



ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total time—2 hours

Question 1¹

(Suggested Time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

In Percy Bysshe Shelley’s sonnet “Ozymandias,” published in 1818, the speaker reflects on a meeting with a traveler where the traveler recounts his observations about some ancient ruins. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Shelley uses literary elements and techniques to explore the complex relationship between power, pride, and the passing of time.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
5 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
10 And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

¹ Modified from an original version produced by Meghan Hobbs Chandler

In Horace Smith's sonnet "Ozymandias," published in 1818, the speaker reflects on some ancient Egyptian ruins and then projects his understandings toward the future. Read the poem carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, analyze how Smith uses literary elements and techniques to explore the complex relationship between power and the passing of time.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

Ozymandias

In Egypt's sandy silence, all alone,
Stands a gigantic Leg, which far off throws
The only shadow that the Desert knows:—
"I am great OZYMANDIAS," saith the stone,
5 "The King of Kings; this mighty City shows
The wonders of my hand."— The City's gone,—
Naught but the Leg remaining to disclose
The site of this forgotten Babylon.

We wonder,—and some Hunter may express
10 Wonder like ours, when thro' the wilderness
Where London stood, holding the Wolf in chace,
He meets some fragment huge, and stops to guess
What powerful but unrecorded race
Once dwelt in that annihilated place.