

## SKHS English/Language Arts Honors Placement Exam Instructions (10-6b)

Students pre-qualify for placement into an ELA (English/Language Arts) Honors-level course if they are currently enrolled in an Honors-level class and have earned a cumulative average of at least 80% in that class. Students in an ELA Honors class who earn a cumulative average *lower* than 80% may enroll in the following year's Honors course *with their current ELA teacher's recommendation*.

All other students (those not currently enrolled in an ELA Honors course, and those not recommended for Honors by their current ELA teacher) may qualify for placement into Honors by taking the ELA Honors Placement Exam and earning a composite score (the combined scores of two readers, out of a maximum score of 12) of at least 8 (for Honors English 10), 9 (for A.P. English 11) or 10 (for A.P. English 12). Students who have *not* been recommended for ELA Honors placement **must** take the ELA Honors Placement Exam regardless of waiver status.

In addition, to qualify for ELA Honors placement, students must have achieved a percentile ranking (relative to their age group) of at least 85% on the combined score on the Gates-McGinitie reading assessment.

The format of the ELA Honors Placement Exam is described below. Specific readings will vary from year to year. The time(s) and date(s) of the exam will be announced.

**QUESTION 1:** You will read a short work of fiction written within the past 100 years. Then you are to write a well-focused, carefully supported **essay** (of at least three paragraphs) in which you identify the story's main theme, and describe how the author develops that theme. Avoid unnecessary plot summary.

**QUESTION 2:** You will read a short passage of poetry. Then you are to write a carefully reasoned **paragraph** in which you: 1) briefly paraphrase the passage, and 2) present your point of view on the subject of the passage. Support your point with specific references to your reading, observation, or experience.

You should expect to spend up to 90 minutes working on the exam.

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To be deemed "outstanding," your responses must meet the following criteria:

- focus on and comprehensively develop one original, **insightful main idea**;
- support the main idea with thorough, accurate **textual evidence**;
- use mature, precise, and varied **syntax and diction**;
- follow basic **rules of standard written English**, including standard format for citing and punctuating references.

Your responses will be assessed according to the following rubric:

6: The student effectively synthesizes and applies key ideas, generalizations, and principles from within the reading selection to support a position in response to the question. The position is thoroughly developed through the use of appropriate examples and details. There are no misconceptions about the reading selection. There are strong relationships among ideas. Mastery of language use and writing conventions contributes to the effect of the response.

5: The student makes meaningful use of key ideas from within the reading selection to support a position in response to the question. The position is well developed through the use of appropriate examples and details. Minor misconceptions may be present. Relationships among ideas are clear to the reader. The language is controlled, and occasional lapses in writing conventions are hardly noticeable.

4: The student makes adequate use of ideas from within the reading selection to support a position in response to the question. The position is supported by examples and details. Minor misconceptions may be present. Language use is correct. Lapses in writing conventions are not distracting.

3: The student makes partially successful use of ideas from the reading selection to support a position in response to the question. The position is developed with limited use of examples and details. The student focuses more on retelling the selection than on developing an idea. Misconceptions may indicate only a partial understanding of the reading selection. Language use is correct but limited. Incomplete mastery over writing conventions may interfere with meaning some of the time.

2: The student makes minimal use of ideas from the reading selection to support a position in response to the question. The position is underdeveloped. The student focuses primarily on retelling the selection rather than developing an idea. Major misconceptions may indicate minimal understanding of the reading selection. Limited mastery over writing conventions may make the writing difficult to understand.

1: The student does not take a position on the question and makes only minimal use of ideas from the reading selection to respond to the question. Ideas are not developed and may be unclear. The student focuses mainly or exclusively on retelling the selection. Major misconceptions may indicate a lack of understanding of the reading selection. Lack of mastery over writing conventions may make the writing difficult to understand.

Not ratable if:

- A: Retells or references the reading selections with no connection to the scenario question or theme
- B: Off topic
- C: Illegible/written in a language other than English
- D: Blank/refused to respond
- E: Responds to the scenario question with no reference to either of the reading selections