

Multiple-Choice Practice for the Exam in AP Language and Composition

Questions 1-10. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.
This passage is taken from a nineteenth-century essay.

- It is not easy to write a familiar style. Many people mistake a familiar for a vulgar style, and suppose that to write without affectation is to write at random. On the contrary, there is nothing
line that requires more precision, and, if I may so say, purity of expression,
(5) than the style I am speaking of. It utterly rejects not only all unmeaning pomp, but all low, cant phrases, and loose, unconnected, slipshod allusions. It is not to take the first word that offers, but the best word in common use; it is not to throw words together in any combination we please, but to follow and
(10) avail ourselves of the true idiom of the language. To write a genuine familiar or truly English style, is to write as any one would speak in common conversation, who had a thorough command and choice of words, or who could discourse with ease, force, and perspicuity, setting aside all pedantic and oratorical flourishes.
(15) Or to give another illustration, to write naturally is the same thing in regard to common conversation, as to read naturally is in regard to common speech. It does not follow that it is an easy thing to give the true accent and inflection to the words you utter, because you do not attempt to rise above the level of
(20) ordinary life and colloquial speaking. You do not assume indeed the solemnity of the pulpit, or the tone of stage-declamation: neither are you at liberty to gabble on at a venture, without emphasis or discretion, or to resort to vulgar dialect or clownish pronunciation. You must steer a middle course. You are tied down
(25) to a given and appropriate articulation, which is determined by the habitual associations between sense and sound, and which you can only hit by entering into the author's meaning, as you must find the proper words and style to express yourself by fixing your thoughts on the subject you have to write about. Any one
(30) may mouth out a passage with a theatrical cadence, or get upon stilts to tell his thoughts: but to write or speak with propriety and simplicity is a more difficult task. Thus it is easy to affect a pompous style, to use a word twice as big as the thing you want to express: it is not so easy to pitch upon the very word that
(35) exactly fits it. Out of eight or ten words equally common, equally intelligible, with nearly equal pretensions, it is a matter of some nicety and discrimination to pick out the very one, the preferableness of which is scarcely perceptible, but decisive. The reason why I object to Dr. Johnson's style is, that there is no discrimination,
(40) no selection, no variety in it. He uses none but "tall, opaque words," taken from the "first row of the rubric:"—words with the greatest number of syllables, or Latin phrases with merely English terminations. If a fine style depended on this sort of arbitrary pretension, it would be fair to judge of an author's
(45) elegance by the measurement of his words, and the substitution of foreign circumlocutions (with no precise associations) for the mother-tongue. How simple it is to be dignified without ease, to

be pompous without meaning! Surely, it is but a mechanical rule for avoiding what is low to be always pedantic and affected. It is clear you cannot use a vulgar English word, if you never use a common English word at all. A fine tact is shown in adhering to those which are perfectly common, and yet never falling into any expressions which are debased by disgusting circumstances, or which owe their signification and point to technical or professional allusions. A truly natural or familiar style can never be quaint or vulgar, for this reason, that it is of universal force and applicability, and that quaintness and vulgarity arise out of the immediate connection of certain words with coarse and disagreeable, or with confined ideas.

1. Which of the following best describes the rhetorical function of the second sentence in the passage?
 - (A) It makes an appeal to authority.
 - (B) It restates the thesis of the passage.
 - (C) It expresses the causal relationship between morality and writing style.
 - (D) It provides a specific example for the preceding generalization.
 - (E) It presents a misconception that the author will correct.
2. Which of the following phrases does the author use to illustrate the notion of an unnatural and pretentious writing style?
 - (A) “unconnected, slipshod allusions” (line 7)
 - (B) “throw words together” (lines 8-9)
 - (C) “gabble on at a venture” (line 22)
 - (D) “get upon stilts” (lines 30-31)
 - (E) “pitch upon the very word” (line 34)
3. In lines 10-32 of the passage, the author uses an extended analogy between
 - (A) language and morality
 - (B) preaching and acting
 - (C) writing and speaking
 - (D) vulgar English and incorrect pronunciation
 - (E) ordinary life and the theater
4. In line 17, “common speech” refers to
 - (A) metaphorical language
 - (B) current slang
 - (C) unaffected expression
 - (D) regional dialect
 - (E) impolite speech
5. Which of the following words is grammatically and thematically parallel to “tone” (line 21)?
 - (A) “solemnity” (line 21)
 - (B) “pulpit” (line 21)
 - (C) “stage-declamation” (line 21)
 - (D) “liberty” (line 22)
 - (E) “venture” (line 22)

6. In context, the expression “to pitch upon” (line 34) is best interpreted as having which of the following meanings?
- (A) To suggest in a casual way
 - (B) To set a value on
 - (C) To put aside as if by throwing
 - (D) To utter glibly and insincerely
 - (E) To succeed in finding
7. The ability discussed in lines 35-38 is referred to elsewhere as which of the following?
- (A) “theatrical cadence” (line 30)
 - (B) “foreign circumlocutions” (line 46)
 - (C) “fine tact” (line 51)
 - (D) “professional allusions” (lines 54-55)
 - (E) “universal force” (line 56)
8. The author’s observation in the sentence beginning “It is clear” (lines 49-51) is best described as an example of which of the following?
- (A) Mocking tone
 - (B) Linguistic paradox
 - (C) Popularity of the familiar style
 - (D) The author’s defense of Johnson’s style
 - (E) The author’s advice to the reader
9. 9. In line 52, “those” refers to which of the following?
- I. “words” (line 45)
 - II. “circumlocutions” (line 46)
 - III. “associations” (line 46)
- (A) I only
 - (B) II only
 - (C) I and III only
 - (D) II and III only
 - (E) I, II, and III
10. The author’s tone in the passage as a whole is best described as
- (A) harsh and strident
 - (B) informal and analytical
 - (C) contemplative and conciliatory
 - (D) superficial and capricious
 - (E) enthusiastic and optimistic

Questions 11-22. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.
This passage is taken from an autobiographical work written in the mid-twentieth century.

Up on the corner lived a drunk of legend, a true phenomenon, who could surely have qualified as the king of all the world's winos. He was neither poetic like the others nor ambitious like the singer (to whom we'll presently come) but his drinking bouts were truly awe-inspiring and he was not without his sensitivity. In the throes of his passion he would shout to the whole wide world one concise command, "Shut up!" Which was disconcerting enough to all who heard (except, perhaps, the singer), but such were the labyrinthine acoustics of courtyards and areaways that he seemed to direct his command at me. The writer's block which this produced is indescribable. On one heroic occasion he yelled his obsessive command without one interruption longer than necessary to take another drink (and with no appreciable loss of volume, penetration or authority) for three long summer days and nights, and shortly afterwards he died. Just how many lines of agitated prose he cost me I'll never know, but in all that chaos of sound I sympathized with his obsession, for I, too, hungered and thirsted for quiet. Nor did he inspire me to a painful identification, and for that I was thankful. Identification, after all, involves feelings of guilt and responsibility, and, since I could hardly hear my own typewriter keys, I felt in no way accountable for his condition. We were simply fellow victims of the madding crowd. May he rest in peace.

No, these more involved feelings were aroused by a more intimate source of noise, one that got beneath the skin and worked into the very structure of one's consciousness—like the "fate" motif in Beethoven's Fifth or the knocking-at-the-gates scene in *Macbeth*. For at the top of our pyramid of noise there was a singer who lived directly above us; you might say we had a singer on our ceiling.

Now, I had learned from the jazz musicians I had known as a boy in Oklahoma City something of the discipline and devotion to his art required of the artist. Hence I knew something of what the singer faced. These jazzmen, many of them now world-famous, lived for and with music intensely. Their driving motivation was neither money nor fame, but the will to achieve the most eloquent expression of idea-emotions through the technical mastery of their instruments (which, incidentally, some of them wore as a priest wears the cross) and the give and take, the subtle rhythmical shaping and blending of idea, tone, and imagination demanded of group improvisation. The delicate balance struck between strong individual personality and the group during those early jam sessions was a marvel of social organization. I had learned too that the end of all this discipline and technical mastery was the desire to express an affirmative way of life through its musical tradition and that this tradition insisted that each artist achieve his creativity within its frame. He must learn the best of the past, and add to his personal vision. Life could be harsh, loud, and wrong if it wished, but they lived it fully, and when they expressed their attitude toward the world it was with a fluid style

that reduced the chaos of living to form.

- The objectives of these jazzmen were not at all those of the singer on our ceiling, but, though a purist committed to the mastery of the *bel canto* style, German *lieder*, modern French art songs, and a few American slave songs sung as if *bel canto*, she was intensely devoted to her art. From morning to night she vocalized, regardless of the condition of her voice, the weather, or my screaming nerves. There were times when her notes, sifting through her floor and my ceiling, bouncing down the walls and ricocheting off the building in the rear, whistled like tenpenny nails, buzzed like a saw, wheezed like the asthma of Hercules, trumpeted like an enraged African elephant—and the squeaky pedal of her piano rested plumb center above my typing chair. After a year of noncooperation from the neighbor on my left I became desperate enough to cool down the hot blast of his phonograph by calling the cops, but the singer presented a serious ethical problem: Could I, an aspiring artist, complain against the hard work and devotion to craft of another aspiring artist?

11. The speaker in the passage can best be described as a person who
- (A) is committed to developing his skills as a writer
 - (B) is actually more interested in being a musician than in being a writer
 - (C) has talent as both a musician and a writer
 - (D) is motivated very differently from the jazz musicians that he describes
 - (E) aspires to greatness but knows that he will never achieve it
12. That the speaker “sympathized with” the drunk’s “obsession” (lines 16-17) is ironic chiefly because the drunk
- (A) agitated the speaker purposely and distracted him from his writing
 - (B) was not “poetic” (line 3) and had no basis for his obsession
 - (C) actually disturbed the speaker less than did the singer
 - (D) had little “sensitivity” (line 5) and was undeserving of sympathy
 - (E) was a major source of the noise from which the speaker wished to escape
13. It can be inferred that the speaker and the drunk were “fellow victims” (line 22) in that
- (A) both had lost control of their passions
 - (B) neither received support from friends or relatives
 - (C) each had in a different way proven to be a failure
 - (D) neither was any longer able to feel guilt or responsibility
 - (E) both were tormented by distracting disturbances
14. In context, the word “intimate” (lines 24-25) is best interpreted to mean
- (A) suggestive and lyrical
 - (B) tender and friendly
 - (C) inexorably penetrating
 - (D) sensual and charming
 - (E) strongly private

15. The speaker mentions Beethoven's Fifth and *Macbeth* (lines 27-28) as examples of which of the following?
- (A) Masterly creations flawed by insidious motifs and violent scenes
 - (B) Works of art famous for their power to annoy audiences
 - (C) Splendid artistic achievements often performed unsatisfactorily
 - (D) Artistic compositions with compelling and unforgettable elements
 - (E) Classic masterpieces with which everyone should be familiar
16. The description of the "delicate balance" (line 41) achieved at jazz jam sessions contributes to the unity of the passage in which of the following ways?
- (A) As a contrast to the situation in the speaker's neighborhood
 - (B) As a condemnation of the singer's lack of talent
 - (C) As a parallel to the drunk's attitude toward the world
 - (D) As an indication of the essential similarity between art and life
 - (E) As a satirical comment on the speaker's own shortcomings
17. According to the speaker, the jazz musicians that he knew as a boy attempted to do all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) become technical masters of the instruments on which they performed
 - (B) blend forms such as the slave song and the spiritual into carefully structured performances
 - (C) achieve individuality and virtuosity within the confines of their musical tradition
 - (D) communicate their beliefs and attitudes in a positive manner through their performances
 - (E) combine their talents with those of others in extemporaneous group performances
18. The speaker's attitude toward the jazz musicians is best described as one of
- (A) idolatrous devotion
 - (B) profound admiration
 - (C) feigned intimacy
 - (D) qualified enthusiasm
 - (E) reasoned objectivity
19. The speaker suggests that the jazz musicians to whom he refers accomplish which of the following by means of their art?
- (A) They hold a mirror to nature.
 - (B) They prove that music is superior to other art forms.
 - (C) They provide an ironic view of the world.
 - (D) They create order from the disorder of life.
 - (E) They create music concerned more with truth than beauty.
20. In the sentence beginning "There were times" (lines 58-63), the speaker employs all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) concrete diction
 - (B) parallel syntax
 - (C) simile
 - (D) understatement
 - (E) onomatopoeia

21. In the passage, the drunk, the jazz musicians, and the singer all share which of the following?
- (A) An inability to identify with others
 - (B) An intense application to a single activity
 - (C) A concern more with individuality than with tradition
 - (D) An ambivalent feeling about their roles in life
 - (E) A desire for popular approval
22. The style of the passage as a whole is most accurately characterized as
- (A) abstract and allusive
 - (B) disjointed and effusive
 - (C) informal and descriptive
 - (D) complex and pedantic
 - (E) symbolic and terse

Questions 23-33. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.
This passage is taken from a twentieth-century book about China.

- Throughout her history China had believed herself the center of civilization, surrounded by barbarians. She was the Middle Kingdom, the center of the universe, whose Emperor was the Son of Heaven, ruling by the Mandate of Heaven. Convinced of their superior values, the Chinese considered that China's greatness was owed to principles of social order over a harmonious whole. All outsiders whose misfortune was to live beyond her borders were "barbarians" and necessarily inferiors who were expected, and indeed required, to make their approach, if they insisted on coming, bearing tribute and performing the kowtow in token of humble submission.
- From the time of Marco Polo to the eighteenth century, visiting Westerners, amazed and admiring, were inclined to take China at her own valuation. Her recorded history began in the third millennium B.C., her bronzes were as old as the pyramids, her classical age was contemporary with that of Greece, her Confucian canon of ethics predated the New Testament if not the Old. She was the inventor of paper, porcelain, silk, gunpowder, the clock and movable type, the builder of the Great Wall, one of the wonders of the world, the creator of fabrics and ceramics of exquisite beauty and of an art of painting that was sophisticated and expressive when Europe's was still primitive and flat
- When at the end of the eighteenth century Western ships and merchants surged against China's shores, eager for tea and silk and cotton, they found no reciprocal enthusiasm. Enclosed in the isolation of superiority, Imperial China wanted no influx of strangers from primitive islands called Britain or France or Holland who came to live off the riches of the Middle Kingdom bearing only worthless articles for exchange. They had ugly noses and coarse manners and wore ridiculous clothes with constricting sleeves and trousers, tight collars and coats that had tails down the back but failed to close in front. These were not the garments of reasonable men.
- A past-oriented society, safe only in seclusion, sensed a threat from the importunate West. The Imperial Government raised every barrier possible by refusals, evasions, postponements, and prohibitions to foreign entry or settlement or the opening of formal relations. Splendidly remote in the "Great Within" of the Forbidden City of Peking, the court refused to concern itself with the knocking on its doors. It would admit foreign embassies who came to plead for trade treaties only if they performed the ritual of three genuflections and nine prostrations in approaching the Son of Heaven. British envoys, after surmounting innumerable obstacles to reach Peking, balked at the kowtow and turned back empty-handed.

23. The principal contrast employed by the author in the passage is between
- (A) past and present
 - (B) wisdom and foolishness
 - (C) Imperial China and Europe
 - (D) civilization and barbarism
 - (E) technology and art
24. In paragraph 2, which of the following rhetorical devices is most in evidence?
- (A) Appeals to authority
 - (B) The massing of factual information
 - (C) The use of abstract generalizations
 - (D) Impressionistic descriptive writing
 - (E) The use of anecdote

25. The primary rhetorical function of lines 11-18 is to
- (A) provide support for a thesis supplied in lines 1-2
 - (B) provide evidence to contrast with that supplied in the first paragraph
 - (C) present a thesis that will be challenged in paragraph three
 - (D) introduce a series of generalizations that are supported in the last two paragraphs
 - (E) anticipate objections raised by the ideas presented in lines 10-11
26. Lines 11-14 contain which of the following?
- (A) Elaborate metaphor
 - (B) Parallel syntax
 - (C) A single periodic sentence
 - (D) A compound subject
 - (E) Subordinate clauses
27. In the last sentence of paragraph 2 (lines 14-18), which of the following words is parallel in function to “inventor” (line 15)?
- (A) “clock” (line 15)
 - (B) “one” (line 16)
 - (C) “creator” (line 16)
 - (D) “art” (line 17)
 - (E) “Europe’s” (line 18)
28. In line 23, “bearing” modifies
- (A) “Imperial China” (line 21)
 - (B) “strangers” (line 22)
 - (C) “primitive islands” (line 23)
 - (D) “riches” (line 23)
 - (E) “Middle Kingdom” (line 23)
29. The point of view expressed in “They . . . men” (lines 24-27) is that of
- (A) the author
 - (B) present-day historians
 - (C) eighteenth-century British merchants
 - (D) eighteenth-century Chinese
 - (E) present-day Chinese
30. The word “importunate” (line 29) is reinforced by the author’s later reference to
- (A) “prohibitions to foreign entry” (line 30)
 - (B) “formal relations” (line 31)
 - (C) “knocking on its doors” (line 33)
 - (D) “the ritual of three genuflections” (line 34)
 - (E) “empty-handed” (line 37)
31. Which of the following best describes the first sentence of paragraph 4 (lines 28-29)?
- (A) The author’s interpretation of China’s situation in the late eighteenth century
 - (B) An objective summary of eighteenth-century Europe’s view of China
 - (C) A challenge to the opinions in paragraph 3
 - (D) A restatement of the ideas in paragraph 2
 - (E) A conclusion rebutted by information in paragraph 4
32. Which of the following characteristics of Imperial China or Britain is most emphasized in paragraph 4?
- (A) Britain’s adaptability to foreign customs
 - (B) Imperial China’s aloof and insular attitude toward Europeans
 - (C) Imperial China’s wisdom in relying on tradition and ceremony
 - (D) Britain’s desperate need for foreign trade
 - (E) The splendor of the Imperial Chinese court

33. The tone of the passage is best described as
- (A) scornful and unsympathetic
 - (B) reverent and respectful
 - (C) acerbic and cynical
 - (D) serious but faintly condescending
 - (E) irate but carefully judicious

Questions 34-43. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.
This passage is taken from a twentieth-century book.

The town sits in a vale between two rounded-off, thickly wooded mountains. Hot mineral waters pour out of the mountainsides, and the hills for miles around erupt with springs, some
line of them famous and commercial, with bottled water for sale,
(5) others trickling under rotten leaves in deep woods and known only to the natives. From one spring the water gushes milky and sulphurous. From another it comes forth laced with arsenic. Here it will be heavy with the taste of rocky earth, there, as sweet as rainwater. Each spring possesses its magical healing
(10) properties and its devoted, believing imbibers. In 1541, on the journey that proved to be his last, Hernando de Soto encountered friendly tribes at these springs. For a thousand years before him the mound-building Indians who lived in the Mississippi Valley had come here to cure their rheumatism and activate their sluggish
(15) bowels.

The main street of town, cutting from northeast to southwest, is schizoid, lined on one side with plate-glass store fronts and on the other with splendid white stucco bathhouses, each with its noble portico and veranda, strung along the street like stones in
(20) an old-fashioned necklace. All but one of the bathhouses are closed down now. At the head of the street, on a plateau, stands the multistoried Arlington, a 1920's resort hotel and a veritable ducal palace in yellow sandstone. Opposite, fronted in mirrors and glittering chrome, is what once was a gambling casino and
(25) is now a wax museum. "The Southern Club," it was called in the days when the dice tumbled across the green baize and my father waited for the results from Saratoga to come in over Western Union. Lots of other horsebooks operated in that same neighborhood—the White Front, the Kentucky Club—some in back
(30) rooms and dives in which no respectable person would be seen. But the Southern was another thing. Gamblers from Chicago strolled in and out in their ice-cream suits and their two-tone shoes and nothing smaller than a C-note in their pockets. Packards pulled up to the door and let out wealthy men with showy
(35) canes and women in silk suits and alligator pumps who owned stables of thoroughbreds and next month would travel to Churchill Downs. I saw this alien world in glimpses as Mother and I sat at the curb in the green Chevrolet, waiting for the last race at Belmont or Hialeah to be over so that my father could
(40) figure the payoffs and come home to supper.

The other realm was the usual realm, Middletown, Everyplace. Then it was frame houses, none very new. Now it is brick ranches and splits, carports, inlaid nylon carpet, and draw-drapes. Now
(45) the roads are lined with a pre-fab forest of Pizza Huts, Bonanzas, ninety kinds of hamburger stand, and gas stations, some with an occasional Southern touch: a plaque, for example, that reads "Serve-U-Sef." In what I still remember as horse pasture now stands a windowless high school—windowless—where classes range up to one hundred, and the teacher may not be able to learn

- (50) everybody's name. My old elementary school, a two-story brick thing that threatened to fall down, had windows that reached to the fourteen-foot ceiling. We kept them shut only from November to February, for in this pleasant land the willows turn green and the winds begin sweetening in March, and by April the iris and
- (55) jonquils bloom so thickly in every yard that you can smell them on the schoolroom air. On an April afternoon, we listened to the creek rushing through the schoolyard and thought mostly about crawdads.

34. The passage as a whole is best described as
- (A) a dramatic monologue
 - (B) a melodramatic episode
 - (C) an evocation of a place
 - (D) an objective historical commentary
 - (E) an allegorical fable
35. The speaker's reference to Hernando de Soto's visit to the springs in 1541 (lines 10-12) serves primarily to
- (A) clarify the speaker's attitude toward the springs
 - (B) exemplify the genuine benefits of the springs
 - (C) document the history of the springs
 - (D) specify the exact location of the springs
 - (E) describe the origin of beliefs in the springs' magical properties
36. With which of the following pairs does the speaker illustrate what she means by "schizoid" in line 17?
- (A) "plate-glass store fronts" (line 17) and "splendid white stucco bathhouses" (line 18)
 - (B) "stones in an old-fashioned necklace" (lines 19-20) and "fronted in mirrors and glittering chrome" (lines 23-24)
 - (C) "the multistoried Arlington" (line 22) and "The Southern Club" (line 25)
 - (D) "once was a gambling casino" (line 24) and "now a wax museum" (line 25)
 - (E) "Chicago" (line 31) and "Churchill Downs" (line 37)
37. In describing the bathhouses and the Arlington hotel (lines 18-23), the speaker emphasizes their
- (A) isolation
 - (B) mysteriousness
 - (C) corruptness
 - (D) magnificence
 - (E) permanence
38. The sentence structure and diction of lines 28-37 ("Lots of other horsebooks . . . travel to Churchill Downs") suggest that the scene is viewed by
- (A) an impartial sociologist
 - (B) a fascinated bystander
 - (C) a cynical commentator
 - (D) an argumentative apologist
 - (E) a bemused visitor

39. The attitude of the speaker toward the gamblers from Chicago is primarily one of
- (A) awe
 - (B) suspicion
 - (C) disapproval
 - (D) mockery
 - (E) indifference
40. The terms “Middletown, Everyplace” (line 41) are best interpreted as
- (A) nicknames used by local residents for their town
 - (B) epithets referring to the homogeneity of American suburbs
 - (C) euphemisms for an area too sprawling to be called a town
 - (D) names that emphasize the town’s prominence as a cultural center
 - (E) evidence of the town’s location at the heart of varied activities
41. The speaker mentions the “Serve-U-Sef” plaque (line 47) chiefly as an example of
- (A) appealing wit
 - (B) churlish indifference
 - (C) attempted folksiness
 - (D) double entendre
 - (E) inimitable eccentricity
42. The speaker’s tone at the conclusion of the passage (lines 50-58) is primarily one of
- (A) poignant remorse
 - (B) self-deprecating humor
 - (C) feigned innocence
 - (D) lyrical nostalgia
 - (E) cautious ambivalence
43. Which of the following is most likely a deliberate exaggeration?
- (A) “the water gushes milky and sulphurous” (lines 6-7)
 - (B) “For a thousand years before him” (line 12)
 - (C) “back rooms and dives in which no respectable person would be seen” (lines 29-30)
 - (D) “women in silk suits . . . who owned stables of thoroughbreds” (lines 35-36)
 - (E) “ninety kinds of hamburger stand” (line 45)

Questions 44-55. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.
This passage is taken from a contemporary book about engineering and technology.

A major attraction at the Paris Exposition of 1867 was the locomotive *America*. Its cab was crafted of ash, maple, black walnut, mahogany, and cherry. Its boiler, smokestack, valve boxes, and cylinders were covered with a glistening silvery material. The tender was decorated with the arms of the Republic, a portrait of Ulysses S. Grant, and a number of elaborate scrolls. Other machinery of the day exhibited similar characteristics. Steam engines were built in “Greek revival” style, featuring fluted columns and decorated pedestals. On a printing press called *The Columbian* each pillar was a caduceus—the serpent-entwined staff of the universal messenger, Hermes—and atop the machine perched an eagle with extended wings, grasping in its talons Jove’s thunderbolts, an olive branch of peace, and a cornucopia of plenty, all bronzed and gilt.¹ It is little remembered today that well into the late nineteenth century most American machine manufacturers embellished their creations. While this practice pleased the public, some observers considered it anomalous. A writer in the British periodical *Engineering* found it “extremely difficult to understand how among a people so practical in most things, there is maintained a tolerance of the grotesque ornaments and gaudy colors, which as a rule rather than an exception distinguish American machines.”² An exasperated critic for *Scientific American* asserted that “a highly colored and fancifully ornamented piece of machinery is good in the inverse ratio of the degree of color and ornament.”³

By the beginning of the twentieth century, machine ornamentation yielded to clean lines, economy, and restriction to the essential. “Form follows function” became the precept of a new machine aesthetic. Creators of exotic contraptions like the locomotive *America* were accused of being sentimentalists, hypocrites and worse. Yet in their reluctance to give up adornment—ridiculous as it might have seemed—these designers were in fact expressing a discomfort we all share, an uneasiness in the face of mathematical severity.

The new machine aesthetic, the admiration of

¹ John F. Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America 1776-1900* (New York: Grossman Publishers, The Viking Press, 1976), Chapter 4, “The Aesthetics of Machinery,” pp. 139–180.

² “Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition,” *Engineering* (26 May 1876), p. 427, cited by Kasson, see note 1 above.

³ “The International Exhibition of 1876,” *Scientific American Supplement* (17 June 1876), p. 386, cited by Kasson, see note 1 above.

- (45) slickness and purity of line, spread from factories and power plants into every area of society. The term “industrial design” was first used in 1913, and by 1927 the famed Norman Bel Geddes was calling himself an “industrial designer.”⁴ During the twenties
- (50) and thirties practically every human artifact was repatterned in the new mode. Lamps, tables, and chairs; toasters, refrigerators, and clocks; plates, goblets, and flatware—all were simplified, trimmed, and reshaped. Even the humble pencil sharpener did
- (55) not escape; Raymond Loewy created a streamlined, chrome model in 1933.

- Along with the revolution in style, came many theories about why it was happening—admiration and emulation of the machine being only one. The new
- (60) simplicity, it was claimed, was democratic at heart, a rebellion against the baroque ornateness of older, autocratic societies. A more jaundiced view held that the new vogue was intended to distract the masses in hard times, or simply to help promote the sale of
- (65) products by giving the machine a good name.

44. Which of the following best states the subject of the passage?
- (A) The senselessness of ornamentation
 - (B) The development of modern machinery
 - (C) A popular revolt against methods of industrial production
 - (D) A change in the aesthetics of machine design
 - (E) The historical development of aesthetics
45. In context, which of the following changes to sentence 4 (lines 5–8) would make it more parallel to the preceding sentences?
- (A) Change “The tender” to “Its tender”
 - (B) Begin with “And thus”
 - (C) Change “The tender was decorated with” to “The decoration on the tender was”
 - (D) Begin with “Also Noteworthy,”
 - (E) Change “The tender was” to “The tender, in addition, was”
46. Which of the following is being referred to by the abstract term “characteristics” (line 9)?
- (A) “boiler, smokestack, valve boxes” (line 4)
 - (B) “The tender” (line 5)
 - (C) “a number of elaborate scrolls” (lines 7-8)
 - (D) “Steam engines” (line 9)
 - (E) “a printing press” (line 11)

⁴ Richard Guy Wilson, Dianne H. Pilgrim, Dickran Tashjian, *The Machine Age in America 1918-1941* (New York: The Brooklyn Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986), p. 85.

47. The tone of lines 18-20 (“It is . . . creations”) can best be described as
- (A) disbelieving
 - (B) uncertain
 - (C) objective
 - (D) exasperated
 - (E) relieved
48. Which of the following is an accurate reading of footnote 2?
- (A) An article by John F. Kasson appears on page 427 of *Engineering*.
 - (B) “Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition” was published in New York.
 - (C) The article “Engineering” can be found on page 427 of “Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition.”
 - (D) “Machine Tools at the Philadelphia Exhibition” is an article published in the May 26, 1876, issue of *Engineering*.
 - (E) *Engineering* is an article cited by John F. Kasson.
49. Both of the writers quoted in paragraph 2 (lines 18-32) view elaborately decorated machinery as
- (A) amusingly imaginative
 - (B) inherently impractical
 - (C) typical of European inventions
 - (D) reflective of the complexity of machines
 - (E) likely to prove too costly to produce
50. Lines 39-43 (“Yet . . . severity”) imply that human beings share which of the following?
- (A) A preference for some sort of embellishment
 - (B) A natural curiosity about ideas
 - (C) An innate indifference toward designers and design
 - (D) A fear of shifts in cultural styles and taste
 - (E) A rejection the principle of symmetry
51. The reference to the first appearance of the phrase “industrial design” (line 47) serves to
- (A) note how a new expression can be mocked by experts
 - (B) explore the ways in which form is determined by function
 - (C) support the authenticity of the movement toward ornamentation
 - (D) detail the ways in which simplicity of form became overdone and outdated
 - (E) highlight how two seemingly unrelated terms became popularly linked
52. The purpose of footnote 4 is to inform the reader that the quotation in line 49
- (A) has been attributed to three different designers
 - (B) was first cited in 1918
 - (C) was the inspiration for an exhibit at The Brooklyn Museum
 - (D) is in an article in *The Machine Age in America 1918-1941* written by Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
 - (E) appears in a book written by Wilson, Pilgrim, and Tashjian and published in 1986
53. The structure of lines 49-56 (“During . . . 1933”) can best be described as
- (A) an exaggeration followed by a series of qualifying statements
 - (B) a movement from the particular to the general
 - (C) an historical example followed by contemporary examples
 - (D) a generalization followed by other generalizations
 - (E) a claim followed by supporting details

54. The development of the passage can best be described as the
- (A) presentation of two conflicting ideas followed by a resolution
 - (B) explanation of an historical issue leading to the examination of the same issue in contemporary society
 - (C) chronological examination of an aspect of design during a particular time period
 - (D) movement from European to United States views of the topic
 - (E) examination of technological advances at a particular point in time
55. Taken as a whole, the footnotes suggest that
- (A) the author of the passage wants the text to present highly technical material
 - (B) the author of the passage relies heavily on Kasson's book
 - (C) very little was written about the topic of machinery and ornamentation prior to 1976
 - (D) engineering magazines are an essential source for technical writers
 - (E) except in rare cases, it is best to use the latest published work when documenting an idea or concept

Answers to Multiple-Choice Questions

1 – E	9 – A	17 – B	25 – A	33 – D	41 – C	49 – B
2 – D	10 – B	18 – B	26 – B	34 – C	42 – D	50 – A
3 – C	11 – A	19 – D	27 – C	35 – C	43 – E	51 – E
4 – C	12 – E	20 – D	28 – B	36 – A	44 – D	52 – E
5 – A	13 – E	21 – B	29 – D	37 – D	45 – A	53 – E
6 – E	14 – C	22 – C	30 – C	38 – B	46 – C	54 – C
7 – C	15 – D	23 – C	31 – A	39 – A	47 – C	55 – B
8 – A	16 – A	24 – B	32 – B	40 – B	48 – D	