SOUTH DAKOTA ENGLISH 11 · UNIT 1

American Literature — Practice Test

South Dakota English 11 • 25 questions

This practice test was made by AI and there may be mistakes. If a question or answer looks wrong, use the Flag a mistake button to let Brett know so he can fix it.

Source I - The River Road

Use this reading for questions 1 to 6.

When June turned sixteen, her grandmother gave her a tin box of letters written by June's great grandmother, a schoolteacher who had traveled by riverboat to a small South Dakota town in 1912 to open a school for children who worked in the cotton fields after school hours. The letters described long days, a leaky roof, and students who arrived tired but eager to learn to read.

At first June read the letters out of curiosity. Soon she noticed a pattern. Whenever the school lost funding, or a storm damaged the building, her great grandmother found another way to keep teaching. She held lessons under a shade tree, borrowed books from a church, and asked older students to help the younger ones. She never wrote about giving up, even when the work was hard.

By the last letter, June understood why her grandmother had saved the box. The letters were not only a family record. They were proof that one determined teacher could change the lives of many children. That summer June began volunteering at a tutoring center in her own town, carrying the tin box in her mind like a compass pointing toward work that mattered.

1 **According to Source I, what is the main idea of the passage?**

- **A** June moves to a new town and opens a school for children who work in the fields.
- **B** June learns to repair a leaky roof and to travel by riverboat across South Dakota.
- **C** June writes letters to her grandmother about her summer at a tutoring center.
- **D** June discovers her great grandmother's determination as a teacher and is inspired to help others learn.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

2 **According to Source I, how did June's great grandmother travel to the small South Dakota town?**

A By wagon

B By riverboat

C By train

D On horseback

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

3 **According to Source I, which word best describes June's great grandmother?**

A Careless

B Fearful

C Determined

D Impatient

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

4 **According to Source I, what does the tin box of letters symbolize?**

A Wealth earned from cotton farming

B A connection to family history and values

C The danger of traveling by riverboat

D A secret about the school funding

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

5 **According to Source I, why did June's grandmother most likely save the tin box?**

A Because the letters were valuable antiques

B Because she wanted June to understand the family legacy of teaching

C Because the school needed the letters for funding

D Because June had asked for old photographs

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

6 **Which theme is best supported by Source I?**

A Young people should avoid difficult work.

B Families should keep secrets from children.

C Education can change lives even when obstacles are great.

D Travel is the best way to learn about history.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

Source II - October in the Hollow

Use this reading for questions 7 to 11.

Stanza 1: The hollow holds its breath in October, and gold leaves drift down to the creek like slow rain. The air smells of woodsmoke and apples, and the hills stand quiet beneath a pale morning sky.

Stanza 2: The creek runs clear and cold over stones, and a heron watches from the bank without moving. The water remembers summer in its shallow pools, but the wind already speaks of winter to come.

Stanza 3: On the porch my grandmother shells beans into a tin pan, and her stories rise like smoke from the chimney. She tells of winters when the road closed and neighbors shared what little they had.

Stanza 4: The year turns, as years always turn, but the hollow keeps its roots deep in the dark soil. What the seasons take, memory returns, and home remains long after the leaves have gone.

7 **How many stanzas does the poem in Source II have?**

ANSWER _____

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

8 **In Source II, the image of gold leaves drifting down to the creek appeals most to which sense?**

- A Sight
- B Smell
- C Taste
- D Touch

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

9 **Which word best describes the tone of the speaker in Source II?**

- A Angry
- B Reflective
- C Humorous
- D Suspicious

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

10 **In Source II, the line about roots deep in the dark soil most likely represents what?**

- **A** The danger of winter storms
- **B** The lasting strength of home and memory
- **C** The wealth of the hollow
- **D** The speed of the changing seasons

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

11 **Which theme is best supported by Source II?**

- **A** People should leave home to find success.
- **B** Winter always destroys what summer builds.
- **C** Neighbors should avoid sharing what they have.
- **D** Seasons change, but home and memory endure.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

12 **Transcendentalist writers in American literature most often believed which idea?**

A Truth is found only in ancient texts.

B Nature and individual intuition can reveal deep truth.

C Cities are the only source of wisdom.

D People should obey tradition without question.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

13 **The Harlem Renaissance is best described as what?**

A A political movement in colonial America

B A flourishing of African American art and literature in the 1920s

C A style of frontier poetry in the 1800s

D A group of Puritan sermons

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

14 **An unreliable narrator is a narrator who does what?**

A Cannot be fully trusted because of bias, youth, or limited knowledge

B Tells the story in strict chronological order

C Speaks only in dialogue

D Never appears in the story

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

15 **In literature, symbolism is best defined as what?**

A The repetition of a sound at the start of words

B A direct comparison using like or as

C The exact dictionary meaning of a word

D The use of an object or image to represent a larger idea

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

16 **Irony occurs when what happens?**

A A story ends happily for every character.

B The author repeats a phrase for emphasis.

C The outcome is the opposite of what was expected.

D Two characters speak at the same time.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

17 **In The Great Gatsby, the green light at the end of Daisy's dock most often symbolizes what?**

A Gatsby's wealth and parties

B Gatsby's hopes and dreams for the future

C The danger of sailing at night

D The growth of American industry

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

18 **Puritan writing in early America is best known for which style and focus?**

A A musical style focused on dancing

B A plain style focused on spiritual matters

C A playful style focused on romance

D A scientific style focused on inventions

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

19 **American Romantic writers most valued which of the following?**

A Emotion, imagination, and nature over cold reason and industry

B Strict rules for grammar and spelling

C The growth of factories and cities

D The study of ancient languages

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

20 **Realism in American literature is best described as what?**

A Stories that depict ordinary life accurately and honestly

B Stories that feature magic and mythical creatures

C Poems written only in strict rhyme

D Plays performed without any setting

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

21 **Modernist American writers often used which technique?**

A Long sermons that teach a single moral

B A fragmented structure that reflects uncertainty and change

C Simple plots with no conflict at all

D Stories told only by animals

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

22 **An allusion is best defined as what?**

A A reference to another work, event, or famous figure

B A long speech by a single character

C A list of sources at the end of a book

D A drawing included in a novel

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

23 **Dialect in a story most often refers to what?**

A The speech patterns of a particular region or group

B The use of formal language by every character

C The silence between scenes in a play

D A foreign language with no translation

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

24 **What is the difference between a topic and a theme?**

- **A** A topic is always a full sentence, while a theme is one word.
- **B** A topic is a subject, while a theme is a message about that subject.
- **C** A topic is the setting, while a theme is the plot.
- **D** There is no difference between them.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

25 **First person point of view most often has which effect on a reader?**

- **A** The reader sees events only through the narrator's limited knowledge.
- **B** The reader knows the thoughts of every character.
- **C** The reader never learns the narrator's name.
- **D** The reader controls how the story ends.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

ANSWER KEY

1. D
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. 4
8. A
9. B
10. B
11. D
12. B
13. B
14. A
15. D
16. C
17. B
18. B
19. A
20. A
21. B
22. A
23. A
24. B
25. A

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.