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English-Literature

CLEP English Literature exam

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Question: 1

What is the rhyme scheme of the first eight lines?

- A. ABACADAC
- B. ABABACDC
- C. c. ABABABCB
- D. ABADACDC
- E. ABABCBCB

Answer: B

Explanation:

The rhyme scheme of the first eight lines falls into the following pattern: ABABACDC. The rhyming words are, "land," "stone," "sand," "frown," "command," "read," "things," and "fed."

Question: 2

What is the central image of the poem?

- A. A collapsed statue in the desert
- B. A wounded king
- C. A face and inscription on a coin
- D. A plaque near a WWII battle site
- E. The Sphinx

Answer: A

Explanation:

The image is explicitly described in lines 2 through 4: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand, / Half sunk, a shattered visage lies." None of the other choices reflect the imagery of the poem.

Question: 3

In what sense are lines 10-11 ironic? Although the inscription was originally intended to boast of a king's power, it appears to later generations as an example of how:

- A. Engineering skills were not as advanced as people believed at the time
- B. A king's power extends only as far as the boundaries of his kingdom
- C. A king can attain immortality through his works

- D. Time and nature will eventually undo the works of even the mighty
- E. The desert is not a suitable climate for a kingdom

Answer: D

Explanation:

Is the best interpretation of the ironic meaning of the inscription. Irony is used to describe statements or events with multiple levels of meaning. Specifically, it is defined as a statement in which the apparent meaning of the words contradicts the intended meaning. In this case, the poem describes a collapsed statue with an inscription that reads, "Look upon my works, ye mighty, and despair." The original intended meaning of the words was that one should look upon the majesty of Ozymandias's kingdom and despair because of his power. When read underneath a ruined statue, however, the words take on a different apparent meaning, namely that the reader should look at the kingdom and despair because of the destructive forces of time and nature.

Question: 4

Read as a symbol, the desert can be seen to represent:

- A. Fertility
- B. The life cycle
- C. The seasons
- D. Life
- E. A wasteland

Answer: E

Explanation:

The symbolic meaning of the desert is best read as a wasteland. A symbol is a specific image in a poem that brings to mind some idea or concept that relates back to the poem's themes. Choice (A), fertility, is not likely since a desert rarely calls fertility to mind. Choice (B), the life cycle, is likewise not commonly associated with the desert. Choice (C), the seasons, does not relate to the poem in any meaningful way. Choice (D), life, is so broad that it could be applied to any symbol and does not yield much insight into the themes of this particular poem. Choice (E), a wasteland, is a connotation (or associated meaning) of the desert that does relate back to the theme of the poem, which has to do with the destructive forces of time and the comparative powerlessness of humans.

Question: 5

Based on the setting, which of the following do you think best describes Ozymandias?

- A. Roman Emperor
- B. Egyptian Pharaoh
- C. Native American Chief
- D. Dynastic Emperor
- E. English Monarch

Answer: B

Explanation:

An Egyptian Pharaoh, is the best answer because of the poem's setting among ruins in the desert. Choice (A), a Roman Emperor, may be suggested by collapsed statues, but not by the desert landscape. The desert landscape would not refer to choices (C), (D), or (E)-leaders of Native American, Chinese, or English cultures.

Question: 6

What poetic form does this poem use?

- A. Italian sonnet
- B. Ballad
- C. Anaphora
- D. Prose poem
- E. Sestina

Answer: A

Explanation:

The poem has fourteen lines, which makes the poem a sonnet. Choice (B), ballad, refers to a type of poem with four-line stanzas and iambic meter. Choice (C), anaphora, is a way of creating emphasis by repeating words at the beginning of each line. Choice (D), prose poem, is a more recent form of poetry that does not have line breaks and resembles paragraphs of prose. Choice (E), sestina, refers to a poem with six-line stanzas in which each line ends with one of the same six words.

Question: 7

In the final stanza, the imagery suggests a soldier who lies dying on a battlefield. Which of the following interpretations of lines from the poem reinforce this image?

- I. The final line suggests cannon blasts
- II. "Strains of triumph" imply the dying soldier's joy in victory
- III. The words "defeated, dying" in line 9 indicate mortal combat

- A. I only
- B. I and II
- C. II and III
- D. I and III
- E. II only

Answer: D

Explanation:

The question provides you with an interpretation of the poem. Your job is to identify any of the following statements that help support or prove that interpretation. Choice (D), interpretations I and III, is the best choice. Interpretation II suggests that the dying soldier was victorious in battle, but line nine, "as he defeated, dying" contradicts this reading. Interpretations I and II both reinforce the reading of the stanza as a scene from a battle.

Question: 8

What literary device is employed in lines 3 and 4?

- A. Paradox
- B. Caesura
- C. Metaphor
- D. Dramatic monologue
- E. Anaphora

Answer: C

Explanation:

A metaphor is an implied comparison between two things. In the first stanza, Dickinson creates an implicit comparison between success and nectar (the sweet fluid produced by plants); since she does not use "like" or "as," this type of comparison is called a metaphor, as opposed to a simile, which does. Choice (A), paradox, which means the poem contains contradictory ideas, may be true of the poem as a whole, but metaphor is the best choice for the specific lines three and four because of the implied comparison Dickinson draws between success and nectar. Choice (B), caesura, refers to a pause within the line, but these lines read without pause. Choice (D), dramatic monologue, is a poetic form written in first person in which the speaker is a character in the poem; however, the speaker of Dickinson's poem does not act as a character in the poem. Choice (E), anaphora, is a rhetorical device using repetition, and this poem does not rely heavily on repetition.

Question: 9

How many stressed syllables are in each line of the first stanza?

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4
- E. 5

Answer: C

Explanation:

3 beats per line, is the best answer. With the syllables stressed, the first stanza reads:
SucCESS is COUNted SWEEtest By THOSE who NE'ER sucCEED. To COMPreHEND a NECTar
ReQUIres SORest NEED.

Note that there are three stressed syllables per line. The poem varies this structure in the second stanza, adding a fourth stressed syllable in the first line, but for the most part, Dickinson's poem is written in iambic trimeter. "Iambic" refers to a pattern of syllables in which every other syllable is stressed. "Trimeter" means there are three beats per line.

Question: 10

By what logical pattern is this poem organized?

- A. Main idea, developed with examples
- B. Cause and effect
- C. Comparison and contrast
- D. Chronological order
- E. Description

Answer: A

Explanation:

Dickinson states the main argument of the poem in the first line and provides examples in the form of metaphors to develop that idea. Choice (B), cause and effect, is not the main logical organization of the poem, as this method usually involves isolating a main cause and explaining the effects that result from it. Choice (C), comparison and contrast, most often involves pointing out the similarities and differences between two things, which this poem does not do at length. Choice (D), chronological order, involves describing an event from its first to last moments. Dickinson's poem focuses on multiple events and does not tell which happened first or last. Choice (E), description, usually examines the details of a single item or event; this poem, however, does not provide a great deal of detail for detail's sake.

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