10th Grade A/H - English Exam

A passage from “The American Scholar” by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

I greet you on the re-commencement of our literary year. Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labor. We do not meet for games of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies, and odes, like the ancient Greeks; for parliaments of love and poesy, like the Troubadours; nor for the advancement of science, like our cotemporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. As such, it is precious as the sign of an indestructible instinct. Perhaps the time is already come, when it ought to be, and will be, something else; when the sluggard intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids, and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions, that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt, that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?

1. Identify at least one example of metaphor in the above passage. What two things are being compared? How are they alike in this passage?

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1. Identify at least one example of simile in the above passage. What two things are being compared? How are the alike in this passage?

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1. What is the author’s tone toward the American scholar? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What words help you to identify tone? (2 examples) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What is the theme of this passage? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A passage from *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*

Oh the doleful sight that now was to behold at this house! *Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolation he has made in the earth*. Of thirty seven persons who were in this one house, none escaped either present death or a bitter captivity, save only one, who might say as he, *Job i. 15, And I only am escaped alone to tell the news*.

1. Underline the use of allusion in this passage. To what is the author alluding? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A passage from *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne:

But there was a more real life for Hester Prynne here, in New England, than in that unknown region where Pearl had found a home. Here had been her sin; here, her sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence. She had returned, therefore, and resumed,—of her own free will, for not the sternest magistrate of that iron period would have imposed it,—resumed the symbol of which we have related so dark a tale. Never afterwards did it quit her bosom. But . . . the scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world’s scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, and yet with reverence, too.

1. Analyze the author’s style of writing. Include at least two specific writing traits of this author. Be specific and give examples for full credit.

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A passage from *Skinny Legs and All*

Colonial Pines was a suburb without an urb. At a distance of twenty-two miles, it was too far from Richmond to truly function as an appendage therof, yet it lacked the autonomy of a separate city. It boaster no industry to speak of, and while excellent tomatoes were grown in abundance in its immediate vicinity, it certainly couldn’t be characterized as a farming community. Oddly enough, it had no downtown. What passed for a business district in Colonial Pines was a four-lane highway that, despite the turnpike that nowadays allowed traffic to skirt the place, still carried thousands of Yankee tourists to Florida and back. As it passed through Colonial Pines, that highway, three miles of it, was lined cheek to jowl with motels, service stations, and restaurants- although restaurant might be too dignified a word for the barbecue pits, ice cream stands, truck stops, and so-called “family” inns (whose blank, almost totalitarian cuisine could be trusted never to excite or confuse a repressed taste bud with flavors novel or bold). Presumably, inhabitants of this quasi-town earned their income from the Strip, as it was known, though we may also presume that they benefitted from their traffic court: the reputation of the Colonial Pines speed trap stretched from Boston to Miami.

1. Based on the author’s tone, would this author want to live in Brantley? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Underline at least two words or phrases that indicate tone.
3. Which of the following literary elements is illustrated in this passage?
	1. Plot
	2. Setting
	3. Character
	4. Theme
4. Do you enjoy this author’s style of writing? Explain what you do or do not like about it.

(Hint: “I don’t like it because it’s hard” will not get you credit for this question.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A Passage from *Skinny Legs and All*

"Well,” said Can o' Beans, a bit hesitantly,” imprecise speech is one of the major causes of mental illness in human beings.”

“The word neat, for example, has precise connotations. Neat means tidy, orderly, well-groomed. It's a valuable tool for describing the appearance of a room, a hairdo, or a manuscript. When it's generically and inappropriately applied, though, as it is in the slang aspect, it only obscures the true nature of the thing or feeling that it's supposed to be representing. It's turned into a sponge word. You can wring meanings out of it by the bucketful--and never know which one is right. When a person says a movie is 'neat,' does he mean that it's funny or tragic or thrilling or romantic, does he mean that the cinematography is beautiful, the acting heartfelt, the script intelligent, the direction deft, or the leading lady has cleavage to die for? Slang possesses an economy, an immediacy that's attractive, all right, but it devalues experience by standardizing and fuzzing it. It hangs between humanity and the real world like a veil. Slang just makes people more stupid, that's all, and stupidity eventually makes them crazy. I'd hate to ever see that kind of craziness rub off."

1. Can O’ Beans, in this novel, is literally a can of pork and beans, but based on Can O’ Bean’s diction, what would likely be his career if he was human rather than an object? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. The author has created a voice for this character. Underline in this passage where the voice changes. Why do you think the author had the character use two different personas?

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1. What is the theme of this passage? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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A passage from an Apache Creation Myth

In the beginning nothing existed, only darkness was everywhere. Suddenly from the darkness emerged a thin disc, one side yellow and the other side white, appearing suspended in midair. Within the disc sat a small bearded man, Creator, the One Who Lives Above. When he looked into the endless darkness, light appeared above. He looked down and it became a sea of light. To the east, he created yellow streaks of dawn. To the west, tints of many colors appeared everywhere. There were also clouds of different colours. He also created three other gods: a little girl, a Sun-God and a small boy.

Then he created celestial phenomena, the winds, the tarantula, and the earth from the sweat of the four gods mixed together in the Creator's palms, from a small round, brown ball, not much larger than a bean. The world was expanded to its current size by the gods kicking the small brown ball until it expanded. Creator told Wind to go inside the ball and to blow it up.

The tarantula, the trickster character, spun a black cord and, attaching it to the ball, crawled away fast to the east, pulling on the cord with all his strength. Tarantula repeated with a blue cord to the south, a yellow cord to the west, and a white cord to the north. With mighty pulls in each direction, the brown ball stretched to immeasurable size--it became the earth! No hills, mountains, or rivers were visible; only smooth, treeless, brown plains appeared. Then the Creator created the rest of the beings and features of the Earth.

1. Without reading the title, how might someone know that this passage is a Native American creation myth?

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