

GED-SECTION-4^{Q&As}

Section Four Language Arts - Reading

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QUESTION 1

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 addresses three people in the poem: a maiden (line 2), a babe (a child, line 16), and a mother (line 28). What feeling in these listeners is the speaker addressing?

- A. their grief
- B. their pride
- C. their anger
- D. their joy
- E. their fear

Correct Answer: A

The speaker is telling the maiden, child, and mother not to weep, and they have all lost a loved one, so he is addressing their grief. They may also be proud

(choice b), angry (choice c) or afraid (choice e), but their main emotion concerning the death of their loved one is grief. They are not weeping with joy, so choice d is also incorrect.

QUESTION 2

What Has Mrs. Mallard Realized?

[Mrs. Mallard has locked herself in a room and is crying.]

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance

of

reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the

color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed

keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body. She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the

suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years

to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome. There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers

in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of

illumination.

-

Kate Chopin, from "The Story of an Hour" (1894) Why is Mrs. Mallard crying?

A.

She is frightened.

B.

She has just been criticized in front of others.

C.

She has been told her husband is dead.

D.

She has been told she is seriously ill.

E.

She is just a very emotional person.

Correct Answer: C

Mrs. Mallard is crying because she just learned her husband is dead. This is clear from the last two paragraphs. Someone has died - his hands will be "folded in death." That someone's eyes "never looked save with love upon her." The relationship of this person to Mrs. Mallard is suggested by the rest of the passage, in which she revels in the thought that she will be able to live for herself, not someone else: "There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature" (lines 47

QUESTION 3

Why Is the Man Screaming?

Edvard Munch's 1893 painting "The Scream" is a powerful work of art that has true aesthetic value. In its raw depiction of the unavoidable human emotions of alienation, anxiety and fear, "The Scream" invites meaningful introspection as the

viewer internalizes its message of the vulnerability of the human psyche.

"The Scream" is a very dynamic and yet frightening painting. The blood-red sky and eerie water/air seem to be moving and twirling, even enveloping the screaming man's mind as he stands on a bridge completely disregarded by passers-by

who do not share in his horror. Viewers of the painting cannot help but ask:

Why is the man screaming? And why is he alone in his scream? What is he afraid of? Or, what has he realized or seen that is making him scream?

Why aren't the others as affected as he? The threat must be internal, yet the brushstrokes, colors and perspective seem to indicate that the horror is also bound to something in nature, something outside of the man. In any case, the agony

and alienation are inescapable. Something horrible has happened or been realized by the man who cannot contain his horror, but has not affected the others on the bridge.

That the people in the background are calm and do not share this horror conveys a truth regarding the ownership of our own feelings. We are often alone in our feelings, as can be especially noticed when we are in pain. The horror is the

man's own; he must carry it himself. In this expressionist piece, the black, red, and orange colors are both bold and dark, illuminating and haunting at the same time. Remarkably, the light from the blood-reds and vibrant oranges in the distant

sky seem to be somewhat detached from the figure in the forefront, failing to reach his persona, suggesting that there is little to illuminate his (and the viewers') fears.

The man's face is nondescript; in fact, it almost looks more like a skull than a living man's face, hollow with two simple dots to indicate the nostrils, no hair, no wrinkles of the skin. This could be any man or woman, left to deal with his or her own horrors.

Which of the following best describes what is depicted in the painting?

A. a man screaming as he falls through the sky

- B. a man standing alone on a bridge and screaming
- C. several people on a bridge, with the man in the forefront screaming
- D. several people on a bridge, all of them screaming
- E. something horrible happening to people on a bridge

Correct Answer: C

The author states that the man "stands on a bridge" and is "completely disregarded by passers-by" (lines 12

QUESTION 4

What Is the Authors Father Like?

It was an impressive place: old, solidly built, in the Tudor style, with leaded windows, a slate roof, and rooms of royal proportions. Buying it had been a big step for my parents, a sign of growing wealth. This was the best neighborhood in town,

and although it was not a pleasant place to live (especially for children), its prestige outweighed its deadliness. Given the fact that he wound up spending the rest of his life in that house, it is ironic that my father at first resisted moving there.

He complained about the price (a constant theme), and when at last he relented, it was with grudging bad humor. Even so, he paid in cash. All in one go. No mortgage, no monthly payments. It was 1959, and business was going well for him.

Always a man of habit, he would leave for work early in the morning, work hard all day, and then, when he came home (on those days he did not work late), take a short nap before dinner. Sometime during our first week in the new house,

before we had properly moved in, he made a curious kind of mistake. Instead of driving home to the new house after work, he went directly to the old one, as he had done for years, parked his car in the driveway, walked into the house

through the back door, climbed the stairs, entered the bedroom, lay down on the bed, and went to sleep. He slept for about an hour.

Needless to say, when the new mistress of the house returned to find a strange man sleeping in her bed, she was a little surprised. But unlike Goldilocks, my father did not jump up and run away. The confusion was eventually settled, and

everyone had a good laugh. Even today, it still makes me laugh. And yet, for all that, I cannot help regarding it as a pathetic story. It is one thing for a man to drive to his old house by mistake, but it is quite another, I think, for him not to notice

that anything has changed inside it.

Paul Auster, from *The Invention of Solitude* (1982)

The passage suggests that the authors father

- A. did not like change.
- B. was a very calculating man.
- C. was unhappy with his life.

D. was very proud of his house.

E. had many bad habits.

Correct Answer: A

The author tells us that his father was "always a man of habit" - so much so that he forgot he'd moved and went to his old house, into his old room, and lay down for a nap, not even noticing that the furniture was different. This suggests that he has a difficult time accepting and adjusting to change. There is no evidence that he is a calculating man (choice b). He may be unhappy with his life (choice c), which could be why he chose not to notice things around him, but there is little to support this in the passage, while there is much to support choice a. We do not know if he was proud of the house (choice d). We do know that he was a man of habit, but we do not know if any of those habits were bad (choice e).

QUESTION 5

How Are Robots Different from Humans?

[Helena is talking to Domain, the general manager of Rossums Universal Robots factory.]

DOMAIN: Well, any one whos looked into anatomy will have seen at once that man is too complicated, and that a good engineer could make him more simply. So young Rossum began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left

out or simplified. In short but this isnt boring you, Miss Glory?

HELENA: No; on the contrary, its awfully interesting.

DOMAIN: So young Rossum said to himself: A man is something that, for instance, feels happy, plays the fiddle, likes going for walks, and, in fact, wants to do a whole lot of things that are really unnecessary.

HELENA: Oh!

DOMAIN: Wait a bit. That are unnecessary when hes wanted, let us say, to weave or to count. Do you play the fiddle?

HELENA: No.

DOMAIN: Thats a pity. But a working machine must not want to play the fiddle, must not feel happy, must not do a whole lot of other things. A petrol motor must not have tassels or ornaments, Miss Glory. And to manufacture artificial workers

is the same thing as to manufacture motors. The process must be of the simplest, and the product of the best from a practical point of view. What sort of worker do you think is the best from a practical point of view?

HELENA: The best? Perhaps the one who is most honest and hard-working.

DOMAIN: No, the cheapest. The one whose needs are the smallest. Young Rossum invented a worker with the minimum amount of requirements. He had to simplify him. He rejected everything that did not contribute directly to the progress of

work. In this way he rejected everything that made man more expensive. In fact, he rejected man and made the Robot. My dear Miss Glory, the Robots are not people. Mechanically they are more perfect than we are, they have an enormously

developed intelligence, but they have no soul. Have you ever seen what a Robot looks like inside? HELENA: Good

gracious, no!

DOMAIN: Very neat, very simple. Really a beautiful piece of work. Not much in it, but everything in flawless order. The product of an engineer is technically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of nature.

HELENA: Man is supposed to be the product of nature.

DOMAIN: So much the worse.

Karel C apek,

from R.U.R. (1923, translated by P. Selver)

Which of the following best expresses Rossums view of nature?

- A. Nature is beautiful.
- B. It is dangerous to try to improve upon nature.
- C. Nature is imperfect and unnecessarily complicated.
- D. Mother Nature is the greatest engineer of all.
- E. Machines are also a part of nature.

Correct Answer: C

Rossum wanted to simplify nature, and Domain states that "the product of an engineer is technically at a higher pitch of perfection than a product of nature" (lines

5860), showing that Rossum felt nature was imperfect and unnecessarily complicated. Rossum seems to think that machines are more beautiful (more perfect) than nature, so choice a is incorrect. Rossum clearly tries to improve upon nature

and seems to think hes a better engineer, so choices b and d can be ruled out.

There is a clear distinction in the passage between products of humans (engineers) and products of nature, so choice e is incorrect.

QUESTION 6

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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Which of the following statements about Alfonso is true?

- A. He was a poet.
- B. He could not speak.
- C. He could speak many languages.
- D. He was a farmer.
- E. He was also a painter.

Correct Answer: B

Lines 8

QUESTION 7

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Based on the passage, Rossum is most likely

- A. a robot.
- B. a part-time inventor.
- C. a retired doctor.
- D. a foreman in the factory.
- E. a very intelligent engineer.

Correct Answer: E

Domain tells Helena in lines 1

QUESTION 8

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Rossum created robots because

- A. humans are complicated and inefficient.
- B. humans are not honest enough.
- C. robots are always happy.
- D. he wanted to see if he could.
- E. there weren't enough people to do the work.

Correct Answer: A

Domain tells us that Rossum "began to overhaul anatomy and tried to see what could be left out or simplified" (lines 4

QUESTION 9

Why Is the Man Screaming?

Edvard Munch's 1893 painting "The Scream" is a powerful work of art that has true aesthetic value. In its raw depiction of the unavoidable human emotions of alienation, anxiety and fear, "The Scream" invites meaningful introspection as the

viewer internalizes its message of the vulnerability of the human psyche.

"The Scream" is a very dynamic and yet frightening painting. The blood-red sky and eerie water/air seem to be moving and twirling, even enveloping the screaming man's mind as he stands on a bridge completely disregarded by passers-by

who do not share in his horror. Viewers of the painting cannot help but ask:

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Why aren't the others as affected as he? The threat must be internal, yet the brushstrokes, colors and perspective seem to indicate that the horror is also bound to something in nature, something outside of the man. In any case, the agony

and alienation are inescapable. Something horrible has happened or been realized by the man who cannot contain his horror, but has not affected the others on the bridge.

That the people in the background are calm and do not share this horror conveys a truth regarding the ownership of our own feelings. We are often alone in our feelings, as can be especially noticed when we are in pain. The horror is the

man's own; he must carry it himself. In this expressionist piece, the black, red, and orange colors are both bold and dark, illuminating and haunting at the same time. Remarkably, the light from the blood-reds and vibrant oranges in the distant

sky seem to be somewhat detached from the figure in the forefront, failing to reach his persona, suggesting that there is little to illuminate his (and the viewers') fears.

The man's face is nondescript; in fact, it almost looks more like a skull than a living man's face, hollow with two simple dots to indicate the nostrils, no hair, no wrinkles of the skin. This could be any man or woman, left to deal with his or her own horrors.

According to the author, what might be making the man scream?

- A. He has seen something horrible.
- B. He has realized something horrible about himself.
- C. He has realized that he is alone.
- D. all of the above
- E. None of the above; we have no idea what is making him scream.

Correct Answer: D

The author speculates that "Something horrible has happened or been realized by the man" (lines 23

QUESTION 10

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

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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

Which of the following words best describes the tone of the poem?

- A. celebratory
- B. mournful
- C. sarcastic
- D. angry
- E. tender

Correct Answer: C

The tone of the poem, especially of the line "war is kind," is sarcastic; the poem shows how war is cruel in taking the lives of the soldiers. The sarcasm is particularly clear in lines 25

QUESTION 11

Whats Wrong with Commercial Television?

Kids who watch much commercial television ought to develop into whizzes at the dialect; you have to keep so much in your mind at once because a series of artificially short attention spans has been created. But this in itself means that the

experience of watching the commercial channels is a more informal one, curiously more homely than watching BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation].

This is because the commercial breaks are constant reminders that the medium itself is artificial, isn't, in fact, "real," even if the gesticulating heads, unlike the giants of the movie screen, are life-size. There is a kind of built-in alienation effect.

Everything you see is false, as Tristan Tzara gnomically opined. And the young lady in the St. Bruno tobacco ads who currently concludes her spiel by stating categorically: "And if you believe that, you'll believe anything," is saying no

more

than the truth. The long-term effect of habitually watching commercial television is probably an erosion of trust in the television medium itself.

Since joy is the message of all commercials, it is as well they breed skepticism. Every story has a happy ending, gratification is guaranteed by the conventions of the commercial form, which contributes no end to the pervasive unreality of it

all. Indeed, it is the chronic bliss of everybody in the commercials that creates their final divorce from effective life as we know it.

Grumpy mum, frowning dad, are soon all smiles again after the ingestion of some pill or potion; minimal concessions are made to mild frustration (as they are, occasionally, to lust), but none at all to despair or consummation. In fact, if the form

is reminiscent of the limerick and the presentation of the music-hall, the overall mood in its absolute and unruffled decorum is that of the uplift fables in the Sunday school picture books of my childhood.

Angela Carter, from *Shaking a Leg* (1997)

Which of the following would the author most likely recommend?

- A. Don't watch any television at all; read instead.
- B. Watch only the BBC.
- C. Watch only commercial television.
- D. Watch what you like, but don't believe what commercials claim.
- E. Watch what you like, but don't watch more than an hour a day.

Correct Answer: D

The author doesn't seem to think watching television whether it is commercial or public is inherently a bad thing, so choice a is incorrect. She doesn't state that we shouldn't watch commercial television and only watch the BBC (choice b); rather, she is emphasizing that we should not (indeed, can't) believe everything we see on commercial TV (choice d). She does not suggest that we do not watch public television, so choice c is incorrect. There is no indication of how much time in front of the television the author would recommend, so choice e is incorrect.

QUESTION 12

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)

Which of the following sentences best describes whats wrong with Happy?

- A. You can't run away from yourself.
- B. Money can't buy happiness.
- C. What goes around, comes around.
- D. Good things come to those who wait.
- E. Money is the root of all evil.

Correct Answer: B

Happy seems to think that money can buy him happiness (Biff seems to think this, too). Happy tells the story of his manager, who built himself a wonderful house and can't enjoy it - and he says he'd do the same thing. He tells Biff: "I think of the rent I'm paying. And it's crazy. But then, it's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I'm lonely" (lines 44

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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)

Biff has come home because

- A. he needs a vacation.
- B. he isn't earning enough money at his new job.
- C. he feels like he isn't getting anywhere in life.
- D. he likes to be home in springtime.
- E. he misses his family.

Correct Answer: C

Biff tells Happy, "And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, my God, I'm not gettin

QUESTION 14

What Inspires Thomas?

[Thomas Builds-the-Fire is a Spokane Indian living on the Spokane Indian Reservation.]

So Thomas went home and tried to write their first song. He sat alone in his house with his bass guitar and waited for the song. He waited and waited. Its nearly impossible to write a song with a bass guitar, but Thomas didn't know that. He'd

never written a song before. "Please," Thomas prayed. But the song would not come, so Thomas closed his eyes, tried to find a story with a soundtrack. He turned on the television and watched The Sound of Music on channel four. Julie

Andrews put him to sleep for the sixty-seventh time, and neither story nor song came in his dreams.

After he woke up, he paced around the room, stood on his porch, and listened to those faint voices that echoed all over the reservation. Everybody heard those voices, but nobody liked to talk about them. They were loudest at night, when

Thomas tried to sleep, and he always thought they sounded like horses. For hours,

Thomas waited for the song.

Then, hungry and tired, he opened his refrigerator for something to eat and discovered that he didnt have any food. So he closed the fridge and opened it again, but it was still empty. In a ceremony that he had practiced since his youth, he

opened, closed, and opened the fridge again, expecting an immaculate conception of a jar of pickles. Thomas was hungry on a reservation where there are ninety-seven different ways to say fry bread.

[. . .]

As his growling stomach provided the rhythm, Thomas sat again with his bass guitar, wrote the first song, and called it "Reservation Blues."

Sherman Alexie, from Reservation Blues (1995)

Why does Thomas keep opening and closing the refrigerator?

- A. He keeps hoping food will magically appear.
- B. He can't believe that the refrigerator is empty.
- C. He is angry and wants the door to break off.
- D. He likes the noise the door makes.
- E. He is bored.

Correct Answer: A

Thomas refers to this opening and closing of the refrigerator as a "ceremony," and he was "expecting an immaculate conception of a jar of pickles" (lines 28

QUESTION 15

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 makinmy 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 justIm 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)

Which of the following sentences best describes whats wrong with Biff?

- A. He needs to stop being selfish and find someone to love.
- B. He needs to grow up and stop acting like a baby.
- C. He needs to pick one career and work hard until he achieves success.
- D. He needs to stop moving around so much and just stay in one place.
- E. He needs to accept who he is and stop searching elsewhere for happiness.

Correct Answer: E

Biff seems to keep moving around as if he is trying to get away from something (himself, his past) and searching for something else (happiness). But as he tells Happy, every spring, wherever he is, he realizes he is still not happy and he doesn't know what he's doing with his life. There is no evidence that he is selfish, so choice a is incorrect. He does not appear to be very mature, but he does not act like a baby (he is independent enough to travel around and support himself through work), so choice b is incorrect. Settling on one career won't necessarily bring him happiness, and he can't pick the right career until he accepts who he is and what sort of work is best suited for him, so choice c is not correct. Moving around (choice d) and switching careers are further part of the root problem, which is Biff's attempts to run away from himself and his past.

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