

Advanced Poetry Comprehension Test

Always choose the best answer

A Vergilian Dream (Questions 1-20)

Tempus erat quo prima quies mortalibus aegris
incipit et dono divum gratissima serpit.
In somnis, ecce, ante oculos maestissimus Hector
visus adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus,
5 raptatus bigis ut quondam, aterque cruento
pulvere perque pedes traiectus lora tumentis.
Ei mihi, qualis erat, quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli
vel Danaum Phrygios iaculatus puppibus ignis!
10 squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis
vulneraque illa gerens, quae circum plurima muros
accepit patrios. ultro flens ipse videbar
compellare virum et maestas expromere voces:
"o lux Dardaniae, spes o fidissima Teucrum,
15 quae tantae tenuere morae? quibus Hector ab oris
exspectate venis? ut te post multa tuorum
funera, post varios hominumque urbisque labores
defessi aspiciamus! quae causa indigna serenos
foedavit vultus? aut cur haec vulnera cerno?"
20 ille nihil, nec me quaerentem vana moratur,
sed grauiter gemitus imo de pectore ducens,
"heu fuge, nate dea, teque his" ait "eripe flammis.
hostis habet muros; ruit alto a culmine Troia
sat patriae Priamoque datum: si Pergama dextra
25 defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.
sacra suosque tibi commendat Troia penatis;
hos cape fatorum comites, his moenia quaere
magna pererrato statues quae denique ponto."
sic ait et manibus vittas Vestamque potentem
30 aeternumque adytis effert penetralibus ignem.
Diverso interea miscentur moenia luctu,
et magis atque magis, quamquam secreta parentis
Anchisae domus arboribusque obtecta recessit,
clarescunt sonitus armorumque ingruit horror.

1. Which adjective best translates Vergil's description of people in the first sentence?
A) happy B) most pleased C) tired D) very worried
2. When describing rest (quies) which animal is most aptly suggested by the verb choice in line 2?
A) fish B) bull C) snake D) bird
3. What best describes Hector as he first appears (line 3)
A) rejoicing B) mournful C) dirty D) solicitous
4. What is Hector doing in lines 4-5?
A) driving a chariot B) looking for help
C) weeping D) pouring flames over the city
5. How does Aeneas (the dreamer) describe Hector's feet (line 6).
A) swollen B) swift C) bleeding D) firmly planted
6. What event from the Iliad does Vergil make reference to in line 8?
A) Hector's duel with Ajax B) Hector's death
C) Achilles chasing Hector at Troy's walls. D) Hector's defeat of Patroclus
7. What event from the Iliad does Vergil make reference to in line 9?
A) Hector's funeral pyre B) Hector's shaming of Paris
C) Achilles dragging Hector around Troy D) Hector's burning the Greek fleet
8. What is Hector described as wearing (line 11)?
A) Achilles' armor B) a proud look
C) wounds D) armor like a city wall
9. Who is speaking between lines 14 and 19?
A) Hector B) Achilles C) Aeneas D) Helenus
10. What is the speaker asking in lines 14-16?
A) Whether dawn will hold hope for the Trojans B) Why Hector has come so late
C) On what shore Trojans should await Hector D) When he can expect his death
11. Whose death and struggles are being spoken of in lines 16-18
A) Hector's B) Achilles' C) Troilus' D) The Trojans'
12. What kind of a face does the speaker say he sees (lines 18-19)
A) happy B) calm C) worn out D) fouled
13. How does the person reply to the questions (of lines 14-19) in lines 20-21?
A) he delays B) he groans C) he beats his breast D) he laughs
14. What is the advice given in line 22?
A) to flee and save himself
B) to run to the goddess and take refuge from the flames
C) To run to find Aeneas
D) to flee to Aeneas and save him
15. According to lines 23-25, what would have saved Troy if it could have been saved?
A) the walls B) Hector's right hand C) Priam D) the citadel

16. Whom does the speaker say entrusts the household gods to the dreamer? (lines 26-28)
A) Hector B) Panthus C) Aphrodite D) Troy
17. What is said to be eternal?
A) the fillets of Vesta B) Troy C) the household gods D) fire
18. What must the dreamer do before a new city is found for the gods?
A) traverse the sea B) defeat the Greeks
C) Find new comrades given by fate D) make fillets with his own hands
19. What shielded the house from external noises?
A) Intervening walls B) trees C) its high position D) the larger hill
20. What wakes the dreamer?
A) Anchises B) the noise of fire in the trees
C) his lover D) the sound of fighting

A Narrow Escape (Questions 21-40)

Ille et nefasto te posuit die,
quicumque primum, et sacrilega manu
produxit, arbos, in nepotum
perniciem opprobriumque pagi.

Illum et parentis crediderim sui
fregisse cervicem et penetralia
sparsisse nocturno cruore
hospitis; ille venena Colcha

5

et quidquid usquam concipitur nefas
tractavit, agro qui statuit meo
te, triste lignum, te caducum
in domini caput inmerentis.

10

Caducus, a, um > cado, cadere
= casurum

Quid quisque vitet, numquam homini satis
cautum est in horas: navita Bosphorum
Poenus perhorrescit neque ultra
caeca timet aliunde fata;

15

navita = nauta

miles sagittas et celerem fugam
Parthi, catenas Parthus et Italum
robur; sed improvisa leti
vis rapuit rapietque gentis.

20

Quam paene furvae regna Proserpinae
et iudicantem vidimus Aeacum
sedesque discretas piorum et
Aeoliis fidibus querentem

furvae > furvus, a, um, black, dark

Sappho puellis de popularibus
et te sonantem plenius aureo,
Alcaee, plectro dura navis,
dura fugae mala, dura belli.

25

Utrumque sacro digna silentio
mirantur umbrae dicere; sed magis
pugnas et exactos tyrannos
densum umeris bibit aure volgus.

30

Quid mirum, ubi illis carminibus stupens
demittit atras belua centiceps
auris, et intorti capillis
Eumenidum recreantur angues?

35

Quin et Prometheus et Pelopis parens
dulci laborem decipitur sono
nec curat Orion leones
aut timidos agitare lyncas.

40

21. What is it that Horace says nearly kills him?
 A) poisoned food B) a falling tree C) lightning D) a wolf
22. When does Horace say this “event” began?
 A) on his first birthday B) on a cursed day
 C) when Horace was in court D) while Horace was entertaining guests
23. What relationship (technically) does Horace claim to have with the originator of this “event”?
 A) father-son B) grandparent-grandson C) patron-client D) guest-host
24. Which crime does Horace say that he believes the person is also guilty of?
 A) murder of a master B) murder of a slave
 C) murder of a guest D) causing shipwrecks
25. To whom does “inmerentis” refer (line 12)?
 A) the wolf B) Horace C) Medea D) the tree
26. Which choice best reflects the sense of lines 13-14 ?
 A) No person knows the hour of danger or they would avoid it
 B) Everyone know the hour of danger but can’t avoid it.
 C) People are not careful enough to avoid danger
 D) Let each live his own life and never worry about he hours given to men
27. What does the soldier do with “sagittas” (line 17)
 A) fears them B) hurls them C) snatches them up D) flees them
28. What are “catenas” and “robur” in this passage (lines 18 & 19)?
 A) fetters and wood B) chains and strength
 C) strong fetters D) ash and oak
29. What does Horace see “rapuit rapietque gentis?”
 A) untiring time B) careless men
 C) swift Parthians D) unforeseen violence of death
30. Why does Horace say he had nearly seen Proserpina?
 A) because he had visited Lake Avernus B) because he had nearly died
 C) because he had seen a pomegranate tree D) because he had been to Henna
31. What does Horace envision Aeacus doing?
 A) judging men B) complaining C) singing D) sitting among the pious
32. Whom does Horace describe as using a golden quill on the lyre?
 A) Sappho B) Aeacus C) Orpheus D) Alcaeus
33. Which of the following subjects does Horace NOT describe Alcaeus as singing about?
 A) girls B) war C) exile D) sailing
34. According to Horace, which group prefers to listen to Alcaeus?
 A) All shades B) the common shades
 C) neither, they prefer Homer D) aristocratic shades

35. How would one translate Horace's description of the monster in lines 33-35 literally?
A) fifty-eyed B) hundred-handed C) three-headed D) black-eared
36. What effect does the poetry have upon this monster?
A) stirs it up B) calms it down C) sends it away D) makes it howl
37. What is the best translation of "angues" (line 36)
A) you will worry B) serpents C) you increase D) suffering
38. How is Prometheus affected "dulci...sono"
A) forgets his suffering B) becomes more mindful of his suffering
C) tricks his captors to release him D) uses it to deceive Pelops
39. Whom does Horace mean by Pelopis parens
A) Sisyphus B) Tantalus C) Danaus D) Lycophron
40. What does Orion do?
A) chases lions B) leaves lions and chases the lynx
C) fears the lynx D) no longer cares to chase the lynx

A Letter from Penelope (Questions 41-60)

Hanc tua Penelope lento tibi mittit, Ulixē;
nil mihi rescribas at tamen ipse veni!
Troia iacet certe Danais invisa puellis:
vix Priamus tanti totaque Troia fuit.
O utinam tum, cum Lacedaemona classe petebat, 5
obrutus insanis esset adulter aquis!
Non ego deserto iacuissem frigida lecto;
non quererer tardos ire relictā dies
nec mihi quaerenti spatiosam fallere noctem
lassasset viduas pendula tela manus. 10
Quando ego non timui graviora pericula veris?
Res est solliciti plena timoris amor.
In te fingebam violentos Troas ituros,
nomine in Hectoreo pallida semper eram;
sive quis Antilochum narrabat ab Hectore victum, 15
Antilochus nostri causa timoris erat;
sive Menoetiaden falsis cecidisse sub armis,
flebam successu posse carere dolos;
sanguine Tlepolemus Lyciam tepefecerat hastam:
Tlepolemi leto cura novata mea est; 20
denique, quisquis erat castris iugulatus Achivis,
frigidius glacie pectus amantis erat.
Sed bene consuluit casto deus aequus amor:
versa est in cineres sospite Troia viro.
Argolici rediere duces: altaria fumant; 25
ponitur ad patrios barbara praeda deos;
grata ferunt nymphae prosalvis dona maritis,
illi victa suis Troica fata canunt;
mirantur iustique senes trepidaeque puellae
narrantis coniunx pendet ab ore viri. 30
Atque aliquis posita monstrat fera proelia mensa,
pingit et exiguo Pergama tota mero:
“ hac ibat Simois, haec est Sigeia tellus,
hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis;
illic Aeacides, illic tendebat Ulixes, 35
hic lacer admissos terruit Hector equos.”
omnia namque tuo senior te quaerere misso
rettulerat nato Nestor, at ille mihi.
rettulit et ferro Rhesumque Dolonaque caesos, 40
utque sit hic somno proditus ille dolo.
Ausus es, O nimium nimiumque oblite tuorum,
Thracia nocturno tangere castra dolo
totque simul mactare viros, adiutus ab uno!

41. What is Penelope's first complaint?
A) Ulysses does not write back B) Troy was not worth this much
C) he is slow D) she hears he is sleeping with other women
42. Of what is Penelope sure?
A) Troy is filled with pretty girls
B) other Greek women have their husbands back
C) other Greek women have unbelievable treasures from Troy
D) Troy has already fallen
43. About whom is Penelope speaking in lines 5-6?
A) Agamemnon B) Paris C) Helen D) Menelaus
44. What does she say in line 7?
A) she worries Ulysses has been castaway on a desert island
B) that she would not have been cold in her bed
C) she thinks that Ulysses lies in cold death somewhere alone
D) if she endures much more she would die of loneliness
45. What does Penelope say wore her down?
A) weaving B) long days C) slow nights D) news of the clash of arms at Troy
46. Of what was Penelope fearful?
A) Of Ulysses meeting a stronger man
B) of Ulysses staying away still longer
C) Ulysses would be filled with love for another
D) that Ulysses suffered even greater dangers than he really did
47. Why was Penelope so fearful?
A) love made her so B) the constant stories of Hector's wins
C) the inconsistent reports D) the infrequent news from Troy
48. Why did Patroclus' death cause Penelope to weep?
A) because she imagined it was Ulysses who died
B) because Patroclus' trickery failed
C) because she knew Ulysses was accustomed to fight near Patroclus
D) because she thought people had lied and Ulysses had really died, not Patroclus
49. What caused Penelope's heart to be "colder than ice"?
A) the name of Hector B) Antilochus' death
C) any death among the Greeks D) Ilepolemus' victory
50. Why does Penelope think that the god had been just to her?
A) Troy had fallen
B) the Greeks had brought back much loot
C) the war was over and Ulysses was safe
D) the Greeks had agreed with Ulysses plan to destroy Troy
51. Whom does Penelope say had made thank-offerings to the gods?
A) Agamemnon B) the Greek leaders
C) Nestor D) Greek women

52. What is placed before the “gods of the homeland”?
A) loot from the war B) first-fruits of the field after their return
C) locks of women’s hair D) hair from their newly-shaven beards
53. Whom does Penelope NOT list as listening to the story of Troy’s fate?
A) girls B) old men C) Greek families D) slaves
54. What can one infer from line 30?
A) the audience pays very close attention B) the stories are poorly told
C) the story is already well-known D) even the Trojan captives listen
55. When were these stories told?
A) before dinner B) after dinner C) late at night D) after the sacrifice
56. How did the Greeks illustrate their stories of the war?
A) with song B) with pure words C) with wine D) with tableware
57. What does line 34 tell us?
A) Where Priam stood to sacrifice B) Where Priam saw Hector killed
C) Where Priam’s palace stood D) Why Achilles granted Hector’s body to Priam
58. Who told Penelope all this?
A) Aeacides B) Nestor C) Telemachus D) Dolon
59. Who or what betrayed Rhesus?
A) sleep B) his sword C) Dolon D) Ulysses
60. What does Penelope say Ulysses forgot on this mission?
A) his shield B) his sword C) his family D) deceitful night

