

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS ON PROSE

**Directions:** This section consists of selections of literature and questions on their content, style, and form. After you have read each passage, choose the answer that best answers the question.

### Test-Taking Strategy

*Review the directions each time you begin a Practice Set so you will not have to spend time puzzling them out on the day of the test.*

**Questions 1 through 14** refer to the following short story by O. Henry. Read the passage carefully and then choose the answers to the questions.

### Hearts and Hands

Line At Denver there was an influx of passengers into the coaches on the eastbound B. & E. express. In one coach there sat a very pretty young woman dressed in elegant taste and surrounded by all the luxurious comforts of an experienced traveler. Among the newcomers were  
5 two young men, one of handsome presence with a bold, frank countenance and manner; the other, a ruffled, glum-faced person, heavily built and roughly dressed. The two were handcuffed together.

As they passed down the aisle of the coach the only vacant seat offered was a reversed one facing the attractive young woman. Here  
10 the linked couple seated themselves. The young woman's glance fell upon them with a distant, swift disinterest; then with a lovely smile brightening her countenance and a tender pink tingeing her rounded cheeks, she held out a little gray-gloved hand. When she spoke, her voice, full, sweet, and deliberate, proclaimed that its owner was  
15 accustomed to speak and be heard.

"Well, Mr. Easton, if you *will* make me speak first, I suppose I must. Don't you ever recognize old friends when you meet them in the West?"

The younger man roused himself sharply at the sound of her  
20 voice, seemed to struggle with a slight embarrassment which he threw off instantly; and then clasped her fingers with his left hand.

"It's Miss Fairchild," he said, with a smile. "I'll ask you to excuse the other hand; it's otherwise engaged just at the present."

He slightly raised his right hand, bound at the wrist by the  
25 shining "bracelet" to the left one of his companion. The glad look in the girl's eyes slowly changed to a bewildered horror. The glow faded from her cheeks. Her lips parted in a vague, relaxing distress. Easton, with a little laugh, as if amused, was about to speak again when the other forestalled him. The glum-faced man had been watching the  
30 girl's countenance with veiled glances from his keen, shrewd eyes.

"You'll excuse me for speaking, miss, but I see you're acquainted with the marshal here. If you'll ask him to speak a word for

me when we get to the pen he'll do it, and it'll make things easier for  
me there. He's taking me to Leavenworth prison. It's seven years for  
35 counterfeiting."

"Oh!" said the girl, with a deep breath and returning color. "So  
that is what you are doing out here? A marshal!"

"My dear Miss Fairchild," said Easton, calmly. "I had to do  
something. Money has a way of taking wings unto itself, and you  
40 know it takes money to keep step with our crowd in Washington. I  
saw this opening in the West, and—well, a marshalship isn't quite as  
high a position as that of ambassador, but—"

"The ambassador," said the girl, warmly, "doesn't call any more.  
He needn't ever have done so. You ought to know that. And so now  
45 you are one of these dashing Western heroes, and you ride and shoot  
and go into all kinds of dangers. That's different from the Washington  
life. You have been missed from the old crowd."

The girl's eyes, fascinated, went back, widening a little, to rest  
upon the glittering handcuffs.

50 "Don't you worry about them, miss," said the other man. "All  
marshals handcuff themselves to their prisoners to keep them from  
getting away. Mr. Easton knows his business."

"Will we see you again soon in Washington?" asked the girl.

"Not soon, I think," said Easton. "My butterfly days are over, I  
55 fear."

"I love the West," said the girl irrelevantly. Her eyes were  
shining softly. She looked away out the car window. She began to  
speak truly and simply, without the gloss of style or manner:

60 "Momma and I spent the summer in Denver. She went home a week  
ago because father was slightly ill. I could live and be happy in the  
West. I think the air here agrees with me. Money isn't everything. But  
people always misunderstand things and remain stupid—"

"Say, Mr. Marshal," growled the glum-faced man. "This isn't quite  
fair. Haven't had a smoke all day. Haven't you talked long enough?  
65 Take me in the smoker now, won't you? I'm half dead for a pipe."

The bound travelers rose to their feet, Easton with the same  
slow smile on his face.

70 "I can't deny a petition for tobacco," he said lightly. "It's the one  
friend of the unfortunate. Goodbye, Miss Fairchild. Duty calls, you  
know." He held his hand for a farewell.

"It's too bad you are not going East," she said, reclothing herself  
with manner and style. "But you must go on to Leavenworth, I  
suppose?"

"Yes," said Easton, "I must go on to Leavenworth."

75 The two men sidled down the aisle into the smoker.

The two passengers in a seat nearby had heard most of the conversation. Said one of them: “That marshal’s a good sort of chap. Some of these Western fellows are all right.”

80 “Pretty young to hold an office like that, isn’t he?” asked the other.

“Young!” exclaimed the first speaker, “why—Oh! Didn’t you catch on? Say—did you ever know an officer to handcuff a prisoner to his right hand?”

—O. Henry

1. The primary purpose of this selection is to present
  - (A) a social commentary on the criminal justice system in the United States in the late 1900s
  - (B) ordinary people in a situation that surprises and entertains the audience
  - (C) satires on the elegant manners of upper-class Americans
  - (D) a regional tale of the Wild West
  - (E) a dramatization of a true event in the history of Colorado
2. Which of the following best explains the main idea of the passage?
  - (A) Crime does not pay.
  - (B) Elegant manners and courtesy often make difficult situations easier to handle.
  - (C) The law is sometimes forgiving.
  - (D) A love of money may be hurtful in many ways.
  - (E) Appearances can be deceiving.
3. This story is an excellent example of which of the following literary techniques?
  - (A) A romance
  - (B) A surprise ending
  - (C) Regional style
  - (D) A red herring
  - (E) Development of suspense
4. Which one of the following choices best describes the past relationship between Miss Fairchild and Mr. Easton?
  - (A) They know each other from Washington, D.C.
  - (B) There was more than friendship between them.
  - (C) Mr. Easton and Miss Fairchild moved in high social circles.
  - (D) They had been engaged to be married.
  - (E) Mr. Easton and the ambassador fought a duel over Miss Fairchild.
5. Which of the following best describes the glum-faced man?
  - (A) The man was a criminal convicted of counterfeiting.
  - (B) He was addicted to tobacco.
  - (C) Although he appeared rough, he was sensitive and perceptive.
  - (D) Many passengers knew him since he was a well-known figure in the West.
  - (E) He did not like Miss Fairchild or Mr. Easton.

6. What impression does the author seek to create in this story?
- (A) Mr. Easton is the marshal and he is taking his prisoner to Leavenworth.
  - (B) Mr. Easton and Miss Fairchild will resume their engagement.
  - (C) Mr. Easton is actually the prisoner.
  - (D) Miss Fairchild finds the marshal attractive.
  - (E) The two passengers know the reputation of the marshal.
7. Which of the following sentences does not hint at the ending?
- (A) "He slightly raised his right hand, bound at the wrist by the shining 'bracelet' to the left one of his companion." (lines 24-25)
  - (B) "'Not soon, I think,' said Easton. 'My butterfly days are over, I fear.'" (lines 54-55)
  - (C) "The girl's eyes, fascinated, went back, widening a little, to rest upon the glittering handcuffs." (lines 48-49)
  - (D) "All marshals handcuff themselves to their prisoners to keep them from getting away. Mr. Easton knows his business." (lines 50-52)
  - (E) "I must go on to Leavenworth." (line 74)
8. The statement "'Yes,' said Easton, 'I must go on to Leavenworth,'" (line 74) is an example of
- (A) a surprise ending
  - (B) a complex sentence
  - (C) sarcasm
  - (D) irony
  - (E) satire
9. What is the significance of the fact that the prisoner's crime is counterfeiting?
- (A) The crime of counterfeiting involves making and spending fake money. The prisoner is "counterfeit" since he passes himself off as a marshal.
  - (B) A nonviolent crime such as counterfeiting makes Mr. Easton less threatening.
  - (C) It establishes that money is important to Mr. Easton.
  - (D) Counterfeiting is something that Miss Fairchild could understand.
  - (E) People are not always what they appear to be.
10. What literary device is found in the sentence: "Money has a way of taking wings unto itself. . . ." (line 39)?
- (A) Personification
  - (B) Alliteration
  - (C) Analogy
  - (D) Metaphor
  - (E) Figurative language
11. What is the inference that the author encourages readers to make from this description: "Among the newcomers were two young men, one of handsome presence with a bold, frank countenance and manner; the other, a ruffled, glum-faced person, heavily built and roughly dressed. The two were handcuffed together." (lines 4-7)?
- (A) The well-dressed man is the law-enforcement officer.
  - (B) One man is more well-to-do than the other.
  - (C) Miss Easton was interested in the better-dressed man.
  - (D) The well-dressed man is a Washington, D.C., official.
  - (E) The glum-faced man is a U.S. marshal.

12. Which of the following was probably not a reason that the marshal deceived Miss Fairchild?
- (A) He found her attractive.
  - (B) He perceived her fondness for Mr. Easton.
  - (C) The marshal noticed that Miss Fairchild was concerned when she saw the handcuffs.
  - (D) The marshal wanted to protect her feelings.
  - (E) The marshal wanted her to feel more comfortable.
13. Grammatically, the phrase “had been watching” in the sentence, “The glum-faced man had been watching the girl’s countenance with veiled glances from his keen, shrewd eyes,” (lines 29–30) indicates which of the following?
- (A) Past perfect
  - (B) Past emphatic
  - (C) Past progressive
  - (D) Present perfect progressive
  - (E) Past perfect progressive
14. Explain the use of the colon in the following quotation: “Said one of them: ‘That marshal’s a good sort of chap. Some of these Western fellows are all right.’” (lines 77–78)
- (A) The colon is incorrect. The writer should have used a semicolon.
  - (B) The colon introduces a list, in this case, two sentences.
  - (C) The colon punctuates an introductory statement.
  - (D) A colon is used to separate explanatory words in a formal or lengthy quotation.
  - (E) The colon joins two sentences of almost equal weight that say essentially the same thing.

**This selection is longer than most of those you will encounter on the Advanced Placement examination. The longer passages allow for more variety in the practice questions. Some prose selections may have only ten questions. Longer passages may have up to fifteen.**

**Turn to the next page. There you will find the explanations clarifying the reasoning behind the correct answers and showing you why the other choices are incorrect. Notice the techniques used to answer each type of question.**