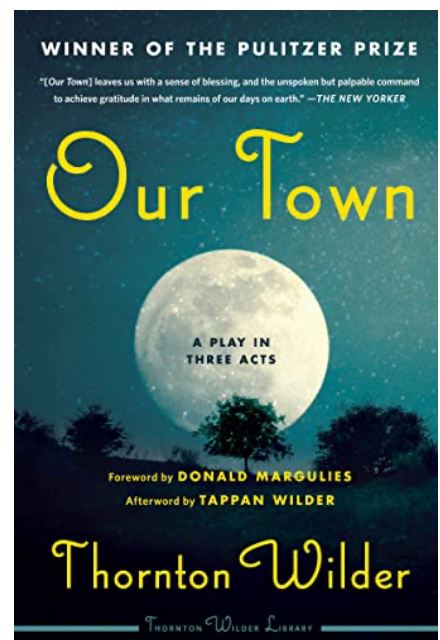
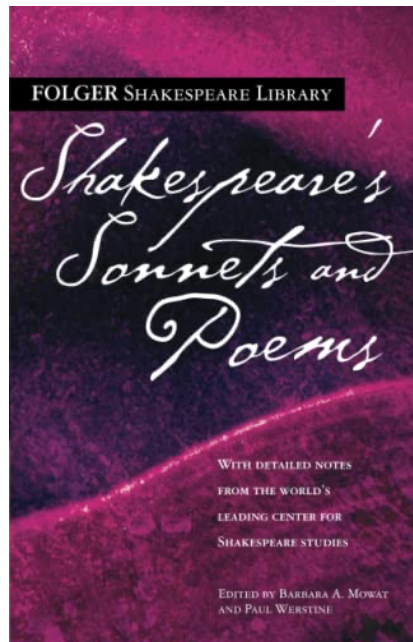
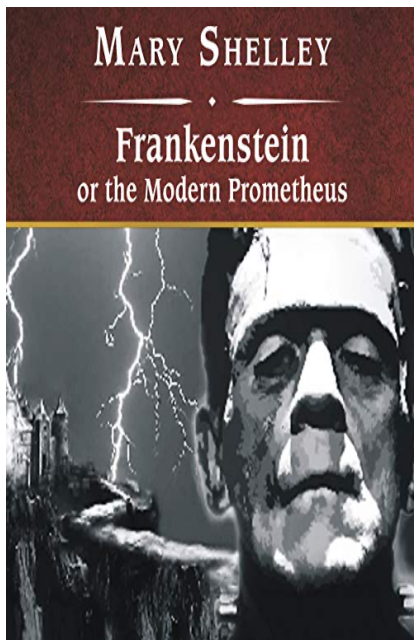




UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

Literary Criticism

Region • 2023



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University Interscholastic League
Literary Criticism Contest • Region • 2023

Part 1: Knowledge of Literary Terms and of Literary History

30 items (1 point each)

1. The use of repetitious words in which an idea is repeated without any added force or clarity is called
 - A) antithesis.
 - B) hyperbole.
 - C) redaction.
 - D) tautology.
 - E) zeugma.
2. The movement in literary, graphic, and cinematic art emphasizing the expression of the imagination as realized in dreams and presented without conscious control is
 - A) aestheticism.
 - B) cubism.
 - C) impressionism.
 - D) minimalism.
 - E) surrealism.
3. The complicated Grammy Award-winning poet, controversial social activist who coined the term *womanist*, and author of a series of autobiographical novels, including the highly acclaimed, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, is
 - A) Maya Angelou.
 - B) Lorraine Hansberry.
 - C) Zora Neale Hurston.
 - D) Toni Morrison.
 - E) Alice Walker.
4. The group of critics, including Georges Poulet, Albert Béguin, and Marcel Raymond, who see a literary work as a series of existential expressions of the author's individual consciousness is the
 - A) Decadents.
 - B) Geneva School.
 - C) Imagists.
 - D) Parnassians.
 - E) Symbolists.
5. The recipient of the 1942 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his autobiographical *The Dust Which Is God* is
 - A) William Rose Benét.
 - B) John Gould Fletcher.
 - C) Edwin Arlington Robinson.
 - D) Robert Penn Warren.
 - E) William Carlos Williams.
6. The character of the speaker or writer as reflected in speech or writing is known as
 - A) bathos.
 - B) ethos.
 - C) logos.
 - D) mythos.
 - E) pathos.
7. The German poet, playwright, illustrator, graphic artist, sculptor, and recipient of the 1999 Nobel Prize for Literature who wrote the internationally celebrated novel *The Tin Drum* is
 - A) Heinrich Böll.
 - B) Hermann Hesse.
 - C) Günter Grass.
 - D) Thomas Mann.
 - E) Theodor Mommsen.
8. The early nineteenth-century American author who gave us the pseudonymic collection *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, in which are found the two tales "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle" is
 - A) Ambrose Bierce.
 - B) Ralph Waldo Emerson.
 - C) Washington Irving.
 - D) Herman Melville.
 - E) Edgar Allan Poe.
9. A word or name fabricated by spelling another word or words backward, as when Daniel Suarez, in 2006, published his novel *Daemon* under the authorship of Leinad Zeraus, is called a(n)
 - A) allonym.
 - B) anonym.
 - C) eponym.
 - D) heteronym.
 - E) pseudonym.
10. **Not** a genre that is, in some manner, a commemoration of a death is (the)
 - A) dirge.
 - B) elegy.
 - C) lament.
 - D) scat.
 - E) threnody.

11. The recipient of the 1943 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his *The Skin of Our Teeth* is
 - A) Edward Albee.
 - B) Arthur Miller.
 - C) Eugene O'Neill.
 - D) Robert E. Sherwood.
 - E) Thornton Wilder.
12. A word, phrase, or manner of expression, whether it is language, customs, dress, or any other characteristic, peculiar to a special region and not customarily used outside that region—therefore, not fashionable or sophisticated, is known as a
 - A) barbarism.
 - B) euphemism.
 - C) Gongorism.
 - D) provincialism.
 - E) regionalism.
13. The group of eighteenth-century English poets who wrote poems on death and immortality that attempt to establish an atmosphere of pleasing gloom in order to call up the horrors of death through the imagery of the charnel house and similar places is the
 - A) Graveyard School.
 - B) Kailyard School.
 - C) Lake School.
 - D) Satanic School.
 - E) Spasmodic School.
14. The term first associated with an anthology of the Bard's works that means to expurgate a piece of writing by omitting material considered offensive or indecorous especially to female modesty is
 - A) abridge.
 - B) bowdlerize.
 - C) modulate.
 - D) quibble.
 - E) truncate.
15. The period in English literature between 1100 and 1350, which is also often called the Early Middle English Period and is frequently dated from the Conquest in 1066, is known as the
 - A) Anglo-Norman Period.
 - B) Anglo-Saxon Period.
 - C) Middle English Period.
 - D) Old English Period.
 - E) Renaissance Period.
16. **Not** a creative form of expression coming out of a Japanese tradition directly or indirectly is (the)
 - A) anime.
 - B) haiku.
 - C) lai.
 - D) senryu.
 - E) tanka.
17. The period in English literature that chronicles the fundamental changes in English life and thought brought on by a long bitter struggle for national survival between the First World War and the beginning of the Second is known as the
 - A) Augustan Age.
 - B) Georgian Age.
 - C) Jacobean Age.
 - D) Realistic Age.
 - E) Restoration Age.
18. The early nineteenth-century New England literary group that includes William Cullen Bryant and John Greenleaf Whittier, named for an image that suggests warmth and domesticity as well as their northern environment, is the
 - A) Fireside Poets.
 - B) Hartford Wits.
 - C) Knickerbocker Group.
 - D) Muckrakers.
 - E) New York School.
19. The system for describing conventional rhythms by dividing lines of verse into feet, indicating the locations of binomial accents, and counting the syllables is known as
 - A) exegesis.
 - B) reception theory.
 - C) scansion.
 - D) typology.
 - E) versification.
20. The nineteenth-century British writer who wrote *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda* and translated Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* is
 - A) Jane Austen.
 - B) George Eliot.
 - C) Constance Garnett.
 - D) Elizabeth Gaskell.
 - E) Mary Shelley.

21. The conventional paradoxical *topos* derived from patristic sources and meaning the "unspeakable word" is the
- carpe diem* formula.
 - deus ex machina* formula.
 - memento mori* formula.
 - ubi sunt* formula.
 - verbum infans* formula.
22. The group of Renaissance writers who favored the introduction of heavy Latin and Greek words into the standard English vocabulary as English transitioned from Middle English to Modern English is known as the
- Ciceronians.
 - Geneva School.
 - Inkhornists.
 - Parnassians.
 - Pléiade*.
23. The stanzaic form consisting of eight iambic pentameter lines rhyming *abababcc* is the
- octameter.
 - octapla.
 - octastich.
 - ottava rima*.
 - oxytonic verse.
24. The Polish British novelist and short story author who wrote *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *Typhoon*, *Nostramo*, *The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes*, *Chance*, *Victory*, "Youth," and "The Secret Sharer," and whose works have been adapted for film, for stage, for opera, and for orchestra, is
- William Blake.
 - Joseph Conrad.
 - Charles Dickens.
 - Arthur Conan Doyle.
 - Ford Madox Ford.
25. The period in American literary history covering 1900 to 1930 that is known for, in part, the virtual birth of modern American poetry and for the self-consciously dislocated, culturally and otherwise, Lost Generation is the
- Naturalistic and Symbolistic Period.
 - Period of the Confessional Self.
 - Postmodernist Period.
 - Realistic Period.
 - Romantic Period.
26. Literature produced by either the Ancient Britons, the Welsh, the Cornish, the Bretons, the Irish, the Manx, or the Gaels is known as
- Anglo-Irish literature.
 - Celtic literature.
 - diasporic literature.
 - frontier literature.
 - wisdom literature.
27. The kind of free verse that regards meter and form as artificial and in which the poet transfers a voice primarily through content and the propulsive quality of breathing, which alone determines the prosodic line, is
- alliterative verse.
 - blank verse.
 - echo verse.
 - nonsense verse.
 - projective verse.
28. **Not** a form of poetry considered to be a pattern poem is the
- altar poem.
 - carmen figuratum*.
 - figure poem.
 - rebus.
 - shaped verse.
29. A recipient of a MacArthur Genius Grant and both the 2017 and the 2020 Pulitzer Prizes for Fiction for *The Underground Railroad*, which "combines the violence of slavery and the drama of escape in a myth that speaks to contemporary America" and *The Nickel Boys*, which celebrates perseverance, is
- William Kennedy.
 - Cormac McCarthy.
 - Larry McMurtry.
 - John Updike.
 - Colson Whitehead.
30. The term, originally German and later made popular in English cultural criticism by Matthew Arnold that points to the worship of material and mechanical prosperity and the disregard of culture, beauty, and spirit is
- asterism.
 - Dadaism.
 - medievalism.
 - philistinism.
 - primitivism.

Part 2: The UIL Reading List

20 items (2 points each)

Items 31-36 are associated with Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*.

Items 37-42 are associated with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*.

Items 43-50 are associated with William Shakespeare's sonnets (selected).

31. In Wilder's *Our Town*, Joe Crowell, Jr.'s comment about Miss Foster's getting married, "I think if a person starts out to be a teacher, she ought to stay one," reflects his, perhaps shared, expectations regarding
- career changes.
 - foster children.
 - gender roles.
 - teacher accountability.
 - teacher burn-out.
32. Dr. Gibbs, according to Mrs. Webb's accounting of Mr. Webb's admiration of Dr. Gibbs, "knows everything about the
- Biblical conflicts in which the Israelites took part."
 - Civil War."
 - First World War."
 - Napoleonic Wars."
 - Revolutionary War."
33. **Not** listed among the items offered by Mr. Webb in answer to the question "Is there any culture or love of beauty in Grover's Corners?" is
- the Bible.
 - Handel's "Largo."
 - Robinson Crusoe*.
 - Whistler's *Mother*.
 - Wilder's *Bridge of San Luis Rey*.
34. The Stage Manager's declaration that he is "going to have a copy of this play put in the cornerstone and the people a thousand years from now'll know a few simple facts about us—" is one of the play's many obvious
- existential crises.
 - liminal moments.
 - metafictional elements.
 - self-confessional turns.
 - transvocalizations.
35. Simon Stimson's epitaph consists of (a/the)
- Alcoholics Anonymous Serenity Prayer.
 - four lines of blank verse.
 - lines from the libretto of Handel's "Largo."
 - quote from "Blessed Be the Ties That Bind."
 - some notes of music.
36. The sanguine advice central to the discussion of the deads' relationship with the living, "Choose an unimportant day. Choose the least important day in your life. It will be important enough," is offered by
- Julia Gibbs.
 - Louella Soames.
 - Simon Stimson.
 - the Stage Manager.
 - Myrtle Webb.
-
37. Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein recounts that as a youth his "eager desire to learn, and not to learn all things indiscriminately" focused on
- the code of governments.
 - the politics of various states.
 - the secrets of heaven and earth.
 - the structure of languages.
 - the tropes and figures of speech of literature.
38. The author to whom Victor alludes in describing his father's "dislike of learning" as one like the Dutch schoolmaster in *The Vicar of Wakefield* is
- Daniel Defoe.
 - Henry Fielding.
 - Oliver Goldsmith.
 - Samuel Richardson.
 - Jonathan Swift.
39. The creature recounts being out in the wood collecting food and finding a leathern portmanteau containing some books that he set about reading as "true histor[ies]," one of which presented "several situations [similar] to [his] own"; this book is
- Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.
 - Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
 - Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*.
 - Stoker's *Dracula*.
 - Volney's *Les Ruines*.
40. Justine confesses to William's murder because she
- actually did commit the murder.
 - fears the creature will find her if she lives on.
 - feels that her family will never accept her.
 - harbors a deep jealousy of Elizabeth.
 - hopes to obtain God's absolution for all her sins.

41. While Victor remembers many reasons to fear keeping his promise to the creature, the one reason that made Victor **shudder the most** is (the)
- A) creature might find the new creature abhorrent.
 - B) creatures joining together to kill his family.
 - C) future ages cursing Victor as their pest.
 - D) new creature abandoning the original.
 - E) prospect of the two creatures propagating.
42. Victor remembers that he "dared to whisper paradisiacal dreams of love and joy; but the apple was already eaten, and the angel's arm bared to drive me from all hope"; his reference to the apple is a
- A) biblical allusion.
 - B) classical allusion.
 - C) historical allusion.
 - D) mythical allusion.
 - E) topical allusion.

Items 43-48 refer to William Shakespeare's

Sonnet 30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste: 4
 Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
 And weep afresh love's long since canceled woe,
 And moan th' expense of many a vanished sight; 8
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
 The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
 Which I new pay as if not paid before. 12
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restored and sorrows end.

43. The opening lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 30 feature
- A) assonance.
 - B) consonance.
 - C) dissonance.
 - D) resonance.
 - E) sigmatism.
44. The close proximity in line 9 of the words *grieve* and *grievances*; and line 11's *fore-bemoanèd moan*; and of *pay* and *paid* in line 12 constitute
- A) anaphora.
 - B) epanalepsis.
 - C) pleonasm.
 - D) polyptoton.
 - E) polysyndeton.

45. The metaphor's vehicle controlling the first stanza's call for evidence—his "summon[ing] up remembrance of things past"—is (the)
- A) drowning eye of loss.
 - B) judicial court.
 - C) speaker's date with death.
 - D) sweet silent thought.
 - E) time's wasting woe.
46. The continuation of the sense and grammatical construction from the first stanza to the second and from the second stanza to the third stanza constitutes
- A) boustrophedon.
 - B) end-stopped lines.
 - C) enjambment.
 - D) reduplication.
 - E) rhopalic progression.
47. The melopoeic scheme dominating the poem, especially in line 4, is
- A) alliteration.
 - B) cacophony.
 - C) dissonance.
 - D) transverse alliteration.
 - E) syzygy.
48. The sonnet's volta occurs at the beginning of
- A) line 1.
 - B) line 5.
 - C) line 11.
 - D) line 12.
 - E) line 13.

Items 49-50 refer to William Shakespeare's

Sonnet 134

So now I have confessed that he is thine,
 And I my self am mortgaged to thy will,
 Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
 Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still: 4
 But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
 For thou art covetous, and he is kind;
 He learned but surety-like to write for me,
 Under that bond that him as fast doth bind. 8
 The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
 Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use,
 And sue a friend came debtor for my sake;
 So him I lose through my unkind abuse. 12
 Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me:
 He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

49. The metaphorical comparison whose vehicle is the world of debt and forfeit is the sonnet's
- controlling image.
 - dead metaphor.
 - diminishing metaphor.
 - metaphysical conceit.
 - objective correlative.
50. Line 7's comparison relies on a
- hyperbole.
 - kenning.
 - paradox.
 - simile.
 - tautology.
52. Pierre de Ronsard's poem "To Cassandre" is an argument of exhortation, a type usually categorized as (the)
- carpe diem* formula.
 - explication de texte*.
 - fin de siècle* formula.
 - in medias res* formula.
 - ubi sunt* formula.
53. The translator Sanders's efforts to produce a sonnet in translation most closely models the rhyme scheme of the
- caudate sonnet.
 - Miltonic sonnet.
 - Petrarchan sonnet.
 - Shakespearean sonnet.
 - Spenserian sonnet.
54. Line 11's "lie beneath the family stone" might be considered an example of
- dysphemism.
 - euhemerism.
 - euphemism.
 - euphony.
 - euphuism.
55. The speaker's tone in his admonishment of Cassandre is
- apathetic.
 - flippant.
 - horticultural.
 - pragmatic.
 - satirical.
56. The speaker's argument finds, in the poem's second stanza, strength in (a)
- bathos.
 - imagery.
 - simile.
 - syllipsis.
 - zeugma.
57. The speaker's speaking to a lass who is not present is an occurrence of (a/n)
- apostrophe.
 - aside.
 - harangue.
 - rhetorical accent.
 - soliloquy.

Part 3: Ability in Literary Criticism
15 items (2 points each)

Item 51 refers to Tim Ryerson's

Male Mantis Murder

Gladly would I die
 for your love, my dear. No! Wait!
 Just kidding! Just kid . . .

51. The form of Ryerson's poem is the
- haiku.
 - lai*.
 - manga.
 - senryu.
 - tanka.

Items 52-57 refer to Pierre de Ronsard's
To Cassandre

I'm sending you this fresh bouquet of flowers
 Which, if my fingers hadn't picked them tonight,
 Would all be withered up and shriveled tight,
 And have dropped their petals in a few short hours. 4

There is in this a lesson meant for you:
 The delicate flower your beauty has become
 Will also wither up and drop in time
 And someday, like these flowers, perish too. 8

Time goes on, my dearest, time goes on.
 Alas! not time, it's we who have to go,
 And we who'll lie beneath the family stone.

And the love of which we've both been talking so 12
 Will mean just nothing when our lives are through;
 So love me, while your beauty is still new.

trans. David Sander

**Items 58-62 refer to George Eliot's
In a London Drawingroom**

The sky is cloudy, yellowed by the smoke.
 For view there are the houses opposite
 Cutting the sky with one long line of wall
 Like solid fog: far as the eye can stretch 4
 Monotony of surface and of form
 Without a break to hang a guess upon.
 No bird can make a shadow as it flies,
 For all is shadow, as in ways o'erhung 8
 By thickest canvass, where the golden rays
 Are clothed in hemp. No figure lingering
 Pauses to feed the hunger of the eye
 Or rest a little on the lap of life. 12
 All hurry on and look upon the ground,
 Or glance unmarking at the passers by
 The wheels are hurrying too, cabs, carriages
 All closed, in multiplied identity. 16
 The world seems one huge prison-house and court
 Where men are punished at the slightest cost,
 With lowest rate of colour, warmth and joy.

58. The iambic metrical patterning of George Eliot's "In a London Drawingroom" is known as
- blank verse.
 - free verse.
 - heroic verse.
 - projective verse.
 - quantitative verse.
59. The description of the city relies primarily on
- auditory imagery.
 - gustatory imagery.
 - olfactory imagery.
 - tactile imagery.
 - visual imagery.
60. The tone of George Eliot's poem is an echo of the description isolated in the word choice of
- line 2.
 - line 5.
 - line 12.
 - line 15.
 - line 16.
61. The spelling of *o'erhung* (line 8) is an example of
- apocope.
 - ellipsis.
 - metathesis.
 - syncope.
 - zeugma.

62. The penalty that is associated with being a resident of the city and to which the speaker in the poem alludes is
- having multiple personality disorder.
 - having hungry eyes.
 - living in a house made of hempcrete.
 - living in a prison-house.
 - suffering a life of monotony.

**Items 63-65 refer to Theodore Roethke's
Root Cellar**

Nothing would sleep in that cellar, dank as a ditch
 Bulbs broke out of boxes hunting for chinks in the dark,
 Shoots dangled and drooped,
 Lolling obscenely from mildewed crates, 4
 Hung down long yellow evil necks, like tropical snakes.
 And what a congress of stinks!
 Roots ripe as old bait,
 Pulpy stems, rank, silo-rich, 8
 Leaf-mold, manure, lime, piled against slippery planks.
 Nothing would give up life:
 Even the dirt kept breathing a small breath.

63. Roethke's imagery, especially in line 4, is meant to
- enchant tropical snakes.
 - evoke disgust.
 - fascinate the gardener in us all.
 - render as beautiful what is ordinary.
 - shame practitioners of cellar hydroponics.
64. The poem's major thematic concern speaks to the
- biology of root vegetables.
 - essence of nothing.
 - power of alliteration and assonance.
 - stench of vegetation.
 - tenacity of life.
65. The figure of speech on which the sensual power of Roethke's poem relies is the
- hyperbole.
 - litotes.
 - metonymy.
 - simile.
 - synecdoche.

The prompt for the required tie-breaking essay is on the next page.

Required Tie-Breaking Essay

Note well: Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified even if they are not involved in any tie. Any essay that does not demonstrate a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic will be disqualified. The judge(s) should note carefully this criterion when breaking ties: ranking of essays for tie-breaking purposes should be based primarily on how well the topic has been addressed.

Three sheets of paper have been provided; your written response should reflect the *Handbook's* notion that an essay is a "moderately brief discussion of a restricted topic": something more than just a few sentences.

Read Steve Kowitz's "The Grammar Lesson," and address the speaker's tone with special attention *both* to the advice he offers: "Just / memorize the rules" (lines 16-17) and to the fact that when the speaker—in putting his sentiments on paper—violates, one might argue, *both* rules and/or conventions of grammar (if only a few) and of the verse form itself.

The Grammar Lesson

A noun's a thing. A verb's the thing it does.
 An adjective is what describes the noun.
 In "The can of beets is filled with purple fuzz" 3

of and *with* are prepositions. *The's*
 an article, a *can's* a noun,
 a noun's a thing. A verb's the thing it does. 6

A can *can* roll—or not. What isn't was
 or might be, *might* meaning not yet known.
 "Our can of beets *is* filled with purple fuzz" 9

is present tense. While words like *our* and *us*
 are pronouns—i.e. *it* is moldy, *they* are icky brown.
 A noun's a thing; a verb's the thing it does. 12

Is is a helping verb. It helps because
filled isn't a full verb. *Can's* what *our* owns
 in "Our can of beets is filled with purple fuzz." 15

See? There's almost nothing to it. Just
 memorize these rules . . . or write them down!
 A noun's a thing, a verb's the thing it does. 18
 The can of beets is filled with purple fuzz.

DO **NOT** DISTRIBUTE THIS **KEY** TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST.

UIL Literary Criticism
Region • 2023

line arrows up →

1.	D	474
2.	E	464
3.	A	
4.	B	215
5.	A	604
6.	B	185
7.	C	601
8.	C	556
9.	B	24
10.	D	431
11.	E	607
12.	D	387
13.	A	221
14.	B	66
15.	A	27
16.	C	269
17.	B	216
18.	A	200
19.	C	430
20.	B	562
21.	E	494
22.	C	253
23.	D	343
24.	B	570
25.	A	316
26.	B	79
27.	E	382
28.	D	401
29.	E	
30.	D	362

31.	C	
32.	B	
33.	E	
34.	C	31; 293
35.	E	87
36.	A	95
37.	C	23
38.	C	46
39.	B	118
40.	E	73
41.	C	156
42.	A	179
43.	E	
44.	D	372
45.	B	
46.	C	174
47.	A	13
48.	E	498
49.	A	108
50.	D	445
51.	D	438
52.	A	75
53.	D	442
54.	C	186
55.	D	
56.	C	445
57.	A	37
58.	A	59
59.	E	
60.	B	
61.	D	469
62.	E	
63.	B	
64.	E	
65.	D	445

8 **FOLD**

19 along the **three**
 longitudinal
 lines for ease
 in grading. →

Please note that the objective scores should not be altered to reflect the breaking of any ties.

Simply adjust ranking.

The thirty items in Part 1 are worth one point each.

The twenty items in Part 2 are worth two points each.

The fifteen items in Part 3 are worth two points each.

DO NOT
 mark (cross out)
 actual **LETTER** answer;
 mark the answer **NUMERAL**.

Page numbers refer to the *Handbook 12e*,

HarperPerennial
Our Town,

Bantam Classic
*Frankenstein [; or, the
 Modern Prometheus]*,

and
 Simon & Schuster: Folger
*Shakespeare's Sonnets and
 Poems*

Part 4: Tie-Breaking Essay

These notes are not intended to be understood as a key for the Tie-Breaking Essay prompt; rather, they should serve the judge(s) as a presentation of critical ideas that might appear in an essay responding to the prompt.

Criteria for judging the Tie-Breaking Essay **SHOULD** include

- the degree to which the instructions have been followed,
- the quality of the critical insight offered in response to the selection,
- the overall effectiveness of the written discussion, and
- the grammatical correctness of the essay.

Note well that the quality of the contestant's critical insight is more important than the contestant's prose style. In short, the Literary Criticism contest is one that promotes the critical analysis of literature. The quality of the writing, which should never go unappreciated, does not trump evidence of critical analysis.

Critical Notes on Steve Kowitz's "The Grammar Lesson"

Literary concepts that **MIGHT** be used by the contestant in a discussion of the speaker's tone in Steve Kowitz's "The Grammar Lesson," the tone the speaker uses while instructing his audience to "[j]ust / memorize the [sic] rules" include

- ambiguity,
- antecedent,
- definition,
- enjambment,
- hyperbole,
- imagery,
- intentional fallacy,
- litotes,
- place,
- pun,
- repetition,
- rhyme,
- rhyme scheme,
- speaker,
- tone, and
- villanelle.

The contestant should recognize the poem's closed form as the villanelle, a form, the conventions/ expectations, rules of which are violated several times: the repetition of lines is not exact. The contestant might focus on the subtle violation of standard, and especially, formal language use in presentation of a grammar lesson.

The young writer might begin with the speaker's "See? There's almost nothing to it," arguing that the rhetorical construct is, by way of litotes or, perhaps, hyperbole, a negation of the "ease" suggested by the lesson up to this point.

Either approach should lead to an appreciation of the speaker's tone as amused, cynical, mildly derisive, facetious, humorous, lighthearted, naïve, satirical, or whimsical—each of which is defensible . . . to a degree.