; mistress of Learning and of the Arts;-faithful guardian of great memories in the midst of irreverent and ephemeral visions;-faithful servant of time-tried principles, under temptation from fond experiments and licentious desires; and amidst the cruel and clamorous jealousies of the nations, worshipped in her strange valour of goodwill towards men?

6. In this passage from John Ruskin's *Lectures on Art*, Ruskin references which of the following English writers with the phrase "sceptred isle"?

- (A) John Milton
- (B) Ben Jonson
- (C) Geoffrey Chaucer
- (D) William Shakespeare
- (E) Charles Dickens

7. The section of *Lectures on Art* subtitled "Imperial Duty" indicates that Ruskin's opinion about the responsibility of youths in England is which of the following?

- (A) Preserve the honored values in art and knowledge and set an example for other nations.
- (B) Utilize acquired learning to teach and better developing nations.
- (C) Reject progressive thinking to value the learning of the past.
- (D) Embrace moral thinking and discard dissolute theories that have arisen in other nations.
- (E) Employ the knowledge from art and literature to strengthen England's imperial position.

8. A hostess spends her day preparing for a party at her home in the evening, and during the course of the day experiences a variety of conflicting emotions. At the party she hosts, she must reacquaint herself with friends from the past, bringing up complex memories.

The book described above is

- (A) *A Handful of Dust*.
- (B) *Lord Jim*.
- (C) *The Light That Failed*.
- (D) *Pygmalion*.
- (E) *Mrs. Dalloway*.

9. E. M. Forster's novel of a young girl who visits Europe for the first time and functions thematically as a parody of middle-class morality and attempts to imitate upper-class values is which of the following?

- (A) *A Room with a View*
- (B) *Howards End*
- (C) *A Passage to India*
- (D) *Where Angels Fear to Tread*
- (E) *England's Pleasant Land*

10. The female Restoration playwright Aphra Behn may be credited with which of the following works?

- (A) *The Rover*
- (B) *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- (C) *The Country Wife*
- (D) *The Plain Dealer*
- (E) *The Man of Mode*

CLEP English Literature Practice Question Answer Key

1. Question 1 asks for the tone of the poem from the passage provided. Tone can be a fairly subjective quality, based on the reader's interpretation, but there are still indications of tone that can be derived from a passage, regardless of interpretation. The student should review

each answer choice carefully to decide if it reflects the poet's voice in the poem. Reviewing these answer choices, the best selection is answer choice (B), reflective. The poet references the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the Sea of Faith. This type of description suggests a degree of quiet reflection that is suggested by answer choice (B). While the poet indicates sadness about this event, there is not enough in the poem to infer a tone of discontentedness. The poem does not indicate a sense of joy, but by contrast the poem does not indicate anything in the way of a livid tone. And answer choice (D), motivated, does not make any sense with reference to the poem, so it can be eliminated.

2. Question 2 is a knowledge question, so the student must be at least distantly familiar with the summary of the work described in the question. The correct answer is (D), *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, by Thomas Hardy. The novel *Jude the Obscure* is also by Thomas Hardy but does not fit the description provided. *Oliver Twist*, by Charles Dickens, chronicles the hardships of a young boy in London and is unrelated in plot to the description that is provided. *Northanger Abbey*, by Jane Austen, is largely a satire on the gothic romances common in the early 19th century and does not fit the description, and *Women in Love*, by D. H. Lawrence, was published (and set) in the 20th century.
3. The correct answer is (B), simile. A simile is a type of comparison that uses "like" or "as," and poet Christina Rossetti clearly utilizes the word "like" in constructing the comparisons within the passage provided. Apostrophe is a form of address of a person or object not physically present (as when Shelley addresses the wind: "O wild west wind, thou breath of Autumn's being . . ."). Catachresis is the deliberate misuse of a word for poetic purposes, and there is no indication of Rossetti doing this. Onomatopoeia is a word that indicates the sound it makes (such as "oink"). And a cliché is an overused expression (such as "avoid that like the plague"). Answer choice (B) provides the only correct literary technique that Rossetti utilizes in the poem.

Questions 4-5 refer to an unidentified poem by William Shakespeare. In this case, the student is asked questions that are more technical, so it is not necessary for the student to recognize this particular piece, but rather its form. For the purposes of identification, this particular passage is Sonnet 87.

4. Answer choice (A), sonnet, is correct. The poem provided is fourteen lines and is noted to be by Shakespeare who is most famous as a poet for his sonnets. What is more, the passage follows the form of the sonnet (and particularly of the Shakespearean sonnet). A haiku is a very short poem of only three metrical phrases and is thus nothing like the passage provided. An idyll is also a short poem detailing a pastoral life, which is not represented in the passage provided. An elegy is a funereal lament or a lament for the dead, and while the poet in the passage is clearly sad, the sadness is related to no longer being with the beloved and not to the death of the beloved. And a limerick is a five-line poem-which immediately disqualifies answer choice (E).
5. The line in the passage reads, "So thy great gift, upon misprision growing, / Comes home again, on better judgment making." This suggests that the gift is not being taken care of or is being neglected. Answer choice (A) provides the option of neglect, so it is correct. The word "mistake" makes no sense in the passage, while the word "value" offers the opposite meaning that is implied by the word "misprision." The word "failure" has potential, but it does not

fully embrace the suggestion of neglect that the passage offers. While the word "reward" might fit into the meaning of line 11, it does not fit the context of the passage as a whole.

Questions 6 and 7 reference a passage by John Ruskin from his Lectures on Art. The questions ask the student to identify an allusion in the passage and also summarize Ruskin's meaning within the passage.

6. In question 6, the student must select the author of the phrase "sceptred isle" to which John Ruskin refers in his Lectures on Art. The correct answer is (D), William Shakespeare, who provided the line to the character John of Gaunt in the play Richard II in the monologue that ends with the now-famous phrase "this England." This question requires prior knowledge or at least basic familiarity with Shakespeare's most famous lines, so the process of elimination will not serve the student well in this question.
7. Question 7 asks the student to summarize John Ruskin's meaning in the passage that is provided. A careful review of the passage will indicate that Ruskin is encouraging the young people of England to retain the traditions that England has developed in the areas of art and literature and thus to be an example for other nations. Answer choice (A) offers the closest version of this and is, therefore, correct. While Ruskin does mention other nations, it is with reference to setting an example for them and not actively teaching them, so answer choice (B) cannot be correct. Ruskin discusses the importance of the learning that has developed in the past, but at no point does Ruskin suggest rejecting progressive learning; answer choice (C) is incorrect. Ruskin speaks in favor of morality, but he makes no mention of dissolute theories arising in other nations, so answer choice (D) is incorrect. Answer choice (E) takes too much from the title "Imperial Duty" and infers that duty within this specific passage, but the only duty that Ruskin mentions in the passage provided is the duty to preserve tradition and to set an example for other nations. There is no clear mention of imperial position, so answer choice (E) cannot be correct.
8. The correct answer is (E), Mrs. Dalloway, Virginia Woolf's novel of a day and a dinner party, with a lifetime of experiences occurring in that single day and in preparation for the party in the evening. If the student has not read Mrs. Dalloway, there is still the possibility of eliminating the incorrect answer choices. A Handful of Dust, by Evelyn Waugh, records a man's emotional journey as his marriage falls apart. Lord Jim, by Joseph Conrad, discusses a young seaman's moral battle as he joins his comrades in abandoning the Muslim pilgrims that they are charged with protecting. The Light That Failed, by Rudyard Kipling, tells the story of a blind painter, and Pygmalion, by George Bernard Shaw, is a play about a young woman who is utilized as an experiment in social climbing.
9. Question 9 also asks for the student to recognize a certain work based on the summary of its plot. In this case, the author is provided, but all of the answer choices represent novels (or, in one case, a play) that he composed. The student must be able to distinguish among these works and select the answer choice that represents the work described in the question. Through prior knowledge, the student might know that the correct answer is indeed answer choice (A), A Room with a View. There are few direct clues within the summary that is provided, so the process of elimination will not be of much benefit in this case, unless the student is highly familiar with Forster's works.

10. Like questions 8 and 9, question 10 asks the student to be familiar with a work by a particular author. In this case, the author is Aphra Behn, and the work is one of her plays. Behn is probably best known for her novel *Oroonoko*, but as that is not one of the options, the student must identify another work by Behn. The correct answer is (A), *The Rover*, which is one (or rather two-since there are two parts) of Behn's plays. William Shakespeare is the author of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Wycherley of *The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer*, and George Etherege of *The Man of Mode*.