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**Final Exam: 9th Grade Common Assessment**

Directions: Part I - Read the following persuasive essay and then answer the questions that follow. While reading, take notes to help monitor your comprehension. You may want to summarize sections, mark connotations and analyze tone.

**Appearances are Destructive**

**Mark Mathabane**

Student Notes:

As public schools reopen for the new year, strategies to curb school violence will once again be hotly debated. Installing metal detectors and hiring security guards will help, but the experience of my two sisters makes a compelling case for the greater use of dress codes as a way to protect students and promote learning.

Shortly after my sisters arrived here from South Africa I enrolled them at the local public school. I had great expectations for their educational experience. Compared with the black schools under apartheid[[1]](#footnote-1), American schools are Shangri Las, with modern textbooks, school buses, computers, libraries, lunch programs and dedicated teachers.

But despite these benefits, which students in many parts of the world only dream about, my sisters’ efforts at learning were almost derailed. They were constantly taunted for their homely outfits. A couple of times they came home in tears. In South Africa students were required to wear uniforms, so my sisters had never been preoccupied withclothes and jewelry.

They became so distraught that they insisted on transferring to different schools, despite my reassurances that there was nothing wrong with them because of what they wore.

I have visited enough public schools around the country to know that my sisters’ experiences are not unique. In schools in many areas, brand names are more familiar names to students than Zora Neale Hurston, Shakespeare and Faulkner[[2]](#footnote-2). Many students seem to pay more attention to what’s on their bodies than in their minds.

Teachers have shared their frustrations with me at being unable to teach those students willing to learn because classes are frequently disrupted by other students ogling themselves in mirrors, painting their fingernails, combing their hair, shining their gigantic shoes, or comparing designer labels on jackets, caps and jewelry.

The fiercest competition among students is often not over academic achievements, but over who dresses most expensively. And many students now measure parental love by how willing their mothers and fathers are to pamper them with money for the latest fads in clothes, sneakers and jewelry.

Those parents without the money to waste on such meretricious extravagances[[3]](#footnote-3) are considered uncaring and cruel. They often watch in dismay and helplessness as their children become involved with gangs and peddle drugs to raise money.

When students are asked why they attach so much importance to clothing, they frequently reply that it’s the cool thing to do, that it gives them status and earns them respect. And clothes are also used to send other messages, with girls thinking that the only things that make them attractive to boys are skimpy dresses and gaudy looks, rather than intelligence and academic excellence.

Student Notes:

The argument by civil libertarians[[4]](#footnote-4) that dress codes infringe on freedom of expression is misleading. We observe dress codes in nearly every aspect of our lives without any diminution[[5]](#footnote-5) of our freedoms – as demonstrated by flight attendants, bus drivers, postal employees, high school bands, military personnel, sports teams, Girl and Boy Scouts, employees of fast food chains, restaurants and hotels.

In many countries where students outperform their American counterparts academically, school dress codes are observed as part of creating the proper learning environment. Their students tend to be neater, less disruptive in class and more disciplined, mainly because their minds are focused more on learning and less on materialism.

It’s time Americans realized that the benefit of safe and effective schools far outweigh any perceived curtailment[[6]](#footnote-6) of freedom of expression brought on by dress codes.

1. What is the author’s main claim in this selection?
2. Teens demand too much money from their parents.
3. Schools need metal detectors and guards to curb school violence.
4. Dress codes will help protect students and promote learning.
5. American schools offer more advantages than South African schools.
6. In lines 11 – 18, the author supports his claim by
7. Stating personal experience and observation
8. Citing statistics about transfer students
9. Using logical reasoning and deductions
10. Countering the opposition’s objections by “mudslinging” (making negative remarks about the opposition)
11. Which of the following statements is an opinion?
12. “Shortly after my sisters arrived here from South Africa, I enrolled them at the local public school.”
13. “A couple of times they came home in tears.”
14. “In South Africa, students were required to wear uniforms”
15. “Many students seem to pay more attention to what’s on their bodies than in their minds.”
16. In lines 16-18, *“They became so distraught that they insisted on transferring to different schools, despite my reassurances that there was nothing wrong with them because of what they wore,”* what persuasive technique did the author use?
17. Repetition
18. Parallelism
19. Emotional appeal
20. Rhetorical question
21. Which sentence summarizes lines 11-18?
22. The sisters enjoyed their new American school.
23. In South Africa, wearing uniforms improves the educational experience.
24. Being teased about their clothes ruined the sisters’ experience.
25. There was nothing wrong with the sisters’ clothing.
26. In lines 24-28, what new source of evidence does the author introduce to support his claim?
27. Teachers
28. Students
29. Parents
30. Polls
31. Parallelism is the use of similar grammatical constructions to express ideas that are related or equal in importance. Parallelism is used in lines 24-28 to emphasize the
32. Differences in the clothing students wear to school
33. Relationship between the teachers and students
34. Disruption caused by the students’ behavior
35. Items with designer labels worn by the students
36. Which word in lines 29-30 gives strong emotional meaning to the author’s opinion?
37. Fiercest
38. Academic
39. Competition
40. Students
41. Which sentence summarizes the relationship between students and their parents, according to the author in lines 29-32?
42. Students and their parents care more about clothes than about grades.
43. Parents will do anything to help their children become popular.
44. Parents reward their children when they do well in school.
45. Students judge their parents by how much money the parents give them.
46. What persuasive technique does the author use in lines 33-36?
47. Emotional (vanity)
48. Emotional (fear)
49. Association (bandwagon)
50. Association (“plain folks”)
51. What opposing argument does the author anticipate in lines 43-48?
52. Our opinions affect how we view wearing uniforms.
53. Dress codes are important in order to show status.
54. Dress codes reduce our freedom of expression.
55. Many people observe dress codes for their jobs.
56. What evidence does the author present to counter the opposing argument in lines 43-48?
57. Too many people are forced to follow dress codes for their jobs.
58. People throughout our society follow dress codes without losing their freedom of expression.
59. Civil libertarians have a fundamental misunderstanding of what freedom of expression means.
60. Dress codes diminish our freedoms not just in school but also in sports and business.
61. Which of the following ideas from lines 49-53 is the author’s opinion?
62. In many countries, students perform better than Americans in school subjects.
63. Schools in many countries of the world have dress codes.
64. American students have academic counterparts in other countries.
65. Students in other countries learn well because their minds are focused less on materialism.
66. There are many ways of defining the term *freedom of expression*. Choose the definition that best defines *freedom of expression* as it is used in lines 54-56.
67. Freedom to dress as one pleases
68. Freedom to speak or write anything
69. Freedom from spending money on outfits
70. Freedom from popularity contests
71. *“Compared with black schools under apartheid, American schools are Shangri-Las, with modern textbooks, school buses, computers, libraries, lunch programs and dedicated teachers.”* What is the most likely meaning of *Shangri-Las* in lines 7-10 of the essay?
72. Flawed institutions
73. Average schools
74. Ideal places
75. Suitable locales
76. On your student answer sheet: Write a persuasive essay explaining your position on school uniforms being required at William Penn high school. Use at least 3 details from the text “Appearances are Destructive” to support your opinion. Make sure to use at least two persuasive techniques as well (such as rhetorical devices, repetition, fact/opinion).

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| --- | --- |
| 12 | Student cited three details from the text and used at least two persuasive techniques in a well written essay. The student took a position on school uniforms. |
| 8 | Student took a position on school uniforms and used some details from the text. Persuasive technique was used. |
| 4 | Student attempted to take a position on school uniforms. Details were weak and persuasive technique was unclear. |
| 2 | Student attempted to take a position on school uniforms. Details were irrelevant or not from the text. Persuasive technique was weak or non-existent. |

Directions: Part II - Read the poem “The Owl” by Edward Thomas. Then answer the questions that follow.

**The Owl**

Down hill I came, hungry, and yet not starved;

Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof

Against the North wind; tired, yet so that rest

Has seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.

5 Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest,

Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.

All of the night was quite barred out except

An owl’s cry, a most melancholy cry

Shaken out long and clear upon the hill,

10 No merry note, nor cause of merriment,

But one telling me plain what I escaped

And others could not, that night, as I went in.

Repose: state of rest

And salted was my food, and my repose,

Salted and sobered, too, by the bird’s voice

15 Speaking for all who lay under the stars,

Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.

1. How does the speaker feel before he reaches the inn?

a. Desperate

b. Enthusiastic

c. Joyful

d. Surprised

1. What details does the speaker use to describe the sound of the owl’s cry?

a. screeching

b. a growl

c. a mournful cry

d. an enraged cry

1. How does the owl’s cry change the speaker’s feeling about being in the inn?

a. His feelings do not change.

b. He is cold and hungry.

c. He becomes angry that he cannot help others find joy.

d. He becomes more aware of his good fortune, of feeling fed and safe.

1. In the last stanza, who is the owl “speaking for”?

a. the less fortunate

b. other owls

c. the innkeeper

d. the lucky few

1. On your student answer sheet: In your own words, explain how the owl is a symbol in Edward Thomas’ poem “The Owl.” Consider what the owl represents and the theme of the poem as well as the tone. Use lines from the poem to support your answer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4 | Student demonstrates complete understanding of symbolism, theme and tone through a well written essay. Student cites specific details from the poem for support. |
| 3 | Student shows some understanding of symbolism, theme and tone. Student cites relevant details from the poem for support. |
| 2 | Student attempts to demonstrate understanding of symbolism, theme and tone but there is some confusion. Student cites some details. |
| 1 | Student attempts to answer question; however, there are serious misconceptions. Student cites irrelevant or no details. |
| 0 | No answer. |

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pd:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Student Answer Sheet: Written Response**

*Please respond to each of the Written and Extended Response questions on this answer sheet. Write legibly. Use details from the texts to support your answers!*

16. Write a persuasive essay explaining your position on school uniforms being required at William Penn high school. Use at least 3 details from the text “Appearances are Destructive” to support your opinion. Make sure to use at least two persuasive techniques as well (such as rhetorical devices, repetition, fact/opinion).

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The above essay is graded using this rubric:

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| --- | --- |
| 12 | Student cited 3 details from the text and used at least 2 persuasive techniques in a well written essay. The student took a position on school uniforms. |
| 8 | Student took a position on school uniforms and used some details from the text. Persuasive technique was used. |
| 4 | Student attempted to take a position on school uniforms. Details were weak and persuasive technique was unclear. |
| 2 | Student attempted to take a position on school uniforms. Details were irrelevant or not from the text. Persuasive technique was weak/non-existent. |

1. In your own words, explain how the owl is a symbol in Edward Thomas’ poem “The Owl.” Consider what the owl represents and the theme of the poem as well as the tone. Use lines from the poem to support your answer.

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The above essay is graded using this rubric:

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| --- | --- |
| 4 | Student demonstrates complete understanding of symbolism, theme and tone through a well written essay. Student cites specific details from the poem for support. |
| 3 | Student shows some understanding of symbolism, theme and tone. Student cites relevant details from the poem for support. |
| 2 | Student attempts to demonstrate understanding of symbolism, theme and tone but there is some confusion. Student cites some details. |
| 1 | Student attempts to answer question; however, there are serious misconceptions. Student cites irrelevant or no details. |
| 0 | No answer. |

**Answer Key – 9th Grade Final Exam**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question Number** | **Point Value** | **Skill Addressed** | **Answer** |
| 1. | 2 | Summarize main idea | C |
| 2. | 2 | Elements of argument | A |
| 3 | 2 | Fact/Opinion | D |
| 4 | 2 | Persuasive Technique | C |
| 5 | 2 | Summarize main idea | C |
| 6 | 2 | Elements of Argument | A |
| 7 | 2 | Rhetorical Devices | C |
| 8 | 2 | Persuasive Techniques | A |
| 9 | 2 | Summarize main idea | D |
| 10 | 2 | Persuasive Techniques | B |
| 11 | 2 | Element of Argument | C |
| 12 | 2 | Element of Argument | B |
| 13 | 2 | Fact/Opinion | D |
| 14 | 2 | Context Clues | A |
| 15 | 2 | Context Clues | C |
| 16 | 12, 8, 4, 2 | Persuasive Techniques | Student answers will vary. Student can be for or against uniforms at WP. In order to earn full rubric points, they need to use at least 3 details from text to support their stance. They must also use at least 2 persuasive techniques in their writing. |
| 17 | 2 | Tone | A |
| 18 | 2 | Context Clues | C |
| 19 | 2 | Tone | D |
| 20 | 2 | Symbolism | A |
| 21 | 4, 3, 2, 1 | Symbolism | Student answers will vary. Possible answer: The owl symbolizes those who are less fortunate. The owl’s cry makes the speaker appreciate his good fortune and feel compassion for those who cannot share it – “salted and sobered, too, by the bird’s voice/Speaking for all who lay under the stars,/Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.” |

1. Apartheid: racial segregation: a former policy of segregation and political and economic discrimination against non-European groups in the Republic of South Africa. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Zora Neale Hurston, Shakespeare and Faulkner: Famous authors. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Meretricious extravagances: superficial gifts [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Civil libertarians: People who advocate for, and believe in, individual rights based on the Constitution. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Diminution: decrease [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Curtailment: to make less by or as if by cutting off or away some part. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)