



# GED-SECTION-4<sup>Q&As</sup>

Section Four Language Arts - Reading

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## QUESTION 1

What Happened When He Came to America? My parents lost friends, lost family ties and patterns of mutual assistance, lost rituals and habits and favorite foods, lost any link to an ongoing social milieu, lost a good part of the sense they had of themselves. We lost a house, several towns, various landscapes. We lost documents and pictures and heirlooms, as well as most of our breakable belongings, smashed in the nine packing cases that we took with us to America. We lost connection to a thing larger than ourselves, and as a family failed to make any significant new connection in exchange, so that we were left aground on a sandbar barely big enough for our feet. I lost friends and relatives and stories and familiar comforts and a sense of continuity between home and outside and any sense that I was normal. I lost half a language through want of use and eventually, in my late teens, even lost French as the language of my internal monologue. And I lost a whole network of routes through life that I had just barely glimpsed. Hastening on toward some idea of a future, I only half-realized these losses, and when I did realize I didnt disapprove, and sometimes I actively colluded. At some point, though, I was bound to notice that there was a gulf inside me, with a blanketed form on the other side that hadnt been uncovered in decades. My project of self-invention had been successful, so much so that I had become a sort of hydroponic vegetable, growing soil-free. But I had been formed in another world; everything in me that was essential was owed to immersion in that place, and that time, that I had so effectively renounced. [ . . . ] Like it or not, each of us is made, less by blood or genes than by a process that is largely accidental, the impact of things seen and heard and smelled and tasted and endured in those few years before our clay hardens. Offhand remarks, things glimpsed in passing, jokes and commonplaces, shop displays and climate and flickering light and textures of walls are all consumed by us and become part of our fiber, just as much as the more obvious effects of upbringing and socialization and intimacy and learning. Every human being is an archeological site. Luc Sante, from *The Factory of Facts* (1998) According to the author, our personalities are formed mostly by

- A. our genes.
- B. our education.
- C. our environment.
- D. our parents and caregivers.
- E. our peers.

Correct Answer: C

The author states, "Like it or not, each of us is made, less by blood or genes than by a process that is largely accidental, the impact of things seen and heard and smelled and tasted and endured . . ." The entire third paragraph lists things in our environment that contribute to who we are. The first sentence in the paragraph contradicts choices a and d. There is no mention of education (choice b) or peers (choice e).

## QUESTION 2

Whats Wrong with Biff and Happy?

[Biff is talking with his brother, Happy. They are together with their parents in the home where they grew up.]

BIFF: [with rising agitation] Hap, Ive had twenty or thirty different kinds of jobs since I left home before the war, and it always turns out the same. I just realized it lately. In Nebraska, when I herded cattle, and the Dakotas, and Arizona, and

now in Texas. Its why I came home now, I guess, because I realized it.

This farm I work on, its spring there now, see? And theyve got about fifteen new colts. Theres nothing more inspiring



or beautiful than the sight of a mare and a new colt. And its cool there now, see? Texas is cool now, and its spring. And

whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, my God, Im not gettin anywhere! What the hell am I doing, playing around with horses, twenty-eight dollars a week! Im thirty-four years old, I oughta be makin my future.

Thats when I come running home. And now, I get here, and I dont know what to do with myself. [After a pause] Ive always made a point of not wasting my life, and every time I come back here I know that all Ive done is to waste my life.

HAPPY: Youre a poet, you know that, Biff?

Youre a youre an idealist!

BIFF: No, Im mixed up very bad. Maybe I oughta get married. Maybe I oughta get stuck into something. Maybe thats my trouble. Im like a boy. Im not married,

Im not in business, I just Im like a boy. Are you content, Hap? Youre a success, arent you? Are you content?

HAPPY: Hell, no!

BIFF: Why? Youre making money, arent you?

HAPPY: [moving about with energy, expressiveness] All I can do now is wait for the merchandise manager to die. And suppose I get to be merchandise manager?

Hes a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now hes building another one.

He cant enjoy it once its finished. And I know thats just what I would do. I dont know what the hell Im workin for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment all alone.

And I think of the rent Im paying. And its crazy. But then, its what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, Im lonely.

Arthur Miller, from *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

Why isnt the merchandise manager happy?

- A. He doesn't have enough money.
- B. He knows Happy is after his job.
- C. The more he has, the more he wants.
- D. He is lonely.
- E. He didn't like the way his estate was built.

Correct Answer: C

Happy explains that the manager built a "terrific estate" but lived there for only two months because "He can't enjoy it once it's finished" (line 41). Happy says he would do the same thing, and Happy is also a character who always wants more. The manager clearly has a lot of money, so choice a is incorrect. There is no evidence that he knows Happy is after his job, so choice b is incorrect. Happy tells us that he is lonely, but we do not know if the manager is also lonely, so choice d is incorrect. Happy says that the estate was "terrific," and there is no evidence that the manager didn't like the way it was built, so choice e is incorrect.



### QUESTION 3

What Did the Speaker Learn from Alfonso?

Alfonso I am not the first poet born to my family. We have painters and singers, actors and carpenters.

I inherited my trade from my zio, Alfonso. Zio maybe was the tallest man in the village, he certainly was the widest. He lost his voice to cigarettes before I was born, but still he roared with his hands, his eyes, with his brow, and his deafening

smile.

He worked the sea with my nonno fishing in silence among the grottoes so my father could learn to write and read and not speak like the guaglione, filled with curses and empty pockets.

He would watch me write with wonder, I could hear him on the couch, he looked at the lines over my shoulder, tried to teach himself to read late in the soft Adriatic darkness. Wine-stained pages gave him away.

But I learned to write from Zio He didnt need words, still he taught me the language of silence, the way the sun can describe a shadow, a gesture can paint a moment, a scent could fill an entire village with words and color and sound, a

perfect little grape tomato can be the most beautiful thing in the world, seen through the right eyes.

Marco A. Annunziata (2002)

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What is the relationship between the speaker and Alfonso?

- A. Alfonso is his uncle.
- B. Alfonso is his father.
- C. Alfonso is his best friend.
- D. Alfonso is his brother.
- E. Alfonso is a neighbor.

Correct Answer: A

Line 1 states, "I am not the first poet in my family, and line 28 states, "But I learned to write from Zio."Thus, he learned to write poetry from Zio. There is no evidence that either of them paints, except through words and gestures (see lines 2835), so choice a is incorrect. Zios trade was fishing, but the speaker is not a fisherman, so b is incorrect. There is no evidence that he is a singer or carpenter, so choices d and e are incorrect.

### QUESTION 4

How Does the Speaker Feel about War?

War Is Kind Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind. Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky And the affrighted steed ran on alone, Do not weep. War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment Little souls who thirst for fight, These men were born to drill and die The unexplained glory flies above them Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom



A field where a thousand corpses lie. Do not weep, babe, for war is kind. Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches, Raged at his breast, gulped and died, Do not weep. War is kind. Swift, blazing flag of the regiment Eagle with crest

of red and gold, These men were born to drill and die Point for them the virtue of slaughter Make plain to them the excellence of killing And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button On the bright splendid shroud of your son, Do not weep. War is kind.

Stephen Crane, 1899

The speaker calls the "kingdom" of the "battlegod" (lines 13

Correct Answer: E

If the kingdom of a god is only corpses, he must be a powerful god (he can create such death and destruction), but he is also a terrible god who lacks love and compassion. In addition, if his kingdom is only corpses, then he has no living worshippers to follow him, so his power is paradoxical and, essentially, useless.

These lines do show that the battle-god is mighty (choice a), but the theme of the poem is the terrible nature of war, so e is a better choice. There are indeed many casualties in a war (choice b) and many deaths in a battle (choice c), but

these ideas do not convey an attitude toward war, and repetition is usually used to help convey theme. The poem does not try to make us afraid of war; rather, it wants us to see the terrible nature of war, so choice d is incorrect.

## QUESTION 5

What Happened When He Came to America? My parents lost friends, lost family ties and patterns of mutual assistance, lost rituals and habits and favorite foods, lost any link to an ongoing social milieu, lost a good part of the sense they had of themselves. We lost a house, several towns, various landscapes. We lost documents and pictures and heirlooms, as well as most of our breakable belongings, smashed in the nine packing cases that we took with us to America. We lost connection to a thing larger than ourselves, and as a family failed to make any significant new connection in exchange, so that we were left aground on a sandbar barely big enough for our feet. I lost friends and relatives and stories and familiar comforts and a sense of continuity between home and outside and any sense that I was normal. I lost half a language through want of use and eventually, in my late teens, even lost French as the language of my internal monologue. And I lost a whole network of routes through life that I had just barely glimpsed. Hastening on toward some idea of a future, I only half-realized these losses, and when I did realize I didnt disapprove, and sometimes I actively colluded. At some point, though, I was bound to notice that there was a gulf inside me, with a blanketed form on the other side that hadnt been uncovered in decades. My project of self-invention had been successful, so much so that I had become a sort of hydroponic vegetable, growing soil-free. But I had been formed in another world; everything in me that was essential was owed to immersion in that place, and that time, that I had so effectively renounced. [ . . . ] Like it or not, each of us is made, less by blood or genes than by a process that is largely accidental, the impact of things seen and heard and smelled and tasted and endured in those few years before our clay hardens. Offhand remarks, things glimpsed in passing, jokes and commonplaces, shop displays and climate and flickering light and textures of walls are all consumed by us and become part of our fiber, just as much as the more obvious effects of upbringing and socialization and intimacy and learning. Every human being is an archeological site. Luc Sante, from *The Factory of Facts* (1998) The author came to America when he was

A. an infant.

B. a toddler.

C. in his early teens.



D. in his late teens.

E. a young adult.

Correct Answer: C

The author was most likely in his early teens when he came to America. The author states that "I lost half a language through want of use and eventually, in my late teens, even lost French as the language of my internal monologue" (lines 17

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