

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

# REGENTS EXAMINATION

IN

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

**Tuesday, August 13, 2019 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., only**

The possession or use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you have or use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has three parts. For Part 1, you are to read the texts and answer all 24 multiple-choice questions. For Part 2, you are to read the texts and write one source-based argument. For Part 3, you are to read the text and write a text-analysis response. The source-based argument and text-analysis response should be written in pen. Keep in mind that the language and perspectives in a text may reflect the historical and/or cultural context of the time or place in which it was written.

When you have completed the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the bottom of the front of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

**DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.**

# Part 1

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

## Reading Comprehension Passage A

### Brooklyn

Eilis Lacey, sitting at the window of the upstairs living room in the house on Friary Street, noticed her sister walking briskly from work. She watched Rose crossing the street from sunlight into shade, carrying the new leather handbag that she had bought in Clerys in Dublin [Ireland] in the sale. Rose was wearing a cream-coloured cardigan over her shoulders. Her golf clubs were in the hall; in a few minutes, Eilis knew, someone would call for her and her sister would not return until the summer evening had faded.

Eilis’s bookkeeping classes were almost ended now; she had a manual on her lap about systems of accounting, and on the table behind her was a ledger where she had entered, as her homework, on the debit and credit sides, the daily business of a company whose details she had taken down in notes in the Vocational School the week before.

As soon as she heard the front door open, Eilis went downstairs. Rose, in the hall, was holding her pocket mirror in front of her face. She was studying herself closely as she applied lipstick and eye make-up before glancing at her overall appearance in the large hall mirror, settling her hair. Eilis looked on silently as her sister moistened her lips and then checked herself one more time in the pocket mirror before putting it away.

Their mother came from the kitchen to the hall. ...

Rose reached into her handbag and took out her purse. She placed a one-shilling piece on the hallstand. “That’s in case you want to go to the pictures,” she said to Eilis.

“And what about me?” her mother asked.

“She’ll tell you the story when she gets home,” Rose replied. ...

All three laughed as they heard a car stop outside the door and beep its horn. Rose picked up her golf clubs and was gone.

Later, as her mother washed the dishes and Eilis dried them, another knock came to the door. When Eilis answered it, she found a girl whom she recognized from Kelly’s grocery shop beside the cathedral.

“Miss Kelly sent me with a message for you,” the girl said. “She wants to see you.”

“Does she?” Eilis asked. “And did she say what it was about?”

“No. You’re just to call up there tonight.” ...

Miss Kelly slowly came down the stairs into the hallway and turned on a light.

“Now,” she said, and repeated it as though it were a greeting. She did not smile. ...

“I hear you have no job at all but a great head for figures.”

“Is that right?”

“Oh, the whole town, anyone who is anyone, comes into the shop and I hear everything.” ...

“And we are worked off our feet every Sunday here. Sure, there’s nothing else open.

And we get all sorts, good, bad and indifferent. And, as a rule, I open after seven mass,<sup>1</sup> and between the end of nine o'clock mass until eleven mass is well over, there isn't room to move in this shop. I have Mary here to help, but she's slow enough at the best of times, so I was on the lookout for someone sharp, someone who would know people and give the right change. But only on Sundays, mind. The rest of the week we can manage ourselves. And you were recommended. I made inquiries about you and it would be seven and six a week, it might help your mother a bit." ...

"Well?" Miss Kelly asked.

Eilis realized that she could not turn down the offer. It would be better than nothing and, at the moment, she had nothing. ...

Rose, at thirty, Eilis thought, was more glamorous every year, and, while she had had several boyfriends, she remained single; she often remarked that she had a much better life than many of her former schoolmates who were to be seen pushing prams<sup>2</sup> through the streets. Eilis was proud of her sister, of how much care she took with her appearance and how much care she put into whom she mixed with in the town and the golf club. She knew that Rose had tried to find her work in an office, and Rose was paying for her books now that she was studying bookkeeping and rudimentary accountancy, but she knew also that there was, at least for the moment, no work for anyone in Enniscorthy, no matter what their qualifications.

Eilis did not tell Rose about her offer of work from Miss Kelly; instead, as she went through her training, she saved up every detail to recount to her mother, who laughed and made her tell some parts of the story again.

"That Miss Kelly," her mother said, "is as bad as her mother and I heard from someone who worked there that that woman was evil incarnate.<sup>3</sup> And she was just a maid in Roche's before she married. And Kelly's used to be a boarding house as well as a shop, and if you worked for her, or even if you stayed there, or dealt in the shop, she was evil incarnate. Unless, of course, you had plenty of money or were one of the clergy."

"I'm just there until something turns up," Eilis said.

"That's what I said to Rose when I was telling her," her mother replied. "And don't listen to her if she says anything to you." ...

One day at dinnertime Rose, who walked home from the office at one and returned at a quarter to two, mentioned that she had played golf the previous evening with a priest, a Father Flood, who had known their father years before and their mother when she was a young girl. He was home from America on holidays, his first visit since before the war. ...

"Anyway," Rose said, "I invited him in for his tea when he said that he'd like to call on you [the mother] and he's coming tomorrow." ...

Father Flood was tall; his accent was a mixture of Irish and American. Nothing he said could convince Eilis's mother that she had known him or his family. His mother, he said, had been a Rochford.

"I don't think I knew her," her mother said. "The only Rochford we knew was old Hatchethead."

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<sup>1</sup>seven mass — church service at 7 A.M.

<sup>2</sup>prams — baby carriages

<sup>3</sup>incarnate — in bodily form

Father Flood looked at her solemnly. “Hatchethead was my uncle,” he said.

“Was he?” her mother asked. Eilis saw how close she was to nervous laughter. ...

80 Rose poured more tea as Eilis quietly left the room, afraid that if she stayed she would be unable to disguise an urge to begin laughing.

When she returned she realized that Father Flood had heard about her job at Miss Kelly’s, had found out about her pay and had expressed shock at how low it was. He inquired about her qualifications.

85 “In the United States,” he said, “there would be plenty of work for someone like you and with good pay.” ...

“In Brooklyn, where my parish is, there would be office work for someone who was hard-working and educated and honest.”

“It’s very far away, though,” her mother said. “That’s the only thing.” ...

90 “It would be a great opportunity, especially if you were young,” Father Flood said finally. ...

Eilis felt like a child when the doctor would come to the house, her mother listening with cowed respect. It was Rose’s silence that was new to her; she looked at her now, wanting her sister to ask a question or make a comment, but Rose appeared to be in a sort of dream. As Eilis watched her, it struck her that she had never seen Rose look so beautiful.

95 And then it occurred to her that she was already feeling that she would need to remember this room, her sister, this scene, as though from a distance. In the silence that had lingered, she realized, it had somehow been tacitly arranged that Eilis would go to America. Father Flood, she believed, had been invited to the house because Rose knew that he could arrange it. ...

—Colm Tóibín  
excerpted and adapted from *Brooklyn*, 2009  
Scribner

- 1 The first three paragraphs serve to introduce
- (1) a contrast between the sisters
  - (2) Rose’s condescension toward her sister
  - (3) the competition between the sisters
  - (4) Eilis’s concern about her sister
- 2 Lines 17 through 20 show Rose’s
- (1) impatience with her mother
  - (2) restlessness in her home
  - (3) satisfaction with her work
  - (4) thoughtfulness toward her sister
- 3 The dialogue in lines 30 through 34 depicts Miss Kelly as
- (1) indecisive
  - (2) abrupt
  - (3) jealous
  - (4) bitter
- 4 The statement “And we are worked off our feet” (line 35) illustrates that Miss Kelly’s shop is
- (1) disorderly
  - (2) bustling
  - (3) bankrupt
  - (4) treasured
- 5 Eilis’s attitude toward Rose in lines 46 through 50 can best be described as
- (1) protective
  - (2) critical
  - (3) admiring
  - (4) indifferent
- 6 The phrase “no work for anyone in Enniscorthy, no matter what their qualifications” (lines 53 and 54) supports a central idea about Eilis’s
- (1) respect for Miss Kelly’s successful business
  - (2) incentive to accept any employment
  - (3) pressure to pursue further education
  - (4) envy of Rose’s comfortable situation
- 7 The author’s choice of the word “mentioned” (line 67) as well as Father Flood’s comments (lines 86 and 87) most likely indicate that Rose is
- (1) afraid that her mother will object to Father Flood’s visit
  - (2) anticipating that Eilis will help her with the meal
  - (3) careful about ensuring that Father Flood feels welcomed
  - (4) subtle about putting her plan for Eilis in motion
- 8 The recognition that a job “had somehow been tacitly arranged” (line 97) suggests that
- (1) an agreement was made without Rose’s permission
  - (2) actions were taken to deceive Eilis’s family
  - (3) an agreement was made without Eilis’s knowledge
  - (4) actions were taken to limit Father Flood’s influence
- 9 Which quotation best reflects a central idea in the passage?
- (1) “All three laughed as they heard a car stop outside the door and beep its horn” (line 21)
  - (2) “ ‘Miss Kelly sent me with a message for you,’ the girl said. ‘She wants to see you’ ” (line 26)
  - (3) “Rose, at thirty, Eilis thought, was more glamorous every year, and, while she had had several boyfriends, she remained single” (lines 46 and 47)
  - (4) “ ‘In the United States,’ he said, ‘there would be plenty of work for someone like you and with good pay’ ” (lines 84 and 85)

## Reading Comprehension Passage B

### Slam, Dunk, & Hook

Fast breaks. Lay ups. With Mercury's<sup>1</sup>  
Insignia on our sneakers,  
We outmaneuvered to footwork  
Of bad angels. Nothing but a hot  
5 Swish of strings like silk  
Ten feet out. In the roundhouse  
Labyrinth our bodies  
Created, we could almost  
Last forever, poised in midair  
10 Like storybook sea monsters.  
A high note hung there  
A long second. Off  
The rim. We'd corkscrew  
Up & dunk balls that exploded  
15 The skullcap of hope & good  
Intention. Lanky, all hands  
& feet...sprung rhythm.  
We were metaphysical<sup>2</sup> when girls  
Cheered on the sidelines.  
20 Tangled up in a falling,  
Muscles were a bright motor  
Double-flashing to the metal hoop  
Nailed to our oak.  
When Sonny Boy's mama died  
25 He played nonstop all day, so hard  
Our backboard splintered.  
Glistening with sweat,  
We rolled the ball off  
Our fingertips. Trouble  
30 Was there slapping a blackjack  
Against an open palm.  
Dribble, drive to the inside,  
& glide like a sparrow hawk.  
Lay ups. Fast breaks.  
35 We had moves we didn't know

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<sup>1</sup>Mercury — Roman god who acted as a messenger to the gods

<sup>2</sup>metaphysical — superhuman

We had. Our bodies spun  
On swivels of bone & faith,  
Through a lyric slipknot  
Of joy, & we knew we were  
40 Beautiful & dangerous.

—Yusef Komunyakaa  
“Slam, Dunk, & Hook”  
from *Pleasure Dome: New and Collected Poems*, 2004  
Wesleyan University Press

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| <p>10 The images in lines 6 through 12 create a sense of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) youth ending</li><li>(2) anxious movement</li><li>(3) time stopping</li><li>(4) imaginative strategy</li></ul> <p>11 In the context of the poem as a whole, lines 24 through 26 present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) an example of the players’ excitement with the game</li><li>(2) a shift in the players’ expectations</li><li>(3) a contrast to the players’ feelings of invincibility</li><li>(4) an illustration of the players’ skill</li></ul> <p>12 Lines 32 through 36 most clearly reflect the players’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) competition</li><li>(2) agility</li><li>(3) insecurity</li><li>(4) devotion</li></ul> | <p>13 In the context of the poem as a whole, the mythological allusions best reflect the players’ sense of being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) popular</li><li>(2) extraordinary</li><li>(3) competent</li><li>(4) successful</li></ul> <p>14 Which quotation best reflects a central idea of the poem?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) “We’d corkscrew / Up &amp; dunk balls that exploded” (lines 13 and 14)</li><li>(2) “We were metaphysical when girls / Cheered on the sidelines” (lines 18 and 19)</li><li>(3) “Glistening with sweat / We rolled the ball off / Our fingertips” (lines 27 through 29)</li><li>(4) “Of joy, &amp; we knew we were / Beautiful &amp; dangerous” (lines 39 and 40)</li></ul> |
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## Reading Comprehension Passage C

### How We Make Sense of Time

“What is the difference between yesterday and tomorrow?” The Yupno man we were interviewing, Danda, paused to consider his answer. A group of us sat on a hillside in the Yupno Valley, a remote nook high in the mountains of Papua New Guinea.<sup>1</sup> Only days earlier we had arrived on a single-engine plane. After a steep hike from the grass airstrip, we found ourselves in the village of Gua, one of about 20 Yupno villages dotting the rugged terrain. We came all the way here because we are interested in *time*—in how Yupno people understand concepts such as past, present and future. Are these ideas universal, or are they products of our language, our culture and our environment?

As we interviewed Danda and others in the village, we listened to what they said about time, but we paid even closer attention to what they did with their hands as they spoke. Gestures can be revealing. Ask English speakers about the difference between yesterday and tomorrow, and they might thrust a hand over the shoulder when referring to the past and then forward when referring to the future. Such unreflective movements reveal a fundamental way of thinking in which the past is at our backs, something that we “leave behind,” and the future is in front of us, something to “look forward” to. Would a Yupno speaker do the same?

Danda was making just the kinds of gestures we were hoping for. As he explained the Yupno word for “yesterday,” his hand swept backward; as he mentioned “tomorrow,” it leaped forward. We all sat looking up a steep slope toward a jagged ridge, but as the light faded, we changed the camera angle, spinning around so that we and Danda faced in the opposite direction, downhill. With our backs now to the ridge, we looked over the Yupno River meandering<sup>2</sup> toward the Bismarck Sea. “Let’s go over that one more time,” we suggested.

Danda obliged, again using his hands to enliven his explanation. But as we expected, his gestures had changed. As he referred to “yesterday,” he now gestured, not backward, but forward. As he explained “tomorrow,” he gestured back over his shoulder, up toward the ridge. Inconsistent as these movements may seem, Danda was not confused. His gestures expressed the Yupno way of understanding time, one in which the future is not something in front of you—it is uphill. By having interviewees change sitting positions, we were able to show that it does not matter whether the slope is in front of you, behind you, to your left or to your right. The Yupno conception of time is not anchored to the body, as the Western one is, but to the world and its contours. By investigating cases such as these, we and other researchers are starting to piece together an answer to a question that has puzzled thinkers for centuries: How are human beings able to make sense of time?

Humans, like creatures ranging from amoebas and bees to mockingbirds and elephants, come with built-in equipment for perceiving some aspects of time, such as the rhythms of night and day, the waxing and waning of the moon, and the turning of the seasons. What separates humans from other animals is that we do not stop at merely sensing time’s passage. We tackle time head-on—or at least we try. We dice it into units, even ones that go beyond what is perceivable, such as milliseconds, or that transcend our life span, such as millennia. We depict time graphically, talk about it ceaselessly and even make gestural models of it in the air as we talk. In short, humans everywhere create and rely on time

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<sup>1</sup>Papua New Guinea — an oceanic country, north of Australia

<sup>2</sup>meandering — winding



concepts—ideas about the nature of time that allow us to make plans, follow recipes, share memories and discuss possible futures.

45 But what are our time concepts made of? What is going on in the mind of a speaker of  
Yupno, or English for that matter, when answering our question about the difference  
between yesterday and tomorrow? Recent research in cognitive science<sup>3</sup> is uncovering a  
surprising answer. Across cultures, human time concepts depend, in large part, on  
50 metaphor—in particular, on what cognitive scientists call conceptual metaphor, in which we  
think about something, in this case time, in terms of something else, in this case space.  
Thus, we build our understanding of duration, of time’s passage and of sequences of events  
out of familiar spatial ideas such as size, movement and location. The latest findings reveal  
that this basic “time is like space” metaphor appears to be universal around the world—yet  
it also takes strikingly different forms from one culture to the next. ...

55 We sometimes imagine ourselves inside the sequence of events, with past, present and  
future conceptualized as locations where we once were, currently are and will be. This  
internal perspective on time motivates English expressions such as “the week ahead of us.”  
When we take the external perspective, however, we view the succession of events from the  
outside, much like watching a lineup of people all moving in one direction. This external  
60 perspective motivates phrases such as “a reception follows the ceremony.”

These basic ideas about time are expressed spatially<sup>4</sup> in a dazzling variety of unrelated  
languages, across cultures that differ in every way imaginable. The idea that temporal<sup>5</sup>  
sequences are like queues<sup>6</sup> of people is found, for example, in Tamil (India), Maori (New  
Zealand), Greenlandic (Greenland) and Sesotho (South Africa), where the idea that “spring  
65 follows winter” can be expressed as “spring is in the footprints left by winter.”

But now we come to a wrinkle. Even as people of all cultures lean on spatial concepts  
for understanding time, exactly *which* spatial metaphors they use can vary. Take the internal  
perspective, future-in-front metaphor mentioned earlier, found in English and many other  
languages. This metaphor was long thought to be universal, but in 2006 members of our  
70 team investigated a striking counterexample in South America. In Aymara, a language  
spoken high in the Andes, many phrases suggest the opposite metaphor is at work. For  
example, the expression “a long time ago” could be loosely rendered in Aymara as “a lot of  
time in front.” Analysis of video-recorded interviews with 30 speakers showed conclusively  
that Aymara speakers gesture according to this future-behind, past-in-front metaphor. The  
75 pattern is especially strong among older speakers who do not speak Spanish, which has the  
future-in-front metaphor common to English and most European languages. ...

The human reliance on spatial metaphors for abstract thinking may have deep  
evolutionary roots and is not likely to change any time soon. The particular metaphors we  
lean on, however, are a product of culture—not of biological evolution—and are much  
80 more malleable.<sup>7</sup> Literacy is a recent and rapid achievement in the scope of the human saga,  
but it already has had profound consequences for how people conceptualize<sup>8</sup> time. New

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<sup>3</sup>cognitive science — the study of the mind and its processes

<sup>4</sup>spatially — with gestures

<sup>5</sup>temporal — relating to time

<sup>6</sup>queues — lines of people

<sup>7</sup>malleable — adaptable

<sup>8</sup>conceptualize — form ideas about

85 spatial metaphors for our dearest abstract concepts will almost certainly enter the picture as our culture evolves. E-mail in-boxes show the most recent items at the top, but text messages go the other way, with the newest at the bottom. And so we must wonder: Which way will time flow next?

—Kensy Cooperrider and Rafael Núñez  
excerpted from “How We Make Sense of Time”  
*Scientific American Mind*, November/December 2016

- 15 A primary function of the first paragraph is to introduce
- (1) a challenge to the author’s research
  - (2) the goals of the author’s research
  - (3) an ease of accessing the Yupno villages
  - (4) the hardness of life in the Yupno villages
- 16 As used in line 13, the word “unreflective” most nearly means
- (1) unreliable
  - (2) unnatural
  - (3) unconscious
  - (4) uncertain
- 17 The details in lines 21 through 25 show that the author
- (1) wanted to influence the way Danda would react
  - (2) had a theory about how Danda would respond
  - (3) needed to complete the interview with Danda before dark
  - (4) had difficulty in communicating instructions to Danda
- 18 Lines 31 and 32 support a central idea by demonstrating
- (1) a contrast between small and large societies
  - (2) the difference in interpretation between cultures
  - (3) the relationship between language and customs
  - (4) a change in behavior adapted over time
- 19 Which statement best summarizes the information in lines 35 through 37?
- (1) Nature interferes with creatures’ awareness of time.
  - (2) All creatures align their behavior to lunar cycles.
  - (3) Physical size inhibits creatures’ adaptations to seasonal change.
  - (4) All creatures have some awareness of time.
- 20 The statements “We tackle time head-on” and “We dice it into units” (line 39) emphasize human attempts to
- (1) enjoy the passage of time
  - (2) structure the concept of time
  - (3) control the speed of time
  - (4) make efficient use of time

- 21 Which word helps clarify the meaning of “transcend” (line 40)?
- (1) “beyond” (line 40)
  - (2) “milliseconds” (line 40)
  - (3) “span” (line 40)
  - (4) “depict” (line 41)
- 22 Researchers found that humans can best understand time (lines 41 through 54) through
- (1) examination of philosophical explanations of change
  - (2) observation of the regularity in daily schedules
  - (3) using figurative language to express complex ideas
  - (4) recording the beginning, ending, and duration of events
- 23 The text is developed primarily through the use of
- (1) point counterpoint
  - (2) detailed examples
  - (3) parallel structure
  - (4) chronological sequence
- 24 Which quotation reflects a central idea of the text?
- (1) “By having interviewees change sitting positions, we were able to show that it does not matter whether the slope is in front of you, behind you, to your left or to your right” (lines 29 through 31)
  - (2) “Recent research in cognitive science is uncovering a surprising answer” (lines 47 and 48)
  - (3) “The latest findings reveal that this basic ‘time is like space’ metaphor appears to be universal around the world—yet it also takes strikingly different forms from one culture to the next” (lines 52 through 54)
  - (4) “New spatial metaphors for our dearest abstract concepts will almost certainly enter the picture as our culture evolves” (lines 81 through 83)
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## Part 2

### Argument

**Directions:** Closely read each of the *four* texts provided on pages 13 through 20 and write a source-based argument on the topic below. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response. Write your argument beginning on page 1 of your essay booklet.

**Topic:** Should plastic shopping bags be banned?

**Your Task:** Carefully read each of the *four* texts provided. Then, using evidence from at least *three* of the texts, write a well-developed argument regarding whether or not plastic shopping bags should be banned. Clearly establish your claim, distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims, and use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least *three* of the texts to develop your argument. Do *not* simply summarize each text.

#### Guidelines:

##### Be sure to:

- Establish your claim regarding whether or not plastic shopping bags should be banned
- Distinguish your claim from alternate or opposing claims
- Use specific, relevant, and sufficient evidence from at least *three* of the texts to develop your argument
- Identify each source that you reference by text number and line number(s) or graphic (for example: Text 1, line 4 or Text 2, graphic)
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

#### Texts:

Text 1 – The Right Chemistry: Ban Plastic Bags? It’s Not So Simple

Text 2 – The Effects of Plastic Bags on Environment

Text 3 – Should Cities Ban Plastic Bags?

Text 4 – The Economic Effect of Plastic Bag Bans

## Text 1

### The Right Chemistry: Ban Plastic Bags? It's Not So Simple

...There's no question that plastic bags are a symbol of our throw-away culture and are an inviting target for scorn, because they are a visible sign of pollution. They can be seen fluttering from trees, floating in that much publicized patch of plastic detritus<sup>1</sup> in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and clogging sewers in parts of Asia. But the bags don't dive into the ocean, jump into sewers or take flight without help. Human help. We are the real problem. With proper recycling, reuse or disposal, benefits can outweigh risks.

What then are the perceived risks? Arguments usually revolve around the bags being made from oil, a non-renewable resource, the plastic being non-biodegradable,<sup>2</sup> the bags taking up space in landfills, the bags being unnecessary because of ready replacement by paper or reusable bags, and the bags leaving a large carbon footprint.<sup>3</sup> Disposable bags are made of high-density polyethylene, which is manufactured from ethylene derived either from petroleum or natural gas. In Canada, the source is usually ethylene made from ethane, a component of natural gas that otherwise is commonly burned off.

Plastic bags do not biodegrade in a landfill, as we are often told. This is true, but modern landfills are designed to have a low oxygen environment to prevent biodegradation that would result in the formation of methane, a greenhouse gas. The purpose of a landfill is to seal in the contents and prevent substances from leaching<sup>4</sup> out. Since plastic bags are highly compressible, they take up very little volume in landfills. In any case, plastic shopping bags are estimated to make up less than 1 percent of litter.

Paper shopping bags do not biodegrade in a landfill either and because of their greater mass they are a greater burden on the waste stream. Paper manufacture is an energy intensive process and requires the use of many chemicals. Cradle to grave calculations generally show that plastic bags have a lower carbon footprint than paper bags. "Biodegradable" bags are a marketing scheme; they don't degrade under normal conditions.

But why should we make an issue of plastic versus paper? Why not rely on reusable bags? Here too, the issue is not as simple as it seems. A cotton bag would have to be used about 130 times in order to have a carbon footprint that is less than that of a plastic bag. Growing cotton requires more pesticides than most crops and processing and transport require a great deal of energy. If the plastic bag is reused to line your garbage can, a cotton bag would have to be used over 300 times to have a lower global warming potential.

Reusable plastic bags are often made of laminated plastics and are not recyclable. Depending on the type of plastic, whether low density polyethylene, or non-woven polypropylene, a reusable bag would have to be used at least 10-20 times before it becomes more environmentally friendly than a disposable bag. There is also the issue of contamination if reusable bags are not cleaned properly. A warm trunk is an excellent incubator for bacteria originating from that trace of meat juice left in the bag.

If not reused for that next trip to the grocery store, or for lining garbage bins, or for collecting garbage in a car, or for picking up after pets, or for covering food in the fridge, disposable plastic bags are eminently recyclable into plastic lumber, trash cans, containers and new plastic bags.

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<sup>1</sup>detritus — debris

<sup>2</sup>non-biodegradable — unable to break down

<sup>3</sup>carbon footprint — the amount of greenhouse gas associated with a product

<sup>4</sup>leaching — leaking

Many municipalities<sup>5</sup> and even countries have banned the giveaway of plastic bags or have introduced fees for them. That has resulted in the use of more paper bags, not an environmental plus, and an increase in the sales of plastic bags for garbage bins. ...

—Joe Schwarcz  
excerpted from “The Right Chemistry: Ban Plastic Bags? It’s Not So Simple”  
<http://montrealgazette.com>, March 25, 2016

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<sup>5</sup>municipalities — communities

## Text 2

### The Effects of Plastic Bags on Environment

...There is no way to strictly limit the effects of plastic bags on the environment because there is no disposal method that will really help eliminate the problem. While reusing them is the first step, most people either don't or can't based on store policies. They are not durable enough to stand up to numerous trips to the store so often the best that citizens can do is reuse them when following pooper scooper laws.

The biggest problem with this is that once they have been soiled, they end up in the trash which then ends up in the landfill or burned. Either solution is very poor for the environment. Burning emits toxic gases that harm the atmosphere and increase the level of VOCs<sup>1</sup> [Volatile Organic Compounds] in the air while landfills hold them indefinitely as part of the plastic waste problem throughout the globe.

Even when citizens try to manage their plastic bag disposal, wind plays a role in carrying them away as litter. This litter is not biodegradable and thus where it lands it tends to stay for a long period of time. A bag that is eventually ripped to shreds from high winds or other factors doesn't disappear but instead is spread in smaller amounts throughout the area. This can cause more problems as these smaller pieces are carried away through storm drains and often end up in the waterways. ...

One of the greatest problems is that an estimated 300 million plastic bags end up in the Atlantic Ocean alone. These bags are very dangerous for sea life, especially those of the mammal variety. Any hunting mammal can easily mistake the size, shape, and texture of the plastic bag for a meal and find its airway is cut off. Needless deaths from plastic bags are increasing every year. ...

The environmental balance of the waterways is being thrown off by the rate of plastic bags finding their way into the mouths and intestinal tracts of sea mammals. As one species begins to die off at an abnormal rate, every other living organism in the waterway is impacted. There are either too many or too few and changes within the environment continue to kill off yet more organisms.

The indefinite period of time that it takes for the average plastic bag to break down can be literally hundreds of years. Every bag that ends up in the woodlands of the country threatens the natural progression of wildlife. Because the breakdown rate is so slow the chances that the bag will harmlessly go away are extremely slim. Throughout the world plastic bags are responsible for suffocation deaths of woodland animals as well as inhibiting soil nutrients.

The land litter that is made up of plastic bags has the potential to kill over and over again. It has been estimated that one bag has the potential to unintentionally kill one animal per every three months due to unintentional digestion or inhalation. If you consider the number of littered plastic bags ranges from 1.5 million to 3 million depending on location, this equals a lot of ecosystem-sustaining lives lost. ...

While it's a noble thought to place the plastic bags in the recycling bin every week, studies have proven that there are very few plants that actually recycle them. Most municipalities either burn them or send them off to the landfill after sorting. This is because it can be expensive to recycle this type of plastic. It doesn't melt down easily and is often not realistically able to be reused from its original form without considerable overhaul to the facility.

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<sup>1</sup>VOCs — carbon-based chemicals that easily become a vapor or gas at room temperature

45 The premise of recycling these bags is nice. Yet funding for the upgrades just has not happened and thus less than 1% of all bags sent to recycling plants worldwide end up in the recycling project. Most are left to become a pollution problem in one way or another. ...

—Jamey Wagner  
excerpted and adapted from “The Effects of Plastic Bags on Environment”  
[www.healthguidance.org](http://www.healthguidance.org), 2017



### Text 3

#### Should Cities Ban Plastic Bags?

*This excerpt from a Wall Street Journal article includes a journalist’s introduction to the plastic bag ban issue and the viewpoints of an environmental expert, Todd Myers, against the ban.*

Plastic bags are one of the most common items in everyday life. And they are at the heart of a fight raging in municipalities world-wide.

5 Many cities around the globe have already banned the ubiquitous<sup>1</sup> bags from stores, and activists are pushing for bans elsewhere. They argue that cities must spend vast sums to clean up the bags and the damages caused by them, money that’s better spent elsewhere. Not to mention that plastic bags are a blight on the environment, polluting waterways and other natural areas and killing off animals. Banning plastic bags, the activists say, will redirect funds to infrastructure<sup>2</sup> and spur entrepreneurial<sup>3</sup> efforts to come up with alternatives to plastic. . . .

10 But there’s no evidence that banning bags helps the environment—and plenty of evidence that it may actually hurt. Bans yield little benefit to wildlife while increasing carbon emissions<sup>4</sup> and other unhealthy environmental effects.

#### Little Harm to Wildlife

15 Let’s go through the arguments for banning bags. Ban backers cite impacts on marine life, but they consistently sidestep the actual data. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, for one, says there are currently no published studies about how many marine mammals die because of marine debris. Meanwhile, other sources of marine debris, such as discarded fishing gear, are recognized as a danger to sea life. Why the frenzy over *one* source—plastic bags—in the absence of evidence?

20 As for the pollution caused by plastic bags, consider a study by Ospar, the European organization working to protect the marine environment. The study found plastic shopping bags represented less than 3% of marine litter on European beaches, a figure that includes scraps of plastic from shredded bags.

25 Meanwhile, the claim that municipalities spend a substantial amount of their trash budget, let alone millions of dollars, on picking up plastic bags is hard to believe. In many cases, these claims are guesses by advocates instead of data based on actual studies, and cost is often thrown in as a justification after bans are enacted for political reasons. . . .

Some ban supporters claim plastics harm human health, even when studies from organizations like the Environmental Protection Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Pacific Northwest National Labs show these claims are false or exaggerated.

30 Consider a study from the U.K. Environment Agency that found plastic grocery bags have the lowest environmental impact in “human toxicity” and “marine aquatic toxicity” as well as “global-warming potential” even after paper bags are used four times and reusable cotton bags are used 173 times. Why? Largely because paper and cotton bags come from crops that require fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and the like.

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<sup>1</sup>ubiquitous — found everywhere

<sup>2</sup>infrastructure — fundamental facilities and structures, such as roads, bridges, and power supplies

<sup>3</sup>entrepreneurial — business leadership

<sup>4</sup>carbon emissions — greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere

### **Environmental Effects**

35 Critics also say that ban opponents ignore the environmental impact of bags over the  
course of their lifetime. But many studies do just that. The U.K. Environment Agency’s study,  
for instance, compared the energy expended in creating, using and disposing of plastic, paper  
and reusable bags to arrive at its figures. Consumers would have to use a cotton bag 173  
40 times before they match the energy savings of one plastic bag, assuming 40% of bags are  
reused—a percentage that’s actually *lower* than the rate in some cities.

Some critics say we need to ban bags because voluntary take-back programs don’t work.  
But the point of the programs is simply to reuse bags, and consumers *already* reuse bags to  
hold garbage or pick up after pets.

45 As for the idea that plastic bags cost consumers more, the reason grocery stores use plastic  
instead of paper or other bags is that they cost less and hold more. Reusable bags are even  
more expensive.

### **Let’s Be Honest**

...Weighing the costs and benefits makes it clear that banning plastic bags yields little  
benefit at very high cost. Unfortunately, the political symbolism of banning the bags is  
powerful. It is often easier to ignore the science that indicates such bans may actually harm  
50 the environment than to make an honest effort to weigh these issues. All of this is why plastic-  
bag bans are more about environmental image than environmental benefit.

—excerpted from “Should Cities Ban Plastic Bags?”  
[www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com), October 8, 2012

## Text 4

### The Economic Effect of Plastic Bag Bans

A study from the National Center for Policy Analysis [NCPA] claims that a ban on plastic bags used by grocers and retailers can negatively impact sales in the ban area and increase sales among stores just outside the bag ban region. ...

5 During a one-year period, before and after the ban, the majority of stores surveyed in areas with a ban reported an overall average sales decline of nearly 6%. While the majority of respondents surveyed in areas without a ban reported an overall average sales growth of 9%. ...

10 The NCPA survey said that stores under the bag ban also experienced a 10% reduction in employment, while employment in stores outside of the ban slightly increased. [NCPA senior fellow, Pamela] Villarreal said that was particularly “alarming.”

“We often hear about the environmental effects of plastic bags, but the economic effects are generally ignored,” she said. “When you think about the unemployment rate in this country, any negative impact on employment is something to take notice of.”

15 The U.S. plastic bag manufacturing and recycling sector employs more than 30,000 workers in 349 communities across the nation, according to the American Progressive Bag Alliance, an organization representing the plastic bag manufacturing and recycling sector. ...

Leila Monroe, staff attorney for the oceans program at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), looks at the impact on jobs in a different way. She said bag bans provide an opportunity for the industry to innovate.

20 “They can pull together and look at how they can design better products that are truly durable and easily recyclable,” Monroe said. “I have no doubt that if the industry put in the time and investment to retool operations, they can ensure there aren’t job losses, but instead work on ways to move the industry forward.”

#### Plastic bag alternatives

25 As paper bags are starting to also get listed on the ban list, more attention is now focused on reusable bags. Reusable shopping bags can be made from fabric, woven synthetic fibers, or even polypropylene.

Vincent Cobb, founder of Reuseit.com, first launched the site in 2003 to offer alternatives to single-use plastic shopping bags. The site then expanded to include all types of reusable products. ...

30 Brad Nihls, VP [Vice President] of operations for Reuseit.com, said the company is all too aware that the reusable bag market is flooded with cheap quality, green-washing<sup>1</sup> products. He said the company warns customers about looking out for cheaply made reusable shopping bags.

35 “One item of concern with reusable shopping bags are the very cheap reusables that are often given away during promotions or selling at grocery stores for 99 cents,” he said. “The concern here is that while they are marketed as reusable shopping bags, they really are just a glorified disposable bag, which we feel is even more damaging than the single-use plastic shopping bags.” ...

40 When it comes to plastic shopping bag bans, Nihls said the company doesn’t view bans as a big “windfall” for the company. ...

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<sup>1</sup>green-washing — falsely claiming that a product is environmentally friendly

Some reports state that plastic bags are responsible for less than 1% of all litter. For instance, litter audit data from major Canadian municipalities show that plastic shopping bags are less than 1% of litter. In San Francisco, surveyors found that plastic bags consisted of 0.6% of the city’s litter before a local ban was enacted.

45 What can be lost in the debate between bans, taxes and consumer choice at the checkout, is the fact that plastic shopping bags are fully recyclable, when disposed of properly.

Still, a study conducted by Boustead Associates found that only 5.2% of plastic bags are recycled. ...

50 However, plastic bag recycling requires a different type of infrastructure than plastic bottles and containers. It’s been reported that when people put plastic bags in their curbside bin, it has the potential to clog machines at the recycling facilities.

“The problem with plastic bags is that they are extremely difficult, if not almost impossible, to recycle,” Monroe said. “At municipality recycling facilities, plastic bags have to be removed because the lightweight thin film can impact the recycling process.” ...

55 Recycling plastic bags can be turned into raw materials for fencing, decking, building and construction products, shopping carts and new bags, according to the American Chemistry Council.

Monroe points out that the 5% recycling of bags is still the current and, potentially, future reality.

60 “There’s just a large number of bags available where there is no incentive really to recycle them,” she said. “In contrast when bag bans and fees are put in place, they show it’s working to reduce waste.” ...

—Heather Caliendo  
excerpted and adapted from “The Economic Effect of Plastic Bag Bans”  
[www.npr.com](http://www.npr.com), February 6, 2013

## Part 3

### Text-Analysis Response

**Your Task:** Closely read the text provided on pages 22 and 23 and write a well-developed, text-based response of two to three paragraphs. In your response, identify a central idea in the text and analyze how the author’s use of *one* writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis. Do *not* simply summarize the text. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response. Write your response in the spaces provided on pages 7 through 9 of your essay booklet.

#### Guidelines:

**Be sure to:**

- Identify a central idea in the text
- Analyze how the author’s use of *one* writing strategy (literary element or literary technique or rhetorical device) develops this central idea. Examples include: characterization, conflict, denotation/connotation, metaphor, simile, irony, language use, point-of-view, setting, structure, symbolism, theme, tone, etc.
- Use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

## Text

### The Edge of the Sea

The edge of the sea is a strange and beautiful place. All through the long history of Earth it has been an area of unrest where waves have broken heavily against the land, where the tides have pressed forward over the continents, receded, and then returned. For no two successive days is the shore line precisely the same. Not only do the tides advance and retreat in their eternal rhythms, but the level of the sea itself is never at rest. It rises or falls as the glaciers melt or grow, as the floor of the deep ocean basins shifts under its increasing load of sediments, or as the earth's crust along the continental margins warps up or down in adjustment to strain and tension. Today a little more land may belong to the sea, tomorrow a little less. Always the edge of the sea remains an elusive and indefinable boundary.

The shore has a dual nature, changing with the swing of the tides, belonging now to the land, now to the sea. On the ebb tide it knows the harsh extremes of the land world, being exposed to heat and cold, to wind, to rain and drying sun. On the flood tide it is a water world, returning briefly to the relative stability of the open sea.

Only the most hardy and adaptable can survive in a region so mutable, yet the area between the tide lines is crowded with plants and animals. In this difficult world of the shore, life displays its enormous toughness and vitality by occupying almost every conceivable niche. Visibly, it carpets the intertidal rocks; or half hidden, it descends into fissures and crevices, or hides under boulders, or lurks in the wet gloom of sea caves. Invisibly, where the casual observer would say there is no life, it lies deep in the sand, in burrows and tubes and passageways. It tunnels into solid rock and bores into peat and clay. It encrusts weeds or drifting spars<sup>1</sup> or the hard, chitinous<sup>2</sup> shell of a lobster. It exists minutely, as the film of bacteria that spreads over a rock surface or a wharf piling; as spheres of protozoa, small as pinpricks, sparkling at the surface of the sea; and as Lilliputian<sup>3</sup> beings swimming through dark pools that lie between the grains of sand.

The shore is an ancient world, for as long as there has been an earth and sea there has been this place of the meeting of land and water. Yet it is a world that keeps alive the sense of continuing creation and of relentless drive of life. Each time that I enter it, I gain some new awareness of its beauty and its deeper meanings, sensing that intricate fabric of life by which one creature is linked with another, and each with its surroundings. . . .

The flats took on a mysterious quality as dusk approached and the last evening light was reflected from the scattered pools and creeks. Then birds became only dark shadows, with no color discernible. Sanderlings scurried across the beach like little ghosts, and here and there the darker forms of the willets stood out. Often I could come very close to them before they would start up in alarm—the sanderlings running, the willets flying up, crying. Black skimmers flew along the ocean's edge silhouetted against the dull, metallic gleam, or they went flitting above the sand like large, dimly seen moths. Sometimes they "skimmed" the winding creeks of tidal water, where little spreading surface ripples marked the presence of small fish.

The shore at night is a different world, in which the very darkness that hides the

<sup>1</sup>spars — pieces of wood

<sup>2</sup>chitinous — tough, protective

<sup>3</sup>Lilliputian — tiny

distractions of daylight brings into sharper focus the elemental realities. Once, exploring the night beach, I surprised a small ghost crab in the searching beam of my torch. He was lying in a pit he had dug just above the surf, as though watching the sea and waiting. The blackness of the night possessed water, air, and beach. It was the darkness of an older world, before Man. There was no sound but the all-enveloping, primeval sounds of wind blowing over water and sand, and of waves crashing on the beach. There was no other visible life—just one small crab near the sea. I have seen hundreds of ghost crabs in other settings, but suddenly I was filled with the odd sensation that for the first time I knew the creature in its own world—that I understood, as never before, the essence of its being. In that moment time was suspended; the world to which I belonged did not exist and I might have been an onlooker from outer space. The little crab alone with the sea became a symbol that stood for life itself—for the delicate, destructible, yet incredibly vital force that somehow holds its place amid the harsh realities of the inorganic world. ...

Looking out over the cove I felt a strong sense of the interchangeability of land and sea in this marginal world of the shore, and of the links between the life of the two. There was also an awareness of the past and of the continuing flow of time, obliterating much that had gone before, as the sea had that morning washed away the tracks of the bird. ...

There is a common thread that links these scenes and memories—the spectacle of life in all its varied manifestations as it has appeared, evolved, and sometimes died out. Underlying the beauty of the spectacle there is meaning and significance. It is the elusiveness of that meaning that haunts us, that sends us again and again into the natural world where the key to the riddle is hidden. It sends us back to the edge of the sea, where the drama of life played its first scene on earth and perhaps even its prelude; where the forces of evolution are at work today, as they have been since the appearance of what we know as life; and where the spectacle of living creatures faced by the cosmic realities of their world is crystal clear.

—Rachel Carson  
excerpted from *The Edge of the Sea*, 1955  
Houghton Mifflin Company

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