Your responses to the SAT Literature Subject Test questions should be filled in on Test 2 of your answer sheet.
LITERATURE TEST 2

Directions: This test consists of selections from literary works and questions on their content, form, and style. After reading each passage or poem, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.

Note: Pay particular attention to questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

Questions 1-9. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

“Promises Like Pie-Crust”

Promise me no promises,
So will I not promise you:
Keep we both our liberties,
Never false and never true:
Let us hold the die uncast,
Free to come as free to go:
For I cannot know your past,
And of mine what can you know?

You, so warm, may once have been
Warmer towards another one:
I, so cold, may once have seen
Sunlight, once have felt the sun:
Who shall show us if it was
Thus indeed in time of old?

Fades the image from the glass,
And the fortune is not told.

If you promised, you might grieve
For lost liberty again:
If I promised, I believe
I should fret to break the chain.

Let us be the friends we were,
Nothing more but nothing less:
Many thrive on frugal fare
Who would perish of excess.

(1861)

1. The promises referred to in the poem are
(A) pledges to share one another’s innermost secrets
(B) articles of incorporation
(C) items in a prenuptial agreement
(D) resolution never to see one another again
(E) marriage vows
2. In the second stanza, the speaker reveals that
   (A) she yearns for the love of someone who is oblivious to her
   (B) the listener has expressed more ardent sentiments toward her than she has expressed toward him
   (C) the listener does not reciprocate her feelings
   (D) she is incapable of deep emotional attachment
   (E) she is heartbroken over the end of a previous relationship

3. The speaker compares her current relationship with the person to whom the poem is addressed to
   (A) one between strangers
   (B) a roll of the dice
   (C) one governed by reciprocal obligations
   (D) a restrained diet of plain food
   (E) an image in a crystal ball

4. “Sunlight” (line 12) is used as a symbol for
   (A) innocence
   (B) genuine mutual love
   (C) purity
   (D) absolute confidence in the rightness of a decision
   (E) perfect understanding

5. Which of the following is NOT implied in the poem as a reason to avoid entering into promises?
   (A) One person can never fully know another.
   (B) A promise can be broken without the person to whom the promise was made ever knowing.
   (C) To make a promise denies one of a degree of personal liberty.
   (D) One cannot be judged faithful or unfaithful to a commitment that has not been promised.
   (E) One can never fully know the situations or feelings of those who made successful and binding promises in the past.

6. In context, “fret” (line 20) most nearly means
   (A) irritate
   (B) chafe
   (C) agitate
   (D) worry
   (E) corrode

7. Which of the following best expresses the meaning of the last two lines of the poem?
   (A) Some people are not meant to enjoy the richness of life, just as some cannot digest rich food.
   (B) When it comes to relationships, something is better than nothing.
   (C) For some people, the potential of happiness is more satisfying than the reality of happiness because the potential cannot be diminished over time.
   (D) Not every relationship is worth the risk entailed to the participants.
   (E) Some relationships are better when they are not too serious.

8. The tone of the poem as a whole can best be described as
   (A) delicate but firm
   (B) disappointed but unapologetic
   (C) ambivalent but patronizing
   (D) world-weary and vague
   (E) harsh and unyielding

9. The simile of the title is apt because
   (A) both promises and pie-crust are sweet
   (B) both promises and pie-crust are meant to be filled
   (C) both promises and pie-crust are easily broken
   (D) the speaker has overindulged in rich food
   (E) the speaker denies herself all pleasures in life
Questions 10-17. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contempt studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.

(c. 1597)

10. The author’s primary purpose is to
(A) demonstrate a display of learned eloquence
(B) encourage pupils to study diligently
(C) discuss the proper means to education
(D) distinguish the more serious from the less dignified motives for study
(E) dissuade students from applying their learning to unethical pursuits

11. By “expert men” (line 5) the author most nearly means
(A) persons with competence in specific activities, but who lack general education
(B) persons who have mastered a craft or trade
(C) persons who carry out the decisions of others
(D) persons who have devoted themselves to their studies
(E) persons who conduct the concrete business of the day

12. The author compares “abilities” and “plants” (line 14) to make the point that
(A) individuals must discipline themselves as they grow to maturity
(B) some students learn profusely while others learn little or slowly
(C) individuals must be nurtured and protected as growing plants must be
(D) education encourages individuals to develop in conformity with one another
(E) education shapes and refines an individual’s innate qualities

13. Which of the following cautions is NOT conveyed in the passage?
(A) The organization of large undertakings is best left to persons who have read widely and deeply.
(B) It is possible to be overzealous in the pursuit of knowledge.
(C) One should not flaunt one’s learning ostentatiously.
(D) Scholars should live in strict accordance with precepts gained through their study.
(E) The knowledge gained from books must be tested against one’s firsthand experience in the world.
14. With which of the following words or phrases could “admire” (line 18) be replaced without changing the meaning of the sentence?
   (A) are awed by
   (B) profess to respect
   (C) enjoy
   (D) are envious of
   (E) are naturally drawn toward

15. Which of these stylistic devices is most prominent in the author’s prose?
   (A) elaborate metaphor
   (B) hyperbole
   (C) neatly balanced syntactic oppositions
   (D) alliteration
   (E) long, convoluted sentences

16. Reading, according to the author, is above all else a source for one’s
   (A) controversial opinions
   (B) moral and religious beliefs
   (C) quiet amusement
   (D) stimulating conversation
   (E) private deliberation

17. The tone of the passage can best be described as
   (A) pious
   (B) didactic
   (C) satiric
   (D) moralistic
   (E) contentious
LITERATURE TEST 2—Continued

Questions 18-24. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

“The Errand”

“On you go now! Run, son, like the devil
And tell your mother to try
To find me a bubble for the spirit level
And a new knot for this tie.”

But still he was glad, I know, when I stood my ground,
Putting it up to him
With a smile that trumped his smile and his fool’s errand,
Waiting for the next move in the game.

(1996)

18. The theme of the poem concerns
   (A) rites of passage that mark the beginning of adolescence
   (B) the contest of wills between one generation and the next
   (C) the futility of needless chores with which parents occupy their children
   (D) a boy’s developing relationship with his father as he matures
   (E) the resentment that lingered in the poet’s memory about childhood

19. The errand described in the poem is a quest for
   (A) nonsensical components that do not form a coherent whole
   (B) tools the speaker needs to continue his work
   (C) someone in the neighborhood more foolish than the man’s son
   (D) degrees of understanding that come with maturity
   (E) common ground on which father and son can identify with each other

20. Which of the following distinctions does NOT characterize the difference between the two stanzas?
   (A) a shift from perfect rhyme to slant rhyme
   (B) a change in speaker
   (C) the passage of time
   (D) a movement from metaphorical to literal language
   (E) a switch from remembered speech to reflection

21. Which of the following is implied by the poet’s use of the word “still” (line 5)?
   (A) The father’s jovial spirits were not ultimately dampened when his son did not assume the errand.
   (B) The father’s pleased response to his son’s refusal will continue indefinitely.
   (C) The game between the father and son will continue indefinitely.
   (D) The father did not express his gladness to his son.
   (E) The boy’s father was disappointed when his son did not assume the errand.
22. Which of the following is nearest in meaning to “Putting it up to him” (line 6)?
   (A) demonstrating to him the poet’s awareness of his joke
   (B) challenging him to find a bubble for himself
   (C) refusing defiantly to honor his request
   (D) handing up to him the items he had asked for
   (E) turning the joke back around on him

23. “Trumped” (line 7) is an allusion to
   (A) a dramatic fanfare announcing an arrival or significant development
   (B) a winning play in a game of cards
   (C) showy but worthless finery
   (D) a squashing sound under one’s feet
   (E) the eclipse of one source of light by a brighter source

24. In the last line the poet suggests that
   (A) the father will send his son on another, more serious errand
   (B) the father’s goal is to make his son appear ridiculous
   (C) the father’s response to his son’s recognition will be significantly delayed
   (D) the father will continue to good-humoredly tease and test his son
   (E) the father and son will always engage in prankish contests
Questions 25-33. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

In the second year of the reign of Valentinian and Valens, on the morning of the twenty-first day of July, the greatest part of the Roman world was shaken by a violent and destructive earthquake.

The impression was communicated to the waters; the shores of the Mediterranean were left dry, by the sudden retreat of the sea; great quantities of fish were caught with the hand; and a curious spectator amused his eye, or rather his fancy, by contemplating the various appearance of valleys and mountains, which had never, since the formation of the globe, been exposed to the sun. But the tide soon returned, with the weight of an immense and irresistible deluge, which was severely felt on the coasts of Sicily, of Dalmatia, of Greece, and of Egypt: large boats were transported, and lodged on the roofs of houses, or at the distance of two miles from the shore; the people, with their habitations, were swept away by the waters; and the city of Alexandria annually commemorated the fatal day, on which fifty thousand persons had lost their lives in the inundation.

This calamity, the report of which was magnified from one province to another, astonished and terrified the subjects of Rome; and their affrighted imagination enlarged the real extent of a momentary evil. They recollected the preceding earthquakes, which had subverted the cities of Palestine and Bithynia: they considered these alarming strokes as the prelude only of still more dreadful calamities, and their fearful vanity was disposed to confound the symptoms of a declining empire and a sinking world.

26. The sentence “the impression was communicated to the waters” (lines 1-2) most nearly means
   (A) citizens sent distress signals via boats
   (B) the water carried the sound of the earthquake
   (C) the earthquake took place off shore
   (D) the earthquake caused water displacement
   (E) the sea parted with the power of the earthquake

27. It can be inferred from the passage that Rome’s citizens
   (A) had never before seen such widespread destruction
   (B) placed a great deal of value on human life
   (C) thought the world was deteriorating
   (D) understood the causes of natural disasters
   (E) were not prone to confabulation

28. The author’s tone can best be described as
   (A) detached
   (B) disparaging
   (C) amused
   (D) frightened
   (E) alarmist

29. It can be inferred from the passage that people affected by the earthquake were
   (A) homogenous
   (B) superstitious
   (C) reactionary
   (D) insightful
   (D) regretful

25. Which of the following is NOT a result of the earthquake?
   (A) beached vessels
   (B) scorched earth
   (C) extensive property damage
   (D) many casualties
   (E) widespread flooding

(1776)
30. Which of the following quotes best describes the reason the Romans were so frightened by the earthquake?

(A) “they considered these alarming strokes as the prelude only of still more dreadful calamities” (lines 27-29)
(B) “the city of Alexandria annually commemorated the fatal day, on which fifty thousand persons had lost their lives in the inundation” (lines 17-20)
(C) “a curious spectator amused his eye, or rather his fancy, by contemplating the various appearance of valleys and mountains, which had never, since the formation of the globe, been exposed to the sun” (lines 5-10)
(D) “great quantities of fish were caught with the hand;” (lines 3-4)
(E) “But the tide soon returned, with the weight of an immense and irresistible deluge, which was severely felt” (lines 10-12)

31. In context, “declining” (line 30) most nearly means

(A) sinking
(B) worsening
(C) aging
(D) shrinking
(E) weary

32. Which of the following is true, according to the passage?

(A) The Roman Empire lost 50,000 people.
(B) Homes were destroyed by the rift in the earth.
(C) The earthquakes in Bithynia and Palestine were not as destructive as this earthquake.
(D) The Mediterranean’s tides were permanently affected.
(E) The damage was primarily caused by a surge of water.

33. The line “great quantities of fish were caught with the hand” contains an example of

(A) figurative language
(B) colorful adjectives
(C) passive verb construction
(D) oxymoronic impossibilities
(E) pastoral analogies
LITERATURE TEST 2—Continued

Questions 34-42. Read the following poem carefully before you choose your answers.

“The Mower to the Glowworms”

Ye living lamps, by whose dear light
The nightingale does sit so late,
And studying all the summer night,
Her matchless songs does meditate;

Ye country comets, that portend
No war nor prince’s funeral,
Shining unto no higher end
Than to presage the grass’s fall;

Ye glowworms, whose officious flame
To wandering mowers shows the way,
That in the night have lost their aim,
And after foolish fires do stray;

Your courteous lights in vain you waste,
Since Juliana here is come,
For she my mind hath so displaced
That I shall never find my home.

(c. 1650)

34. The speaker of the poem first addresses the
glowworms by epithets that draw attention to the
insects’ natural
(A) intelligence
(B) tranquility
(C) luminosity
(D) inconsequence
(E) mortality

35. The speaker of the poem describes glowworms as providing assistance to
I. nightingales
II. princes
III. mowers
(A) I only
(B) II only
(C) III only
(D) I and III only
(E) I, II, and III

36. In its context, the word “portend” (line 5) means
(A) “predict,” and alludes to the superstition that the motion of glowworms could be interpreted to foretell future events
(B) “predict,” and alludes to the superstition that comets, meteors, and other natural phenomena were omens of evil
(C) “forecast,” and alludes to the fact that the behavior of insects can be used to predict the next day’s weather
(D) “imitate,” and suggests that glowworms mimic the cyclical flight of comets
(E) “weigh,” and makes clear that glowworms are oblivious to the dramatic upheavals of human life
37. Which of the following best expresses the meaning of “higher end” (line 7)?
   (A) brighter level
   (B) greater distance off the ground
   (C) further boundary
   (D) secret intention
   (E) nobler purpose

38. Which of the following is the closest synonym for “officious,” as it is used in line 9?
   (A) helpful
   (B) dim
   (C) wandering
   (D) bureaucratic
   (E) meddlesome

39. The speaker implies that, without the glowworms, mowers who have “lost their aim” (line 11) would be likely to
   (A) mow the wrong fields
   (B) conduct themselves disgracefully
   (C) fall in love
   (D) be distracted by other, mysterious sources of light
   (E) never find their way home

40. Which of the following is the best paraphrase for the last line of the poem?
   (A) I am blinded by my resentment toward her.
   (B) I will continue wandering forever.
   (C) I will never be myself again.
   (D) I will never go home without her.
   (E) I will never go to heaven.

41. The main verb in the sentence that states the overall theme of the poem is
   (A) “sit” (line 2)
   (B) “waste” (line 13)
   (C) “come” (line 14)
   (D) “displaced” (line 15)
   (E) “find” (line 16)

42. “The Mower to the Glowworms” could most reasonably be considered
   (A) a celebration of fireflies
   (B) an elaborate compliment to a woman
   (C) an analysis of love at first sight
   (D) an allegory about the Holy Spirit
   (E) a commentary on the foolishness of mowers
Questions 43-53. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

ROSE: Times have changed since you was playing baseball, Troy. That was before the war. Times have changed a lot since then.

TROY: How in hell they done changed?

ROSE: They got lots of colored boys playing ball now. Baseball and football.

BONO: You right about that, Rose. Times have changed, Troy. You just come along too early.

TROY: There ought not never have been no time called too early! Now you take that fellow . . . what’s that fellow they had playing right field for the Yankees back then? You know who I’m talking about, Bono. Used to play right field for the Yankees.

ROSE: Selkirk?

TROY: Selkirk! That’s it! Man batting .269, understand? .269. What kind of sense that make? I was hitting .432 with thirty-seven home runs! Man batting .269 and playing right field for the Yankees! I saw Josh Gibson’s* daughter yesterday. She walking around with raggedy shoes on her feet.

Now I bet you Selkirk’s daughter ain’t walking around with raggedy shoes on her feet! I bet you that!

ROSE: They got a lot of colored baseball players now. Jackie Robinson was the first. Folks had to wait for Jackie Robinson.

TROY: I done seen a hundred niggers play baseball better than Jackie Robinson. Hell, I know some teams Jackie Robinson couldn’t even make! Jackie Robinson wasn’t nobody. I’m talking about if you could play ball then they ought to have let you play. Don’t care what color you were. Come telling me I come along too early. If you could play . . . then they ought to have let you play.

(Troy takes a long drink from the bottle.)

ROSE: You gonna drink yourself to death. You don’t need to be drinking like that.

TROY: Death ain’t nothing. I done seen him. Done wrestled with him. You can’t tell me nothing about death. Death ain’t nothing but a fastball on the outside corner. And you know what I’ll do to that! Lookee here, Bono . . . am I lying? You get one of them fastballs, about waist height, over the outside corner of the plate where you can get the meat of the bat on it . . . and good god! You can kiss it goodbye. Now, am I lying?

BONO: Naw, you telling the truth there. I seen you do it.

TROY: If I’m lying . . . that 450 feet worth of lying! (Pause.) That’s all death is to me. A fastball on the outside corner.

ROSE: I don’t know why you want to get on talking about death.

TROY: Ain’t nothing wrong with talking about death. That’s part of life. Everybody gonna die. You gonna die, I’m gonna die. Bono’s gonna die. Hell, we all gonna die.

(1986)

*Josh Gibson was a notable baseball player in the Negro Leagues.

43. It can be inferred that Troy played baseball
   (A) before the outbreak of World War I
   (B) long before the period in which Selkirk played right field for the Yankees
   (C) before Jackie Robinson was born
   (D) before the major leagues were racially integrated
   (E) until his near brush with death

44. Which of the following best expresses the meaning of Troy’s statement that “There ought not never have been no time called too early!” (lines 10-11)?
   (A) We should judge past conditions in light of their historical context.
   (B) It is a shame that we must wait for society’s flaws to be corrected by progress and social change.
   (C) Most individuals are born before the time period in which they could most prosper or succeed.
   (D) The language we use to describe the world affects the way we experience the world.
   (E) Despite the appearance of progress, social conditions do not really improve.
45. Troy mentions his encounter with Josh Gibson’s daughter to
   (A) prove that Selkirk had been unqualified to play right field for the Yankees
   (B) cite an example of a black athlete whose skills in his view exceeded those of Jackie Robinson
   (C) pay tribute to the greatest of right fielders in the Negro Leagues
   (D) illustrate the disparity in the economic rewards available to white and to black professional baseball players before the integration of Major League Baseball
   (E) emphasize his point that times have not changed

46. Troy’s tone in lamenting the injustice of his baseball career is one of
   (A) evenhanded objectivity
   (B) harsh political fervor
   (C) lingering resentment
   (D) naïve idealism
   (E) pompous self-pity

47. Troy begins a speech by personifying death and then proceeds to
   (A) ignore Rose’s well-meaning advice
   (B) revert to his previous bragging about his prowess as a baseball player
   (C) make a comparison expressing his fearlessness of death
   (D) make an analogy that shows that he believes he can evade death
   (E) explain what he believes it will feel like to die

48. Which of the following stylistic devices are employed by the playwright to evoke the atmosphere of the scene?
   I. soliloquy
   II. double entendre
   III. nonstandard English
   (A) I only
   (B) II only
   (C) III only
   (D) I and III only
   (E) II and III only

49. Troy’s attitude toward death is primarily one of
   (A) contemptuous denial
   (B) naïve self-delusion
   (C) boastful nonchalance
   (D) awed anticipation
   (E) thinly veiled cowardice

50. From the passage, it can be inferred that Troy and Bono are
   (A) opponents in a long-standing dispute
   (B) former teammates of Josh Gibson
   (C) baseball players of two different generations
   (D) flirtatious colleagues
   (E) old friends

51. Rose’s role in the passage can best be described as
   (A) inquisitive
   (B) condemning
   (C) justifying
   (D) instigating
   (E) attentive

52. It can be inferred that Rose’s feelings for Troy are characterized by
   (A) affectionate concern
   (B) sarcastic mockery
   (C) reverent admiration
   (D) apathetic dismissal
   (E) jealous anxiety

53. Which of the following would most logically precede the discussion excerpted in this passage?
   (A) A discussion about whether Troy’s son can expect to be discriminated against in his sports career because he is black
   (B) A debate over whether Troy should compete for a spot at the Yankees’ spring training camp
   (C) A debate over the merits of racially integrated neighborhoods
   (D) A discussion of the great moments in Troy’s baseball career
   (E) A discussion of persistent racial unrest in American society
Questions 54-61. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The guest waked from a dream, and remembering his day’s pleasure hurried to dress himself that it might sooner begin. He was sure from the way the shy little girl looked once or twice yesterday that she had at least seen the white heron, and now she must really be persuaded to tell. Here she comes now, paler than ever, and her worn old frock is torn and tattered, and smeared with pine pitch. The grandmother and the sportsman stand in the door together and question her, and the splendid moment has come to speak of the dead hemlock-tree by the green marsh.

But Sylvia does not speak after all, though the old grandmother fretfully rebukes her, and the young man’s kind appealing eyes are looking straight in her own. He can make them rich with money; he has promised it, and they are poor now. He is so well worth making happy, and he waits to hear the story she can tell.

No, she must keep silence! What is it that suddenly forbids her and makes her dumb? Has she been nine years growing, and now, when the great world for the first time puts out a hand to her, must she thrust it aside for a bird’s sake? The murmur of the pine’s green branches in her ears, she remembers how the white heron came flying through the golden air and how they watched the sea and the morning together, and Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron’s secret and give its life away.

(1886)

54. It can be inferred that the guest’s anticipated “day’s pleasure” (line 2) centered around
(A) his furthering his acquaintance with Sylvia
(B) his hearing the end of a tale that Sylvia has promised to finish for him
(C) his opportunity to make a carving from a petrified hemlock tree
(D) his opportunity to photograph a white heron in its natural habitat
(E) his opportunity to shoot a white heron

55. Which of the following is NOT an effect of the switch from past-tense narration to present-tense narration in the first paragraph?
(A) It conveys the young man’s surprise at the little girl’s appearance.
(B) It emphasizes the young man’s suspense in waiting for her to speak.
(C) It serves to heighten the reader’s anticipation of the little girl’s revelation.
(D) It signals the narrator’s switch from the guest’s point of view to the little girl’s.
(E) It intensifies the reader’s sense that this is a moment that both the young man and Sylvia have been eagerly awaiting.

56. Which of the following is the strongest enticement for Sylvia to lead the young man to where she has seen the white heron?
(A) her grandmother’s failing health
(B) her respect for the young man’s good intentions toward the heron
(C) her fear that the young man might take her away from her familiar surroundings
(D) his promise of financial reward
(E) his loyalty to all the wild creatures of the region

57. Which of the following best articulates Sylvia’s feelings toward the young man?
(A) She hopes to win his esteem at any cost.
(B) She is torn between her desire to please him and her contrary impulse not to assist him.
(C) She is indifferent to his aims and toward him as a person.
(D) She is repulsed by him personally, although she supports his endeavor.
(E) She despises his mercenary motives.
58. Sylvia’s own surprise at her reluctance to speak is best conveyed by
    (A) the narrator’s emphasis on her and her grandmother’s poverty
    (B) the narrator’s admission that Sylvia had never before had the chance to fulfill someone’s hopes as she might have fulfilled the young man’s
    (C) the short sentences used to convey the choppiness of Sylvia’s thoughts
    (D) Sylvia’s memory of the pine tree and the view of the sea
    (E) the author’s use of rhetorical questions to express Sylvia’s own self-questioning

59. Sylvia is described in the passage as
    (A) surprised at her own morality
    (B) failing to honor a promise she had made to her grandmother
    (C) frustrating any hope she might have had of getting to know the young man better
    (D) persistently dismissive of other people’s feelings
    (E) remaining faithful to her long-standing beliefs

60. Which of the following phrases from the passage is most nearly the antithesis of what the white heron represents to Sylvia?
    (A) “torn and tattered” (lines 8-9)
    (B) “splendid moment” (line 12)
    (C) “nine years growing” (line 24)
    (D) “the great world” (line 25)
    (E) “the golden air” (line 29)

61. “The murmur of the pine’s green branches” (line 27) is an example of
    (A) personification
    (B) alliteration
    (C) authorial intrusion
    (D) reification
    (E) poetic license