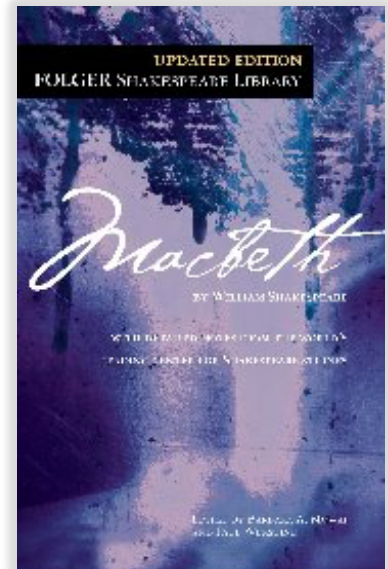
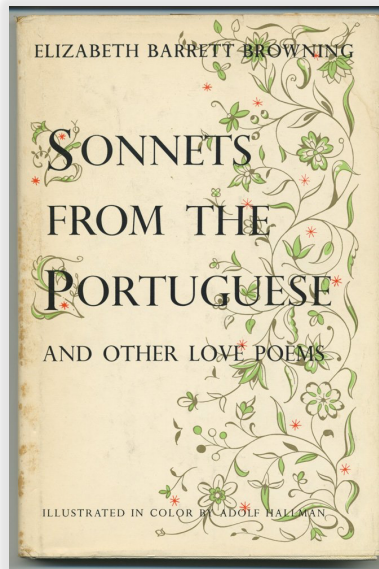
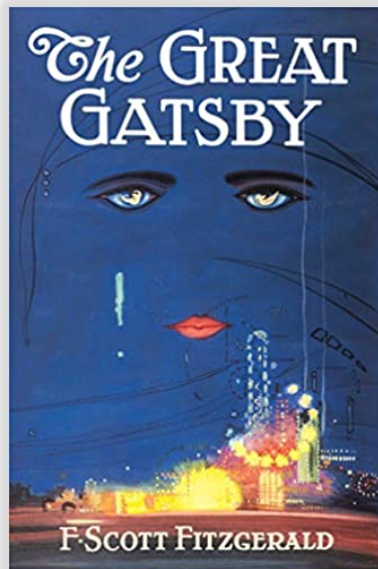




UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

Literary Criticism

Invitational A • 2022



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University Interscholastic League
Literary Criticism Contest • Invitational A • 2022

Part 1: Knowledge of Literary Terms and of Literary History

30 items (1 point each)

1. The relation between words in which the final consonants in the stressed syllables agree but vowels that precede them differ is called
 - A) assonance.
 - B) balance.
 - C) concordance.
 - D) consonance.
 - E) dissonance.
2. The school of British poets, including its "founder" Craig Raine, born during the 1940s who struggled to see the world afresh, as might a visitor who has traveled from afar, is known as the
 - A) Martian School.
 - B) Satanic School.
 - C) Silver Fork School.
 - D) Spasmodic School.
 - E) Transcendental Club.
3. The genre that encompasses novels, usually comic in nature, that have universities as their setting is the
 - A) *Bildungsroman*.
 - B) campus novel.
 - C) education novel.
 - D) novel of manners.
 - E) scholium.
4. The first major, self-conscious literary movement of African-American writers that resulted in part from a massive migration of young, talented writers and poets to northern American cities is known as the
 - A) Black Mountain School.
 - B) Fugitives.
 - C) Harlem Renaissance.
 - D) New York Poets.
 - E) Parnassians.
5. The British novelist and playwright, author of *The Lord of the Flies* and the recipient of the 1983 Nobel Prize for Literature is
 - A) William Golding.
 - B) Rudyard Kipling.
 - C) Harold Pinter.
 - D) Bertrand A. W. Russell.
 - E) George Bernard Shaw.
6. A dignified formal speech or form of writing that praises a person or a thing, often delivered as part of services for the dead, is a(n)
 - A) elegy.
 - B) encomium.
 - C) eulogy.
 - D) paean.
 - E) threnody.
7. **Not** among the many literary terms describing complimentary repetition of sounds appearing as end rhyme without an exact vocalic correspondence is
 - A) analyzed rhyme.
 - B) assonant rhyme.
 - C) broken rhyme.
 - D) near rhyme.
 - E) slant rhyme.
8. Any person who through contrast underscores the distinctive characteristics of another person is a(n)
 - A) alazon.
 - B) foil.
 - C) nemesis.
 - D) persona.
 - E) tritagonist.
9. The author of *All the Pretty Horses* (part of the Border Trilogy), *Blood Meridian*, and *No Country for Old Men* and the recipient of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *The Road* is
 - A) Michael Cunningham.
 - B) Paul Harding.
 - C) Norman Mailer.
 - D) Cormac McCarthy.
 - E) Larry McMurtry.
10. Literature—usually prose fiction—entirely or partly written as letters (not alphabetic characters) is known as (a)
 - A) documentary novel.
 - B) epistolary literature.
 - C) narratology.
 - D) transliteration.
 - E) vignette.

11. The twentieth-century American author of *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Moveable Feast*, *Garden of Eden*, *Islands in the Stream*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and the short story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is
- A) Ernest Hemingway.
 - B) Norman Mailer.
 - C) Walker Percy.
 - D) John Steinbeck.
 - E) John Updike.
12. **Not** one of the five ages making up the English Renaissance Period is the
- A) Augustan Age.
 - B) Caroline Age.
 - C) Early Tudor Age.
 - D) Elizabethan Age.
 - E) Jacobean Age.
13. The term that, from the very late nineteenth century through the twenty-first, denotes the various newspapers and magazines specializing in scandal and sensation is
- A) affective fallacy.
 - B) intentional fallacy.
 - C) metafiction.
 - D) pathetic fallacy.
 - E) yellow journalism.
14. The broad term referring to the recognition of a reality different from appearance is
- A) hyperbole.
 - B) irony.
 - C) litotes.
 - D) paradox.
 - E) zeugma.
15. A term used, often narrowly, to suggest a certain complacency, hypocrisy, or squeamishness assumed to characterize the attitudes of the last half of the nineteenth century in Britain, all of which are apparent in the cautious manner with which writers treat such matters as profanity and sex, is
- A) dandyism.
 - B) hedonism.
 - C) meliorism.
 - D) Puritanism.
 - E) Victorian.
16. The period characterized by a gradual tempering of romantic impulse and the steady growth of realism in English letters, noted for the authors Lord Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, and Algernon Swinburne, among others, is known as the
- A) Early Victorian Age.
 - B) Modernist Period.
 - C) Neoclassic Period.
 - D) Post-Modernist Period.
 - E) Romantic Period.
17. Unrhymed but otherwise regular verse—usually iambic pentameter—is called
- A) accentual-syllabic verse.
 - B) blank verse.
 - C) free verse.
 - D) projective verse.
 - E) quantitative verse.
18. The period in English literature spanning the years 1660-1798 and including the Restoration Age, the Augustan Age, and the Age of Johnson is known as the
- A) Contemporary Period.
 - B) Modernist Period.
 - C) Neoclassic Period.
 - D) Realistic Period.
 - E) Romantic Period.
19. A self-contradictory combination of words or smaller verbal units is a(n)
- A) hyperbole.
 - B) litotes.
 - C) mimesis.
 - D) oxymoron.
 - E) paradox.
20. The author of the novels *Song of Solomon*, *Jazz*, *Tar Baby*, *Paradise*, and her first play *Dreaming Emmett* who received the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for her novel *Beloved* and whose international fame garnered her the 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature is
- A) Toni Morrison.
 - B) Marilynne Robinson.
 - C) Jean Stafford.
 - D) Alice Walker.
 - E) Eudora Welty.

21. The nineteenth-century British author of novels of manners, including *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Persuasion*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Mansfield Park*, is
- Jane Austen.
 - Charlotte Brontë.
 - Emily Brontë.
 - Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
 - George Eliot.
22. The term applied to women of pronounced intellectual interests and finding popularity after 1750 as a result of its application to a London group of women of literary and intellectual tastes who held intellectual assemblies or conversations with literary and ingenious men is
- Apocalyptic.
 - Bluestockings.
 - Lost Generation.
 - Parnassians.
 - P. E. N.
23. The postwar 1948 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry was awarded to the three-time Nobel-nominated English-American author of the influential long poem *The Age of Anxiety*,
- Conrad Aiken.
 - W. H. Auden.
 - Rita Dove.
 - Sylvia Plath.
 - James Wright.
24. A work or manner that blends a censorious attitude with humor and wit for improving human institutions or humanity in general is categorized as (an)
- burlesque.
 - exordium.
 - irony.
 - meliorism.
 - satire.
25. The eighteenth-century Irish author of *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and "A Modest Proposal" is
- Daniel Defoe.
 - Henry Fielding.
 - Laurence Sterne.
 - Jonathan Swift.
 - Horace Walpole.
26. The playwright whose plays are informed by family, pop culture, feminism, and ethnicity, and whose *The Heidi Chronicles* earned her the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for Drama is
- Beth Henley.
 - Marsha Norman.
 - Suzan-Lori Parks.
 - Paula Vogel.
 - Wendy Wasserstein.
27. The logical turn in thought—from question to answer, problem to solution—that occurs at the beginning of the sestet in the Italian sonnet and sometimes, but not always, between the twelfth and thirteenth lines of the Shakespearean sonnet, is called (the)
- climax.
 - modulation.
 - mythopoeia.
 - peripeteia.
 - volta.
28. Literally the "unknotting," the unraveling, of a plot or an intrigue, the solution of a mystery, or an explanation or an outcome of a narrative or drama is a plotline's
- climax.
 - débat*.
 - dénouement*.
 - epiphany.
 - peripety.
29. **Not** one of the terms that designates an author of a literary work by a name other than his or her own is
- allonym.
 - eponym.
 - persona.
 - pseudonym.
 - putative author.
30. The word meaning 'rebirth' commonly applied to the period of transition from the medieval to the modern world in Western Europe is
- boustrophedon.
 - jeremiad.
 - pastoral.
 - renaissance.
 - tmesis.

Part 2: The UIL Reading List

20 items (2 points each)

Items 31-36 are associated with William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.

Items 37-42 are associated with F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

Items 43-50 are associated with Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry (selected).

31. In the first scene of William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, the Weird Sisters call out to
- A) Banquo and Macbeth.
 - B) Donalbain and Malcolm.
 - C) Graymalkin and Paddock.
 - D) Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.
 - E) Macbeth and Macduff.
32. The lines that begin "Is this a dagger which I see before me [. . .]?" constitute a(n)
- A) apostrophe.
 - B) aside.
 - C) harangue.
 - D) invocation.
 - E) soliloquy.
33. In Macbeth's apprehensive assessment "There the grown serpent lies. The worm that's fled / Hath nature that in time will venom breed. / No teeth for th' present," the "worm" is
- A) Donalbain.
 - B) Fleance.
 - C) Malcolm.
 - D) Macduff's son.
 - E) Young Siward.
34. "Whither should I fly? / I have done no harm. But I remember now / I am in this earthly world, where to do harm / Is often laudable, to do good sometime / Accounted dangerous folly" reflects
- A) Banquo's awareness of the times.
 - B) the Doctor's awareness of the times.
 - C) Lady Macbeth's awareness of the times.
 - D) Lady Macduff's awareness of the times.
 - E) the Porter's awareness of the times.
35. The command "Let every soldier hew him down a bough / And bear 't before him. Thereby shall we shadow / The numbers of our host" is delivered by
- A) Banquo.
 - B) Donalbain.
 - C) Macbeth.
 - D) Macduff.
 - E) Malcolm.
36. **Not** recognized as one of the sons of an important character in the events of *Macbeth* is
- A) Donalbain.
 - B) Fleance.
 - C) Malcolm.
 - D) Ross.
 - E) Young Siward.
-
37. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator's second cousin once removed is
- A) Jordan Baker.
 - B) Daisy Buchanan.
 - C) Lucille McKee.
 - D) Myrtle Wilson.
 - E) Meyer Wolfsheimer.
38. "The fact that gossip had published the [wedding] banns was one of the reasons I had come East [. . .]. I had no intention of being rumored into marriage" explains, in part, the presence in New York of
- A) Jordan Baker.
 - B) Tom Buchanan.
 - C) Nick Carraway.
 - D) Jay Gatsby.
 - E) George Wilson.
39. "I made the pleasure of his acquaintance just after the war. But I knew I had discovered a man of fine breeding after I talked with him an hour" is a recounting shared by
- A) Nick Carraway.
 - B) Dan Cody.
 - C) Henry Gatz.
 - D) Ewing Klipspringer.
 - E) Meyer Wolfsheimer.
40. "Absolutely real [. . .]. I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact, they're absolutely real" is Owl Eyes's declaration regarding the
- A) books in Gatsby's library.
 - B) centerpieces on the party tables.
 - C) crates holding the fresh oranges and lemons.
 - D) planters holding the floral arrangements.
 - E) statues along the mansion's third-floor balcony.

41. "She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved anyone except me!" is the climax of a conversation between
- A) Buchanan and Carraway.
 B) Gatsby and Buchanan.
 C) Gatsby and Trimalchio.
 D) Wilson and Buchanan.
 E) Wilson and Gatsby.
42. "[O]ne of these worn-out men: when he wasn't working, he sat on a chair in the doorway and stared at people and the cars that passed along the road. [. . .]. He was his wife's man and not his own" describes
- A) Dan Cody.
 B) Henry Gatz.
 C) Ewing Klipspringer.
 D) Chester McKee.
 E) George Wilson.
44. Half way through the first line of the sonnet's sestet, the speaker addresses her immediate audience, "O Belovéd, it is plain / I am not of thy worth [. . .]," which is an occurrence of
- A) apostrophe.
 B) aside.
 C) harangue.
 D) invocation.
 E) soliloquy.
45. The dropping of an initial, unstressed syllable at the beginning of a word to accommodate, in this case, the line's meter, as is found in line 7's "pipe now 'gainst the valley nightingale" is called
- A) aphaeresis.
 B) apocope.
 C) elision.
 D) metathesis.
 E) syncope.

Items 43-47 refer to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's

Sonnet XI

And therefore if to love can be desert,
 I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale
 As these you see, and trembling knees that fail
 To bear the burden of a heavy heart,— 4
 This weary minstrel-life that once was girt
 To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail
 To pipe now 'gainst the valley nightingale
 A melancholy music,—why advert 8
 To these things? O Belovéd, it is plain
 I am not of thy worth nor for thy place!
 And yet, because I love thee, I obtain
 From that same love this vindicating grace, 12
 To live on still in love, and yet in vain,—
 To bless thee, yet renounce thee to thy face.

43. Line 2 of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnet XI features an ironic understatement in which a thing is affirmed by stating the negative of its opposite, a figure of speech known as
- A) chiasmus.
 B) conceit.
 C) hyperbole.
 D) litotes.
 E) solecism.

46. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Sonnet XI is a(n)

- A) Anglo-Norman sonnet.
 B) caudate sonnet.
 C) curtal sonnet.
 D) English sonnet.
 E) Italian sonnet.

47. The figure of speech found in the second and third lines of the sonnet's octave, "Cheeks as pale / As these you see," is a

- A) conceit.
 B) metaphor.
 C) simile.
 D) syllepsis.
 E) synecdoche.

Items 48-50 refer to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's

A Man's Requirement

Love me, Sweet, with all thou art,
 Feeling, thinking, seeing;
 Love me in the lightest part,
 Love me in full being. 4

Love me with thine open youth
 In its frank surrender;
 With the vowing of thy mouth
 With its silence tender. 8

Love me with thine azure eyes,
 Made for earnest granting;
 Taking colour from the skies,
 Can Heaven's truth be wanting? 12

Love me with their lids, that fall
 Snow-like at first meeting;
 Love me with thine heart, that all
 Neighbours then see beating. 16

Love me with thine hand stretched out
 Freely—open-minded:
 Love me with thy loitering foot,—
 Hearing one behind it. 20

Love me with thy voice, that turns
 Sudden faint above me;
 Love me with thy blush that burns
 When I murmur *Love me!* 24

Love me with thy thinking soul,
 Break it to love-sighing;
 Love me with thy thoughts that roll
 On through living—dying. 28

Love me when in thy gorgeous airs,
 When the world has crowned thee;
 Love me, kneeling at thy prayers,
 With the angels round thee. 32

Love me pure, as musers do,
 Up the woodlands shady:
 Love me gaily, fast and true
 As a winsome lady. 36

Through all hopes that keep us brave,
 Farther off or nigher,
 Love me for the house and grave,
 And for something higher. 40

Thus, if thou wilt prove me, Dear,
 Woman's love no fable.
 I will love *thee*—half a year—
 As a man is able. 44

48. The figure of speech featured in line 14 of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "A Man's Requirement" is

- A) allusion.
- B) hyperbole.
- C) litotes.
- D) paradox.
- E) simile.

49. Line 29's "gorgeous airs" are
- A) atmospheric delights.
 - B) bucolic musitations.
 - C) melodious songs.
 - D) prayerful entreaties.
 - E) welcomed attitudes.

50. The speaker's call to be loved across the fullness of time is best expressed in the

- A) fourth stanza.
- B) seventh stanza.
- C) sixth stanza.
- D) tenth stanza.
- E) third stanza.

Part 3: Ability in Literary Criticism
15 items (2 points each)

Items 51-55 refer to William Shakespeare's

Sonnet 2

When forty winters shall beseege thy brow,
 And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
 Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
 Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held: 4
 Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
 Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
 To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
 Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise. 8
 How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
 If thou couldst answer "This fair child of mine
 Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,"
 Proving his beauty by succession thine! 12
 This were to be new made when thou art old,
 And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

51. In William Shakespeare's Sonnet 2, the proposed answer, "This fair child of mine / Shall sum my count [. . .]" (lines 10-11), suggests that the beauty of the person being addressed will continue if he or she

- A) can answer a math question.
- B) can count to forty.
- C) praises what is beautiful.
- D) produces offspring.
- E) survives both the siege and trench warfare.

52. The trope in which a part signifies the whole and with which the poet opens his sonnet, "When forty winters shall besiege thy brow," is
- irony.
 - metaphor.
 - metonymy.
 - synecdoche.
 - zeugma.
53. The speaker's use of the terms "besiege," "field," "trenches," and "livery" constitutes (a)
- controlling image.
 - dialect.
 - metonymy.
 - paradox.
 - synecdoche.
54. Thematic to the sonnet's basic logical argument is that
- beauty does not last.
 - fields often go to weeds.
 - lusty days cause one to grow old quickly.
 - thrifless praise follows shame.
 - youth gives way to winter.
55. The rhyme scheme of Shakespeare's Sonnet 2 is
- aabb, ccdd, eeff, gg.
 - abab, cdcd, efef, gg.
 - abbaabba, cdecde.
 - abbaacca, cdcdcd.
 - abba, cddc, effe, gg.
56. The first stanza of Dickinson's lyric poem ["Success is counted sweetest"] is characterized by a marked use of sibilants, which is known as
- anaphora.
 - asyndeton.
 - epanalepsis.
 - parenthesis.
 - sigmatism.
57. The word *host*, as Dickinson uses it in line 5 (and as Shakespeare uses it in *Macbeth*), means
- computer server.
 - eucharistic wafer.
 - great number.
 - someone who entertains a gathering.
 - victim of a parasite.
58. Characterizing victory as the "[taking of] the flag to-day" is an example of
- hyperbole.
 - metonymy.
 - reification.
 - syllipsis.
 - zeugma.
59. The "distant strains of triumph" (line 11) refer to
- artillery fire.
 - definitions being offered.
 - ears being forbidden.
 - military music.
 - sounds of soldiers dying.
60. The continuation of sense and grammatical construction from the second stanza to the third is an example of
- enjambment.
 - hyperbole.
 - metaphor.
 - simile.
 - tautology.
61. The omission of a letter or syllable in order to accommodate a line's meter as exemplified by line 2's *ne'er* is an instance of
- apocope.
 - ellipsis.
 - litotes.
 - metathesis.
 - syncope.

Items 56-61 refer to Emily Dickinson's

[Success is counted sweetest]

Success is counted sweetest
 By those who ne'er succeed.
 To comprehend a nectar
 Requires sorest need. 4

Not one of all the purple host
 Who took the flag to-day
 Can tell the definition,
 So clear, of victory, 8

As he, defeated, dying,
 On whose forbidden ear
 The distant strains of triumph
 Break, agonized and clear. 12

Items 62-65 refer to John Updike's

Player Piano

My stick fingers click with a snicker
And, chuckling, they knuckle the keys;
Light footed, my steel feelers flicker
And pluck from these keys melodies. 4

My paper can caper; abandon
Is broadcast by dint of my din,
And no man or band has a hand in
The tones I turn on from within. 8

At times I'm a jumble of rumbles,
At others I'm light like the moon,
But never my numb plunker fumbles,
Misstrums me, or tries a new tune. 12

62. The diction of John Updike's personified speaker in "Player Piano" serves to establish and reinforce the speaker's own necessarily static character through its reliance on
- A) concordance.
 - B) consonance.
 - C) onomatopoeia.
 - D) resonance.
 - E) synaesthesia.
63. The mechanical nature of the speaker's self-description is accentuated by no fewer than five
- A) internal rhymes.
 - B) leonine rhymes.
 - C) masculine rhymes.
 - D) mosaic rhymes.
 - E) slant rhymes.
64. The clever rhyming of *melodies* (line 4) with *-le the keys* (line 2) is an example of
- A) broken rhyme.
 - B) chain rhyme.
 - C) compound rhyme.
 - D) heteromorous rhyme.
 - E) macaronic rhyme.
65. The speaker's proud summation, "But never my numb plunker fumbles, / Misstrums me," (lines 11-12) is meaningfully paired with "or tries a new tune," a clear statement of a(n)
- A) desire to sing as well as play music.
 - B) inability to create.
 - C) need for a tuning software update.
 - D) repressed fear of ivory.
 - E) wish to be self-sufficient.

**Required Tie-Breaking Essay Prompt
on the next page**

Required Tie-Breaking Essay

Note well: Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified even if they are not involved in any tie. Any essay that does not demonstrate a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic will be disqualified. The judge(s) should note carefully this criterion when breaking ties: ranking of essays for tie-breaking purposes should be based primarily on how well the topic has been addressed.

Three sheets of paper have been provided; your written response should reflect the *Handbook's* notion that an essay is a "moderately brief discussion of a restricted topic": something more than just a few sentences.

Read Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Patience Taught by Nature," and address the speaker's comparison of how a person handles existing as perceived difficulty to how nature handles simply existing.

Patience Taught by Nature

"O Dreary life!" we cry, "O dreary life!"		
And still the generations of the birds		
Sing through our sighing, and the flocks and herds		
Serenely live while we are keeping strife	4	
With Heaven's true purpose in us, as a knife		
Against which we may struggle. Ocean girds*		encircles
Unslackened the dry land: savannah-swards*		expanses of lawn
Unweary sweep: hills watch, unworn; and rife*	8	widespread
Meek leaves drop yearly from the forest-trees,		
To show, above, the unwasted stars that pass		
In their old glory. O thou God of old!		
Grant me some smaller grace than comes to <i>these</i> ;—	12	
But so much patience, as a blade of grass		
Grows by contented through the heat and cold.		

DO **NOT** DISTRIBUTE THIS **KEY** TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST.

UIL Literary Criticism

Invitational A • 2022

line arrows up →

1.	D	107
2.	A	286
3.	B	72
4.	C	227
5.	A	600
6.	C	186
7.	C	68
8.	B	202
9.	D	603
10.	B	179
11.	A	576
12.	A	45
13.	E	508
14.	B	259
15.	E	496
16.	A	161
17.	B	59
18.	C	320
19.	D	345
20.	A	603
21.	A	554
22.	B	62
23.	B	604
24.	E	427
25.	D	542
26.	E	608
27.	E	498
28.	C	135
29.	C	361
30.	D	405

31.	C	1.1.9-10
32.	E	2.1.44-77
33.	B	3.4.32-34
34.	D	4.2.81-87
35.	E	5.4.6-9
36.	D	
37.	B	5
38.	C	19
39.	E	72
40.	A	45
41.	B	130
42.	E	136
43.	D	275
44.	A	37
45.	A	34
46.	E	260
47.	C	445
48.	E	445
49.	C	
50.	D	
51.	D	
52.	D	470
53.	A	108
54.	A	
55.	B	
56.	E	
57.	C	
58.	B	298
59.	D	
60.	A	174
61.	E	469
62.	C	337
63.	A	255
64.	D	232
65.	B	

FOLD

along the **three** longitudinal lines for ease in grading. →

Please note that the objective scores should not be altered to reflect the breaking of any ties.

Simply adjust ranking.

The thirty items in Part 1 are worth one point each.

The twenty items in Part 2 are worth two points each.

The fifteen items in Part 3 are worth two points each.

DO NOT mark (cross out) actual **LETTER** answer; mark the answer **NUMERAL**.

Page numbers refer to the *Handbook 12e*,

Folger Shakespeare *The Tragedy of Macbeth*,

Scribner *The Great Gatsby*,
and

Mint Editions *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and Reading List addendum

Part 4: Tie-Breaking Essay

These notes are not intended to be understood as a key for the Tie-Breaking Essay prompt; rather, they should serve the judge(s) as a presentation of critical ideas that might appear in an essay responding to the prompt.

Criteria for judging the Tie-Breaking Essay **SHOULD** include

- the degree to which the instructions have been followed,
- the quality of the critical insight offered in response to the selection,
- the overall effectiveness of the written discussion, and
- the grammatical correctness of the essay.

Note well that the quality of the contestant's critical insight is more important than the contestant's prose style. In short, the Literary Criticism contest is one that promotes the critical analysis of literature. The quality of the writing, which should never go unappreciated, does not trump evidence of critical analysis.

Critical Notes on Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Patience Taught by Nature"

Literary concepts that **MIGHT** be used by the contestant in a discussion of the speaker's comparison of how a person handles existing as perceived difficulty to how nature handles simply existing in Elizabeth Barret Browning's "Patience Taught by Nature" include

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| alliteration, | pathetic fallacy, |
| apostrophe, | personification, |
| assonance, | rhyme scheme, |
| controlling image, | sestet, |
| enjambment, | simile, |
| imagery, | sigmatism, |
| melopoeia, | sonnet, |
| meter, | speaker, |
| octave, | theme, and |
| onomatopoeia, | tone. |

The young literary critic should recognize that the speaker's comparison takes in the fullness of the world, animate and inanimate, flora and fauna, here on earth and beyond to include "the unwasted stars" (line 10), which represent "[i]n their old glory" (line 11) time, the temporal as—literally—the companion to patience.

The contestant might choose to focus on the imagery—auditory, visual, tactile—that reinforces the notion that nature is characterized by untroubled beauty and serene (line 4) purposefulness, which the speaker contrasts with human experience/existence that is characterized as both dreary (line 1) and burdened by meeting Heaven's expectations (lines 4-6).

The speaker's asking "the God of old" (line 11) for the grace to be patient, even as little patience as the arguably personified blade of grass needs to get through the vicissitudes—the extremes—of existence (lines 13-14) might be recognized by the close reader as a contrast to "generations of birds / Sing[ing] through our sighing" (lines 2-3): Nature has long not complained, and our weakness, measured against the natural world's strength, needs but a "smaller grace" (line 12) to learn and perhaps to emulate the flocks and the herds, the oceans and the savannah, the trees and the stars.