



OIB American Section

Entrance Test

April 25, 2018

Welcome to Lycée François Magendie ! Good Luck !

Part I : Written Comprehension and Written Expression.

2 hours : Read the texts and answer the question IN ORDER ! Then choose ONE essay to write 250 words.

10 Minute Break

Part II Oral Comprehension

Three listenings : The document will be played once, with a one minute pause; a second time, with a one minute pause ; and then a third time with five minutes to complete the questions. The candidate is allowed to write while listening.

Reading comprehension:*Read the texts and answer the questions*

Text 1

The First Day

The episode recounted here is inspired by Elizabeth Eckford's true story in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957.

Elizabeth put on her black sunglasses. She said goodbye to her parents, kissed them and walked to the public bus stop where she waited quietly for the bus that would take her to her new school. But when she got off at the bus stop closest to Central High she didn't see any of the other eight black children who were meant to be starting at the school with her that day. She didn't see any black people at all. She saw a sea of white people, thousands of them from all over the state and, judging from the out-of-state license plates, from other states as well. She saw hundreds of soldiers in full battle dress: boots, helmets. The soldiers were armed. She saw bayonets, too many to count.

She looked at the guards lined up along the road leading to the school building and she looked at the white crowd. The day before, she had been told to go to the school's main entrance. It was a block away from where she was standing. It occurred to her that when walking the block to the front of the school she might be safer if she walked it from behind the guards so that for the length of the block there would be a line of guards between her and the crowd. It was at the corner of the block that she chose to try to pass through the line of guards in order to stand on the other side of them. She was wearing sunglasses and the black-and-white pleated dress she had made with her mother. It was her first day at a new school. She was fifteen and she chose a soldier at random.

The soldier didn't speak but pointed across the street in the direction of the crowd. She tried not to look frightened and walked as the random soldier had directed her. What might another soldier have done? Elizabeth had always achieved high grades, always been an excellent student.

Elizabeth Eckford walked toward the crowd and, at least at first, that section of it closest to her moved back, away from her, almost as though afraid of her, as though afraid they might catch something from her. If you stood too near her perhaps you could become her. People would look at you. You would stand out simply by being in that part of the crowd nearest to her. You hadn't gone there expecting to stand out. That wasn't why you were there. But now you might stand out through no fault of your own. So you had better make sure that everybody around knows where you really stand. You hate her. You hate her as much as anyone else in the crowd hates her. You might even hate her more. By standing near you, she's making you especially uncomfortable, more uncomfortable than she makes everybody else feel, and how they feel is only how you felt moments ago before she chose you to make especially uncomfortable. Why did she have to choose you? She brings trouble with her wherever she goes. You can see it. You've been told this all your life, known it all your life, but now you can actually feel it. She's making you sweat. She's making your heart race. Everybody's looking as she stands near you. Oh Christ, you hate her. Why did she have to make you feel like this? You hate her so much.

"Here she comes. Get ready!" someone shouted.

Elizabeth moved away from the crowd and closer to the guards. She walked briskly but she didn't run. The noise of the crowd was everywhere. All she had to do, she told herself, was make it to the main entrance at the end of the block.

Elizabeth managed to reach the front of the school. She approached another guard. This one wouldn't meet her eyes. He stared out beyond her, over her head like she wasn't there. The noise was all around her as though attached to the air. The guard wouldn't let her pass. She saw that there was a path which led directly to the front entrance a little farther on. She turned and took it. She hadn't realized the school was so big. White students were walking up to the guards at the front door and were being let through.

Still with the feeling that her legs could give way at any moment, she walked toward the guard who was letting the white students through. He didn't move. Again it was like she wasn't there. She tried to get in between him and the guard next to him. He raised his bayonet to block her. Then the other guards moved in. They raised their bayonets too. As though sensing something, some change or new phase, a quiet descended on the crowd for a moment. Elizabeth didn't know what to do. She turned away from the guards and just stood there, between them and the crowd. Now the crowd moved toward her, closer, and she heard, "Lynch her! Lynch her!"

She turned around to face the guards again but they remained impassive and impassable. The noise of those thousands of angry white people was like nothing she had ever heard before. She had always got good grades. She had always been very polite, always been a good girl, been no trouble to her teachers, always paid attention. These people didn't know her. Where in her fifteen years of life was the thing she had done that was so bad they should hate her this much? There were so many of them and they all hated her. They appeared to feel this so strongly even though none of them knew her. It was hard to think but she found and clutched at the thought that somehow it might be better for her if she could make it back to the bus stop from where she'd arrived. It was a new plan, to make it back to the bench at the bus stop. She turned around and started the journey back, flanked by the crowd on each side. Still she didn't run but her legs felt as though they might buckle at any time. When she finally got to the bench at the bus stop her legs did buckle slightly but she propped herself up on the back of the bench.

Elliot Perlman, *The Street Sweeper*, 2011.

Questions

TEXT 1	The First Day
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Answer in clear full sentences. As much as you can, write only one sentence for each answer.

1. How old is Elizabeth and what is she trying to do?
2. What problem(s) is she facing?
3. What doesn't the crowd want? Why not?
4. Why did the crowd initially walk back, away from her?
5. In the third paragraph (from line 22 to line 36), we notice a change in point of view as the narrator uses the pronoun "you" 25 times.
 - a) Why do you think the author decided on such a change?
 - b) Who is "you" supposed to be?
 - c) Which predominant feeling is "you" supposed to experience?
 - d) Lines 33-34: *"She brings trouble with her wherever she goes. You can see it. You've been told this all your life, known it all your life, but now you can actually feel it."*
Is "she" really bringing trouble here? And who do you think told "you"?

For questions 7 and 8 quote sentences from the text, underline the most important elements, and indicate the line numbers.

6. Pick 2 sentences that illustrate Elizabeth's courage.
7. Pick 2 sentences that show how vulnerable she feels on the inside.
8. Contrast the crowd's behavior with Elizabeth's. Reproduce this chart and fill it out focusing on action verbs in the text.

Crowd	Elizabeth

9. Try to guess the reasons why the crowd's reactions and Elizabeth's are so different.

The scene takes place in Mississippi in September 1962.

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"Did I tell you?" Mother says. "Fanny Peatrow got engaged." "Good for Fanny."

"Not even a month after she got that teller¹ job at the Farmer's Bank." "That's great, Mother."

"I know," she says, and I turn to see one of those lightbulb-popping looks of hers. "Why don't you go down to the bank and apply for a teller job?"

5 "I don't want to be a bank teller, Mama."

Mother sighs (...). We've had this conversation so many times.

"Four years my daughter goes off to college and what does she come home with?" she asks.

"A diploma?"

"A pretty piece of paper", Mother says.

10 "I told you, I didn't meet anybody I wanted to marry," I say.

Mother rises from her chair, comes close so I'll look her in her smooth, pretty face. She's wearing a navy blue dress, narrow along her slim bones. As usual her lipstick is just so, but when she steps into the bright afternoon sun, I see dark stains², deep and dried, on the front of her clothes. I squint³ my eyes, trying to see if the stains are really there. "Mama?

15 Are you feeling bad?"

"If you'd just show a little gumption⁴, Eugenia..."

"Your dress is all dirty on the front."

Mother crosses her arms. "Now, I talked to Fanny's mother and she said Fanny was practically swimming in opportunities once she got that job."

20 I drop the dress issue. I'll never be able to tell Mother I want to be a writer. She'll only turn it into yet another thing that separates me from married girls. (...)

My own mother is looking at me as if I completely baffle⁵ her mind with my looks, my height, my hair. (...)

"It's all about putting yourself in a man-meeting situation where you can."

25 "Mama," I say, just wanting to end this conversation, "would it really be so terrible if I never met a husband?"

Mother clutches her bare arms as if made cold by the thought. "Don't. Don't say that, Eugenia. Why, every week I see another man in town over six feet and I think, if Eugenia would just try..." She presses her hand to her stomach, the very thought advancing her ulcers. (...)

30 I shudder with the same left-behind feeling I've had since I graduated from college, three months ago. I've dropped off in a place I do not belong anymore. Certainly not here with Mother and Daddy. (...)

"... here you are twenty-three years old and I'd already had Carlton Jr. at your age..."

Mother says.

Answer in clear full sentences. As much as you can, write only one sentence for each answer.

10. Who are the various characters mentioned in the text and how are they connected to each other?
11. On *line 6*, the narrator writes: "We've had this conversation so many times." What is the topic of the conversation?
12. Where was Eugenia three months before this conversation?
13. How long did it take her to get her degree?
14. What does the mother think a diploma represents?
15. Read the sentence on *lines 18-19*: "Now, I talked to Fanny's mother and she said Fanny was practically swimming in opportunities once she got that job." What kind of opportunities are being referred to?
16. Why is it impossible for Eugenia to tell her mother she wants to be a writer?
17. Eugenia feels she "doesn't belong" at her parents' house anymore. Why?
18. TRUE or FALSE:
 - a) No one wants to marry Eugenia.
 - b) Eugenia's mother has found a husband for her daughter.
19. Why is Eugenia worried about the stains on her mother's dress?
20. Using information from the text (explicit and implicit) create Eugenia's mother's portrait:
 - a) Her physical appearance
 - b) Her personality traits

Essays: Choose one topic (indicate the number) and write about 250 words (about 25 lines)

- I. Eugenia asks her mother if it would really "be so terrible if (she) never met a husband?". How would **you** answer this question?
- II. Write about a situation in which you felt different from everyone around you. Explain what caused you to feel that way and what your thoughts and reactions were. Describe how people around you reacted and what you learned from that experience.
- III. Relate a disagreement you had with your parents about an important topic. What was your point of view? What was theirs? Did you manage to come to a compromise?