

## SAMPLE PROVINCIAL EXAM QUESTIONS FOR PART C

This prose reading has been taken from the June 2002 Provincial Exam.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the following selection and answer the questions that follow.

### ADAPTED FROM TASEKO

by Christian Petersen

- 1 The rifles, in their leather scabbards, were placed behind the seat of the pickup. The boy's parents were talking quietly on the porch, while he waited with Lars in the truck. He was fidgety. At last, his father came down the steps, carrying his hunting boots, which shone with dubbin.<sup>11</sup> As they pulled out, Mother waved, especially to her boy it seemed. He almost wished she hadn't. Like Lars, he simply lifted his hand.
- 2 They drove several hours on the highway, tires whining on the dry, grey pavement, sunshine glinting on the hood, warm on the dash. The two men spoke about work. He listened to them, and to the fading radio, but most of his attention was on the land: growth lines dividing the spruce and aspens, rock ridge colours, cattail ponds and open grassy slopes. West of Lee's Corner was gravel road and dust. They crossed the Chilcotin River, then climbed higher up the Plateau. Now, on the crest of a hill, great reaches of country came into sight, vast dark stands of jackpine, and autumn wild meadows. It was largely untouched, except for occasional corrals or rail fences sketched into the distance.
- 3 Lars geared down as they neared a number of plain plywood houses. Long-travelled cars were parked under the trees, or already half-buried in the weeds. Children came close to the road to watch them pass. Lars waved, and the kids grinned and ran behind the pickup shouting. Past the houses was a pole corral holding a half dozen horses. A man stood inside the corral holding an open lariat. He did not turn to the road. The boys, perched on the fence, looked briefly, but then went back to watching the man with the rope and the horses. The boy in the pickup twisted in his seat, gazing back until they had rounded the next bend.
- 4 By late afternoon they were into the first folds of the Coast Range, following a river that was glacial green and laced with rapids. The road became two ruts worn in scant mountain turf. Lars pointed out a big blunt peak to the west, called Tatlow, that was sacred to the Tsilhqot'in people.
- 5 The men had a site in mind for a camp; from there they could cover two adjoining valleys. They stepped out of the truck into the bite of an icy wind. The boy's fingers numbed as he helped his father assemble their tent. As dusk crept quickly westward, the snow on the peaks and in the facial crevices retained the essence of the day's light.

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<sup>11</sup> dubbin: *waterproofing*

- 6 In the morning, frost clustered in the bunchgrass and the juniper needles, and clung in webs against the tires and fenders of the truck.
- 7 The boy was first up and made a fire with bone-white branches of pine. Then he dug the charred coffee pot out of the campbox and took it down to the creek. The boy dipped into the icy stream, then scooted back to his fire. He sat on his heels with his back to the warmth, hands tucked deep into his coat. A vibrant light rose above the mountains as the pine sticks snapped in the fire.
- 8 Lars always hunted alone. This trip he was after a goat, so he worked the higher ridges, sometimes crossing the patches of grainy snow that had lasted through summer at that altitude. He left early each morning, taking only rye bread and cheese for lunch, and did not return until dusk.
- 9 The boy and his father stayed below timberline most of the time, watching the game trails and meadows for moose or mule deer. They each carried their lunch and a Thermos. On a leather sling over one shoulder his father had an Enfield .303, with a long black scope. It was accurate at three hundred yards or more. The boy carried his own Winchester carbine. He was proud of the gun, careful not to scuff it in the brush, but leery with it too. Lightly he touched the cool lip of the trigger and the gnarled steel hammer end. They stopped often, to listen, waiting for movement in the woods.
- 10 Scanning, his binoculars in hand, the boy's father would point out their next route through alpine slopes and mossy rock-slides.
- 11 Each evening, his father and Lars spread the map on the tailgate and described the country they had crossed. Under a kerosene lamp hanging from the truck's canopy, the three of them prepared a meal. Afterward they settled close to the fire and Lars poured their tea. The boy cupped his hands around the hot drink, listening closely to the men's talk and quiet laughter. He was intently aware of when his father spoke. For a moment he did not recognize that voice, and he did not trust his own. Often, as if he heard something, he looked over his shoulder. Just there, beyond the firelight, was the wild, an absolute darkness.
- 12 After four days, they had seen no game. Any tracks or sign they found, seemed to be more than a week old, which puzzled Lars. He had hunted the region for years and had always known it to be rich with wildlife. But each day it grew colder and perhaps the animals had already moved west or south to lower valleys.
- 13 Lying in the tent one night, after his father was asleep, the boy heard a low, lasting howl, but the aged wolf may have been calling from the dark slope of a dream.
- 14 On the morning of the fifth day, there were two inches of snow on the ground and the boughs of the pines, and grey clouds were banked above the mountains, covering the peaks. Over breakfast, they had to make a decision. It was two hours by truck to the good road. If it began to snow again during the day, and continued for any time, they could have real trouble getting out. However, the snow would allow them to finally determine if there was any game around, and if there was today, it could be easily tracked. They chose to hunt one last day.

- 15 It was tough going. The snow on the dried grass made any incline slippery and for the first time, the boy had trouble keeping up. His boots chafed him. It was cold and he'd worn extra clothing, which now had him sweating. Perhaps his father had wanted to leave that morning; he seemed impatient. He looked gruff with five days of beard.
- 16 Not wanting to range too far in the uncertain weather, they checked benches and thickets they had covered on previous days. The boy's father hoped to get a deer. He recalled his own first hunting trip, and he wanted something like that for his son. The boy sensed this. For a time he shared his father's frustration. But that afternoon when they turned back for camp, the boy felt only relief.
- 17 A shot ripped the white valley.
- 18 When the boy started to speak, to ask—his father sharply raised a hand. The man's attention strained for the direction of the echo.
- 19 During those few taut moments—the gun's report gone, snow and wind rising, spirits moaning in the timber—in that time the boy first perceived his own unfolding solitude.
- 20 Another shot. His father headed towards the sound. The boy jogged behind, frightened now by the haste with which they broke through the brush. His father wanted to find Lars and help him dress the animal. They stopped in camp to gather some rope and an axe.
- 21 It was difficult to see the depth of ravines until they had plunged into them. Icy branches clawed at their clothing. Despite the pace their progress seemed slow and stubborn. Then his father stopped, motioned for the boy to be quiet, and called out to Lars. A shout from behind them startled the boy.
- 22 In a few minutes they discovered the hunter in a tiny matted clearing, a moose bed. Lars knelt close to the dead bull.
- 23 They cleaned the animal, and his father rigged a rope harness around it. They had to get the meat to camp that night.
- 24 The boy looked over at the long head of the moose. When Lars removed the rack, the boy winced. Lars held them a moment, and then handed them to the boy. The men took up the ropes on the sides of glistening meat. The boy shouldered the rack and followed them through the darkness.

1. Why, in paragraph 1, is the boy fidgety while waiting in the truck?  
A. He is angry  
B. He is excited.  
C. His father is ill  
D. His father is unprepared
  
2. What does the line "...rock ridge colours, cattail ponds and open grassy slopes" (paragraph 2) contain?  
A. rhyme  
B. assonance  
C. dissonance  
D. onomatopoeia
  
3. Why is Mt. Tatlow (paragraph 4) important to the Tsilhqot'in people?  
A. It is blunt.  
B. It is sacred.  
C. It is glacial.  
D. It is scarred.
  
4. What example does the phrase "into the bite of an icy wind" (paragraph 5) contain?  
A. allusion  
B. symbolism  
C. synecdoche  
D. personification
  
5. According to paragraph 9, what attitude does the boy display towards his gun on this, his first hunting trip?  
A. fear  
B. disgust  
C. respect  
D. affection
  
6. In paragraph 14, after four unsuccessful days of hunting, what do the hunters realize after the snow?  
A. It will end the hunt.  
B. It will help the hunt.  
C. It will trap the hunters  
D. It will cover the animals' tracks.
  
7. What does the phrase "unfolding solitude" suggest about the boy? (paragraph 19)  
A. He is feeling angry.  
B. He needs to be warm.  
C. He is afraid of being shot.  
D. He has a sense of separation from the others.
  
8. What slows the hunters' progress? (paragraph 21)  
A. The icy branches.  
B. The rocky terrain.  
C. The rushing water.  
D. The heavy clothing.
  
9. What word best describes the boy's character?  
A. flat  
B. stock  
C. static  
D. dynamic

## SOLUTIONS FOR SAMPLE PROVINCIAL EXAM QUESTIONS – PART C

1. B.

In paragraph 1, nothing is said about why the boy is fidgety while he is waiting in the truck. We must infer (decide from evidence) the reason.

The boy is going on a hunting trip with his father and another man, presumably a friend. Everything is ready, but his father is talking to his wife, the boy's mother, on the porch. Then the father joins his son and the friend.

- A. Incorrect. There is no reason to infer that the boy is angry.
- B. Correct. There is plenty of reason to infer that the boy is excited about going hunting. Excitement would be a natural and expected response.
- C. Incorrect. There is no suggestion that his father is ill.
- D. Incorrect. There is no reason to think that his father is unprepared. The father does carry his boots to the truck, but that is because they are oily with dubbin and he would want to keep them away from his other gear.

2. B.

The line *rock ridge colours, cattail ponds and open grassy slopes* contains examples of a poetic device. Notice that the question states that the line contains **examples**. You will find more than one example of the poetic device.

- A. Incorrect. *Rhyme* is the repetition of the same sounds. Syllables, entire words, or groups of words can rhyme. As a rule, rhyme consists of the last *stressed* vowel and all the sounds after it. (*infernal, eternal; laughter, rafter; ring for him; sing for him*). Rhyme is usually found at the end of a line of poetry, but sometimes it occurs within the line (*internal rhyme*). There is no rhyme in the line.
- B. Correct. *Assonance* is like rhyme, but only the repeated vowels are the same or almost the same. (*load, loan; mess, lend*).

*Rock ridge colours, cattail ponds and open grassy slopes* contains two examples of assonance. These two examples repeat different sounds of the same vowel. (A second form of assonance is called *half rhyme*. Consonants match, but vowels do not (*tin, tan; stake, stick*). Some poems use half rhyme in place of full rhyme.)

- C. Incorrect. *Dissonance* is the use of discordant or unpleasant sounds. There are no unpleasant sounds in the line.
- D. Incorrect. *Onomatopoeia* is the use of words that suggest the sound of the thing they describe. Tennyson's *murmuring of innumerable bees* imitates (through the use of assonance) the sound of many distant bees buzzing. (The last sentence contains a second example of onomatopoeia; Tennyson's is better) The line in the question does not contain onomatopoeia.

3. B.

When you are directed to a paragraph, then the best approach is to reread the paragraph, and perhaps the paragraph before and after it. However, in this case, only the paragraph itself is needed to answer the question.

By late afternoon they were into the first folds of the Coast Range, following a river that was **glacial** green and laced with rapids. The road became two ruts worn in scant mountain turf. Lars pointed out a big **blunt** peak to the west, called Tatlow, that was **sacred** to the Tsilhqot'in people.

Blunt (A) describes the shape of Mt. Tatlow; it does not explain why it is important to the Tsilhqot'in. Glacial (C) has nothing to do with the mountain; it describes the river. Scarred (D) is not mentioned in the paragraph or anywhere in the selection.

- B. The answer is straightforward. Mt. Tatlow is important to the Tsilhqot'in because they consider it to be sacred.

4. D.

In paragraph 5, the phrase "into the bite of an icy wind" is an example of a figure of speech.

- A. Incorrect. An *allusion* is an indirect reference to something. In literature, allusions to classical mythology, the Bible, other literature, and history are common.
- B. Incorrect. Symbolism is the use of a symbol, something that either by convention (general agreement) or by some association, represents something else. *The maple leaf is a symbol of Canada.* (Notice that a symbol can be a lot like metonymy.) *In mathematics, x is a symbol for an unknown quantity.* In literature, symbols are sometimes invented by the author for a particular purpose.
- C. Incorrect. *Synecdoche* is the use of part of something to stand for the whole thing. *Many hands make light work.* In this old proverb, a part—hands—stands for the whole—workers. Note how synecdoche is different from symbolism. Hands do not *symbolize* the workers, they *are* the workers.
- D. Correct. *Personification* is the attribution of human or living characteristics to non-human or to inanimate things. The wind does not have teeth; the attribution is metaphorical. This kind of metaphor is called personification.

5. C.

This kind of question depends on inference (judgement based on evidence). Lines from paragraph 9 make the boy's attitude to his rifle clear.

*The boy carried his own Winchester carbine. He was proud of the gun, careful not to scuff it in the brush, but leery with it too. Lightly, he touched the cool lip of the trigger and the gnarled steel hammer end.*

The boy is proud of his gun and leery (careful, wary) of it. He carefully touches the trigger (only the lip of it) and the hammer.

- A. Incorrect. The boy is proud and careful. There is no evidence that would indicate *fear*.
- B. Incorrect. *Disgust* means strong dislike or revulsion. The boy is proud of his rifle and he looks after it. He cannot be disgusted as well.
- C. Correct. Since the boy is proud and wary, and he is careful of the trigger and hammer (the parts of the firing mechanism that the shooter handles directly), we can tell that he feels *respect* for his rifle. Remember that *respect* has several meanings. It can mean admiration or honour. You respect a hero who saves someone's life. It can mean consideration or politeness. (As far as possible, you treat everyone with respect.) It can also mean watchful care. (Always handle power tools with respect.)
- D. Incorrect. *Affection* is an active liking that suggests warmth and tenderness. You do not generally display affection for tools and other inanimate objects.

6. B.

This kind of comprehension question requires close reading. All of the answers are plausible, and three of them are correct to some degree. Which one is the **best** answer?

In paragraph 14, the hunters realize that the snow will affect them in some way.

Over breakfast, they had to make a decision. It was two hours by truck to the good road. If it began to snow again during the day, and continued for any time, they could have real trouble getting out.

However, the snow would allow them to finally determine if there was any game around, and if there was, today it could be easily tracked. They chose to hunt one last day.

- A. Incorrect. Because of the snow, the hunters have to make a decision. Since they decide to hunt one last day, then the other choice was to end the hunt. The snow could end the hunt.
- B. Correct. Because the snow would allow them to find game and track it, the snow could also help the hunt. Because of this, they stay for one more day. The hunters' choice makes it clear that the chance of finding game is the most important result of the snowfall.
- C. Incorrect. It is plausible that the snow could cover tracks, but the only tracks they had seen so far were old (paragraph 12). Covering tracks is not mentioned in paragraph 14, but the fact that snow would make the following of fresh tracks easy is mentioned.
- D. Incorrect. Although falling snow covers animal tracks, snow that has already fallen allows hunters to find and hunt game with greater ease.

7. D.

The phrase "unfolding solitude" (paragraph 19) is best understood in the context of the whole selection.

- A. Incorrect. Without clear evidence, we cannot say the boy is feeling anger. Loneliness would be the most likely feeling to arise from solitude.
- B. Incorrect. The only reference to warmth on that day is found in paragraph 15. The boy is wearing extra clothes and as a result he is overheated. There is no mention of him cooling down during the rest of the day.
- C. Incorrect. In paragraph 9, we see that the boy knows how to handle his rifle carefully. We may infer that he has been taught by his father and that his father is also careful. Thus the boy would have the confidence that comes from knowledge. There is also no mention or suggestion that the boy is afraid of being shot.
- D. Correct. In paragraph 19, the boy first perceives (sees, realizes, understands) his solitude.

Earlier in this selection the writer has hinted at the boy's growing uneasiness. In paragraph 11, he does not recognize his father's voice and he does not trust himself to speak. He keeps looking over his shoulder and he feels the wild and the darkness at his back. The aged wolf in paragraph 13 may not be real, it may be howling in a dark dream. In paragraphs 15 and 16 he is uncomfortable and hot, and his father is impatient.

The boy feels his father's frustration—but when they turn toward camp (meaning their hunt is over) he is relieved. In several paragraphs, he listens to the men speaking, but nowhere does he himself speak. The boy is feeling uneasy. He is relieved when he thinks the hunt is over. Considering all this and remembering that solitude means being alone, you can decide that *unfolding solitude* means *sense of separation*.

8. A.

This question can be answered by simply rereading paragraph 21.

It was difficult to see the depth of ravines until they had plunged into them. Icy branches clawed at their clothing. Despite the pace their progress seemed slow and stubborn. Then his father stopped, motioned for the boy to be quiet, and called out to Lars. A shout from behind them startled the boy.

A. Icy branches clawing at their clothing makes their progress difficult.

Rocky terrain (B) is not mentioned. (The ravines need not be rocky.) Rushing water (C) is not mentioned, nor is heavy clothing (D).

9. D.

This question is about *characterization*, the way that characters are presented in works of fiction.

- A. Incorrect. *Flat* characters are simple and easy to understand, and could be described in a sentence. Minor characters are often flat because there is not enough time or space in a story to develop them.
- B. Incorrect. *Stock* characters are like flat characters, but they are familiar stereotypes that have been used over and over. The hard-boiled detective, the ugly-duckling-who-will-become-a-swan, and the smart-aleck sidekick are common examples. Stock characters can be useful in certain kinds of stories.
- C. Incorrect. *Static* characters do not change. This need not be a bad thing. The point of a story may be that a character cannot or will not change.
- D. Correct. *Dynamic* characters change. Since the boy in paragraph 1 is fidgeting with excitement about the hunt and in paragraph 19 realizes his unfolding solitude, he is a dynamic character.