

Sample Grade 9 English Exam

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read all exam questions before you begin the exam.
2. All inquiries are to be directed to the teacher only.
3. All responses must be written in complete sentences and proper paragraph form, unless otherwise indicated.
4. Where indicated, answer on the provided lined paper.
5. Write your name on each page of the lined paper and at the top of this page.

MARK DISTRIBUTION	KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING	THINKING	COMMUNICATION	APPLICATION	SECTION TOTALS
PART A: Multiple Choice	/10			/10	/20
PART B: Short Story		/10		/10	/20
PART C: Novel Study	/10	/10	/10	/5	/35
SECTION TOTALS	/20	/20	/10	/25	/75

PART A – MULTIPLE CHOICE (10 KU, 10 A)

Circle the correct answer.

1. Which statement best explains the function of the rising action in a short story or novel?

- A. It provides the moral of the story.
- B. It adds complications and builds tension leading up to the climax.
- C. It briefly outlines the resolution of conflicts.
- D. It serves as the final turning point after the story's climax.

2. Read the following sentence: “The old willow tree sighed sadly in the autumn breeze.”

Which literary device is exemplified in this sentence?

- A. Metaphor
- B. Hyperbole
- C. Personification
- D. Oxymoron

3. Which of the following lines is the best example of a metaphor?

- A. “The puppy’s bark was like a squeaky toy.”
- B. “She danced as gracefully as a swan.”
- C. “Her voice was thunder echoing through the hall.”
- D. “His laughter sounded almost like a door creaking.”

4. Which sentence contains an allusion?

- A. “He sprinted across the field faster than a cheetah.”
- B. “She opened the door, revealing a dark and empty room.”
- C. “He had a Mona Lisa smile that no one could quite interpret.”
- D. “The candle’s flame flickered in the silent hall.”

5. Which line is an example of hyperbole?

- A. “My backpack is the colour of a storm cloud.”
- B. “I’ve told you a million times to clean your room!”
- C. “She whispered so softly no one could hear her.”
- D. “His car screeched to a halt at the stop sign.”

6. If a novelist repeatedly refers to a rising sun throughout a story to represent hope, what literary device is being used?

- A. Characterization
- B. Symbolism
- C. Irony

D. Oxymoron

7. In a short story, the main character struggles against societal norms, threatening her freedom. What type of conflict is this?

- A. Character vs. Self
- B. Character vs. Nature
- C. Character vs. Society
- D. Character vs. Fate

8. Which of the following phrases is an example of an oxymoron?

- A. "Pretty as a picture"
- B. "Freezing cold morning"
- C. "Ordinary miracle"
- D. "Bitter memory"

9. Which of the following statements best defines foreshadowing?

- A. A figure of speech that compares two unlike things using "like" or "as."
- B. A literary device in which clues or hints are provided about events that will occur later in the story.
- C. A descriptive technique that uses exaggerated language for emphasis or effect.
- D. A method of attributing human qualities to animals or inanimate objects.

10. Which of the following lines demonstrates alliteration?

- A. "The fierce wind whipped through the empty alleyway."
- B. "She sang a lullaby softly to soothe her baby."
- C. "Bright stars shimmered far above."
- D. "Sally sells seashells by the seashore."

11. Which sentence uses correct capitalization?

- A. "on Tuesday, Mary visited Dr. Smith."
- B. "On tuesday, mary visited Dr. smith."
- C. "On Tuesday, Mary visited Dr. Smith."
- D. "On tuesday, Mary visited Dr. Smith."

12. In which sentence is the comma placed correctly?

- A. "Before we leave, gather your coat and backpack."
- B. "Before we leave gather, your coat and backpack."
- C. "Before, we leave gather your coat and backpack."
- D. "Before we leave gather your coat, and backpack."

13. In which sentence is the semicolon used correctly?

- A. "She finished her essay; but she forgot to proofread."
- B. "She finished her essay; she forgot to proofread."
- C. "She finished her essay; and, she forgot to proofread."
- D. "She finished her essay; she forgot to proofread."

14. In which of the following sentences is the colon used correctly to introduce a list?

- A. "He needed the following: paper, pencil, and eraser."
- B. "He needed the following paper: pencil, and eraser."
- C. "He needed: the following paper, pencil, and eraser."
- D. "He needed the following paper, pencil, and eraser:"

15. Choose the correct coordinating conjunction for the following sentence:

"I wanted to play soccer, ___ it started to rain."

- A. so
- B. or
- C. and
- D. but

16. Select the best correlative conjunctions to complete the sentence: "___ my sister ___ my brother wanted to go to the amusement park."

- A. Both / but
- B. Not only / or
- C. Either / so
- D. Neither / nor

17. Which form of the verb "to be" is in the past tense for the pronoun "they"?

- A. Am
- B. Is
- C. Were
- D. Are

18. In the sentence "John gave his mother flowers," which words are the indirect object and direct object?

- A. "John" is the indirect object; "gave" is the direct object
- B. "his mother" is the direct object; "flowers" is the indirect object
- C. "his mother" is the indirect object; "flowers" is the direct object
- D. "flowers" is the indirect object; "John" is the direct object

19. Which option best describes a pronoun?

- A. A word that describes an action or state of being
- B. A word used in place of a noun
- C. A naming word for a person, place, or thing
- D. A word that modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb

20. In the sentence “Ms. Jones is the principal of our school,” what is the predicate noun?

- A. Ms. Jones
- B. principal
- C. school
- D. our

PART B – SHORT STORY (10 T, 10 A)

Read the short story “Once Upon a Time” by Nadine Gordimer on the next page. Answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Draw and label a plot diagram for this short story. (10 T)
2. What is the theme of this story? Provide evidence from the story. (4 A)
3. Who is the antagonist, and who is the protagonist? Why do you think that? (2 A)
4. What is ironic about the situation? Provide evidence from the story. (2 A)
5. What types(s) of conflict are introduced in this story? Provide evidence from the story. (2 A)

“Once Upon a Time” by Nadine Gordimer

In a house, in a suburb, in a city, there was a man and his wife who loved each other very much and were living happily ever after. They had a little boy, and they loved him very much. They had a cat and a dog that the little boy loved very much. They had a car and a caravan trailer for holidays, and a swimming pool which was fenced so that the little boy and his playmates would not fall in and drown. They had a housemaid who was absolutely trustworthy and an itinerant gardener who was highly recommended by the neighbors. For when they began to live happily ever after they were warned, by that wise old witch, the husband's mother, not to take on anyone off the street. They were inscribed in a medical benefit society, their pet dog was licensed, they were insured against fire, flood damage and theft, and subscribed to the local Neighborhood Watch, which supplied them with a plaque for their gates lettered YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED over the silhouette of a would-be intruder. He was masked: it could not be said if he was black or white, and therefore proved the property owner was no racist.

It was not possible to insure the house, the swimming pool or the car against riot damage. There were riots, but these were outside the city, where people of another color were quartered. These people were not allowed into the suburb except as reliable housemaids and gardeners, so there was nothing to fear, the husband told the wife. Yet she was afraid that some day such people might come up the street and tear off the plaque YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED and open the gates and stream in... Nonsense, my dear, said the husband, there are police and soldiers and tear-gas and guns to keep them away. But to please her – for he loved her very much and buses were being burned, cars stoned, and schoolchildren shot by the police in those quarters out of sight and hearing of the suburb – he had electronically controlled gates fitted. Anyone who pulled off the sign YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED and tried to open the gates would have to announce his intentions by pressing a button and speaking into a receiver relayed to the house. The little boy was fascinated by the device and used it as a walkie-talkie in cops and robbers play with his small friends.

The riots were suppressed, but there were many burglaries in the suburb and somebody's trusted housemaid was tied up and shut in a cupboard by thieves while she was in charge of her employers' house. The trusted housemaid of the man and wife and little boy was so upset by this misfortune befalling a friend left, as she herself often was, with responsibility for the possessions of the man and his wife and the little boy that she implored her employers to have burglar bars attached to the doors and windows of the house, and an alarm system installed. The wife said, She is right, let us take heed of her advice. So from every window and door in the house where they were living happily ever after they now saw

the trees and sky through bars, and when the little boy's pet cat tried to climb in by the fanlight to keep him company in his little bed at night, as it customarily had done, it set off the alarm keening through the house.

The alarm was often answered – it seemed – by other burglar alarms, in other houses, that had been triggered by pet cats or nibbling mice. The alarms called to one another across the gardens in shrills and bleats and wails that everyone soon became accustomed to, so that the din roused the inhabitants of the suburb no more than the croak of frogs and musical grating of cicadas' legs. Under cover of the electronic harpies' discourse intruders sawed the iron bars and broke into homes, taking away hi-fi equipment, television sets, cassette players, cameras and radios, jewelry and clothing, and sometimes were hungry enough to devour everything in the refrigerator or paused audaciously to drink the whiskey in the cabinets or patio bars. Insurance companies paid no compensation for single malt, a loss made keener by the property owner's knowledge that the thieves wouldn't even have been able to appreciate what it was they were drinking.

Then the time came when many of the people who were not trusted housemaids and gardeners hung about the suburb because they were unemployed. Some importuned for a job: weeding or painting a roof; anything, baas, madam. But the man and his wife remembered the warning about taking on anyone off the street. Some drank liquor and fouled the street with discarded bottles. Some begged, waiting for the man or his wife to drive the car out of the electronically operated gates. They sat about with their feet in the gutters, under the jacaranda trees that made a green tunnel of the street – for it was a beautiful suburb, spoilt only by their presence – and sometimes they fell asleep lying right before the gates in the midday sun. The wife could never see anyone go hungry. She sent the trusted housemaid out with bread and tea, but the trusted housemaid said these were loafers and tsotsis, who would come and tie her and shut her in a cupboard. The husband said, She's right. Take heed of her advice. You only encourage them with your bread and tea. They are looking for their chance... And he brought the little boy's tricycle from the garden into the house every night, because if the house was surely secure, once locked and with the alarm set, someone might still be able to climb over the wall or the electronically closed gates into the garden.

You are right, said the wife, then the wall should be higher. And the wise old witch, the husband's mother, paid for the extra bricks as her Christmas present to her son and his wife – the little boy got a Space Man outfit and a book of fairy tales.

But every week there were more reports of intrusion: in broad daylight and the dead of night, in the early hours of the morning, and even in the lovely summer twilight – a certain family was at dinner while the bedrooms were being ransacked upstairs. The man and his wife, talking of the latest armed robbery in the suburb, were distracted by the sight of the little boy's pet cat effortlessly arriving over the seven-foot wall, descending first with a rapid bracing of extended forepaws down on the sheer vertical surface, and then a graceful launch, landing with swishing tail within the property. The whitewashed wall was marked with the cat's comings and goings; and on the street side of the wall there were larger red-earth smudges that could have been made by the kind of broken running shoes, seen on the feet of unemployed loiterers, that had no innocent destination.

When the man and wife and little boy took the pet dog for its walk round the neighbourhood streets they no longer paused to admire this show of roses or that perfect lawn; these were hidden behind an array of different varieties of security fences, walls and devices. The man, wife, little boy and dog passed a remarkable choice: there was the low-cost option of pieces of broken glass embedded in cement along the top of walls, there were iron grilles ending in lance-points, there were attempts at reconciling the aesthetics of prison architecture with the Spanish Villa style (spikes painted pink) and with the plaster urns of neoclassical facades (twelve-inch pikes finned like zigzags of lightning and painted pure white). Some walls had a small board affixed, giving the name and telephone number of the firm responsible for the installation of the devices. While the little boy and the pet dog raced ahead, the husband and wife found themselves comparing the possible effectiveness of each style against its appearance; and after several weeks when they paused before this barricade or that without needing to speak, both came out with the conclusion that only one was worth considering. It was the ugliest but the most honest in its suggestion of the pure concentration-camp style, no frills, all evident efficacy. Placed the length of walls, it consisted of a continuous coil of stiff and shining metal serrated into jagged blades, so that there would be no way of climbing over it and no way through its tunnel without getting entangled in its fangs. There would be no way out, only a struggle getting bloodier and bloodier, a deeper and sharper hooking and tearing of flesh. The wife shuddered to look at it. You're right, said the husband, anyone would think twice... And they took heed of the advice on a small board fixed to the wall: Consult DRAGON'S TEETH The People For Total Security.

Next day a gang of workmen came and stretched the razor-bladed coils all round the walls of the house where the husband and wife and little boy and pet dog and cat were living happily ever after. The sunlight flashed and slashed, off the serrations, the cornice of razor thorns encircled the home, shining. The husband said, Never mind. It will weather. The wife said, You're wrong. They guarantee it's rust-proof. And she waited until the little boy had run off

to play before she said, I hope the cat will take heed... The husband said, Don't worry, my dear, cats always look before they leap. And it was true that from that day on the cat slept in the little boy's bed and kept to the garden, never risking a try at breaching security. One evening, the mother read the little boy to sleep with a fairy story from the book the wise old witch had given him at Christmas. Next day he pretended to be the Prince who braves the terrible thicket of thorns to enter the palace and kiss the Sleeping Beauty back to life: he dragged a ladder to the wall, the shining coiled tunnel was just wide enough for his little body to creep in, and with the first fixing of its razor-teeth in his knees and hands and head he screamed and struggled deeper into its tangle. The trusted housemaid and the itinerant gardener, whose "day" it was, came running, the first to see and to scream with him, and the itinerant gardener tore his hands trying to get at the little boy. Then the man and his wife burst wildly into the garden and for some reason (the cat, probably) the alarm set up wailing against the screams while the bleeding mass of the little boy was hacked out of the security coil with saws, wire-cutters, choppers, and they carried it – the man, the wife, the hysterical trusted housemaid and the weeping gardener – into the house.

PART C – NOVEL STUDY (10 KU, 10 T, 5 A, 10 C)

Answer all questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Describe one important event from the novel that significantly affected the direction of the story. Explain why this moment mattered. (5 KU)
2. Who is the main character? Explain how this character changes, grows, or reveals important traits over the course of the novel. (5 KU)
3. In a paragraph, what is the central theme that the novel explores? Explain how the author develops this idea through characters or events. (5 T)
4. Choose a moment from the novel that stood out to you. In a paragraph, explain why this moment is memorable and what it reveals about the story. (5 T)
5. In a paragraph, describe what happens at the end of the novel. Why is the ending impactful (or not)? (5 A)
6. In two paragraphs, describe two choices the author made (for example: an ending, a character decision, or a turning point). Explain how this choice shapes the reader's understanding of the story. (10 C)