QUESTIONS 1–15

This passage from the beginning of *The Magus*, a novel by British author John Fowles, is a selection that exhibits a sophistication of style that you will find on the AP English Literature Exam. This exam tests your knowledge, not only of literary elements, but of how well you comprehend the effect of those elements on the selection as a whole.

The voice of the narrator is important in this piece, as it is in every piece. But after you have finished reading this selection, you should be able to recognize that the narrator's realization of his situation is reflected in the setting.

1. A You may have read answer choice (A), which is a straightforward answer, and thought, "Oh, that's the answer," and then puzzled over the other choices wondering if you'd missed something. Perhaps (B) and (C) seemed to be possible answers also. Most of the time a pronoun refers to the last noun that has been named, but there are exceptions to this rule. In this case, the narrator is telling us that Phraoxos, which is in the center of the landscape (B), is as memorable as the landscape is. When you looked at choice (C) again, you would have seen that "mainland" was used for location rather than imagery. Choice (D) could not have been the correct choice because a noun must precede the pronoun, not the other way around. Your only logical choice then was (A).

2. E Remember that when you are given choices that contain two words, both words must correctly answer the question. If one of the words is not accurate, then the entire choice must be eliminated. This question also tests your knowledge of literary terminology. Choice (A) could have been eliminated immediately because the narrator states that it was "simply and effortlessly beautiful." That alone would have eliminated choice (A) because "pretentious" indicates it was showy and not simple. The description is also not a form of a hyperbole. Choice (B) could have been a close choice because of the term "metaphor." In the phrase "amethyst evening sea," the adjective "amethyst" can be seen as a color or as a gem. However, the term "elusive" eliminates the answer because "elusive" indicates that it is intangible and mysterious. The concrete comparisons that are used in lines 5–10 would also help to eliminate this answer. Choice (C) indicates that the comparisons that are made are farfetched and do not have any concrete references. This is not the case. Choice (D) indicates that there is no depth to the impression the landscape has made on the narrator. This is the exact opposite of what has occurred. (E) is the correct answer. The comparisons used in these lines are predominately similes, and when you continue reading, it is evident that the use of Venus and the use of the whale are symbolic. Venus, the brightest planet in the sky, is used in contrast with a black whale in an evening sea. Also, Venus is symbolic of passion and romantic notions, whereas the whale is a symbol of earthly and pragmatic ideals.

3. C Make sure you understand what this question is asking. To answer it, you need to first think about what the narrator's tone is as he describes the island. He is clearly awed by its beauty. Now, what is the effect of this awe? Choice (A) seems pretty redundant and does not really address how the tone advances something else. Does it advance his anticipation of the one "facade?" This choice is only partially correct; the narrator is expressing something about the setting. However, he is not offering a logical explanation of the lack of towns on the island (D); this does not really suit the tone of awe and beauty. Same thing with (E)—the narrator is not offering a cold, objective analysis. So what does his awed description of the island's beauty do? It highlights the contrast between nature and the intellect, choice (C).
4. D This question requires that you take the time to refer to the line in which the word “obese” appears. If you rely on the definition you might erroneously choose (B) because the answer indicates a size. Don’t forget, if you are given a line number, you must check to see how the word is used. Read at least one sentence before the word appears and one sentence after the word appears to get a better understanding of the meaning of the word in context. Rarely will you be asked for a textbook definition of a word, although it might happen. Choice (A) deals with the location of the hotel in relation to the water, which does not answer the question. Choice (C) does reflect a comparison to the analogy that the narrator makes, but it does not answer the question. The question is asking what the word “obese” is being used to describe. Choice (E) is a detail found in the previous paragraph that has to do with location. The remaining choice is (D). The word “obese” implies a very large object that is evidently out of place. This hotel is the result of modern commercialism and an intrusion on the landscape. Even if you did not know the meaning of all of the words in this selection, through POE, you should have arrived at choice (D).

5. C This question asks you to reflect on the importance of the second paragraph to the selection as a whole. The narrator recognizes that the building has a “facade.” He later learns that this is not the only thing that has a disguise. He learns that the feelings of harmony he has are also an “illusion.” Choice (A) is not accurate. The word “acceptance” is not true of this passage. When he arrives on the island he sees it in terms of simple beauty and considers the modern buildings to be “eyesores.” The word “uneasiness” in choice (B) is not an accurate description of his impression. The second paragraph does not help to establish choice (D), even though this may be true of your understanding of the passage. Remember that you must select the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question. The second paragraph offers a critical analysis of the island’s beauty, but this paragraph does more than that; it sets up a comparison that is expanded upon to great effect later in the passage. Therefore, (C) is correct.

6. C Once again, you must take a look at the entire paragraph before you make a decision. In order to establish tone, you must consider the word choice and the imagery that the author has provided. In this case choice (A) only refers to the description of the solitude of the island. Choice (B) refers only to one of the comparisons the narrator states. Choice (D) does not provide an accurate picture of the narrator’s attitude in this paragraph, which is evident by his use of the words “significance,” and “eerie.” Neither of those words indicates depression. With the mention of nymphs and monsters in the last sentence, it is evident that a scholarly tone is not being used in this paragraph. Choice (C) is the best answer for this question. It provides a more in-depth understanding of what the narrator is trying to express.

7. A This question provides you with the fact that the names of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon are allusions. If you do not know their place in Greek tragedy and mythology then you might not understand what is being asked of you. Clytemnestra was the wife of Agamemnon, a Greek warrior who accompanied Odysseus to Troy. Prior to his departure, he sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to the gods in order that he might return home safely. He rationalized his decision to kill his daughter. His wife, Clytemnestra, also sister to the infamous Helen of Troy, vowed revenge on Agamemnon for the murder. Agamemnon returned home safely, only to be murdered by his wife. This conflict provides the correct answer to this question. You should not have chosen choice (B) because there are no surreptitious events that follow in this passage, as is evident by the narrator’s understanding of the
misconception of the harmony he felt. If you chose (C) you may have recognized the names from Greek mythology, but there is no mention of the history of the island by the narrator. If you chose (D), you may have recognized the Greek names in relationship with a kingdom, but the word “grandeur” is not the word that would be used to describe the island. It is its natural beauty that captivates the narrator. You could eliminate choice (E) because nowhere in the passage is there a reference to violence. Once again, you might have been able to make the correct choice using the Process of Elimination.

8.  D  This question requires you to have an understanding of the vocabulary used in the choices. Once again, you must remember that both words must accurately describe the speaker’s impression of education on the island. In this case, choice (A) can be eliminated because the education is a solid and practical British education, not superficial. You can also eliminate choice (B) because it may be annoying to the narrator, but it is not arcaic, merely adequate and current. Choice (C) does not provide you with any choices that are accurate. Choice (E) may provide you with the idea that the education one receives there is inconsequential, but it is not perplexing to the speaker. He understands that the education is adequate, but he is frustrated that it does not involve more of a romantic notion of education. Therefore, the best answer is choice (D).

9.  A  The speaker finds the school constricting and the students exasperating. They preferred to talk about cars rather than poetry. He found this preference of theirs frustrating, so choice (A) is correct. If you had chosen (E), you chose an answer that was close to correct, but it was more than disappointment that the narrator felt; it was frustration, as shown by the way he developed his examples in a repetitive, almost sarcastic manner.

10. A  This type of question posses the most difficulty for students. Once again, you need to look carefully at the question and the choices you are given. Eliminate the choices that do not supply the correct implications. It is true that the narrator believes that there are shortcomings in the British educational system. The education fostered an interest for science and little for literature. If you decided that choice I was a correct answer, you are on the right track. You can eliminate choice (C) and choice (D). If you look at choice II you will see that the “myopic” (limited) vision of the students who only want to learn scientific information and not that of literature, also makes selection II a valid statement. Because the choices that are left all include II, you have to look at III and IV to determine whether or not they also apply. Selection III may be true, but you need to refer to line 80 to make sure you understand what the object of reference is to “mole-like blindness.” You can easily determine that this reference loosely applies to education. In that case, you can eliminate selection III because it refers to all inhabitants of the island. We do not know if this statement is true based on this selection. Now you can also eliminate choices (E) and (B). Choice IV is not true, and therefore you are left with choice (A).

11. C  This question requires you to know some basic literary terminology. Parody is not evident in this passage; you can eliminate choice (A). Apostrophe, which is often used in poetry, is not used in this passage. You can eliminate choice (B). Repetition is often used by good writers, but choice (D) indicates that the attitude of the speaker is emphasized by their usage. So choice (D) is not the best answer for this question. Take a look at (E). Hyperbole is not used. Now, you need to decide between choice (C) and choice (D). This passage, like most literary passages, does depend on the author’s use of imagery to make his point. So keep choice (C). That leaves (C) as the correct answer.
12. B You may say, "I don’t know the meaning of termitary" (a nest of termites). But remember that this is an EXCEPT question. Take a look and see if the statements are true, even if you don’t understand the term. You do know that the statement in choice (A) is true. The atmosphere of the school on Phraxos is the same as it is in England. You know that the attitude of the Greeks on the island is not in contrast to those of the students in school (B). The Greeks may not pay attention to their surroundings, but the students in the school are also Greek and receiving a British education. This statement, therefore, cannot be true. A look at the other choices indicates statements that you have already recognized as accurate in other questions. Choice (C) indicates that masters and students do not appreciate their surroundings. This choice is a true statement. Choice (D) is implied when the narrator states that the students devoured any scientific information that the masters provided. Choice (E) implies the same response as choice (D). Therefore, the answer is (B).

13. D Choice (A), "laconic," means uncommunicative. You could possibly infer that the speaker did not communicate with others based on this selection; however, you need to read the statement carefully. You are asked to infer how the hills made the speaker feel. They made him feel harmonious with nature. Choice (B) indicates they made him feel weak. This is not true. You can eliminate it. Choice (C) is the opposite of what the speaker felt. You can eliminate (C) as well. Although the speaker may have felt impatient at times, the hills did not make him feel that way. You can eliminate (E). Choice (D) is the best answer.

14. A Don’t forget the reference line: “It was an illusion” refers to the speaker’s feelings of harmony between body and mind. The closest answer for the question is (A). You can eliminate (B) because the choice indicates that the climate was an illusion. That is not true. You can also eliminate (C) because it deals with the Greek language and the narrator previously indicated that he knew very little Greek. This is a detail and not a sufficient response to the statement. Choice (D) indicates a feeling of animosity between the two cultures. This is incorrect. Choice (E) indicates that the speaker will not enjoy his time in the hills. That is not what the speaker says previously. Remember, in a reference question, you must look at what comes just before the line and what comes after it, if appropriate. Without a doubt, (A) is the correct answer.

15. E Once again, you are quizzed on your knowledge of terminology. Refer to the back of the book if you are not familiar with the literary terms that have been used in these questions. The key to understanding what is being asked of you is to look at the question. The question is not asking you what literary elements are used in the passage—it is asking what elements help to reinforce the meaning of the selection. In this case, all but (E) are correct.
QUESTIONS 16–27
The passage is by Christina Rossetti (1830–1894), and was written when she was in her early thirties. The poem’s spiritual, death-haunted theme is typical of Rossetti, who was beset with ill health her entire—yet relatively long—life.

The Rossettis, Christina and her brothers, William Michael and Dante Gabriel, were at the center of an influential mid-nineteenth-century arts movement called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Pre-Raphaelite painting and writing were concerned with medieval themes, with romance (often tinged with self-destruction or death), nature, nostalgia, and vivid imagery and color.

Christina’s brother Dante (arguably the leader of the Pre-Raphaelite movement) is guilty of one of the truly cheeseball acts of narcissism in literary history. When Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s wife died, the painter-poet buried the manuscripts of several of his poems in the casket with her. Ah, love. Seven years later he decided maybe it wasn’t such a good idea and had the mess dug up so he could get his poems back. The last laugh, however, is on Dante, whose literary reputation is waning. His sister Christina, however, has acquired a growing respect from the literary world after many years spent in her brother’s shadow.

The poem on the test (like almost everything Christina Rossetti wrote) is a meditation on the transience of life and the inevitability of death. When, in the third stanza, God promises to come for the poet when her hour arrives, the poem becomes an avowal of faith.

Although the bulk of the poem’s meaning is accessible to most readers, the questions asked on the test lay several traps for the unwary. When reading and interpreting poetry, be on guard against making assumptions that can’t be justified. Several questions have incorrect choices that suggest the principal narrator is on her deathbed. You should not reason that the poem’s intense contemplation of death indicates the speaker is gravely ill or about to die; those are unwarranted assumptions.

Another difficulty you face when answering the questions on the Rossetti passage is that the questions ask about some of the poem’s subtler points. There are several questions, for example, about the important shift in the recurrent nature imagery that occurs in the poem’s final stanza. Complications also rise from the presence of multiple speakers in the poem.

This long-standing tradition of conversing with the spiritual forces of the cosmos may seem a hopelessly old-fashioned device, but poets up to the present day continue to create interesting and important works using this convention. The Rossetti poem, however, not only has the speaker in dialogue with the metaphysical world, but takes matters a degree further in the second stanza by having the Soul speak with the voice of the past. Following the line “Hearken what the past doth witness and say:” the Soul presents what the past has to say about human mortality. You needed to understand that in this stanza the past is not being directly presented as a speaker. In fact, the past is probably not even being quoted; the Soul is interpreting the past for the benefit of the principal narrator. This is a tangled piece of rhetorical construction and causes most students some problems.

Overall, the passage, taken together with its questions, is at the difficult end of the spectrum of work you will see on the AP English Literature and Composition Exam.

16. D As noted in the general notes to the passage, this is a tough question. Most students choose answer choice (E), five. But the past is not a speaker. The past is being interpreted for the principal narrator by the Soul. Another choice that sophisticated readers sometimes pick is (A), one. The reasoning behind choosing (A) is usually that only the poet is speaking; the Soul, World, and God represent elements and ideas within the poet. In this reading, the poem is a kind of internal monologue in which the poet sorts out her feelings about death and the afterlife. This interpretation is absolutely plausible (Rossetti certainly did not intend for you to think she had actually held a conversation with the World or with God). The problem is that it is an interpretation. The question asks, “How many speakers does the
poem present?” The emphasis is on what the poem presents, not what the poem might suggest. The question is not asking for an interpretation but simply for what the poem presents. It presents four speakers.

17. C This is one of the relatively rare knowledge questions on the test. You either know it or you don’t. Eighty to ninety percent of the test is about your ability to understand the material you read, both the details and the larger picture. But there are some facts which ETS feels they can expect you to know. They expect you to know the basic terminology of literary criticism and form (i.e., simile, metaphor, sonnet, couplet, etc.), and they occasionally ask about those literary historical references a well-read individual should recognize. This question is an example of the latter.

In ancient Greek and Roman society, a garland of laurel and bay leaves was awarded in recognition of triumph in sports, war, or poetry. The original “gold medal” of the Olympics was a laurel wreath, as is that wreath you always see framing Julius Caesar’s bald pate. The reason the answer specifically mentions poets is that laurel (bay is a variety of laurel) was the symbolic flower of Apollo, patron God of poetry. Even today, when people are honored as the national poet their title is poet laureate. Speaking of honors, graduation from college with a bachelor’s degree will mean that you have earned your baccalaureate, a term derived from the medieval university tradition of crowning graduates with laurel.

18. B The lines in question here, “I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:/ Thou, root stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay,” contrast the cyclical progress of the seasons with the linear trajectory of human life. Line 7 is a troublemaker line for many students, who frequently pick up on “root stricken” as indicating that the principal narrator is deathly ill. What root-stricken refers to is the fundamental presence of death in human life. The author and humans in general are “root stricken” in the sense that death is imminent from birth; or to use another plant metaphor, we carry the seed of death within us from conception.

19. C The incorrect answers all make use of imagery that draws on living things, especially plants, and of the changing seasons. In line 13, the image of “Rust in thy gold” is the one image of the poem that draws neither on the seasons nor on living things.

20. E In this question the key was to use POE, reading each answer choice carefully for what makes it wrong. An answer that gets the meaning of two out of three stanzas correct is still wrong. In these kinds of questions, pay close attention to the wording of the answer choices. In (B), for example, you should reason that for stanza 1, “nostalgia for the earthly world that must be left behind” is close enough to accept, and “welcome acceptance of the afterlife” for stanza 3 is substantially correct. However, “fear of physical decay” for stanza 2 is only half-correct. Physical decay is certainly contemplated, but fear is much too strong a term. This makes the answer wrong. Cross it off. Working this way you should find yourself, without too much trouble, left only with the correct answer, (E).

21. E The question shouldn’t have given you too much trouble. Basically, you were asked what “a moth in thine array” is meant to signify metaphorically. The image is yet one more description of the natural aging process. The incorrect choices offer various misreadings, either seeing illness where none is present, or spiritual anxieties that neither the line in question, nor the poem as a whole, is concerned with.
22. A Understanding the lines in question is not as much about the lines themselves as it is about letting them make sense in the overall context of the poem. If you understood the bulk of the poem, then this question shouldn’t have been difficult. If the poem itself gave you trouble, this question might have as well. The incorrect choices offer various misreadings and overinterpretations.

23. B This is a question that many students get wrong. Always return to the passage. The third stanza presents a dramatic reversal in the poem’s meaning and direction by refiguring imagery from the previous stanzas with an antithetical meaning. In the first two stanzas, Spring and all the imagery of Spring are used to represent youth, energy, and life. You might easily think then that Winter, as Spring’s opposite, represents (E) aging and loss of vigor, or perhaps (C) the coldness of the grave, that is, death itself. But the question asks for the meaning of winter in the third stanza. In this stanza God says that now “winter passeth after the long delay.” What follows are images of spring now clearly tied to death and the afterlife. Spring in the final stanza is a metaphor for the joy of reunion with God. In the final stanza, God offers death as a joyous springlike occasion. It is earthly life, separate from the Maker, which is the long Winter.

24. C As with all questions with longer answers, you must read carefully and eliminate when an answer is partially correct. Partially correct means all wrong. Otherwise, the reasoning behind this question is fully covered in the explanation to question 23.

25. C The line runs on from 7 to 8. This is another terminology question. If it gave you any trouble you should refer to our section on literary terms for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam. Also, remember to use POE to get rid of those answers you are sure are wrong and guess with what’s left. No blanks!

26. C One of the easiest questions on the test. This is essentially a vocabulary question, but chances are you were unfamiliar with the passage’s usage of the word “spray.” Figure out the meaning from the context. None of the incorrect answers makes sense in context except possibly (A), and we hope that between (A) and (C), you chose (C).

27. D You are certain to see a question (or two or three) like this one on your test. If you got this question wrong, brush up on your skills with our section on grammar for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam (page 53). As outlined in that section, the best way to figure out the construction of the kind of sentence ETS likes to ask about is to rewrite the sentence (in your mind—you shouldn’t need to actually write it down) into a more natural form. The sentences ETS chooses are never straightforward “subject, verb, direct-object, indirect object” sentences like “Jack threw the ball to me.” The sentence that begins on line 24 “Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day, My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear me say,” should be rewritten:

“Thou shalt hear me say, ‘Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day, My love, My sister, My spouse.’”

Notice we’ve put quotation marks around what God reports he will say. This is how the sentence would normally be punctuated. If you rewrite it in this manner, you should be able to see that “Thou” is the subject.
QUESTIONS 28–40

This passage is from Anthony Trollope’s novel *Barchester Towers*, the second of his Barsetshire novels. It was written in 1857 and, unlike many Victorian novels, was more concerned with the topics of the day than the recent past. However, like the Victorian prose you are apt to see on the test, the sentences can be somewhat convoluted, with multiple negations and other forms of twisted syntax. Tone isn’t always easy to discern. Close reading is essential.

28. A The narrator states, “It is not my intention to breathe a word against Mrs Proudie,” but then spends several paragraphs doing just that. Choice (B) is a colloquialism derived from figurative language describing a domineering wife. Because domineering is precisely what Mrs. Proudie is said to be, there is no irony here. Choice (C) is the juxtaposition of Mrs. Grantly, the archdeacon’s wife, but there isn’t enough said about her to know if this is ironic or not. Choice (D) might be construed as hyperbole, but it certainly is not the opposite of the author’s intended meaning. Choice (E) is close; one might detect some sarcasm, also known as verbal irony, but the author doesn’t mean the opposite of what he has stated, so (A) is the best answer.

29. C Although it describes Dr. Proudie, it does so in the context of how Mrs. Proudie’s despotic behavior has cowed him. Choice (A), while tempting, refers much more closely to Mrs. Proudie’s ambitions and how they extend beyond the normal sphere of the wife of a bishop. Choice (B) refers to Mrs. Grantly, not Mrs. Proudie. Choice (D) refers to something Mrs. Proudie expects those under her roof to submit to, but it is not as pointed an example of her authoritarian nature as (C). Choice (E) uses a mythological allusion to a watchful, not authoritarian, character.

30. E Dr. Proudie is, in name, the lord of Mrs. Proudie, but as the passage explains in great depth, it is Mrs. Proudie, in actuality, who lords over her husband. The situation is the opposite of what it is in name. Choice (A) doesn’t have much going for it, other than a big word that students who aren’t adequately familiar with literary terms won’t understand. Hyperbole is exaggeration, and (A) is not an exaggeration. Choices (B) and (D) do much the same thing, but with even fancier words. Choice (C) might appeal to a student who knows that onomatopoeia has something to do with how words sound, and “titular” does sound funny—but it’s not a noun or verb, so it can’t really sound like the noise made by the thing it describes.

31. D The phrase states that in domestic matters, he would not have offered the power to his wife, but was happy to cede it. Choice (B) and (E) are based on careless reading of the phrases “domestic” or the vague memory that the passage was about his marriage. Choices (A) and (C) take deceptive language from further afield in the passage.

32. C In the context of the passage, which is devoted to describing Mrs. Proudie’s character, the example of Mrs. Grantly, the archdeacon’s wife, is used to describe Mrs. Proudie by contrast. Mrs. Grantly’s virtues are laid out in contrast, and the transition into the subsequent paragraph, “Not so Mrs. Proudie,” makes the author’s intention clear. Choice (A) is a trap answer, designed to snare the careless reader who sees the words “the full privileges of her rank,” which actually pertain to her role as a clergyman’s wife. Choice (B) is another use of deceptive language. The transition into the paragraph, “In fact, the bishop is henpecked,” refers to Dr. Proudie, not the archdeacon, Mrs. Grantly’s husband. Choice (D) is probably the most evil of all trap answers, one designed to catch the rare student who may have read
this novel or its sequels, in particular, *Framley Parsonage*, in which the rivalry of Mrs. Grantly and Mrs. Proudie is given substantial attention. It certainly is not the author’s intention to suggest a rivalry, although he may have intended to foreshadow it. Choice (E) has some merit. From the description of Mrs. Grantly, it certainly seems as if the author favors women who exert their power domestically and privately. The passage states, “before the world she is a pattern of obedience; her voice is never loud ... she know what should be the limits of a woman’s rule.” Nevertheless, the language in the answer choice, “assert why women should be seen and not heard,” suggests that the author provides evidence for a position stronger than the one he actually takes.

33. D *Pity*, answer choice (A), is best used to describe how the author feels toward Dr. Proudie, “her poor husband.” Although the narrator may feign an appearance of *objectivity*, answer choice (B), his opening comments make it clear that what he presents is his subjective opinion. Given that, answer choice (C), *emotional judgment*, might be tempting, but his language is strong enough to justify (D), *sardonic condemnation*. He is certainly mocking Mrs. Proudie, and his judgment of her does condemn her behavior. It is choice (E) that is too extreme for the passage.

34. B We get no sense of Dr. Proudie’s devotion to his wife or of his moral compass, no matter what we might want to infer from knowing his profession, so answer choice (A) is out. Answer choice (B) is supported by the text of the third paragraph. Choice (C) and (D) suggest a happy and loving marriage, not the picture painted by this paragraph. (E) might describe Mrs. Proudie’s relationship to her husband, but not the reverse.

35. C He is described as “aware that submission produces the nearest approach to peace which his own house can ever attain.” Choices (A) refers most nearly to a quality best attributed to Mrs. Proudie. Choices (B) and (E) are not supported by the text. Choice (D) is a trap answer for those who read quickly and saw that the passage was about the clergy and religious matters.

36. B Even if you weren’t familiar with the Victorian use of “character” as shorthand for “character reference,” you could derive the meaning from the context of the passage—the maid has been dismissed, and because of this “character,” she is unable to find decent employment. Choices (A), (C), and (E) all prey on a reader’s familiarity with the dictionary definitions of the word, as opposed to the contextual meaning. Choice (D) is a trap for the careless reader who sees “character” and “foot” near each other in the passage and overinterprets—perhaps thinking that the footman is sent to escort the housemaid from the premises.

37. C The repetition of the phrase “Woe betide” accentuates the seriousness of the servants’ situation. It neither slows down the prose, as in (A), nor does it satirize or mock the servants’ fate, as in (B). The phrase is consistent with the narrator’s attitude throughout the rest of the passage, so (D) is incorrect. Choice (E) is too extreme.

38. A The maid in question has been unfaithful to her duty. As is par for the course, on a single phrase or word question, the primary dictionary definition, choice (D) is offered as an answer choice, as is a word it kind of sounds like, choice (B). The other choices have no merit whatsoever.
39. C The point of the paragraph is to illustrate Mrs. Proudie’s hypocrisy. The paragraph does so by showing how strict she is in applying the rules to others when it comes to this single point of religious belief, although she is given to “[d]issipation and low dresses” the rest of the time. Choice (A) might be tempting because of the religious aspect, but in no place does this paragraph suggest a transformation for the domineering Mrs. Proudie. Choice (B) also has its merits, as this paragraph is where Mr. Slope is introduced, but no mention is made of him observing Mrs. Proudie (quite the contrary, one is expected to observe Mr. Slope). For similar reasons—the mention of religion—(D) might be attractive, but as mentioned above, it doesn’t counter speculation about her despotic reign. It extends it beyond her husband to her household staff... which she might have a hard time hiring, as (E) suggests, but that would not be the point of the paragraph.

40. E The author analyzes Mrs. Proudie in an amusing way, mocking her cleverly by pointing out her flaws, first in contrast to a social equivalent, then by exposing her hypocrisy. Most of the other answers fall into the half-right, half-wrong category, and aggressive POE will save the day here. Choice (A) is wrong on both counts—the passage is neither humorless nor pedantic. Although the passage is certainly subjective, it is hardly emotional, so as long as you know the definition of effusive, you can eliminate (B). Choice (C) starts out stronger; the passage is certainly descriptive. Alas, a few metaphors do not a metaphorical passage make. If you chose (C), or even kept it on your first pass through the answer choices, don’t kick yourself. Close answer choices are one of the ways a question can be made more challenging. Lacking both terseness and epigrams, though, choice (D) should be an easy candidate for elimination.

QUESTIONS 41–55
The passage is the poem “A Long Line of Doctors” by contemporary American poet Carolyn Kizer. Overall, the questions shouldn’t have caused you too many problems as long as you had a working sense of the general content of the poem and kept the poem's main idea in mind.

Essentially, the poem describes a character called Mother (we shouldn’t presume that the poem is in fact about Kizer’s mother, the poem might narrate an entirely fictional trial and fictional people) who serves on the jury at the trial of a dentist. The mother takes a strange and not particularly honorable approach to her duties; she simply finds the dentist guilty from the moment she lays eyes on him, and so pays as much attention to the book she’s reading as to the trial itself. If you got this much from the poem you would be off to a good start. Using POE carefully should have solved most (or all) of your problems.

41. D This question called for you to interpret the answer choices carefully. You needed to pay strict attention to the wording of the choices. Choice (A) should have been an easy first elimination. It describes an attitude completely opposite to that of the mother’s. The other three incorrect answers were a little bit tricky. In (B), was she “completely unaware?” Take the statement literally. Does she not know that she will be called upon to deliver a verdict? Of course she does. She may be unaware of some of the ethical duties imposed on her, but that doesn’t make her “completely” unaware. Eliminate (B). Similarly, in (C), just because the Mother judges the dentist according to her own rather than legal standards we can’t assume that she would face every jury situation this way, nor in fact does she hold the dentist’s status as accused against him. She just doesn’t like creepy little dentists. (E) shouldn’t have been too tough to eliminate. The mother certainly considers herself superior to the dentist (and probably a lot of other people as well), but how she feels the law applies to her
we don’t know. Eliminate (E). This leaves only (D). Yes, it’s fair to say that the mother takes her responsibilities too lightly, and her certainty about the whole affair tells us that she has no doubts about her fitness as a juror.

42. B This question should have been a piece of cake. You did not need to read too much into the phrase “half-heard.” Don’t let the power of suggestion steer you down false paths. The mother half-hears because she’s reading. If the poet wanted to suggest age or poor hearing she would have returned to those ideas to make them clearer. Here, she wants to reinforce the impression that the mother has made up her mind so fully that she barely bothers with the details of the trial.

43. D This is an extremely tricky question. Many students pick answer choices (B) or (C). But the dentist is not said to be a seminarian (a clergyperson). The dentist is uncomfortable, like a priest without the white collar of that profession. The rest of the stanza relates the courtroom to a ship (e.g., the “plank,” the “deck”). The dentist isn’t compared to a condemned sailor, but is described as though he is one when the mother pushes the fly-speck from the page and says “she will push him off.” This statement refers to the way in which she will push him from the plank. It also suggests that she thinks of him as easily dismissed and as insignificant as a fly, and perhaps as repulsive. But the poet does not describe the dentist as a fly-speck. Choice (E) may or may not be true, but it is found neither in the stanza, nor in the poem. Only (D) is correct.

44. C Here you needed to understand that the poem is about the mother and the dentist, not about other people. That is, you needed to stay with the main idea. The phrase in question refers only to the dentist; in fact, choice (C) summarizes it nicely. The dentist is the “hacker, wielder of pliers,” etc. Yes, some of the items in the list are a bit confusing, but use your imagination. How is the dentist a “barber”? Well, think of the hydraulic chair you have to sit in, or the bib the dentist pulls around your neck; aren’t those things reminiscent of being in a barbershop?

45. E Here you needed to stay with the main idea and not get drawn toward a silly answer. Throughout the poem, the mother feels herself to be superior to dentists in general and to this dentist in particular. The mother is a tremendous snob; she considers dentists to be lowlifes. Advertising is just one more thing that her-kind-of-people just don’t do. You might have had some difficulty if you didn’t know the word “propriety.” It refers to what is proper or polite. POE should have led you to the right answer anyway, however, so long as you saw that other answers all involved reading much too deeply into the passage.

46. A The lines “He was doomed, doomed, doomed by birth, profession,/ Practice, appearance, personal habits, loves.../ And now his patient swollen-mouthed with cancer!” gave this question away. All you had to do was to work through the choices using those lines to eliminate (remember this is an EXCEPT question!). In the end, all you are left with is the correct answer. The dentist’s religious beliefs are never mentioned.
47. A ETS has a way of sneaking some vocabulary into the test, and this question is a good example. It is also a good example of a question that lends itself to POE and the principle of half-bad = all-bad. You didn’t have to know what lecherous meant in (A) to say that the dentist could be seen as comically chasing his assistant around the chair while molded plaster teeth grinz from the shelves, and there’s something sickly funny too about his being so out of it with love that he drills right through a patient’s tongue. So, if you didn’t know what lecherous meant you’d leave (A) for a guess. For (B) to be correct, the dentist would have to have deliberately drilled through his patient’s tongue. That’s wrong, so eliminate (B). For exactly the same reason eliminate (C), the dentist was not calculating. In (D) you find more vocab. What’s amorous? If you know, great, but you don’t need to know to eliminate the choice. You could eliminate by simply using the half-bad = all-bad principle. Is the dentist timid? No. He chased his assistant around the chair. He sounds more like a maniac. Eliminate (D). Finally there’s (E). The dentist drilled his patient’s tongue in a moment of dreamy contemplation, not anger. Eliminate (E). Thus, using POE, we’re left with only (A). So what does lecherous mean? Well, essentially, it means lustful, with strong overtones of slime.

48. E The phrase “tasting brine” continues the doomed-sailor-forced-to-walk-the-plank metaphor of the second stanza. Again, vocabulary helps: “brine” is seawater. The dentist has begun to realize that things are not going well, that he will be found guilty. Metaphorically then, he will walk the plank and end up with a mouthful of seawater. It’s worth pointing out how nicely Kizer sets this image of “tasting brine.” It refers back to the earlier sailor metaphors, but it also works as a fresh rephrasing of a stale idea: that one finds a bitter taste in one’s mouth in the face of unpleasant prospects. Along similar lines, and just because artistry is worth pointing out wherever you find it, note Kizer’s use of the word “rises” in the phrase “as the testimony rises.” It’s an unusual/striking verb in this context, but perfectly suited to the moment. “Rises” implies an increase in sound and in passion. It is also the verb of choice to refer to deepening water, as in a rising tide—or even more appropriately—to the effect an approaching storm has on the seas, as in the seas’ rise. In the poem, Kizer has found a use for “rise” where all three meanings—increasing sound, increasing emotion, rising (metaphorical) water—come into play. Does seeing this specifically help you answer the question? Not really. But we wanted to point out the kind of sensitivity to language you want to develop in order to fully appreciate poetry (and everything else you read). Developing a keen ear for language brings pleasure and success far beyond the AP exam (though it helps you there, too).

49. D The key to this question was to go back and find where the poem attaches a metaphor to reading. The question gives no line reference, but you shouldn’t have had too much trouble spotting line 19, where the mother reads with “an easy breaststroke.” (Of course, to do this kind of spotting, you needed to have an idea of what a metaphor is. We’ve mentioned it a couple of times already, but here it is again: Make sure you can define the terms simile and metaphor, and make sure you can tell the difference between them. Both concepts are defined in our glossary of literary terms.) This was a very easy question so long as you went back to the passage. The disastrous mistake was to not go back to the passage and instead try to figure out the answer based on memory and common sense. Even if you didn’t get the question wrong you’d actually end up wasting time, and you’d probably get it wrong.
50. D This is primarily a term question, but you could have arrived at a correct guess without knowing that “poetic justice” refers to punishment that reflects the crime. (For example, a counterfeiter buying an expensive old painting with bogus money only to discover later that the painting is a forgery.) In the seventh stanza, the poet describes the dentist now in the position of a patient, gripping the arms of his chair and being most uncomfortably drilled. This sort of reversal also falls under the category of poetic justice. If you were unfamiliar with the term poetic justice you could have arrived at a perfectly good guess by reading the question carefully. It refers to “Mother’s treatment” of the dentist. In which stanza is the mother most directly involved with the dentist himself (and not simply the legal process)? In the seventh stanza, where she “strapped him in, to drill him away.” This understanding should have made (D), the most attractive guess. **Guess.** By the way, there’s another more technical definition of poetic justice, which ETS will probably not use. We cover that definition in our glossary.

51. C There’s our old friend irony again. In the phrase “Nice Mrs. Nemesis” the irony is not very delicate; in fact, it has almost become irony’s nasty little brother, sarcasm. To answer this question, it helped a great deal to know that a “nemesis” is an archenemy. (In the poem, Kizer actually refers to the Greek goddess, Nemesis, who represented righteous anger.) If you knew that a nemesis is an archenemy, or even just something negative (which you could have figured out from context), you could have reasoned that “Nice Mrs. ‘something nasty’” contains the kind of contradiction that makes for irony. Barring that understanding, you should have worked with the terms you knew and used POE. All the terms in the answer choices are covered in our glossary of terms.

52. D These I, II, III questions are made for POE. After reading through the items, you should have gone back to the final stanza and reread it. Then look at the items again. Which choice is easiest to decide upon? Choice II should look weird—eliminate it. The stanza discusses the mother’s idea of God; Voltaire is an afterthought, and all that’s said is that she finds him “indispensable.” What Voltaire’s views are, the poem doesn’t say (and ETS does not expect you to know Voltaire’s philosophy). With item II gone, choices (B) and (E) are gone as well. What about item III? Social decorum refers to polite behavior. In the last stanza, the mother mentions that God instructs in “hygiene and deportment,” that is, in necessary social graces. Item III is a keeper. Even if you didn’t know what decorum meant, which makes more sense: the mother believes God agrees with her, or disagrees? If you got the general drift of the poem you should know that the Mother thinks God shares her views. Keeping item III means you can eliminate (A). All that’s left are choices (C) and (D). Okay, let’s look at item I. Here you needed to read closely. She says God is “indispensable.” That’s good enough to justify the “deeply held” part of item I. What about “unsophisticated.” Is it a sophisticated conception of the Divine to think that God cares about hygiene? Not really. Furthermore, Kizer’s comparison of the mother to “true idolaters” reinforces the unsophisticated idea. Does the mother think she’s unsophisticated? Not at all! She thinks she’s hot stuff reading Voltaire and all! But the question doesn’t ask what the mother thinks of herself. It asks about what the poem says about her. In the final stanza Kizer has some fun at the mother’s expense. Item I is a keeper, which makes the right answer (D).
53. B This should have been a truly easy grammar question. In fact, it really isn't a grammar
question at all, just a disguised comprehension question. Basically, it asks who "swept
out"? The answer is Mother. You should have gone back to the poem and read the sentence
carefully. ETS likes to ask grammar, or pseudogrammar questions like this one, when the
elements in question are widely separated. In this instance, the only difficult aspect of the
question is that several words intervene between "Mother" and "swept out." Don't let that
throw you. Subject and verb do not have to come close to one another. ETS likes it when
they don't. You've probably also been taught that modifiers should be placed next to the
word(s) they modify. That's true, but ETS likes to ask questions about sentences that are
exceptions to that rule.

54. D This is a super POE question and it should have been pretty easy. Choices I and II should
have been obvious. The mother finds the dentist guilty simply because he is a dentist, and
she then persuades the rest of the jury that he is guilty. Using POE you are then left with
just choices (D) and (E). So, does the poem imply that the dentist should have been found
innocent? Not at all. All it implies is that the dentist is an unattractive creep who drilled
a patient through the tongue. Does this action make him guilty? Who knows? Innocent?
Again: Who knows? We're never told with what exactly the dentist has been charged.

55. E This is a tone question. As you read the poem, you probably found yourself thinking the
mother is being pretty harsh and unfair in condemning a man for being a dentist. And it's
ture. By conventional ethical standards the mother has behaved abominably. Kizer knows it
but never passes judgment. Mostly, Kizer has fun with the situation. She's impressed with
the mother's strength (and arrogance) even as she calls upon Voltaire to rescue the "wreck
of [the mother's] fai'mindedness." Kizer's sympathetic to the mother, but not entirely so,
not when she refers to the mother as "Nice Mrs. Nemesis," and not when she relates the
mother's vision of the deity. These statements are lightly critical. The whole thing is soft-
ened by the fact that the dentist does sound like a creep who deserves what he gets, so the
mother's cavalier attitude doesn't have tragic consequences. All of this reasoning adds up
to (E), amused ambivalence. The situation might have been shocking, but Kizer prefers to
see the underlying humor in the clash of the mother's snooty sense of proper conduct, the
dentist's low life self-presentation, and the irony that neither of them are actually conduct-
ing themselves well. The incorrect choices all call up emotional states that are too extreme to
be justified, and should have been pretty easy to eliminate, so POE should have gotten you
the right answer even if the term "ambivalence" in choice (E) puzzled you.