



# English 12

Examination Booklet  
2008/09 Sample Examination  
**Form A**

**DO NOT OPEN ANY EXAMINATION MATERIALS UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO.**  
FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS REFER TO THE RESPONSE BOOKLET.



You have **Examination Booklet Form A**. In the box above #1 on your **Answer Sheet**, fill in the bubble as follows.

Exam Booklet Form/ Cahier d'examen	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>						

## PART A: READING COMPREHENSION

### STAND-ALONE TEXT

7 multiple-choice questions  
1 written-response question  
Value: 23%

Suggested Time: 25 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following passage, “An Ode to the User-Friendly Pencil,” and answer the multiple-choice questions. For each question, select the **best** answer and record your choice on the **Answer Sheet** provided.

adapted from **An Ode to the User-Friendly Pencil**

by Bonnie Laing

- 1 Recently I acquired a computer. Or perhaps I should say it acquired me. My therapist claims that acknowledging the superior partner in a destructive relationship is the first step toward recovery. I should point out that prior to this acquisition, my idea of modern technology at its best was frozen waffles. My mastery of business machines had advanced only as far as the stapler.
- 2 I was persuaded to make this investment by well-meaning friends who said the word-processing capacity of a computer would make me a better writer, make me a more productive writer, and make me a richer writer. I pointed out that Chaucer was a pretty good writer even though he used a quill, and Dickens managed to produce 15 novels and numerous collections of short stories without so much as a typewriter. But I have to admit that option C got to me, even if I couldn't figure out how spending \$3,000 on a piece of molded plastic was going to make me wealthier.
- 3 To date, my association with the computer has not been too successful. It has proven to be very sensitive to everything but my needs. At the last breakdown (its, not mine) the service man commented that it should have been called an Edsel,<sup>1</sup> not an Epson, and suggested an exorcist be consulted. Needless to say, I am not yet in a position to open a numbered Swiss bank account.
- 4 But they say hardship teaches you who your friends are. And so, my computer experience has forced me to spend a lot more time with an old friend, the pencil. Its directness and simplicity have proven to be refreshing. In fact, the more I wrestled with my microchips (whatever they are), the more convinced I became that the pencil is superior to the computer. Allow me to cite a few examples.
- 5 To start with the purchase decision, you don't have to ask for a bank loan to buy a pencil. Since most pencils are not manufactured in Japan, you don't feel you're upsetting the nation's balance of trade by buying one.
- 6 In fact, pencils are constructed in part from that most Canadian of natural resources — wood. By buying pencils you create employment and prosperity for dozens of people in British Columbia. Well, a few anyway.
- 7 Of course, like most people I rarely *buy* a pencil, preferring to pick them up free from various places of employment, in the mistaken belief that they are a legitimate fringe benefit. It's best not to make that assumption about office computers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Edsel: *an unreliable car*

- 8 Operationally, the pencil wins over the computer hands down. You can learn to use a pencil in less than 10 seconds. Personally, at the age of 2, I mastered the technology in 3.2 seconds. To be fair, erasing did take a further 2.4 seconds. I've never had to boot a pencil, to interface with it or to program it. I just write with it.
- 9 Compared to a computer, a pencil takes up far less space on a desk and it can be utilized in a car, bathroom or a telephone booth without the aid of batteries. You can even use one during an electrical storm. Pencils don't cause eye strain and no one has ever screamed, after four hours of creative endeavour, "The - - - pencil ate my story!"
- 10 Pencils are wonderfully single-minded. They aren't used to open car doors, make the morning coffee or remind you that your Visa payment is overdue. They're user-friendly. (For the uninitiated, see comments on vocabulary.)
- 11 Of course, the technologically addicted among you will argue that the options of a pencil are rather limited. But the software of a pencil is both cheap and simple, consisting of a small rubber tip located at one end of the unit. A pencil is capable of producing more fonts or typefaces than any word processor, depending on the operator's skill.
- 12 Its graphic capability is limited only by the operator's talent, an element referred to as the Dürer<sup>2</sup> or Da Vinci Factor. Backup to a pencil can usually be found in your purse or pocket. Although a pencil has no memory, many of us who write badly consider that to be an advantage.
- 13 But it's in the area of maintenance that the pencil really proves its superiority. Should a pencil break down, all you have to do to render it operational again, is buy a small plastic device enclosing a sharp metal strip, a purchase that can be made for under a dollar. A paring knife, a piece of broken glass or even your teeth can be used in an emergency. For the more technically advanced, an electronic pencil sharpener can be obtained, but I should point out that these devices don't run on electrical power but by devouring one-third of the pencil.
- 14 You never have to take a pencil to a service department located on an industrial site on the outskirts of Moose Factory. Neither do you have to do without them for two weeks before discovering that the malfunction is not covered by the warranty and that the replacement part is on a boat from Korea.
- 15 What finally won me over to the pencil was its lack of social pretension. For instance, very few people suffer the nagging doubt that their intelligence is below that of a pencil. No one has ever claimed that a pencil put them out of a job. And the pencil has not created a whole new class of workers who consider themselves superior to, let's say, crayon operators. At parties, you meet very few people who will discuss pencils with a fervour normally found only at student rallies in Tehran. Fewer people boast about being 'pencil literate.'
- 16 Of course, the pencil is not without its flaws. It has a nasty habit of hiding when most needed. If located beside a telephone, it will break spontaneously if a caller wishes to leave a message. Those aspiring to be professional writers should note that editors are unreasonably prejudiced against submissions in pencil.
- 17 But a pencil won't argue with you if you wish to write more than 50 lines to the page. It won't insist on correcting your whimsical use of grammar, and it won't be obsolete 10 seconds after you mortgage your first-born to buy one. Just in case you remain unconvinced, I ask you, can you imagine chewing on a computer while balancing your cheque book? And what do computer operators use to scratch that place in the middle of the back where they can't reach? The defence rests.

---

<sup>2</sup> Dürer: *a famous European artist*



www.cartoonbank.com

Figure 1

1. Which stylistic device is used in the title, "An Ode to the User-Friendly Pencil"?
  - A. pun
  - B. cliché
  - C. euphemism
  - D. archaic language
  
2. What main purpose is served by paragraph 1?
  - A. to encourage people to buy a computer
  - B. to establish the objectivity of the writer
  - C. to engage the reader's interest with the topic
  - D. to assess the advantages of modern technology

3. Which technique is used in paragraph 2?
- A. parable
  - B. allusion
  - C. allegory
  - D. archaism
4. Which method of development is primarily used in the article?
- A. expert opinion
  - B. cause and effect
  - C. chronological order
  - D. compare and contrast
5. Which quotation best expresses the main idea of the article?
- A. “To date, my association with the computer has not been too successful” (paragraph 3)
  - B. “Operationally, the pencil wins over the computer hands down” (paragraph 8)
  - C. “Pencils are wonderfully single-minded” (paragraph 10)
  - D. “the technologically addicted among you will argue that the options of a pencil are rather limited” (paragraph 11)
6. Which word best describes the tone of the article?
- A. humble
  - B. reverent
  - C. resigned
  - D. humorous
7. With reference to Figure 1, on which technique does the cartoon depend for its effect?
- A. analogy
  - B. faulty logic
  - C. stereotyping
  - D. juxtaposition

**INSTRUCTIONS:** In paragraph form and in at least **150 words**, answer question 1 in the **Response Booklet**. Write in **ink**. Use the **Organization and Planning** space to plan your work. The mark for your answer will be based on the appropriateness of the examples you use as well as the adequacy of your explanation and the quality of your written expression.

1. In paragraph form, and with specific reference to “An Ode to a User-Friendly Pencil,” discuss irony in the article.

### **Organization and Planning**

Use this space to plan your ideas before writing in the **Response Booklet**.

**WRITING ON THIS PAGE WILL NOT BE MARKED**

## PART B: READING COMPREHENSION

13 multiple-choice questions  
Value: 16%

Suggested Time: 25 minutes

### SYNTHESIS TEXT 1

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following poem, “Wordsmith,” and answer the multiple-choice questions. For each question, select the **best** answer and record your choice on the **Answer Sheet** provided.

#### Wordsmith

by Susan Young

- 1 In my mind I call my  
father the Pollyfilla<sup>1</sup> king,  
watch with something akin to awe  
as he begins the arduous process  
5 of filling in the gaps, the long winded  
cracks that travel down the walls of my house  
like run on sentences.
- From the sidelines I watch as he  
trudges up and down the stairs, carrying  
10 with nonchalance an industrial-sized bucket,  
shiny spatula tucked into back pocket  
for easy access.
- Over and over again  
with precision and grace  
15 he fills and smooths and sands  
as filling in all of the empty crevices  
with the words he didn't know how to say,  
the lost syllables and consonants springing up  
from the bucket, stubbornly announcing themselves  
20 home, until there is only smoothness,  
my fifty eight year old house a perfect sentence,
- the veritable sheen of its walls  
privy to this father of mine,  
whose love keeps him moving  
25 from room to room, brightly asking,  
*Do you think you'll be painting the other room  
upstairs sometime? I could start work on it now.  
Then it'll be ready for painting later.*  
*Yes, I say, yes,*  
30 my face aglow.

---

<sup>1</sup>Pollyfilla: a brand name for a substance used to fill cracks in plaster walls

8. What does “as he begins the arduous process / of filling in the gaps” (lines 4 and 5) suggest about the task of repairing the house?
- A. It was futile.
  - B. It was overwhelming.
  - C. It required a high level of skill.
  - D. It required a great deal of work.
9. What is the purpose of the italics used in lines 26–29?
- A. to indicate speech
  - B. to provide emphasis
  - C. to serve as an epilogue
  - D. to foreshadow future events
10. Which statement best describes the character of the father?
- A. He has high expectations of his children.
  - B. He provides a good role model for his children.
  - C. He shows more caring for his house than his family.
  - D. He demonstrates his love for his family through his work.
11. Which literary device is primarily used in the poem?
- A. paradox
  - B. internal rhyme
  - C. personification
  - D. extended metaphor
12. Which word **best** describes the overall mood of the poem?
- A. solemn
  - B. regretful
  - C. nostalgic
  - D. whimsical
13. What is the form of the poem?
- A. ballad
  - B. sonnet
  - C. free verse
  - D. blank verse

## SYNTHESIS TEXT 2

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following excerpt from “The Gold Mountain Coat,” and answer the multiple-choice questions. For each question, select the **best** answer and record your choice on the **Answer Sheet** provided.

**The narrator remembers her childhood in small-town Ontario during the 1950s. “Gold Mountain” is the name by which many Chinese referred to North America.**

### The Gold Mountain Coat

by Judy Fong-Bates

- 1 The small town that was my home was typical of many small towns in Ontario. It had one main street, one elementary school, one district high school, and five churches – Presbyterian, Anglican, United, Roman Catholic, and a Dutch Reform Church on the edge of town.
- 2 The main street of our small town had a dime store that sold everything from *Evening in Paris* perfume to stationery and hammers. It also had a clothing store, a jewellery shop, a hardware store, a drugstore, a barber shop, and a restaurant that served Canadian food. And, typical of all small towns, it also had a Chinese restaurant and a Chinese hand laundry.
- 3 My father operated the hand laundry and the other Chinese family managed the Chinese restaurant. I was the only Chinese child in the town. When my family first arrived, the restaurant was run by two brothers and their father, Sam Sing. The floors were covered with old-fashioned black and red lino tiles laid out in a diamond checkerboard pattern. There was a shiny speckled Formica counter with stools of circular seats upholstered in vinyl, and rimmed with a wide band of shiny chrome. There hung from the ceiling, a huge, four-blade fan, that in the summer hovered and whirred – a huge humming dragonfly.
- 4 The proprietor, Sam Sing, stood behind the counter of his restaurant. He was a tall, straight-backed, grim-looking man with deep wrinkles cross-hatching his face. Sam rarely smiled, but when he did he showed a set of gold teeth that matched his gold-rimmed glasses. He rarely spoke, but when he did his voice had the raspy quality of sandpapers rubbing together.
- 5 There was nothing ingratiating about Sam. He glared at his customers from behind his glasses. In his presence, I was always struck speechless. I was afraid to return his gaze. I felt diminished and insignificant.
- 6 When I first met Sam Sing, he was already in his seventies; he had a head of thick, almost totally black hair parted at the side. He seemed robust and alert, and for a man his age he moved with amazing agility. My parents told me that Sam owed his exceptionally good health to drinking medicinal turtle soup. According to local legend, whenever Sam felt unwell, he asked a couple of local teenage boys to catch him a turtle from the nearby creek. Then followed hours of simmering to produce a clear, brown, pungent, tonic soup.

- 7 Sam was proud of the fact that he had fathered two sons who would carry on his business and his family name. In contrast to Sam's stern, imposing demeanour, his sons were round-faced, smooth-skinned, and smiling. They reminded me of bookends; they looked almost identical, except that one was very fair-skinned, while the other was very dark.
- 8 The brothers, Ken and John, were kind to me. I remember visiting the restaurant and frequently coming out with a double-scooped ice cream cone. Often the brothers came to visit my parents in the afternoon, during the quiet time between the lunch and supper hours in the restaurant. But Sam Sing never entered our house. His enterprise was prosperous, whereas ours was poor. Did he feel that we were beneath him? Or was it that we reminded him of earlier and more meagre times that were best forgotten?
- 9 What I remember most about Ken and John, though, was that in the winter they visited our house one at a time. Between them, they shared a single coat. It was a shapeless, black, wool garment. The pile was completely worn, the sleeves were permanently accordioned, the buttons were all mismatched, and the corners of the collar curled upwards. Occasionally, when the weather was not too severe, one brother would arrive at the laundry dressed in the coat. A half hour or so later the other brother would dash over wearing just a thin sweater over his white shirt. This made my mother laugh and she teased them about their excessive thrift.
- 10 For many years, Sam Sing and his sons lived contentedly in this bachelor existence. The sons each had a clearly defined role in the running of the restaurant and Sam presided over everything. Ken had come to Canada unmarried, but John had left his wife, son, and daughter back in China. After working through government channels for several years, John was finally given permission to bring his family over.
- 11 My mother often helped John compose his letters back to China. Whenever he received mail from home, he rushed over to share it with my parents. One day he showed me a picture, taken in a studio, of his wife, son, and daughter. The wife and daughter had freshly permed hairstyles parted at the side, revealing high broad foreheads. The son was dressed in too-large overalls, the bib almost touching his chin. The mother was sitting down with her hand resting on her son's shoulder, while the daughter, who was a few years older, stood slightly but noticeably apart. I looked at this picture and felt the solemnity of their stares. It seemed strange to me that John was really the father. His youth and exuberance were in such contrast to the personality of my own father, who was over sixty when I was born. My mother was pleased that I would at last have Chinese playmates. Although both my parents were proud that I had learned English so quickly, I knew they were concerned that I was becoming "too Canadian." John told me that I would be in charge of teaching his children English and taking them to school. As he spoke, the brown in his eyes took on a liquid quality and his eyebrows were arched so that dark vertical furrows appeared between them. Once more, I looked at the children in the photograph. Then I looked at John. Did he expect me to be friends with them? I was the only Chinese child in the town and since coming to Canada I had only played with *lo fon*<sup>1</sup> children. Did these children from China know about *Howdy Doody* and *Captain Kangaroo*<sup>2</sup>? What would I have to teach them besides English? I began to feel a weight on my chest.
- 12 When an arrival date for John's family was established, Sam permitted his sons to close the restaurant for a half-day. Both brothers were to go to the airport to greet the family from China. The brothers

---

<sup>1</sup> lo fon: *caucasian*

<sup>2</sup> Howdy Doody and Captain Kangaroo: *1950s children's TV shows*

recognized their father's generosity in giving them a half-day off. For five years, the restaurant had never been closed. However, there was one problem. It was winter and they had only the one coat to share between them. Both John and Ken realized that a new coat was a significant purchase, one that would have to have Sam's approval. As the arrival date of John's family drew nearer, and the temperatures grew colder, the need for a second coat was becoming urgent.

- 13 John and Ken discussed the purchase of a second coat from every angle. How could they convince the old man to part with enough money for a new coat? Timing was essential. After closing time, Ken and John always scurried around the restaurant. They swept and washed the floors, filled the glass sugar dispensers and the miniature china creamers, and cleaned up the dirty dishes. Meanwhile, Sam sat alone in the wooden booth at back of the restaurant. He carefully calculated the day's profits, his fingers flying over the rings of a black wooden abacus<sup>3</sup> brought many years ago from China. If the earnings were good, Sam invited his sons to share a glass of whisky. But if the earnings were poor, Sam drank alone and glowered at the wooden walls of the booth while his sons continued silently working. Naturally, John and Ken decided to approach Sam on a night the whisky was shared.
- 14 The day after his discussion with Ken, John came to visit my parents. Though I heard him chuckling as he confided to my mother about the logistics of the timing, every word was coated with resentment. At first he decided that Saturday should be the asking day. But then my mother pointed out that if permission to purchase was granted on a Saturday night, Sam might change his mind by the time stores opened on Monday. She convinced John that Friday was a better day. Business was usually good. And the stores were open on Saturday.
- 15 On the chosen Friday, John visited us late in the afternoon. The wind sounded particularly shrill that day as it sprayed blasts of white powdery snow over the sidewalks. When John walked into the laundry, he looked as if someone had dusted him with icing sugar. He seemed quite agitated. I remember hearing him speak with great determination. "In a few days my family will be here. We'll all be living upstairs. I will be the one responsible for them." He glanced at my mother who nodded in agreement. "I'm going to have to stand up to that old man. I carry all his money in my pocket." He patted the front pocket of his pants emphatically before continuing. "And I have to ask permission to spend it. What right does he have to object? I work hard. This isn't China. Things are different here." Again, my parents said very little. They mostly smiled and nodded reassuringly. Then John suddenly remembered, "Today is payday at the mill!" He smiled and exclaimed, "Today business will be good. Guaranteed!"
- 16 Just before he left, John walked over to the corner where I sat pretending to read a comic book. He patted me on the shoulder and grinned. "Not too much longer now." I looked up and smiled. John looked so happy. As I nodded I felt an ever so slight cramp in my stomach.
- 17 That Friday, after the restaurant closed, Sam counted his money, smiled, and invited his sons for a glass of whisky. This was the moment John had been waiting for. His father offered him a glass. He took a large, quick gulp. "Father, you know that my wife and family will be arriving on Wednesday. You have been generous enough to let Ken come with me to the airport to greet them." Sam nodded his head.

---

<sup>3</sup> abacus: *manual calculating device*

- 18 John continued, with Ken nervously looking on. “But, Father, we have only one coat. The weather is very cold. We need to buy another coat.”
- 19 Sam carefully set down his whisky glass. His face slowly hardened at the boldness of his son’s request. John was ready to panic but then Ken blurted out, “John’s son will need a coat for school. Your grandson cannot walk to school without a coat. A second one for us, one the boy can grow into.”
- 20 Sam’s face broke into a smile. His gold teeth gleamed. “Very good,” he said and finished his whisky. The brothers breathed a sigh of relief.
- 

14. Which word best describes the small town where the narrator grew up (paragraphs 1–3)?
- A. isolated
  - B. run-down
  - C. progressive
  - D. commonplace
15. Which literary device is used in paragraph 3?
- A. pathos
  - B. imagery
  - C. dilemma
  - D. hyperbole
16. Which phrase best expresses the narrator’s feeling about the arrival of “Chinese playmates”?
- A. uneasy about her new responsibility
  - B. unsure of her ability to teach English
  - C. reluctant to share the adults’ attention
  - D. embarrassed about her loss of traditional culture
17. Why do Ken and John choose Friday as the best day to ask their father’s permission to buy the coat (paragraph 14)?
- A. The business would be quiet.
  - B. The shops would be closed on Saturday.
  - C. The father would be working with the accounts.
  - D. The father would have little time to change his mind.

18. Why does Ken's argument convince his father to purchase a second coat?
- A. It appeals to his father's caring nature.
  - B. It appeals to his father's sense of practicality.
  - C. It reminds his father how hard the sons work.
  - D. It reminds his father of the harshness of an Ontario winter.
19. Which term best describes the narrator?
- A. generous
  - B. observant
  - C. dependent
  - D. unquestioning
20. What is the primary effect of the author's use of a small town setting?
- A. It develops internal conflict.
  - B. It develops a suspenseful mood.
  - C. It emphasizes the prejudice of the people in the town.
  - D. It emphasizes the uniqueness of the Chinese families.

**PART C: READING COMPREHENSION**  
**ANALYSIS OF SYNTHESIS TEXTS 1 AND 2**

**2 multiple-choice questions**  
**1 written-response question**  
**Value: 31%**

**Suggested Time: 35 minutes**

Multiple-choice questions 21 and 22 and written-response question 2 are based on the poem “Wordsmith” and the literary prose passage “The Gold Mountain Coat.”

21. What do the speaker in “Wordsmith” and the narrator in “The Gold Mountain Coat” have in common?
- A. They are grateful.
  - B. They are objective.
  - C. They are respectful.
  - D. They are protective.
22. Which word best describes the ending of “Wordsmith” and “The Gold Mountain Coat”?
- A. surprise
  - B. resolved
  - C. anti-climactic
  - D. indeterminate

You have **Examination Booklet Form A**. In the box above #1 on your **Answer Sheet**, ensure you filled in the bubble as follows.

Exam Booklet Form/ Cahier d'examen	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>						

**INSTRUCTIONS:** In a multi-paragraph (**3 or more paragraphs**) essay of at least **300 words**, answer question 2 in the **Response Booklet**. Write in **ink**. Use the **Organization and Planning** space to plan your work. The mark for your answer will be based on the appropriateness of the examples you use as well as the adequacy of your explanation and the quality of your written expression.

2. Contrast the relationships that the father in “Wordsmith” and Sam Sing in “The Gold Mountain Coat” have with their children. You must refer to **both** passages in your essay.

### **Organization and Planning**

Use this space to plan your ideas before writing in the **Response Booklet**.

**WRITING ON THIS PAGE WILL NOT BE MARKED**

**PART D: COMPOSITION**

**Suggested Time: 35 minutes**

**1 written-response question**  
**Value: 30%**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Using standard English, write in the **Response Booklet**, a coherent, unified, multi-paragraph (**3 or more paragraphs**) composition of at least **300 words** on the topic below. In your composition, you may apply any appropriate method of development including exposition, persuasion, description, and narration.

Use the **Organization and Planning** space to plan your work.

3. Write a multi-paragraph composition on the topic below. In addressing the topic, consider all possibilities. You may draw support from the experiences of others or from any aspect of your life: your reading and your experiences. You do not have to accept the basic premise of the topic.

**Topic:**

**Each generation has something valuable to offer.**

**Organization and Planning**

Use this space to plan your ideas before writing in the **Response Booklet**.

**WRITING ON THIS PAGE WILL NOT BE MARKED**

**END OF EXAMINATION**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fong-Bates, Judy. "The Gold Mountain Coat." From *China Dog and Other Tales from a Chinese Laundry*. Sister Vision. 1997.

Lang, Bonnie. "An Ode to the User-Friendly Pencil." *The Act of Writing: Canadian Essays for Composition*. 1990.

Young, Susan. "Wordsmith." *Chasing Halley's Comet*. Laughing Willow Books. 1995.

