Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Pygmalion

by George Bernard Shaw

Written by Priscilla Beth Baker

ISBN 978-1-935468-36-3
Item No. 308639

Pygmalion

Objectives

By the end of the Unit, the student will be able to:

1. explain the significance of the play's title.
2. analyze the use of both representational and presentational techniques in the play.
3. analyze and explain the function of the epilogue, prologue, and detailed stage directions.
4. analyze the use of humor, sarcasm, coincidence, and irony in the play.
5. analyze the use of allusion in the play.
6. discuss the function of language and dialect in the play.
7. examine the impact of the social and political issues present in the play on plot, character, and theme.
8. discuss prominent themes in the play.
9. explain the relevance and the meaning of the symbols and motifs present in the play.
10. explain the effects of the literary and rhetorical devices used in the play.
11. discuss the functions of the minor characters in the play.
12. evaluate the play as a didactic piece of literature.
13. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
14. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.

Introductory Lecture

George Bernard Shaw was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1856 to George Carr Shaw, a civil servant and later an unsuccessful merchant, and Lucinda Gurley Shaw, a professional singer and music teacher. It is from his father that Shaw inherited his comic gift for satire and from his mother that he developed a lifelong passion for classical music and opera.

Shaw briefly attended numerous schools, both public and private, but insisted that formal education was a complete waste of time and that he had learned nothing during his years in the classroom. He is famously quoted as saying, "Schools and schoolmasters, as we have them today, are not popular as places of education and teachers, but rather prisons and turnkeys in which children are kept to prevent the disturbing and chaperoning of their parents." An independent, deeply self-motivated thinker, Shaw saw no reason to continue his studies within the confines of such a regimented environment that so stifles intellectual curiosity and the human spirit.

When he was 16 years old, his mother followed her voice teacher, George Vandeleur, to London with his two sisters. Shaw elected to stay in Dublin with his father and worked for several years as a clerk in an estate office. Resolved to become a professional writer, Shaw then moved to London to join his mother in 1876. With his mother's financial support, he worked solely on his writing career and wrote five novels between 1879 and 1883. However, none of the novels proved nearly as successful as his later plays eventually would. All five were rejected by publishers.

Shaw eventually supported his writing endeavors by becoming an arts critic, ghostwriting Vandeleur's music column and reviewing drama, art, and music for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Dramatic Review*, *Our Corner*, and the *Saturday Review*. His work was well-respected and he was able to make a lucrative living as a writer.

Of major credit to Shaw was the result of his critique of the practice of editing Shakespeare's plays to create "acting versions." Though a tradition for two-hundred years, Shaw's scathing public denouncement of this practice led to its abolishment in the theater community.

Also of particular note is Shaw's influence in bringing another fellow author to London's forefront: Henrik Ibsen. Initially rejected as a "muck-ferreting dog" by a theater-going community who only embraced romance and melodrama as appropriate subject matter, Ibsen eventually became a renowned playwright in his own right through Shaw's public championing of his work.

Shaw recognized that Ibsen was both a philosopher and a social critic, and these qualities heavily influenced his work as he developed characters who struggled with moral dilemmas and challenged social mores. Many of Shaw's own works were similarly informed. He made his plays a forum for considering moral, political and economic issues, possibly his most lasting and important contribution to dramatic art.

First performed in the 1890s, Shaw's plays established him as an important playwright by the end of the decade. He would write 63 plays by the end of his career, in addition to his novels, his political, social and economic essays, and his continued work as a critic of the arts. *Pygmalion*, published in 1912, is by far his most celebrated and popular work. Made into several films and the musical adaptation *My Fair Lady*, *Pygmalion* made Shaw the first and only man ever to win both the Nobel Peace Prize for literature and an Academy Award. Both the play and musical version are still performed with raving success today.

Shaw died at the age of 94 in 1950, a celebrated writer and social activist. A fitting tribute to his life can be seen in his own words, spoken in reference to *Macbeth*:

> "I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' for me. It is a sort of splendid torch, which I have got hold of for the moment; and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

Sources of Pygmalion

THE TITLE

The title of the play references the mythological story of Pygmalion, specifically the version of this story contained in Book X of the Roman poet Ovid's epic poem *Metamorphoses*.

The Pygmalion myth, briefly summarized:

> Pygmalion is a Cypriot sculptor who disdains all women because he sees them as essentially wicked. He decides to sculpt a beautiful woman out of stone, and the completed work of art is apparently more beautiful than any woman Nature could create.
>
> On the festival day of Aphrodite (the Greek goddess of love, beauty, and sexuality), Pygmalion makes an offering to Aphrodite and prays that his work of art be transformed into a real woman. When he returns home, he finds that Cupid, sent by Aphrodite, has kissed the hand of the sculpture and brought it to life.
>
> Pygmalion, overwhelmed that his wish has been granted, immediately marries the statue and names her Galatea.

The basic story of Pygmalion has been replicated and transformed countless times in novels, plays, short stories, art, music, dance, opera, and paintings.

THE PREMISE

The story of *Pygmalion* draws its source not only from the Pygmalion myth but also from the legend of *The King and the Beggar-Maid*, a medieval romance which recounts the legend of Prince Cophetua and his love for the beggar-girl Penelophon.

A brief summary of *The King and the Beggar-Maid*:

> Cophetua, an African king, is not sexually attracted to women. One day, he looks out a palace window and sees a young, ill-clothed beggar girl, Penelophon. Despite his former disdain for women, he falls in love instantly. He decides that he will kill himself unless Penelophon consents to marry him.
>
> Cophetua goes out into the streets and asks Penelophon to be his wife. Penelophon agrees, and they marry. Soon, Penelophon ceases at all to resemble, in appearance and in manners, the beggar girl she once was, quickly adapting to her new role as a refined, genteel lady of the court.

The Romance Controversy

It is this story, *The King and the Beggar-Maid*, combined with the modern-day retelling of the Pygmalion myth, which inspire George Bernard Shaw's work. Both of these works are rooted deeply in romance—Cophetua falls in love at first sight and Pygmalion creates his perfect love.

It is no wonder that, given the play's roots, audiences consistently expect Higgins and Eliza to become romantically entangled throughout the course of the play. Even given all evidence to the contrary right up until the end of Act V, people still read romance into the work, a fact which prompts Shaw to condemn his audience and readers in the Epilogue:

> The rest of the story need not be shown in action, and indeed, could hardly need retelling if our imaginations were not so enfeebled by their lazy dependence on the ready-mades and reach-me-downs of the ragshop in which Romance keeps its stock of 'happy endings' to misfit all stories… people in all directions have assumed, for no other reason than that she became the heroine of a romance, that she must have married the hero of it. This is unbearable.

Though the author himself claims there is no room for misinterpretation, for the contemplative reader, it could be argued that there is evidence in the play which both suggests and refutes romantic feelings between Higgins and Eliza.

In the case of Higgins, most of the evidence suggests a possessive detachment towards Eliza rather than any romantic feelings. Higgins briefly thinks Doolittle might take Eliza away and reminds her father that "she doesn't belong to him" and that he paid five pounds for her. Higgins seems to think in terms of owning and creating her rather than as a person with emotional needs. He does seem marginally jealous when Eliza announces her intent to marry Freddy Hill, but as the conversation progresses, it is clear that he does not care <u>if</u> she marries, he just cares <u>who</u> she marries and if the person is an appropriate choice. One detail which might suggest a genuine attachment is when Higgins refers to missing her soul in Act V: "Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you." Students might recall that Higgins also refers to her soul in Act III as being "the quaintest of the lot."

Eliza is extremely concerned with the fact that Higgins doesn't appear to notice or care about her enough, has an almost constant need to garner his approval (exceedingly so in Act IV), and looks frantically for the ring Higgins had given her. All of these facts might lead the reader to believe that she is romantically interested in him and this is, perhaps, far easier for the reader to embrace than is the prospect of Higgins's affection. However, Eliza makes it clear at the closing of Act V that infatuation is "not the sort of feeling I want from you," that she merely wants "a little kindness." Whether readers believe what she is saying or not depends upon their interpretation of these details and whether or not they think that Eliza's word is to be taken at face value.

Students will need to determine whether they believe the author's own claim that romantic inclinations are nonexistent in his play. This could be the basis for an interesting discussion regarding what we as readers impose on a work versus what is actually there.

Shaw's Socialist Influences

Deeply influenced by his extensive reading of economics and social theory, Shaw became a dedicated socialist supporter and a charter member of the **Fabian Society**, a middle-class organization founded in 1884 to promote the gradual spread of socialism through peaceful measures.

The basic tenets of socialism are that it:

- is both an economic and a political theory
- advocates public or common ownership and management of both the means of production and the allocation of resources
- is organized on the basis of equal power-relations and self-management
- strives for a reduction or elimination of hierarchical administration

THE FABIAN SOCIETY

Immediately upon its inception, the Fabian Society attracted many leading societal figures in London who were drawn to the socialist cause, including Shaw, H.G. Wells, Annie Besant, Edith Nesbit, Sydney Olivier, Virginia Woolf, and Bertrand Russell.

In 1900, Shaw, aided by the input of 150 Fabian members, drafted *Fabianism and the Empire*, the first statement of the Society's views on foreign affairs.

The major reforms which the Fabian Society addressed were:

- cooperative ownership of both capital and land
- the introduction of a minimum wage
- the creation of a universal health care system
- the abolition of the heredity of titles in the House of Lords through birth
- the formation of the Labor Party in 1900

As well as his plays, novels, and artistic criticism, Shaw wrote political treatises, such as *Fabian Essays in Socialism* and *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, a 495-page book detailing all aspects of socialistic theory as Shaw interpreted it.

Shaw contended that each of the social classes strove to serve its own ends. The upper and middle classes reigned successful in their struggles while the working class perpetually lost due to the greed of their employers, impoverished living conditions, ignorance, and apathy.

Students can see evidence of Shaw's socialist leanings in *Pygmalion*, particularly in the character of Henry Higgins and his attitude towards manners with reference to social equality.

In Act V, Higgins states:

> The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another … The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better.

Higgins maintains that he is not a snob but treats all people of different classes exactly the same, and in so doing, causes social status to disappear. Students will likely be of strong split opinions on this point and there is evidence both for and against Higgins as a socialist. Although his day-to-day dealings with people might indicate behavioral equality, his attitude towards Eliza does provide extensive evidence to the contrary.

Shaw and the Role of Didactic Literature

Didacticism, a word with Greek origins meaning "related to education or teaching," is an artistic philosophy which emphasizes both instructional and informative qualities in literature and other forms of art. The primary function of didactic art is then not to entertain but to teach.

The term is also often used in reference to a work fraught with excessive instruction or facts meant to educate but which ultimately deters the audience from any enjoyment.

Throughout the history of the arts, artists have used various genres as vehicles for instruction, sometimes subtly and sometimes exceedingly heavy-handed. Genres include all branches of literature—particularly children's literature, parables, fables, allegories, and plays—films, opera and art.

Shaw sees the artist's role as that of a teacher who makes his or her work "intensely and deliberately didactic." For those who argue that art should never be didactic, Shaw maintains that art should never be anything else. The author often uses the preface to his plays as an extension of or introduction to the lessons he purports in his works.

SHAW'S USE OF THE PREFACE

Most of Shaw's plays come with lengthy prefaces and are, comically, often longer than the plays themselves. The author uses the opportunity the preface presents to expound on his opinion of the issues raised in the play, often rather than addressing the play itself.

He views the preface, as well as the play as a whole, as a way to further his humanitarian and political agenda. Interestingly, audiences tend to ignore his intended messages and enjoy the play purely as entertainment because of the lively comedy present in so many of his plays. Shaw was keenly aware of this fact which may explain his compulsion to provide his readers with a more viable form of didacticism: the preface.

In the preface to *Pygmalion*, Shaw addresses the role of phonetics and language in English society, saying that "English is not accessible even to Englishmen." He maintains that there are so many varied dialects in England that even the English often cannot understand one another. Shaw says that they have no respect for the language, they don't teach their children to speak properly, and that they spell so poorly that no one could possibly teach himself how to speak by reading. By way of social commentary, Shaw further states that "it is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him." Because social standing is a function of language, the English form an immediate judgmental impression based on the dialect people speak. This is the fundamental premise of the play.

DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE IN THE PLAY

Students should be reminded of the inherent differences between seeing a play and reading a play—both in general terms and how that specifically applies to *Pygmalion*.

There are two techniques of dramatic storytelling: **presentational** and **representational**. Presentational storytelling acknowledges the viewer in some way, whether through puns or asides or information about the plot presented by an actor on stage. The representational style never breaks the fourth wall; it is self-contained.

The acting in *Pygmalion* is all representational; the audience really isn't considered or acknowledged. However, Shaw directly addresses his reader in the preface and epilogue, and he certainly explains some characteristics of various characters in his stage directions.

The question students need to ask themselves is: *Why* would Shaw directly address his reader in this manner but not his audience? The answer may perhaps be found in Shaw's view towards art as a didactic medium. If the goal of the play is to teach, then Shaw accomplishes this with both the audience and the reader in different ways. The audience is taught through representational storytelling and the reader through presentational storytelling.

Students should reflect, then, on both what is gained and what is lost when reading the play rather than viewing it.

Themes

APPEARANCE VERSUS REALITY

The theme of appearance versus reality is predominant throughout the play and encompasses numerous characters and situations. Eliza, though she appears wealthy and refined and speaks with great precision, cannot disguise who she is because of what she says. Mrs. Eynsford Hill, though she attends at-homes and struggles to appear of the genteel class, actually has no money. Clara, though she believes herself to be sophisticated and "up to date," is totally unaware of how foolish she actually looks. And Higgins, though a scholar with an irreproachable reputation in his field, has no manners himself.

Alfred Doolittle, Eliza's father, exemplifies this theme. The most telling detail presented by the author prior to Doolittle's entrance is the phrase "his present pose," suggesting that the "wounded honor" and "stern resolution" are actually a manufactured farce; we find this to be entirely true in the subsequent scene. Readers would expect an irate, protective father coming to his daughter's rescue, but the reality is just the opposite. It is clear in the scene that follows that Eliza and her father have no relationship at all and that he is only there to bribe Higgins for a mere pittance so he and "the missus" can go on a drinking spree.

For the Eynsford Hills not even to recognize Eliza as the dirty, lowborn flower girl they met in Act I, the contrast in her appearance and speech from Act I to Act III must be suitably dramatic. She is "exquisitely dressed" and "produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty" that they are all awestruck by her presence. Though her outward appearance and speech have radically changed, Eliza still retains remnants of her former self. However confident she appears to be in her new role, she is still insecure about her romantic prospects with men. When Freddy, clearly infatuated, attempts to ask her to go for a walk with him, she does not even recognize it as an invitation. And the content of her tale regarding her aunt's health reminds the reader that her exterior is merely a façade attempting to conceal her vulgar tendencies.

FEMINISM

Another principal theme in the play is feminism and the role of women; this theme is revealed mostly through the character of Henry Higgins.

Pickering questions Higgins as to whether or not he is "a man of good character where women are concerned" because he has seen much evidence to the contrary in Higgins's dealings with Eliza.

Higgins finds women difficult, jealous, exacting, and suspicious and feels that his behavior is selfish and tyrannical when he tries to be friends with a woman. He believes that women upset everything and prevent him from reaching his own goals. Higgins proclaims himself "a confirmed old bachelor, and likely to remain so."

He claims that all women other than his mother are "idiots." He safely puts his mother on a pedestal as the ideal woman, knowing that no woman will ever measure up. His experiment with Eliza is, in some sense, a test of his ability to create the ideal woman without the emotional attachment present with his mother.

He finds Eliza "useful" because she knows where his things are, remembers appointments, and can entertain him and Pickering with her astounding mimicry and music. Mrs. Higgins grows increasingly more frustrated with her son, and with Pickering, in Act III because they treat Eliza like a "live doll"—a plaything to be discarded. Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Pearce represent Eliza's feminist interests, though their assertions fall on the deaf ears of the "two infinitely stupid male creatures." The act closes with the men trailing after their work of art as Mrs. Higgins exclaims "Oh men! men!! men!!!"

Perhaps the most condescending of Higgins's misogynistic comments is when he says to Eliza, "You go to bed like a good girl and sleep it off. Have a little cry and say your prayers: that will make you comfortable." His patronizing delivery only serves to further invoke her wrath. She caustically asserts that becoming a "lady" has meant that she is now qualified only to sell herself instead of flowers and wishes he had left her alone.

CLASS DISTINCTION AND MANNERS

Higgins, having committed to his task of producing a true lady, begins calling Liza "Eliza" as the first step towards his goal. He knows that names hold great meaning in terms of class and status and that Eliza is a far more refined and distinguished name than Liza, which is a lower-class nickname.

Higgins tells Eliza that she may only discuss the weather and everybody's health. These are "safe" topics which present no opportunity to assert opinions or cause conflict, thus supporting Higgins's belief that members of the upper class care only to discuss superficial matters.

When Eliza uses the phrase "it done her in" to explain her aunt's death in Act III, Higgins quickly explains her crass slang by convincing the Eynsford Hills that it is "the new small talk." Because they are of a lesser class and are in the presence of people whom they admire, they believe Higgins's absurd claim, and Clara even commits to using it. This shows the upper class's ability to set trends and control societal expectations of presentable manners merely because they are of a higher social standing.

Pickering says, "You see, lots of real people can't do it at all: they're such fools that they think style comes by nature to people in their position; and so they never learn." He is making the observation that people in high society need to learn manners just as anyone else would but that the affluent often feel their entitlement extends to the realm of style and etiquette when it does not. The wealthy view the poor as ill-mannered when, ironically, it is they who often fall short of displaying becoming conduct because they have not bothered to learn as Eliza has so studiously done. Higgins wholeheartedly agrees that they are "silly people" who "don't know their own silly business," that their behavior belies their social standing.

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Though Mrs. Pearce is Higgins's housekeeper, she also appears to be something of a moral compass for him. While initially appalled at Eliza for her intrusive manner, her dress, and her poor etiquette, Mrs. Pearce has a change of heart when she realizes that her boss's attitude towards the experiment is supremely short-sighted. She reminds him that he "can't walk over everybody like this," as he normally does, and that it is his moral responsibility to consider the effect this will have on Eliza. It is she who first brings a central question (and theme for the play) before her employer: "What is to become of her when you've finished your teaching?"

Similar to Mrs. Pearce, Mrs. Higgins seems to be a voice of moral reason as well, reminding her son that his work with Eliza presents a future problem for the girl who will acquire "the manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income."

Another example is seen in the character of Alfred Doolittle, who blames Higgins for his current station in life—that of the middle-class moralist. His character becomes the mouthpiece for all the absurdity associated with the moral codes and conventions of the wealthier class. No longer of the "undeserving poor," Doolittle now has responsibilities to people other than himself.

SCIENCE VERSUS EMOTION

With very little exception, Higgins's attitude towards Eliza is condescending and downright cruel at times. He treats her as "baggage," not as a human being, and is only concerned with proving to Pickering what he can do professionally with such a lost cause as Eliza. It is a fanciful game to him and no more, and he claims that Eliza hasn't "any feelings [he, Pickering, and Mrs. Pearce] need to bother about" and that "when [he is] done with her, [he, Pickering, and Mrs. Pearce] can throw her back in the gutter."

Mrs. Higgins makes the point that her son is an expert in his field and entirely engaging and respectful when surrounded by fellow scholars but that in social situations of any other kind, he falls drastically short. His intellect prevents him from being a decent human being, a fact of which he seems only dimly aware.

Additionally, Mrs. Higgins can see that her son and Pickering are only concerned with the scientific aspect of their experiment with Eliza rather than considering her present or future feelings about the situation. For them, Eliza is merely a living toy and they are the children entitled to play with her for as long as they see fit.

Finally, aside from wanting to ensure that she is not accused of stealing from Higgins, the main reason Eliza asks Higgins about whether or not she owns her clothes in Act IV is clearly to provoke him into any sort of emotional reaction. She has been emotionally wrought for the entire scene and is hoping that he too will experience some of her own doubt and insecurity—any indication that he is a human being with real feelings rather than just an indifferent scientist.

Motif

SLIPPERS

The primary motif in *Pygmalion* is that of the slippers, and its recurrence develops an extended metaphor that characterizes Higgins and Eliza's complicated relationship throughout Acts IV and V.

Higgins wonders where his slippers are at the beginning of Act IV, and Eliza wordlessly retrieves them without him even noticing. Like a puppy with her master, Eliza fetches the slippers and waits for praise that never comes. Higgins and Pickering have no intention of offering her any credit for the evening's success, and she grows increasingly more agitated, eventually turning on Higgins like an angry, vicious dog.

The metaphor continues in Act V as Mrs. Higgins rebukes Higgins and Pickering: "You didn't thank her, or pet her, or admire her, or tell her how splendid she'd been." All of these remarks might easily be said in reference to a dog. Eliza insists that Higgins only wants her back to pick up his slippers and "fetch and carry" for him; Higgins later refers to these as her "little dog's tricks." Ultimately, Higgins determines that he prefers the strong-willed, confident Eliza who throws his slippers in his face to the subservient girl who merely fetches them.

This metaphor is significant to the work as a whole in terms of effectively characterizing the relationship between Higgins and Eliza and further illuminates the allusion to the Pygmalion myth—the master can only control his creation to the extent that the creation wants to be controlled.

Allusion

PYGMALION MYTH

The entirety of the play alludes to the myth of the Greek sculptor Pygmalion, who creates the perfect sculpture out of ivory and prays to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, to bring her to life. Aphrodite grants his wish. He names his creation Galatea; they marry and love each other for eternity.

Though the play is based on this idea, it does diverge significantly in several respects, particularly in its lack of a romantic conclusion.

Higgins has consciously, methodically created an exterior of perfection, including renaming Liza "Eliza"—much as the Greek sculptor names his sculpture Galatea. He tells his mother, "You have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being."

Externally, Eliza is his perfect version of a duchess, as evidenced by her performance at the garden party, but Higgins cannot control the interior willful emotions of his creation, and he does not know how to react when she expresses herself. In the original myth, Pygmalion had to pray to Aphrodite to give Galatea a soul, but Eliza, being human, already has a soul.

Eliza just wants to be herself—"natural" as she calls it—and at the end of Act V, she realizes that she can do that on her own. Higgins, on the other hand, views her as his "masterpiece" and does not want to have all of his work wasted on Freddy, who can't possibly appreciate, or more importantly cultivate, his creation. Eliza thinks in terms of what she and Freddy can <u>give</u> to one another, whereas Higgins thinks only in terms of what they can <u>make</u> of one another. This is the primary conflict that drives the play.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Why does the author find it necessary to include a preface to the story?

2. What social and political views does the author express? What techniques does Shaw use to reveal those views? How do these issues affect the characters?

3. Discuss the significance of the play's title.

4. Evaluate the author's reliability as a commentator. What other options might the author have considered, and what would the effects of those alternate choices have been?

5. Compare and contrast Higgins and Pickering. How do they complement one another?

6. Compare and contrast Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Higgins—as individuals and in terms of their relationships with Henry.

7. Analyze the roles of men and women in the play. What does the author's attitude toward men seem to be? Toward women? How do these roles change throughout?

8. Discuss the effects of power and control on the characters in the play.

9. What is the dramatic importance of phonetics in each act? How are phonetics related to manners in each act?

10. What does the author seem to be saying about how we measure success?

11. Speculate about an alternate ending where Higgins and Eliza marry.

12. Evaluate *Pygmalion*:

    - as a feminist piece of literature.
    - as a socialist piece of literature.
    - as a didactic piece of literature.

13. With whom should the reader assign the most credit for Eliza's transformation and why?

14. In a play about ideas, the play's protagonist is sometimes seen as a mouthpiece for the author; assuming that Henry Higgins's views are also those of Shaw, list five personal views that Shaw puts forth in the play.

15. Does the reader ultimately view Eliza as a heroic character? Why or why not? Does Higgins possess any heroic qualities as well?

Practice Free Response Questions

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #1

The two passages below are from Acts I and II of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Read them both carefully, and then write a well-organized and -supported essay in which you analyze what each contributes to Shaw's characterization of Higgins. To what extent does the second scene reinforce, alter, or challenge the audience's impression of Higgins from the first?

HIGGINS: *[identified in Act I as THE NOTE TAKER]*: Simply phonetics. The science of speech. That's my profession; also my hobby. Happy is the man who can make a living by his hobby! You can spot an Irishman or a Yorkshireman by his brogue. I can place any man within six miles. I can place him within two miles in London. Sometimes within two streets.

LIZA: *[identified in Act I as THE FLOWER GIRL]*: Ought to be ashamed of himself, unmanly coward!

PICKERING: *[identified in Act I as THE GENTLEMAN]*: But is there a living in that?

HIGGINS: Oh yes. Quite a fat one. This is an age of upstarts. Men begin in Kentish Town with 80 pounds a year, and end in Park Lane with a hundred thousand. They want to drop Kentish Town; but they give themselves away every time they open their mouths. Now I can teach them—

LIZA: Let him mind his own business and leave a poor girl—

HIGGINS: *[explosively]* Woman: cease this detestable boohooing instantly; or else seek the shelter of some other place of worship.

LIZA: *[with feeble defiance]* I've a right to be here if I like, same as you.

HIGGINS: A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere—no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespear and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon.

LIZA: *[quite overwhelmed, and looking up at him in mingled wonder and deprecation without daring to raise her head]* Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

HIGGINS: *[whipping out his book]* Heavens! what a sound! *[He writes; then holds out the book and reads, reproducing her vowels exactly]* Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—ow—oo!

LIZA: *[tickled by the performance, and laughing in spite of herself]* Garn!

HIGGINS: You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party. I could even get her a place as lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English. That's the sort of thing I do for commercial millionaires. And on the profits of it I do genuine scientific work in phonetics, and a little as a poet on Miltonic lines.

. . .

PICKERING: Higgins: I'm interested. What about the ambassador's garden party? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you can't do it. And I'll pay for the lessons.

LIZA: Oh, you are real good. Thank you, Captain.

HIGGINS: *[tempted, looking at her]* It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—

LIZA: *[protesting extremely]* Ah—ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oooo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

PICKERING: You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

MRS. PEARCE: *[uneasy]* Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.

HIGGINS: *[becoming excited as the idea grows on him]* What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to find them to do. Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe.

LIZA: *[strongly deprecating this view of her]* Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

HIGGINS: *[carried away]* Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! this moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Monkey Brand, if it won't come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

MRS. PEARCE: *[protesting]*. Yes; but—

HIGGINS: *[storming on]* Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.

LIZA: You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are, I do.

HIGGINS: We want none of your Lisson Grove prudery here, young woman. You've got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs. Pearce. If she gives you any trouble wallop her.

LIZA: *[springing up and running between Pickering and Mrs. Pearce for protection]* No! I'll call the police, I will.

MRS. PEARCE: But I've no place to put her.

HIGGINS: Put her in the dustbin.

LIZA: Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

PICKERING: Oh come, Higgins! be reasonable.

MRS. PEARCE: *[resolutely]* You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins: really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this.

[Higgins, thus scolded, subsides. The hurricane is succeeded by a zephyr of amiable surprise.]

HIGGINS: *[with professional exquisiteness of modulation]* I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #2

The following passage comprises the stage directions that open Act II of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. It is commonly accepted in literature that an author will use setting, especially private spaces, to help define his or her characters. These directions, however, go beyond a mere description of the physical layout of the room that the audience will see and include notes on Henry Higgins's character that are available to one who reads the play, but not one who watches it on stage. Read the passage carefully, and then write a well-reasoned essay in which you evaluate the effectiveness of this narrative device and hypothesize Shaw's purpose in commenting on his character in this way.

[Next day at 11 a.m. Higgins's laboratory in Wimpole Street.

It is a room on the first floor, looking on the street, and was meant for the drawing-room. The double doors are in the middle of the back wall; and persons entering find in the corner to their right two tall file cabinets at right angles to one another against the walls. In this corner stands a flat writing-table, on which are a phonograph, a laryngoscope, a row of tiny organ pipes with a bellows, a set of lamp chimneys for singing flames with burners attached to a gas plug in the wall by an indiarubber tube, several tuning-forks of different sizes, a life-size image of half a human head, showing in section the vocal organs, and a box containing a supply of wax cylinders for the phonograph.

Further down the room, on the same side, is a fireplace, with a comfortable leather-covered easy-chair at the side of the hearth nearest the door, and a coal-scuttle. There is a clock on the mantelpiece. Between the fireplace and the phonograph table is a stand for newspapers.

On the other side of the central door, to the left of the visitor, is a cabinet of shallow drawers. On it is a telephone and the telephone directory. The corner beyond, and most of the side wall, is occupied by a grand piano, with the keyboard at the end furthest from the door, and a bench for the player extending the full length of the keyboard. On the piano is a dessert dish heaped with fruit and sweets, mostly chocolates.

The middle of the room is clear. Besides the easy chair, the piano bench, and two chairs at the phonograph table, there is one stray chair. It stands near the fireplace. On the walls, engravings; mostly Piranesis and mezzotint portraits. No paintings.

Pickering is seated at the table, putting down some cards and a tuning-fork which he has been using. Higgins is standing up near him, closing two or three file drawers which are hanging out. He appears in the morning light as a robust, vital, appetizing sort of man of forty or thereabouts, dressed in a professional-looking black frock-coat with a white linen collar and black silk tie.

He is of the energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings. He is, in fact, but for his years and size, rather like a very impetuous baby "taking notice" eagerly and loudly, and requiring almost as much watching to keep him out of unintended mischief. His manner varies from genial bullying when he is in a good humor to stormy petulance when anything goes wrong; but he is so entirely frank and void of malice that he remains likeable even in his least reasonable moments.]

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #3

The following passage consists of the stage directions that open Acts II and III of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Each is the description of the private space of one of the play's main characters. Read the passage, paying particular attention to the details in each room and the playwright's commentary on the character reflected by each. Then, write a thoughtful and well-supported essay in which you compare and contrast the characters of Henry Higgins and his mother as revealed by their respective homes. Do not merely compare and contrast the settings themselves.

[Next day at 11 a.m. Higgins's laboratory in Wimpole Street. It is a room on the first floor, looking on the street, and was meant for the drawing-room. The double doors are in the middle of the back wall; and persons entering find in the corner to their right two tall file cabinets at right angles to one another against the walls. In this corner stands a flat writing-table, on which are a phonograph, a laryngoscope, a row of tiny organ pipes with a bellows, a set of lamp chimneys for singing flames with burners attached to a gas plug in the wall by an indiarubber tube, several tuning-forks of different sizes, a life-size image of half a human head, showing in section the vocal organs, and a box containing a supply of wax cylinders for the phonograph.

Further down the room, on the same side, is a fireplace, with a comfortable leather-covered easy-chair at the side of the hearth nearest the door, and a coal-scuttle. There is a clock on the mantelpiece. Between the fireplace and the phonograph table is a stand for newspapers.

On the other side of the central door, to the left of the visitor, is a cabinet of shallow drawers. On it is a telephone and the telephone directory. The corner beyond, and most of the side wall, is occupied by a grand piano, with the keyboard at the end furthest from the door, and a bench for the player extending the full length of the keyboard. On the piano is a dessert dish heaped with fruit and sweets, mostly chocolates.

The middle of the room is clear. Besides the easy chair, the piano bench, and two chairs at the phonograph table, there is one stray chair. It stands near the fireplace. On the walls, engravings; mostly Piranesis and mezzotint portraits. No paintings.

Pickering is seated at the table, putting down some cards and a tuning-fork which he has been using. Higgins is standing up near him, closing two or three file drawers which are hanging out. He appears in the morning light as a robust, vital, appetizing sort of man of forty or thereabouts, dressed in a professional-looking black frock-coat with a white linen collar and black silk tie.

. . .

[It is Mrs. Higgins's at-home day. Nobody has yet arrived. Her drawing-room, in a flat[1] on Chelsea embankment, has three windows looking on the river; and the ceiling is not so lofty as it

[1] an apartment

would be in an older house of the same pretension.

The windows are open, giving access to a balcony with flowers in pots. If you stand with your face to the windows, you have the fireplace on your left and the door in the right-hand wall close to the corner nearest the windows.

Mrs. Higgins was brought up on Morris and Burne Jones[2]; and her room, which is very unlike her son's room in Wimpole Street, is not crowded with furniture and little tables and nicknacks. In the middle of the room there is a big ottoman; and this, with the carpet, the Morris wall-papers, and the Morris chintz window curtains and brocade[3] covers of the ottoman and its cushions, supply all the ornament, and are much too handsome to be hidden by odds and ends of useless things. A few good oil-paintings from the exhibitions in the Grosvenor Gallery[4] thirty years ago (the Burne Jones, not the Whistler side of them) are on the walls. The only landscape is a Cecil Lawson[5] on the scale of a Rubens. There is a portrait of Mrs. Higgins as she was when she defied fashion in her youth in one of the beautiful Rossettian[6] costumes which, when caricatured by people who did not understand, led to the absurdities of popular estheticism in the eighteen-seventies.

In the corner diagonally opposite the door Mrs. Higgins, now over sixty and long past taking the trouble to dress out of the fashion, sits writing at an elegantly simple writing-table with a bell button within reach of her hand.

There is a Chippendale[7] chair further back in the room between her and the window nearest her side. At the other side of the room, further forward, is an Elizabethan chair roughly carved in the taste of Inigo Jones[8]. On the same side a piano in a decorated case. The corner between the fireplace and the window is occupied by a divan cushioned in Morris chintz.

It is between four and five in the afternoon.

The door is opened violently; and Higgins enters with his hat on.]

[2] Morris and Burne Jones were nineteenth-century artists and designers whose designs were largely inspired by medieval themes and a strong regard for handcrafted goods. Their interior designs featured rich carpets and wall tapestries, and embroidered and printed upholstery and draperies.

[3] Chintz and brocade are both heavily ornamented fabrics.

[4] A successful art gallery in the second half of the nineteenth century; it featured artists who were considered too "classical" or "conservative" for the predominant artistic taste of the time.

[5] a portrait painter of the second half of the nineteenth century, whose lush and romantic works were celebrated as "restoring" English landscape painting to the heights attained in the late eighteenth century.

[6] an allusion to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, another nineteenth-century painter who, along with the others alluded to in the description of Mrs. Higgins's flat, were a part of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; whatever Mrs. Higgins's "beautiful Rossettian costumes" looked like, they were probably romantic and sensuous with heavy medieval influence.

[7] an eighteenth-century cabinet maker and furniture designer most known for ornate designs and intricately carved patterns.

[8] Inigo Jones was an English Renaissance architect who introduced to England the Italianate Renaissance architecture that eventually evolved into the baroque and rococo aesthetic of the artists and designers alluded to in this passage.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #4

In the following passage, from Act IV of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, the most important part of the story is not told by the dialogue but by the subtext of action and reaction and the handling of an onstage prop. Read the passage carefully and then write a well-organized and -supported essay in which you analyze the playwright's use of Higgins's slippers as a unifying metaphor that reveals character, conflict, and theme. Do not merely summarize the action involving the slippers.

HIGGINS: …I wonder where the devil my slippers are!

[Eliza looks at him darkly; then rises suddenly and leaves the room. Higgins yawns ... Pickering returns, with the contents of the letter-box in his hand.]

PICKERING: Only circulars, and this coroneted billet-doux for you. *[He throws the circulars into the fender, and posts himself on the hearthrug, with his back to the grate].*

HIGGINS: *[glancing at the billet-doux]* Money-lender. *[He throws the letter after the circulars].*

[Eliza returns with a pair of large down-at-heel slippers. She places them on the carpet before Higgins, and sits as before without a word.]

HIGGINS: *[yawning again]* Oh Lord! What an evening! What a crew! What a silly tomfoollery! *[He raises his shoe to unlace it, and catches sight of the slippers. He stops unlacing and looks at them as if they had appeared there of their own accord].* Oh! they're there, are they?

PICKERING: *[stretching himself]* Well, I feel a bit tired. It's been a long day. The garden party, a dinner party, and the opera! Rather too much of a good thing. But you've won your bet, Higgins. Eliza did the trick, and something to spare, eh?

HIGGINS: *[fervently]* Thank God it's over!

[Eliza flinches violently; but they take no notice of her; and she recovers herself and sits stonily as before.]

PICKERING: Were you nervous at the garden party? I was. Eliza didn't seem a bit nervous.

HIGGINS: Oh, she wasn't nervous. I knew she'd be all right. No, it's the strain of putting the job through all these months that has told on me. It was interesting enough at first, while we were at the phonetics; but after that I got deadly sick of it. If I hadn't backed myself to do it I should have chucked the whole thing up two months ago. It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore.

PICKERING: Oh come! the garden party was frightfully exciting. My heart began beating like anything.

HIGGINS: Yes, for the first three minutes. But when I saw we were going to win hands down, I felt like a bear in a cage, hanging about doing nothing. The dinner was worse: sitting gorging there for over an hour, with nobody but a damned fool of a fashionable woman to talk to! I tell you, Pickering, never again for me. No more artificial duchesses. The whole thing has been simple purgatory.

PICKERING: You've never been broken in properly to the social routine. *[Strolling over to the piano]* I rather enjoy dipping into it occasionally myself: it makes me feel young again. Anyhow, it was a great success: an immense success. I was quite frightened once or twice because Eliza was doing it so well. You see, lots of the real people can't do it at all: they're such fools that they

think style comes by nature to people in their position; and so they never learn. There's always something professional about doing a thing superlatively well.

HIGGINS: Yes: that's what drives me mad: the silly people don't know their own silly business. *[Rising]* However, it's over and done with; and now I can go to bed at last without dreading tomorrow.

[Eliza's beauty becomes murderous.]

PICKERING: I think I shall turn in too. Still, it's been a great occasion: a triumph for you. Goodnight. *[He goes]*.

HIGGINS: *[following him]* Good-night. *[Over his shoulder, at the door]* Put out the lights, Eliza; and tell Mrs. Pearce not to make coffee for me in the morning: I'll take tea. *[He goes out]*.

[Eliza tries to control herself and feel indifferent as she rises and walks across to the hearth to switch off the lights. By the time she gets there she is on the point of screaming. She sits down in Higgins's chair and holds on hard to the arms. Finally she gives way and flings herself furiously on the floor raging.]

HIGGINS: *[in despairing wrath outside]* What the devil have I done with my slippers? *[He appears at the door]*.

LIZA: *[snatching up the slippers, and hurling them at him one after the other with all her force]* There are your slippers. And there. Take your slippers; and may you never have a day's luck with them!

HIGGINS: *[astounded]* What on earth—! *[He comes to her]*. What's the matter? Get up. *[He pulls her up]*. Anything wrong?

LIZA: *[breathless]* Nothing wrong—with you. I've won your bet for you, haven't I? That's enough for you. *I* don't matter, I suppose.

HIGGINS: You won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! *I* won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?

LIZA: Because I wanted to smash your face. I'd like to kill you, you selfish brute. Why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it's all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you? *[She crisps her fingers, frantically]*.

HIGGINS: *[looking at her in cool wonder]* The creature is nervous, after all.

LIZA: *[gives a suffocated scream of fury, and instinctively darts her nails at his face]*!!

HIGGINS: *[catching her wrists]* Ah! would you? Claws in, you cat. How dare you show your temper to me? Sit down and be quiet. *[He throws her roughly into the easy-chair]*.

LIZA: *[crushed by superior strength and weight]* What's to become of me? What's to become of me?

HIGGINS: How the devil do I know what's to become of you? What does it matter what becomes of you?

LIZA: You don't care. I know you don't care. You wouldn't care if I was dead. I'm nothing to you—not so much as them slippers.

HIGGINS: *[thundering]* Those slippers.

LIZA: *[with bitter submission]* Those slippers. I didn't think it made any difference now.

[A pause. Eliza hopeless and crushed. Higgins a little uneasy.]

HIGGINS: *[in his loftiest manner]* Why have you begun going on like this? May I ask whether you complain of your treatment here?

LIZA: No.

HIGGINS: Has anybody behaved badly to you? Colonel Pickering? Mrs. Pearce? Any of the servants?

LIZA: No.

HIGGINS: I presume you don't pretend that I have treated you badly.

LIZA: No.

HIGGINS: I am glad to hear it. *[He moderates his tone]*. Perhaps you're tired after the strain of the day. Will you have a glass of champagne? *[He moves towards the door]*.

LIZA: No. *[Recollecting her manners]* Thank you.

HIGGINS: *[good-humored again]* This has been coming on you for some days. I suppose it was natural for you to be anxious about the garden party. But that's all over now. *[He pats her kindly on the shoulder. She writhes]*. There's nothing more to worry about.

LIZA: No. Nothing more for you to worry about. *[She suddenly rises and gets away from him by going to the piano bench, where she sits and hides her face]*. Oh God! I wish I was dead.

HIGGINS: *[staring after her in sincere surprise]* Why? in heaven's name, why? *[Reasonably, going to her]* Listen to me, Eliza. All this irritation is purely subjective.

LIZA: I don't understand. I'm too ignorant.

HIGGINS: It's only imagination. Low spirits and nothing else. Nobody's hurting you. Nothing's wrong. You go to bed like a good girl and sleep it off. Have a little cry and say your prayers: that will make you comfortable.

LIZA: I heard your prayers. "Thank God it's all over!"

HIGGINS: *[impatiently]* Well, don't you thank God it's all over? Now you are free and can do what you like.

LIZA: *[pulling herself together in desperation]* What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me?

HIGGINS: *[enlightened, but not at all impressed]* Oh, that's what's worrying you, is it? *[He thrusts his hands into his pockets, and walks about in his usual manner, rattling the contents of his pockets, as if condescending to a trivial subject out of pure kindness]*. I shouldn't bother about it if I were you. I should imagine you won't have much difficulty in settling yourself, somewhere or other, though I hadn't quite realized that you were going away. *[She looks quickly at him: he does not look at her, but examines the dessert stand on the piano and decides that he will eat an apple]*. You might marry,

you know. *[He bites a large piece out of the apple, and munches it noisily]*. You see, Eliza, all men are not confirmed old bachelors like me and the Colonel. Most men are the marrying sort (poor devils!); and you're not bad-looking; it's quite a pleasure to look at you sometimes—not now, of course, because you're crying and looking as ugly as the very devil; but when you're all right and quite yourself, you're what I should call attractive. That is, to the people in the marrying line, you understand. You go to bed and have a good nice rest; and then get up and look at yourself in the glass; and you won't feel so cheap.

[*Eliza again looks at him, speechless, and does not stir. The look is quite lost on him: he eats his apple with a dreamy expression of happiness, as it is quite a good one.]*

HIGGINS: *[a genial afterthought occurring to him]* I daresay my mother could find some chap or other who would do very well.

LIZA: We were above that at the corner of Tottenham Court Road.

HIGGINS: *[waking up]* What do you mean?

LIZA: I sold flowers. I didn't sell myself. Now you've made a lady of me I'm not fit to sell anything else. I wish you'd left me where you found me.

HIGGINS: *[slinging the core of the apple decisively into the grate]* Tosh, Eliza. Don't you insult human relations by dragging all this cant about buying and selling into it. You needn't marry the fellow if you don't like him.

LIZA: What else am I to do?

HIGGINS: Oh, lots of things. What about your old idea of a florist's shop? Pickering could set you up in one: he's lots of money. *[Chuckling]* He'll have to pay for all those togs you have been wearing today; and that, with the hire of the jewellery, will make a big hole in two hundred pounds. Why, six months ago you would have thought it the millennium to have a flower shop of your own. Come! you'll be all right. I must clear off to bed: I'm devilish sleepy. By the way, I came down for something: I forget what it was.

LIZA: Your slippers.

HIGGINS: Oh yes, of course. You shied them at me. *[He picks them up, and is going out when she rises and speaks to him]*.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #5

Authors often use their novels and plays as a forum to criticize a particular social or political issue. Choose a work of considerable literary merit.* Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the narrative techniques the author uses to illuminate his or her attitude about social class distinctions, and explain the relevance of the issue to the play as a whole. Avoid plot summary.

**Note to the student: For the purposes of this unit, you must choose George Bernard Shaw's* Pygmalion.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #6

Characters who are morally ambiguous are central figures in many works of literature. In *Pygmalion*, Alfred Doolittle could be considered a character of questionable morals. In a well-written essay, explain how Doolittle can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why that ambiguity is significant to the play, particularly in terms of the theme of social morality and the overall tone created by Doolittle's presence. Avoid merely restating the plot.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #7

Of the human emotions most wrestled with, one of the strongest is our ability to control ourselves and others. Write a well-supported essay in which you analyze the complexities of the power struggle between Higgins and Eliza in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Be sure to articulate how Shaw uses this struggle for control to enhance the meaning of the work overall.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #8

Authors often allude to other works in order to enhance or clarify the meaning of their own. An effective allusion can help the reader to better understand a work's themes, the author's intent, and even the overall meaning of the work. Choose a work of considerable literary merit.* Then, in a well-organized essay, explain how an allusion that is central to the work contributes to character development and theme. Do not merely summarize the plot.

**Note to the student: For the purposes of this unit, you must choose George Bernard Shaw's* Pygmalion.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION #9

Works of literature often raise important philosophical questions and either attempt to answer those questions or ultimately leave those answers up to the reader. Choose a work of considerable literary merit.* Then, in a well-written essay, analyze the central question raised in the work and assess the extent to which that question is answered. Be sure to address how that question affects the reader's perception of the work as a whole.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 1 – 5

Carefully read the following passage from Act I of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

[Covent Garden at 11.15 p.m. Torrents of heavy summer rain. Cab whistles blowing frantically in all directions. Pedestrians running for shelter into the market and under the portico of St. Paul's Church, where there are already several people, among them a lady and her daughter in evening dress. They are all peering out gloomily at the rain, except one man with his back turned to the rest, who seems wholly preoccupied with a notebook in which he is writing busily.

The church clock strikes the first quarter.]

THE DAUGHTER: *[in the space between the central pillars, close to the one on her left]* I'm getting chilled to the bone. What can Freddy be doing all this time? He's been gone twenty minutes.

THE MOTHER: *[on her daughter's right]* Not so long. But he ought to have got us a cab by this.

A BYSTANDER: *[on the lady's right]* He won't get no cab not until half-past eleven, missus, when they come back after dropping their theatre fares.

THE MOTHER: But we must have a cab. We can't stand here until half-past eleven. It's too bad.

THE BYSTANDER: Well, it ain't my fault, missus.

THE DAUGHTER: If Freddy had a bit of gumption, he would have got one at the theatre door.

THE MOTHER: What could he have done, poor boy?

THE DAUGHTER: Other people got cabs. Why couldn't he?

[Freddy rushes in out of the rain from the Southampton Street side, and comes between them closing a dripping umbrella. He is a young man of twenty, in evening dress, very wet around the ankles.]

THE DAUGHTER: Well, haven't you got a cab?

FREDDY: There's not one to be had for love or money.

THE MOTHER: Oh, Freddy, there must be one. You can't have tried.

THE DAUGHTER: It's too tiresome. Do you expect us to go and get one ourselves?

FREDDY: I tell you they're all engaged. The rain was so sudden: nobody was prepared; and everybody had to take a cab. I've been to Charing Cross one way and nearly to Ludgate Circus the other; and they were all engaged.

THE MOTHER: Did you try Trafalgar Square?

FREDDY: There wasn't one at Trafalgar Square.

THE DAUGHTER: Did you try?

FREDDY: I tried as far as Charing Cross Station. Did you expect me to walk to Hammersmith?

THE DAUGHTER: You haven't tried at all.

THE MOTHER: You really are very helpless, Freddy. Go again; and don't come back until you have found a cab.

FREDDY: I shall simply get soaked for nothing.

THE DAUGHTER: And what about us? Are we to stay here all night in this draught, with next to nothing on. You selfish pig—

FREDDY: Oh, very well: I'll go, I'll go. *[He opens his umbrella and dashes off Strandwards, but comes into collision with a flower girl, who is hurrying in for shelter, knocking her basket out of her hands. A blinding flash of lightning, followed instantly by a rattling peal of thunder, orchestrates the incident]*

THE FLOWER GIRL: Nah then, Freddy: look wh' y' gowin, deah.

FREDDY: Sorry *[he rushes off]*.

THE FLOWER GIRL: *[picking up her scattered flowers and replacing them in the basket]* There's menners f' yer! Te-oo banches o voylets trod into the mad.

[She sits down on the plinth of the column, sorting her flowers, on the lady's right. She is not at all an attractive person. She is perhaps eighteen, perhaps twenty, hardly older. She wears a little sailor hat of black straw that has long been exposed to the dust and soot of London and has seldom if ever been brushed. Her hair needs washing rather badly: its mousy color can hardly be natural. She wears a shoddy black coat that reaches nearly to her knees and is shaped to her waist. She has a brown skirt with a coarse apron. Her boots are much the worse for wear. She is no doubt as clean as she can afford to be; but compared to the ladies she is very dirty. Her features are no worse than theirs; but their condition leaves something to be desired; and she needs the services of a dentist].

THE MOTHER: How do you know that my son's name is Freddy, pray?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y' de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy athaht pyin. Will ye-oo py me f'them? *[Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London.]*

THE DAUGHTER: Do nothing of the sort, mother. The idea!

THE MOTHER: Please allow me, Clara. Have you any pennies?

THE DAUGHTER: No. I've nothing smaller than sixpence.

THE FLOWER GIRL: *[hopefully]* I can give you change for a tanner, kind lady.

THE MOTHER: *[to Clara]* Give it to me. *[Clara parts reluctantly]*. Now *[to the girl]* this is for your flowers.

THE FLOWER GIRL: Thank you kindly, lady.

THE DAUGHTER: Make her give you the change. These things are only a penny a bunch.

THE MOTHER: Do hold your tongue, Clara. *[To the girl]*. You can keep the change.

THE FLOWER GIRL: Oh, thank you, lady.

THE MOTHER: Now tell me how you know that young gentleman's name.

THE FLOWER GIRL: I didn't.

THE MOTHER: I heard you call him by it. Don't try to deceive me.

THE FLOWER GIRL: *[protesting]* Who's trying to deceive you? I called him Freddy or Charlie same as you might yourself if you was talking to a stranger and wished to be pleasant. *[She sits down beside her basket]*.

THE DAUGHTER: Sixpence thrown away! Really, mamma, you might have spared Freddy that. *[She retreats in disgust behind the pillar]*.

[An elderly gentleman of the amiable military type rushes into shelter, and closes a dripping umbrella. He is in the same plight as Freddy, very wet about the ankles. He is in evening dress, with a light overcoat. He takes the place left vacant by the daughter's retirement.]

THE GENTLEMAN: Phew!

THE MOTHER: *[to the gentleman]* Oh, sir, is there any sign of its stopping?

THE GENTLEMAN: I'm afraid not. It started worse than ever about two minutes ago. *[He goes to the plinth beside the flower girl; puts up his foot on it; and stoops to turn down his trouser ends]*.

THE MOTHER: Oh, dear! *[She retires sadly and joins her daughter]*.

THE FLOWER GIRL: *[taking advantage of the military gentleman's proximity to establish friendly relations with him]*. If it's worse it's a sign it's nearly over. So cheer up, Captain; and buy a flower off a poor girl.

THE GENTLEMAN: I'm sorry, I haven't any change.

THE FLOWER GIRL: I can give you change, Captain,

THE GENTLEMAN: For a sovereign? I've nothing less.

THE FLOWER GIRL: Garn! Oh do buy a flower off me, Captain. I can change half-a-crown. Take this for tuppence.

THE GENTLEMAN: Now don't be troublesome: there's a good girl. *[Trying his pockets]* I really haven't any change—Stop: here's three hapence, if that's any use to you *[he retreats to the other pillar]*.

THE GENTLEMAN: *[disappointed, but thinking three halfpence better than nothing]* Thank you, sir.

THE BYSTANDER: *[to the girl]* You be careful: give him a flower for it. There's a bloke here behind taking down every blessed word you're saying.

[All turn to the man who is taking notes].

THE FLOWER GIRL: *[springing up terrified]* I ain't done nothing wrong by speaking to the gentleman. I've a right to sell flowers if I keep off the kerb. *[Hysterically]* I'm a respectable girl: so help me, I never spoke to him except to ask him to buy a flower off me.

[General hubbub, mostly sympathetic to the flower girl, but deprecating her excessive sensibility. Cries of Don't start hollerin. Who's hurting you? Nobody's going to touch you. What's the good of fussing? Steady on. Easy, easy, etc., *come from the elderly staid spectators, who pat her comfortingly. Less patient ones bid her shut her head, or ask her roughly what is wrong with her. A remoter group, not knowing what the matter is, crowd in and increase the noise with question and answer:* What's the row? What she do? Where is he? A tec taking her down. What! him? Yes: him over there: Took money off the gentleman, etc. *The flower girl, distraught and mobbed, breaks through them to the gentleman, crying mildly]* Oh, sir, don't let him charge me. You dunno what it means to me. They'll take away my character and drive me on the streets for speaking to gentlemen. They—

1. The overall tone of the author's commentary throughout this act can best be described as
   A. indifferent.
   B. honest.
   C. impartial.
   D. judgmental.
   E. hopeful.

2. The playwright uses the storm as a device to
   A. gather diverse characters in the same place.
   B. present his characters first as types.
   C. allow Higgins and Pickering to meet.
   D. showcase Higgins's phonetic ability.
   E. introduce Freddy's incompetence.

3. All of the following explain Shaw's rendering the Flower Girl's speech phonetically EXCEPT to
   A. contrast her speech with the other characters'.
   B. prepare the actor playing the Flower Girl.
   C. portray her speech as unintelligible.
   D. mimic the notes Higgins is writing.
   E. reveal her lack of education.

4. When compared with her Daughter's attitude, the Mother's attitude towards the Flower Girl is ultimately
   A. more generous.
   B. the same.
   C. kinder.
   D. less forgiving.
   E. more condescending.

5. An early theme suggested by this opening scene might be
   A. society's oppression of the poor.
   B. changing social values.
   C. gender inequality.
   D. the plight of the uneducated.
   E. bias among social classes.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 6 – 10

Carefully read the following passage from Act II of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

PICKERING: *[gently]* What is it you want, my girl?

THE FLOWER GIRL: I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favor—and he treats me as if I was dirt.

MRS. PEARCE: How can you be such a foolish ignorant girl as to think you could afford to pay Mr. Higgins?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Why shouldn't I? I know what lessons cost as well as you do; and I'm ready to pay.

HIGGINS: How much?

THE FLOWER GIRL: *[coming back to him, triumphant]* Now you're talking! I thought you'd come off it when you saw a chance of getting back a bit of what you chucked at me last night. *[Confidentially]* You'd had a drop in, hadn't you?

HIGGINS: *[peremptorily]* Sit down.

THE FLOWER GIRL: Oh, if you're going to make a compliment of it—

HIGGINS: *[thundering at her]* Sit down.

MRS. PEARCE: *[severely]* Sit down, girl. Do as you're told. *[She places the stray chair near the hearthrug between Higgins and Pickering, and stands behind it waiting for the girl to sit down]*.

THE FLOWER GIRL: Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo! *[She stands, half rebellious, half bewildered]*.

PICKERING: *[very courteous]* Won't you sit down?

LIZA: *[coyly]* Don't mind if I do. *[She sits down. Pickering returns to the hearthrug]*.

HIGGINS: What's your name?

THE FLOWER GIRL: Liza Doolittle.

HIGGINS: *[declaiming gravely]* Eliza, Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess, They went to the woods to get a birds nes':

PICKERING: They found a nest with four eggs in it:

HIGGINS: They took one apiece, and left three in it.

[They laugh heartily at their own wit.]

LIZA: Oh, don't be silly.

MRS. PEARCE: You mustn't speak to the gentleman like that.

LIZA: Well, why won't he speak sensible to me?

HIGGINS: Come back to business. How much do you propose to pay me for the lessons?

LIZA: Oh, I know what's right. A lady friend of mine gets French lessons for eighteenpence an hour from a real French gentleman. Well, you wouldn't have the face to ask me the same for teaching me my own language as you would for French; so I won't give more than a shilling. Take it or leave it.

HIGGINS: *[walking up and down the room, rattling his keys and his cash in his pockets]* You know, Pickering, if you consider a shilling, not as a simple shilling, but as a percentage of this girl's income, it works out as fully equivalent to sixty or seventy guineas from a millionaire.

PICKERING: How so?

HIGGINS: Figure it out. A millionaire has about 150 pounds a day. She earns about half-a-crown.

LIZA: *[haughtily]* Who told you I only—

HIGGINS: *[continuing]* She offers me two-fifths of her day's income for a lesson. Two-fifths of a millionaire's income for a day would be somewhere about 60 pounds. It's handsome. By George, it's enormous! it's the biggest offer I ever had.

LIZA: *[rising, terrified]* Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get—

HIGGINS: Hold your tongue.

LIZA: *[weeping]* But I ain't got sixty pounds. Oh—

MRS. PEARCE: Don't cry, you silly girl. Sit down. Nobody is going to touch your money.

HIGGINS: Somebody is going to touch you, with a broomstick, if you don't stop snivelling. Sit down.

LIZA: *[obeying slowly]* Ah—ah—ah—ow—oo—o! One would think you was my father.

HIGGINS: If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you. Here *[he offers her his silk handkerchief]*!

LIZA: What's this for?

HIGGINS: To wipe your eyes. To wipe any part of your face that feels moist. Remember: that's your handkerchief; and that's your sleeve. Don't mistake the one for the other if you wish to become a lady in a shop.

[Liza, utterly bewildered, stares helplessly at him.]

MRS. PEARCE: It's no use talking to her like that, Mr. Higgins: she doesn't understand you. Besides, you're quite wrong: she doesn't do it that way at all *[she takes the handkerchief]*.

LIZA: *[snatching it]* Here! You give me that handkerchief. He give it to me, not to you.

PICKERING: *[laughing]* He did. I think it must be regarded as her property, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE: *[resigning herself]* Serve you right, Mr. Higgins.

PICKERING: Higgins: I'm interested. What about the ambassador's garden party? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you can't do it. And I'll pay for the lessons.

LIZA: Oh, you are real good. Thank you, Captain.

HIGGINS: *[tempted, looking at her]* It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—

LIZA: *[protesting extremely]* Ah—ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oooo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

PICKERING: You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

MRS. PEARCE: *[uneasy]* Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.

HIGGINS: *[becoming excited as the idea grows on him]* What is life but a series of inspired follies? The difficulty is to find them to do. Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe.

LIZA: *[strongly deprecating this view of her]* Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

HIGGINS: *[carried away]* Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! this moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce. Monkey Brand, if it won't come off any other way. Is there a good fire in the kitchen?

MRS. PEARCE: *[protesting]*. Yes; but—

HIGGINS:*[storming on]* Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.

LIZA: You're no gentleman, you're not, to talk of such things. I'm a good girl, I am; and I know what the like of you are, I do.

HIGGINS: We want none of your Lisson Grove prudery here, young woman. You've got to learn to behave like a duchess. Take her away, Mrs. Pearce. If she gives you any trouble wallop her.

LIZA: *[springing up and running between Pickering and Mrs. Pearce for protection]* No! I'll call the police, I will.

MRS. PEARCE: But I've no place to put her.

HIGGINS: Put her in the dustbin.

LIZA: Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

PICKERING: Oh come, Higgins! be reasonable.

MRS. PEARCE: *[resolutely]* You must be reasonable, Mr. Higgins: really you must. You can't walk over everybody like this.

[Higgins, thus scolded, subsides. The hurricane is succeeded by a zephyr of amiable surprise.]

HIGGINS: *[with professional exquisiteness of modulation]* I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

[Liza, reassured, steals back to her chair.]

MRS. PEARCE: *[to Pickering]* Well, did you ever hear anything like that, sir?

PICKERING: *[laughing heartily]* Never, Mrs. Pearce: never.

HIGGINS: *[patiently]* What's the matter?

MRS. PEARCE: Well, the matter is, sir, that you can't take a girl up like that as if you were picking up a pebble on the beach.

HIGGINS: Why not?

MRS. PEARCE: Why not! But you don't know anything about her. What about her parents? She may be married.

LIZA: Garn!

HIGGINS: There! As the girl very properly says, Garn! Married indeed! Don't you know that a woman of that class looks a worn out drudge of fifty a year after she's married.

LIZA: Whood marry me?

HIGGINS: *[suddenly resorting to the most thrillingly beautiful low tones in his best elocutionary style]* By George, Eliza, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've done with you.

MRS. PEARCE: Nonsense, sir. You mustn't talk like that to her.

LIZA: *[rising and squaring herself determinedly]* I'm going away. He's off his chump, he is. I don't want no balmies teaching me.

HIGGINS: *[wounded in his tenderest point by her insensibility to his elocution]* Oh, indeed! I'm mad, am I? Very well, Mrs. Pearce: you needn't order the new clothes for her. Throw her out.

LIZA: *[whimpering]* Nah—ow. You got no right to touch me.

MRS. PEARCE: You see now what comes of being saucy. *[Indicating the door]* This way, please.

LIZA: *[almost in tears]* I didn't want no clothes. I wouldn't have taken them *[she throws away the handkerchief]*. I can buy my own clothes.

HIGGINS: *[deftly retrieving the handkerchief and intercepting her on her reluctant way to the door]* You're an ungrateful wicked girl. This is my return for offering to take you out of the gutter and dress you beautifully and make a lady of you.

MRS. PEARCE: Stop, Mr. Higgins. I won't allow it. It's you that are wicked. Go home to your parents, girl; and tell them to take better care of you.

LIZA: I ain't got no parents. They told me I was big enough to earn my own living and turned me out.

MRS. PEARCE: Where's your mother?

LIZA: I ain't got no mother. Her that turned me out was my sixth stepmother. But I done without them. And I'm a good girl, I am.

HIGGINS: Very well, then, what on earth is all this fuss about? The girl doesn't belong to anybody—is no use to anybody but me. *[He goes to Mrs. Pearce and begins coaxing]*. You can adopt her, Mrs. Pearce. I'm sure a daughter would be a great amusement to you. Now don't make any more fuss. Take her downstairs; and—

MRS. PEARCE: But what's to become of her? Is she to be paid anything? Do be sensible, sir.

HIGGINS: Oh, pay her whatever is necessary: put it down in the housekeeping book. *[Impatiently]* What on earth will she want with money? She'll have her food and her clothes. She'll only drink if you give her money.

LIZA: *[turning on him]* Oh you are a brute. It's a lie: nobody ever saw the sign of liquor on me. *[She goes back to her chair and plants herself there defiantly]*.

PICKERING: *[in good-humored remonstrance]* Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings?

HIGGINS: *[looking critically at her]* Oh no, I don't think so. Not any feelings that we need bother about. *[Cheerily]* Have you, Eliza?

LIZA: I got my feelings same as anyone else.

HIGGINS: *[to Pickering, reflectively]* You see the difficulty?

PICKERING: Eh? What difficulty?

HIGGINS: To get her to talk grammar. The mere pronunciation is easy enough.

LIZA: I don't want to talk grammar. I want to talk like a lady.

MRS. PEARCE: Will you please keep to the point, Mr. Higgins. I want to know on what terms the girl is to be here. Is she to have any wages? And what is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little.

HIGGINS: *[impatiently]* What's to become of her if I leave her in the gutter? Tell me that, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE: That's her own business, not yours, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS: Well, when I've done with her, we can throw her back into the gutter; and then it will be her own business again; so that's all right.

6. The conflict between Liza and Higgins can best be described as
   A. courtesy versus rudeness.
   B. folly versus wisdom.
   C. idealism versus pragmatism.
   D. weakness versus strength.
   E. poverty versus wealth.

7. The subtle shift in Mrs. Pearce's attitude towards Liza can best be described as
   A. condescending then practical.
   B. welcoming then condescending.
   C. indifferent then apologetic.
   D. contemptuous then affectionate.
   E. irritated then relieved.

8. Based on the context of the full passage provided, Higgins's speech about his intentions toward Liza, starting with "I walk over everybody!" until the end of the paragraph, seems
   A. condescending.
   B. unrealistic.
   C. consistent.
   D. genuine.
   E. insincere.

9. Higgins stereotypes Liza based on all of the following EXCEPT her
   A. attire.
   B. speech.
   C. profession.
   D. manners.
   E. cleanliness.

10. All of the following are examples of irony EXCEPT
   A. "I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did."
   B. "I'm a good girl, I am."
   C. "You mustn't speak to the gentleman like that."
   D. "What is life but a series of inspired follies?"
   E. "I don't want to talk grammar. I want to talk like a lady."

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 11 – 15

Carefully read the following passage from Act III of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

[The door is opened violently; and Higgins enters with his hat on.]

MRS. HIGGINS: *[dismayed]* Henry *[scolding him]*! What are you doing here to-day? It is my at-home day: you promised not to come. *[As he bends to kiss her, she takes his hat off, and presents it to him]*.

HIGGINS: Oh bother! *[He throws the hat down on the table]*.

MRS. HIGGINS: Go home at once.

HIGGINS: *[kissing her]* I know, mother. I came on purpose.

MRS. HIGGINS: But you mustn't. I'm serious, Henry. You offend all my friends: they stop coming whenever they meet you.

HIGGINS: Nonsense! I know I have no small talk; but people don't mind.

[He sits on the settee].

. . .

HIGGINS: *[rising and coming to her to coax her]* Oh, that'll be all right. I've taught her to speak properly; and she has strict orders as to her behavior. She's to keep to two subjects: the weather and everybody's health—Fine day and How do you do, you know—and not to let herself go on things in general. That will be safe.

MRS. HIGGINS: Safe! To talk about our health! about our insides! perhaps about our outsides! How could you be so silly, Henry?

HIGGINS: *[impatiently]* Well, she must talk about something. *[He controls himself and sits down again]*. Oh, she'll be all right: don't you fuss. Pickering is in it with me. I've a sort of bet on that I'll pass her off as a duchess in six months. I started on her some months ago; and she's getting on like a house on fire. I shall win my bet. She has a quick ear; and she's been easier to teach than my middle-class pupils because she's had to learn a complete new language. She talks English almost as you talk French.

MRS. HIGGINS: That's satisfactory, at all events.

HIGGINS: Well, it is and it isn't.

MRS. HIGGINS: What does that mean?

HIGGINS: You see, I've got her pronunciation all right; but you have to consider not only how a girl pronounces, but what she pronounces; and that's where—

[They are interrupted by the parlor-maid, announcing guests.]

THE PARLOR-MAID: Mrs. and Miss Eynsford Hill. *[She withdraws]*.

HIGGINS: Oh Lord! *[He rises; snatches his hat from the table; and makes for the door; but before he reaches it his mother introduces him].*

[Mrs. and Miss Eynsford Hill *are the mother and daughter who sheltered from the rain in Covent Garden. The mother is well bred, quiet, and has the habitual anxiety of straitened means. The daughter has acquired a gay air of being very much at home in society: the bravado of genteel poverty.]*

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *[to Mrs. Higgins]* How do you do? *[They shake hands].*

MISS EYNSFORD HILL: How d'you do? *[She shakes].*

MRS. HIGGINS: *[introducing]* My son Henry.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: Your celebrated son! I have so longed to meet you, Professor Higgins.

HIGGINS: *[glumly, making no movement in her direction]* Delighted. *[He backs against the piano and bows brusquely].*

MISS EYNSFORD HILL: *[going to him with confident familiarity]* How do you do?

HIGGINS: *[staring at her]* I've seen you before somewhere. I haven't the ghost of a notion where; but I've heard your voice. *[Drearily]* It doesn't matter. You'd better sit down.

MRS. HIGGINS: I'm sorry to say that my celebrated son has no manners. You mustn't mind him.

MISS EYNSFORD HILL: *[gaily]* I don't. *[She sits in the Elizabethan chair].*

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL*: [a little bewildered]* Not at all. *[She sits on the ottoman between her daughter and Mrs. Higgins, who has turned her chair away from the writing-table].*

HIGGINS: Oh, have I been rude? I didn't mean to be.

[He goes to the central window, through which, with his back to the company, he contemplates the river and the flowers in Battersea Park on the opposite bank as if they were a frozen desert. The parlor-maid returns, ushering in Pickering.]

THE PARLOR-MAID: Colonel Pickering *[She withdraws].*

PICKERING: How do you do, Mrs. Higgins?

MRS. HIGGINS: So glad you've come. Do you know Mrs. Eynsford Hill—Miss Eynsford Hill? *[Exchange of bows. The Colonel brings the Chippendale chair a little forward between Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Higgins, and sits down].*

PICKERING: Has Henry told you what we've come for?

HIGGINS: *[over his shoulder]* We were interrupted: damn it!

MRS. HIGGINS: Oh Henry, Henry, really!

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *[half rising]* Are we in the way?

MRS. HIGGINS: *[rising and making her sit down again]* No, no. You couldn't have come more fortunately: we want you to meet a friend of ours.

HIGGINS: *[turning hopefully]* Yes, by George! We want two or three people. You'll do as well as anybody else.

[The parlor-maid returns, ushering Freddy.]

THE PARLOR-MAID: Mr. Eynsford Hill.

HIGGINS: *[almost audibly, past endurance]* God of Heaven! another of them.

FREDDY: *[shaking hands with Mrs. Higgins]* Ahdedo?

MRS. HIGGINS: Very good of you to come. *[Introducing]* Colonel Pickering.

FREDDY: *[bowing]* Ahdedo?

MRS. HIGGINS: I don't think you know my son, Professor Higgins.

FREDDY: *[going to Higgins]* Ahdedo?

HIGGINS: *[looking at him much as if he were a pickpocket]* I'll take my oath I've met you before somewhere. Where was it?

FREDDY: I don't think so.

HIGGINS: *[resignedly]* It don't matter, anyhow. Sit down.

[He shakes Freddy's hand, and almost slings him on the ottoman with his face to the windows; then comes round to the other side of it.]

HIGGINS: Well, here we are, anyhow! *[He sits down on the ottoman next Mrs. Eynsford Hill, on her left]*. And now, what the devil are we going to talk about until Eliza comes?

MRS. HIGGINS: Henry: you are the life and soul of the Royal Society's soirees; but really you're rather trying on more commonplace occasions.

HIGGINS: Am I? Very sorry. *[Beaming suddenly]* I suppose I am, you know. *[Uproariously]* Ha, ha!

MISS EYNSFORD HILL: *[who considers Higgins quite eligible matrimonially]* I sympathize. I haven't any small talk. If people would only be frank and say what they really think!

HIGGINS: *[relapsing into gloom]* Lord forbid!

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *[taking up her daughter's cue]* But why?

HIGGINS: What they think they ought to think is bad enough, Lord knows; but what they really think would break up the whole show. Do you suppose it would be really agreeable if I were to come out now with what I really think?

MISS EYNSFORD HILL: *[gaily]* Is it so very cynical?

HIGGINS: Cynical! Who the dickens said it was cynical? I mean it wouldn't be decent.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *[seriously]* Oh! I'm sure you don't mean that, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS: You see, we're all savages, more or less. We're supposed to be civilized and cultured—to know all about poetry and philosophy and art and science, and so on; but how many of us know even the meanings of these names? *[To Miss Hill]* What do you know of poetry? *[To Mrs. Hill]* What do you know of science? *[Indicating Freddy]* What does he know of art or science or anything else? What the devil do you imagine I know of philosophy?

MRS. HIGGINS: *[warningly]* Or of manners, Henry?

THE PARLOR-MAID: *[opening the door]* Miss Doolittle. *[She withdraws].*

HIGGINS: *[rising hastily and running to Mrs. Higgins]* Here she is, mother.

[He stands on tiptoe and makes signs over his mother's head to Eliza to indicate to her which lady is her hostess].

[Eliza, who is exquisitely dressed, produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty as she enters that they all rise, quite fluttered. Guided by Higgins's signals, she comes to Mrs. Higgins with studied grace.]

LIZA: *[speaking with pedantic correctness of pronunciation and great beauty of tone]* How do you do, Mrs. Higgins? *[She gasps slightly in making sure of the H in Higgins, but is quite successful].* Mr. Higgins told me I might come.

MRS. HIGGINS: *[cordially]* Quite right: I'm very glad indeed to see you.

PICKERING: How do you do, Miss Doolittle?

LIZA: *[shaking hands with him]* Colonel Pickering, is it not?

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: I feel sure we have met before, Miss Doolittle. I remember your eyes.

LIZA: How do you do? *[She sits down on the ottoman gracefully in the place just left vacant by Higgins].*

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *[introducing]* My daughter Clara.

LIZA: How do you do?

CLARA: *[impulsively]* How do you do? *[She sits down on the ottoman beside Eliza, devouring her with her eyes].*

FREDDY: *[coming to their side of the ottoman]* I've certainly had the pleasure.

MRS. EYNSFORD HILL: *[introducing]* My son Freddy.

LIZA: How do you do?

11. When Higgins tells his mother, "[Eliza] talks English almost as you talk French," he is suggesting that Mrs. Higgins's French is
    A. passable.
    B. fluent.
    C. precise
    D. flawed.
    E. proficient.

12. As it is used in this passage, the word *straitened* most likely means
    A. improved.
    B. worrisome.
    C. satisfactory.
    D. impoverished.
    E. disillusioning.

13. The interplay between Higgins and his mother in this scene can best be categorized as
    A. frustration and delight.
    B. annoyance and apprehension.
    C. apathy and joy.
    D. anxiety and reverence.
    E. aggravation and disdain.

14. Shaw carefully depicts three manners of pronouncing "How do you do?" in order to
    A. emphasize Higgins's skill.
    B. poke fun at upper class pretension.
    C. illustrate Eliza's accomplishment.
    D. foreshadow success for Higgins's project.
    E. contrast upper- and lower-class etiquette.

15. Based on his behavior in this passage, Higgins would most likely be described as
    A. jocund.
    B. preoccupied.
    C. authoritarian.
    D. gregarious.
    E. sullen.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 16 – 20

Carefully read the following passage from Act IV of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

[Eliza opens the door and is seen on the lighted landing in opera cloak, brilliant evening dress, and diamonds, with fan, flowers, and all accessories. She comes to the hearth, and switches on the electric lights there. She is tired: her pallor contrasts strongly with her dark eyes and hair; and her expression is almost tragic. She takes off her cloak; puts her fan and flowers on the piano; and sits down on the bench, brooding and silent. Higgins, in evening dress, with overcoat and hat, comes in, carrying a smoking jacket which he has picked up downstairs. He takes off the hat and overcoat; throws them carelessly on the newspaper stand; disposes of his coat in the same way; puts on the smoking jacket; and throws himself wearily into the easy-chair at the hearth. Pickering, similarly attired, comes in. He also takes off his hat and overcoat, and is about to throw them on Higgins's when he hesitates.]

PICKERING: I say: Mrs. Pearce will row if we leave these things lying about in the drawing-room.

HIGGINS: Oh, chuck them over the bannisters into the hall. She'll find them there in the morning and put them away all right. She'll think we were drunk.

PICKERING: We are, slightly. Are there any letters?

HIGGINS: I didn't look. *[Pickering takes the overcoats and hats and goes down stairs. Higgins begins half singing half yawning an air from La Fanciulla del Golden West. Suddenly he stops and exclaims]* I wonder where the devil my slippers are!

[Eliza looks at him darkly; then rises suddenly and leaves the room. Higgins yawns again, and resumes his song. Pickering returns, with the contents of the letter-box in his hand.]

PICKERING: Only circulars, and this coroneted billet-doux for you. *[He throws the circulars into the fender, and posts himself on the hearthrug, with his back to the grate]*.

HIGGINS: *[glancing at the billet-doux]* Money-lender. *[He throws the letter after the circulars]*.

[Eliza returns with a pair of large down-at-heel slippers. She places them on the carpet before Higgins, and sits as before without a word.]

HIGGINS: *[yawning again]* Oh Lord! What an evening! What a crew! What a silly tomfoollery! *[He raises his shoe to unlace it, and catches sight of the slippers. He stops unlacing and looks at them as if they had appeared there of their own accord]*. Oh! they're there, are they?

PICKERING: *[stretching himself]* Well, I feel a bit tired. It's been a long day. The garden party, a dinner party, and the opera! Rather too much of a good thing. But you've won your bet, Higgins. Eliza did the trick, and something to spare, eh?

HIGGINS: *[fervently]* Thank God it's over!

[Eliza flinches violently; but they take no notice of her; and she recovers herself and sits stonily as before.]

PICKERING: Were you nervous at the garden party? I was. Eliza didn't seem a bit nervous.

HIGGINS: Oh, she wasn't nervous. I knew she'd be all right. No, it's the strain of putting the job through all these months that has told on me. It was interesting enough at first, while we were at

the phonetics; but after that I got deadly sick of it. If I hadn't backed myself to do it I should have chucked the whole thing up two months ago. It was a silly notion: the whole thing has been a bore.

PICKERING: Oh come! the garden party was frightfully exciting. My heart began beating like anything.

HIGGINS: Yes, for the first three minutes. But when I saw we were going to win hands down, I felt like a bear in a cage, hanging about doing nothing. The dinner was worse: sitting gorging there for over an hour, with nobody but a damned fool of a fashionable woman to talk to! I tell you, Pickering, never again for me. No more artificial duchesses. The whole thing has been simple purgatory.

PICKERING: You've never been broken in properly to the social routine. *[Strolling over to the piano]* I rather enjoy dipping into it occasionally myself: it makes me feel young again. Anyhow, it was a great success: an immense success. I was quite frightened once or twice because Eliza was doing it so well. You see, lots of the real people can't do it at all: they're such fools that they think style comes by nature to people in their position; and so they never learn. There's always something professional about doing a thing superlatively well.

HIGGINS: Yes: that's what drives me mad: the silly people don't know their own silly business. *[Rising]* However, it's over and done with; and now I can go to bed at last without dreading tomorrow.

[Eliza's beauty becomes murderous.]

PICKERING: I think I shall turn in too. Still, it's been a great occasion: a triumph for you. Goodnight. *[He goes]*.

HIGGINS: *[following him]* Good-night. *[Over his shoulder, at the door]* Put out the lights, Eliza; and tell Mrs. Pearce not to make coffee for me in the morning: I'll take tea. *[He goes out]*.

[Eliza tries to control herself and feel indifferent as she rises and walks across to the hearth to switch off the lights. By the time she gets there she is on the point of screaming. She sits down in Higgins's chair and holds on hard to the arms. Finally she gives way and flings herself furiously on the floor raging.]

HIGGINS: *[in despairing wrath outside]* What the devil have I done with my slippers? *[He appears at the door]*.

LIZA: *[snatching up the slippers, and hurling them at him one after the other with all her force]* There are your slippers. And there. Take your slippers; and may you never have a day's luck with them!

HIGGINS: *[astounded]* What on earth—! *[He comes to her]*. What's the matter? Get up. *[He pulls her up]*. Anything wrong?

LIZA: *[breathless]* Nothing wrong—with you. I've won your bet for you, haven't I? That's enough for you. *I* don't matter, I suppose.

HIGGINS: You won my bet! You! Presumptuous insect! *I* won it. What did you throw those slippers at me for?

LIZA: Because I wanted to smash your face. I'd like to kill you, you selfish brute. Why didn't you leave me where you picked me out of—in the gutter? You thank God it's all over, and that now you can throw me back again there, do you? *[She crisps her fingers, frantically]*.

HIGGINS: *[looking at her in cool wonder]* The creature is nervous, after all.

LIZA: *[gives a suffocated scream of fury, and instinctively darts her nails at his face]*!!

HIGGINS: *[catching her wrists]* Ah! would you? Claws in, you cat. How dare you show your temper to me? Sit down and be quiet. *[He throws her roughly into the easy-chair].*

LIZA: *[crushed by superior strength and weight]* What's to become of me? What's to become of me?

HIGGINS: How the devil do I know what's to become of you? What does it matter what becomes of you?

LIZA: You don't care. I know you don't care. You wouldn't care if I was dead. I'm nothing to you—not so much as them slippers.

HIGGINS: *[thundering]* Those slippers.

LIZA: *[with bitter submission]* Those slippers. I didn't think it made any difference now.

16. Pickering's observation that begins "You've never been broken in properly" can best be described as
    A. condescending.
    B. enlightening.
    C. didactic.
    D. enervating.
    E. aggravating.

17. The cause of Eliza's silent brooding in the first half of this passage is most likely the result of her
    A. anger at being neglected.
    B. anxiety about her future.
    C. doubt about her achievement.
    D. growing affection for Higgins.
    E. shame at being treated like a servant.

18. Eliza's attitude in this passage shifts from
    A. pensive to desperate.
    B. tense to explosive.
    C. apathetic to aggressive.
    D. desperate to resigned.
    E. docile to despondent.

19. The irony in the exchange in which both take credit for "winning the bet" stems from the fact that
    A. Eliza is right.
    B. Higgins is right.
    C. they are both right.
    D. each is too willing to claim the credit.
    E. neither acknowledges the other's achievement.

20. The central conflict in this passage is the result of
    A. differing assumptions.
    B. contrasting aspirations.
    C. misunderstood household roles.
    D. gender inequality.
    E. social class distinctions.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 21 – 25

Carefully read the following passage from Act V of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

LIZA: It's not because you paid for my dresses. I know you are generous to everybody with money. But it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isn't it? You see it was so very difficult for me with the example of Professor Higgins always before me. I was brought up to be just like him, unable to control myself, and using bad language on the slightest provocation. And I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there.

HIGGINS: Well!!

PICKERING: Oh, that's only his way, you know. He doesn't mean it.

LIZA: Oh, *I* didn't mean it either, when I was a flower girl. It was only my way. But you see I did it; and that's what makes the difference after all.

PICKERING: No doubt. Still, he taught you to speak; and I couldn't have done that, you know.

LIZA: *[trivially]* Of course: that is his profession.

HIGGINS: Damnation!

LIZA: *[continuing]* It was just like learning to dance in the fashionable way: there was nothing more than that in it. But do you know what began my real education?

PICKERING: What?

LIZA: *[stopping her work for a moment]* Your calling me Miss Doolittle that day when I first came to Wimpole Street. That was the beginning of self-respect for me. *[She resumes her stitching]*. And there were a hundred little things you never noticed, because they came naturally to you. Things about standing up and taking off your hat and opening doors—

PICKERING: Oh, that was nothing.

LIZA: Yes: things that showed you thought and felt about me as if I were something better than a scullerymaid; though of course I know you would have been just the same to a scullery-maid if she had been let in the drawing-room. You never took off your boots in the dining room when I was there.

PICKERING: You mustn't mind that. Higgins takes off his boots all over the place.

LIZA: I know. I am not blaming him. It is his way, isn't it? But it made such a difference to me that you didn't do it. You see, really and truly, apart from the things anyone can pick up (the dressing and the proper way of speaking, and so on), the difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins, because he always treats me as a flower girl, and always will; but I know I can be a lady to you, because you always treat me as a lady, and always will.
MRS. HIGGINS: Please don't grind your teeth, Henry.

PICKERING: Well, this is really very nice of you, Miss Doolittle.

LIZA: I should like you to call me Eliza, now, if you would.

PICKERING: Thank you. Eliza, of course.

LIZA: And I should like Professor Higgins to call me Miss Doolittle.

HIGGINS: I'll see you damned first.

MRS. HIGGINS: Henry! Henry!

PICKERING: *[laughing]* Why don't you slang back at him? Don't stand it. It would do him a lot of good.

LIZA: I can't. I could have done it once; but now I can't go back to it. Last night, when I was wandering about, a girl spoke to me; and I tried to get back into the old way with her; but it was no use. You told me, you know, that when a child is brought to a foreign country, it picks up the language in a few weeks, and forgets its own. Well, I am a child in your country. I have forgotten my own language, and can speak nothing but yours. That's the real break-off with the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it.

PICKERING: *[much alarmed]* Oh! but you're coming back to Wimpole Street, aren't you? You'll forgive Higgins?

HIGGINS: *[rising]* Forgive! Will she, by George! Let her go. Let her find out how she can get on without us. She will relapse into the gutter in three weeks without me at her elbow.

[Doolittle appears at the centre window. With a look of dignified reproach at Higgins, he comes slowly and silently to his daughter, who, with her back to the window, is unconscious of his approach.]

PICKERING: He's incorrigible, Eliza. You won't relapse, will you?

LIZA: No: Not now. Never again. I have learnt my lesson. I don't believe I could utter one of the old sounds if I tried. *[Doolittle touches her on her left shoulder. She drops her work, losing her self-possession utterly at the spectacle of her father's splendor]* A—a—a—a—a—ah—ow—ooh!

HIGGINS: *[with a crow of triumph]* Aha! Just so. A—a—a—a—ahowooh! A—a—a—a—ahowooh ! A—a—a—a—ahowooh! Victory! Victory! *[He throws himself on the divan, folding his arms, and spraddling arrogantly]*.

DOOLITTLE: Can you blame the girl? Don't look at me like that, Eliza. It ain't my fault. I've come into money.

LIZA: You must have touched a millionaire this time, dad.

DOOLITTLE: I have. But I'm dressed something special today. I'm going to St. George's, Hanover Square. Your stepmother is going to marry me.

LIZA: *[angrily]* You're going to let yourself down to marry that low common woman!

PICKERING: *[quietly]* He ought to, Eliza. *[To Doolittle]* Why has she changed her mind?

DOOLITTLE: *[sadly]* Intimidated, Governor. Intimidated. Middle class morality claims its victim. Won't you put on your hat, Liza, and come and see me turned off?

LIZA: If the Colonel says I must, I—I'll *[almost sobbing]* I'll demean myself. And get insulted for my pains, like enough.

DOOLITTLE: Don't be afraid: she never comes to words with anyone now, poor woman! respectability has broke all the spirit out of her.

PICKERING: *[squeezing Eliza's elbow gently]* Be kind to them, Eliza. Make the best of it.

LIZA: *[forcing a little smile for him through her vexation]* Oh well, just to show there's no ill feeling. I'll be back in a moment. *[She goes out]*.

DOOLITTLE: *[sitting down beside Pickering]* I feel uncommon nervous about the ceremony, Colonel. I wish you'd come and see me through it.

PICKERING: But you've been through it before, man. You were married to Eliza's mother.

DOOLITTLE: Who told you that, Colonel?

PICKERING: Well, nobody told me. But I concluded naturally—

DOOLITTLE: No: that ain't the natural way, Colonel: it's only the middle class way. My way was always the undeserving way. But don't say nothing to Eliza. She don't know: I always had a delicacy about telling her.

PICKERING: Quite right. We'll leave it so, if you don't mind.

DOOLITTLE: And you'll come to the church, Colonel, and put me through straight?

PICKERING: With pleasure. As far as a bachelor can.

MRS. HIGGINS: May I come, Mr. Doolittle? I should be very sorry to miss your wedding.

DOOLITTLE: I should indeed be honored by your condescension, ma'am; and my poor old woman would take it as a tremenjous compliment. She's been very low, thinking of the happy days that are no more.

MRS. HIGGINS: *[rising]* I'll order the carriage and get ready. *[The men rise, except Higgins]*. I shan't be more than fifteen minutes. *[As she goes to the door Eliza comes in, hatted and buttoning her gloves]*. I'm going to the church to see your father married, Eliza. You had better come in the brougham with me. Colonel Pickering can go on with the bridegroom.

[Mrs. Higgins goes out. Eliza comes to the middle of the room between the centre window and the ottoman. Pickering joins her.]

DOOLITTLE: Bridegroom! What a word! It makes a man realize his position, somehow. *[He takes up his hat and goes towards the door]*.

PICKERING: Before I go, Eliza, do forgive him and come back to us.

LIZA: I don't think papa would allow me. Would you, dad?

DOOLITTLE: *[sad but magnanimous]* They played you off very cunning, Eliza, them two sportsmen. If it had been only one of them, you could have nailed him. But you see, there was two; and one of them chaperoned the other, as you might say. *[To Pickering]* It was artful of you, Colonel;

but I bear no malice: I should have done the same myself. I been the victim of one woman after another all my life; and I don't grudge you two getting the better of Eliza. I shan't interfere. It's time for us to go, Colonel. So long, Henry. See you in St. George's, Eliza. *[He goes out]*.

PICKERING: *[coaxing]* Do stay with us, Eliza. *[He follows Doolittle]*.

[Eliza goes out on the balcony to avoid being alone with Higgins. He rises and joins her there. She immediately comes back into the room and makes for the door; but he goes along the balcony quickly and gets his back to the door before she reaches it.]

HIGGINS: Well, Eliza, you've had a bit of your own back, as you call it. Have you had enough? and are you going to be reasonable? Or do you want any more?

LIZA: You want me back only to pick up your slippers and put up with your tempers and fetch and carry for you.

HIGGINS: I haven't said I wanted you back at all.

LIZA: Oh, indeed. Then what are we talking about?

HIGGINS: About you, not about me. If you come back I shall treat you just as I have always treated you. I can't change my nature; and I don't intend to change my manners. My manners are exactly the same as Colonel Pickering's.

LIZA: That's not true. He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess.

HIGGINS: And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl.

LIZA: I see. *[She turns away composedly, and sits on the ottoman, facing the window]*. The same to everybody.
HIGGINS: Just so.

LIZA: Like father.

HIGGINS: *[grinning, a little taken down]* Without accepting the comparison at all points, Eliza, it's quite true that your father is not a snob, and that he will be quite at home in any station of life to which his eccentric destiny may call him. *[Seriously]* The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third-class carriages, and one soul is as good as another.

LIZA: Amen. You are a born preacher.

HIGGINS: *[irritated]* The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever heard me treat anyone else better.

LIZA: *[with sudden sincerity]* I don't care how you treat me. I don't mind your swearing at me. I don't mind a black eye: I've had one before this. But *[standing up and facing him]* I won't be passed over.

HIGGINS: Then get out of my way; for I won't stop for you. You talk about me as if I were a motor bus.

LIZA: So you are a motor bus: all bounce and go, and no consideration for anyone. But I can do without you: don't think I can't.

HIGGINS: I know you can. I told you you could.

LIZA: *[wounded, getting away from him to the other side of the ottoman with her face to the hearth]* I know you did, you brute. You wanted to get rid of me.

HIGGINS: Liar.

LIZA: Thank you. *[She sits down with dignity]*.

HIGGINS: You never asked yourself, I suppose, whether *I* could do without you.

LIZA: *[earnestly]* Don't you try to get round me. You'll have to do without me.

HIGGINS: *[arrogant]* I can do without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire. But *[with sudden humility]* I shall miss you, Eliza. *[He sits down near her on the ottoman]*. I have learnt something from your idiotic notions: I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather.

LIZA: Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt.

HIGGINS: I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you.

LIZA: Oh, you are a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs. Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you; and you always got round her at the last minute. And you don't care a bit for her. And you don't care a bit for me.

HIGGINS: I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask?

LIZA: I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me.

HIGGINS: Commercial principles, Eliza. Like *[reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness]* s'yollin voylets *[selling violets]*, isn't it?

LIZA: Don't sneer at me. It's mean to sneer at me.

HIGGINS: I have never sneered in my life. Sneering doesn't become either the human face or the human soul. I am expressing my righteous contempt for Commercialism. I don't and won't trade in affection. You call me a brute because you couldn't buy a claim on me by fetching my slippers and finding my spectacles. You were a fool: I think a woman fetching a man's slippers is a disgusting sight: did I ever fetch your slippers? I think a good deal more of you for throwing them in my face. No use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave? If you come back, come back for the sake of good fellowship; for you'll get nothing else. You've had a thousand times as much out of me as I have out of you; and if you dare to set up your little dog's tricks of fetching and carrying slippers against my creation of a Duchess Eliza, I'll slam the door in your silly face.

LIZA: What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?

HIGGINS: *[heartily]* Why, because it was my job.

LIZA: You never thought of the trouble it would make for me.

HIGGINS: Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble. There's only one way of escaping trouble; and that's killing things. Cowards, you notice, are always shrieking to have troublesome people killed.

LIZA: I'm no preacher: I don't notice things like that. I notice that you don't notice me.

HIGGINS: *[jumping up and walking about intolerantly]* Eliza: you're an idiot. I waste the treasures of my Miltonic mind by spreading them before you. Once for all, understand that I go my way and do my work without caring twopence what happens to either of us. I am not intimidated, like your father and your stepmother. So you can come back or go to the devil: which you please.

LIZA: What am I to come back for?

HIGGINS: *[bouncing up on his knees on the ottoman and leaning over it to her]* For the fun of it. That's why I took you on.

LIZA: *[with averted face]* And you may throw me out tomorrow if I don't do everything you want me to?

HIGGINS: Yes; and you may walk out tomorrow if I don't do everything you want me to.

21. Higgins's attitude toward Eliza in this scene can best be described as
    A. anxious.
    B. bitter.
    C. cautious.
    D. indifferent.
    E. benevolent.

22. All of the following suggest a theme of social equality EXCEPT
    A. Mrs. Higgins's and the Colonel's attending Doolittle's wedding.
    B. Eliza's refusal to return to Wimpole Street.
    C. Doolittle's inheritance.
    D. Doolittle's intent to marry.
    E. Higgins's understanding of manners.

23. Doolittle is present in this scene primarily as a
    A. comic foil for Higgins.
    B. vehicle to reveal Eliza's limitations.
    C. representative of the lower class.
    D. representative of the middle class.
    E. symbol of class equality.

24. A close examination of Eliza's conversation with Pickering reveals her point to be
    A. ambiguous.
    B. unsupportable.
    C. inexplicable.
    D. unemotional.
    E. inconsistent.

25. Eliza's conversation with Higgins at the conclusion of this scene portrays her as
    A. insecure.
    B. euphoric.
    C. nervous.
    D. argumentative.
    E. stoic.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 26 – 30

Carefully read the following passage, excerpted from the Epilogue of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, before selecting the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

> The rest of the story need not be shown in action, and indeed, would hardly need telling if our imaginations were not so enfeebled by their lazy dependence on the ready-mades and reach-me-downs of the ragshop in which Romance keeps its stock of "happy endings" to misfit all stories.
>
> Now, the history of Eliza Doolittle, though called a romance because of the transfiguration it records seems exceedingly improbable, is common enough. Such transfigurations have been achieved by hundreds of resolutely ambitious young women since Nell Gwynne set them the example by playing queens and fascinating kings in the theatre in which she began by selling oranges. Nevertheless, people in all directions have assumed, for no other reason than that she became the heroine of a romance, that she must have married the hero of it. This is unbearable, not only because her little drama, if acted on such a thoughtless assumption, must be spoiled, but because the true sequel is patent to anyone with a sense of human nature in general, and of feminine instinct in particular.
>
> Eliza, in telling Higgins she would not marry him if he asked her, was not coquetting: she was announcing a well-considered decision. When a bachelor interests, and dominates, and teaches, and becomes important to a spinster, as Higgins with Eliza, she always, if she has character enough to be capable of it, considers very seriously indeed whether she will play for becoming that bachelor's wife, especially if he is so little interested in marriage that a determined and devoted woman might capture him if she set herself resolutely to do it. Her decision will depend a good deal on whether she is really free to choose; and that, again, will depend on her age and income. If she is at the end of her youth, and has no security for her livelihood, she will marry him because she must marry anybody who will provide for her. But at Eliza's age a good-looking girl does not feel that pressure; she feels free to pick and choose. She is therefore guided by her instinct in the matter. Eliza's instinct tells her not to marry Higgins. It does not tell her to give him up. It is not in the slightest doubt as to his remaining one of the strongest personal interests in her life. It would be very sorely strained if there was another woman likely to supplant her with him. But as she feels sure of him on that last point, she has no doubt at all as to her course, and would not have any, even if the difference of twenty years in age, which seems so great to youth, did not exist between them.
>
> . . .
>
> And now, whom did Eliza marry? For if Higgins was a predestinate old bachelor, she was most certainly not a predestinate old maid. Well, that can be told very shortly to those who have not guessed it from the indications she has herself given them.
>
> . . .
>
> Unless Freddy is biologically repulsive to her, and Higgins biologically attractive to a degree that overwhelms all her other instincts, she will, if she marries either of them, marry Freddy.
> And that is just what Eliza did.
>
> Complications ensued; but they were economic, not romantic. Freddy had no money and no occupation.
>
> . . .

Thus Freddy and Eliza, now Mr. and Mrs. Eynsford Hill, would have spent a penniless honeymoon but for a wedding present £500 from the Colonel to Eliza. It lasted a long time because Freddy did not know how to spend money, never having had any to spend, and Eliza, socially trained by a pair of old bachelors, wore her clothes as long as they held together and looked pretty, without the least regard to their being many months out of fashion. Still, £500 will not last two young people for ever; and they both knew, and Eliza felt as well, that they must shift for themselves in the end. She could quarter herself on Wimpole Street because it had come to be her home; but she was quite aware that she ought not to quarter Freddy there, and that it would not be good for his character if she did.

Not that the Wimpole Street bachelors objected. When she consulted them, Higgins declined to be bothered about her housing problem when that solution was so simple. Eliza's desire to have Freddy in the house with her seemed of no more importance than if she had wanted an extra piece of bedroom furniture. Pleas as to Freddy's character, and the moral obligation on him to earn his own living, were lost on Higgins. He denied that Freddy had any character, and declared that if he tried to do any useful work some competent person would have the trouble of undoing it: a procedure involving a net loss to the community, and great unhappiness to Freddy himself, who was obviously intended by Nature for such light work as amusing Eliza, which, Higgins declared, was a much more useful and honorable occupation than working in the city. When Eliza referred again to her project of teaching phonetics, Higgins abated not a jot of his violent opposition to it. He said she was not within ten years of being qualified to meddle with his pet subject; and as it was evident that the Colonel agreed with him, she felt she could not go against them in this grave matter, and that she had no right, without Higgins's consent, to exploit the knowledge he had given her; for his knowledge seemed to her as much his private property as his watch: Eliza was no communist. Besides, she was superstitiously devoted to them both, more entirely and frankly after her marriage than before it.

It was the Colonel who finally solved the problem, which had cost him much perplexed cogitation. He one day asked Eliza, rather shyly, whether she had quite given up her notion of keeping a flower shop. She replied that she had thought of it, but had put it out of her head, because the Colonel had said, that day at Mrs. Higgins's, that it would never do. The Colonel confessed that when he said that, he had not quite recovered from the dazzling impression of the day before. They broke the matter to Higgins that evening. The sole comment vouchsafed by him very nearly led to a serious quarrel with Eliza. It was to the effect that she would have in Freddy an ideal errand boy.

. . .

When Freddy paid a visit to Earlscourt (which he never did when he could possibly help it) to make the desolating announcement that he and his Eliza were thinking of blackening the Large-lady scutcheon by opening a shop, he found the little household already convulsed by a prior announcement from Clara that she also was going to work in an old furniture shop in Dover Street.

. . .

And so it came about that Eliza's luck held, and the expected opposition to the flower shop melted away. The shop is in the arcade of a railway station not very far from the Victoria and Albert Museum; and if you live in that neighborhood you may go there any day and buy a buttonhole from Eliza.

Now here is a last opportunity for romance. Would you not like to be assured that the shop was an immense success, thanks to Eliza's charms and her early business experience in Covent Garden? Alas! the truth is the truth: the shop did not pay for a long time, simply because Eliza and her Freddy did not know how to keep it. True, Eliza had not to begin at the very beginning: she knew the names and prices of the cheaper flowers; and her elation was unbounded when she found that Freddy, like all youths educated at cheap, pretentious, and thoroughly inefficient schools, knew a little Latin. It was very little, but enough to make him appear to her a Porson or

Bentley, and to put him at his ease with botanical nomenclature. Unfortunately he knew nothing else; and Eliza, though she could count money up to eighteen shillings or so, and had acquired a certain familiarity with the language of Milton from her struggles to qualify herself for winning Higgins's bet, could not write out a bill without utterly disgracing the establishment. Freddy's power of stating in Latin that Balbus built a wall and that Gaul was divided into three parts did not carry with it the slightest knowledge of accounts or business: Colonel Pickering had to explain to him what a cheque book and a bank account meant. And the pair were by no means easily teachable. Freddy backed up Eliza in her obstinate refusal to believe that they could save money by engaging a bookkeeper with some knowledge of the business. How, they argued, could you possibly save money by going to extra expense when you already could not make both ends meet? But the Colonel, after making the ends meet over and over again, at last gently insisted; and Eliza, humbled to the dust by having to beg from him so often, and stung by the uproarious derision of Higgins, to whom the notion of Freddy succeeding at anything was a joke that never palled, grasped the fact that business, like phonetics, has to be learned.

On the piteous spectacle of the pair spending their evenings in shorthand schools and polytechnic classes, learning bookkeeping and typewriting with incipient junior clerks, male and female, from the elementary schools, let me not dwell. There were even classes at the London School of Economics, and a humble personal appeal to the director of that institution to recommend a course bearing on the flower business. He, being a humorist, explained to them the method of the celebrated Dickensian essay on Chinese Metaphysics by the gentleman who read an article on China and an article on Metaphysics and combined the information. He suggested that they should combine the London School with Kew Gardens. Eliza, to whom the procedure of the Dickensian gentleman seemed perfectly correct (as in fact it was) and not in the least funny (which was only her ignorance) took his advice with entire gravity. But the effort that cost her the deepest humiliation was a request to Higgins, whose pet artistic fancy, next to Milton's verse, was calligraphy, and who himself wrote a most beautiful Italian hand, that he would teach her to write. He declared that she was congenitally incapable of forming a single letter worthy of the least of Milton's words; but she persisted; and again he suddenly threw himself into the task of teaching her with a combination of stormy intensity, concentrated patience, and occasional bursts of interesting disquisition on the beauty and nobility, the august mission and destiny, of human handwriting. Eliza ended by acquiring an extremely uncommercial script which was a positive extension of her personal beauty, and spending three times as much on stationery as anyone else because certain qualities and shapes of paper became indispensable to her. She could not even address an envelope in the usual way because it made the margins all wrong.

Their commercial school days were a period of disgrace and despair for the young couple. They seemed to be learning nothing about flower shops. At last they gave it up as hopeless, and shook the dust of the shorthand schools, and the polytechnics, and the London School of Economics from their feet for ever. Besides, the business was in some mysterious way beginning to take care of itself. They had somehow forgotten their objections to employing other people. They came to the conclusion that their own way was the best, and that they had really a remarkable talent for business. The Colonel, who had been compelled for some years to keep a sufficient sum on current account at his bankers to make up their deficits, found that the provision was unnecessary: the young people were prospering. It is true that there was not quite fair play between them and their competitors in trade. Their week-ends in the country cost them nothing, and saved them the price of their Sunday dinners; for the motor car was the Colonel's; and he and Higgins paid the hotel bills. Mr. F. Hill, florist and greengrocer (they soon discovered that there was money in asparagus; and asparagus led to other vegetables), had an air which stamped the business as classy; and in private life he was still Frederick Eynsford Hill, Esquire. Not that there was any swank about him: nobody but Eliza knew that he had been christened Frederick Challoner. Eliza herself swanked like anything.

That is all. That is how it has turned out. It is astonishing how much Eliza still manages to meddle in the housekeeping at Wimpole Street in spite of the shop and her own family. And it is notable that though she never nags her husband, and frankly loves the Colonel as if she were his favorite daughter, she has never got out of the habit of nagging Higgins that was established on the fatal night when she won his bet for him. She snaps his head off on the faintest provocation, or on none. He no longer dares to tease her by assuming an abysmal inferiority of Freddy's mind to his own. He storms and bullies and derides; but she stands up to him so ruthlessly that the Colonel has to ask her from time to time to be kinder to Higgins; and it is the only request of his that brings a mulish expression into her face. Nothing but some emergency or calamity great enough to break down all likes and dislikes, and throw them both back on their common humanity—and may they be spared any such trial!—will ever alter this. She knows that Higgins does not need her, just as her father did not need her. The very scrupulousness with which he told her that day that he had become used to having her there, and dependent on her for all sorts of little services, and that he should miss her if she went away (it would never have occurred to Freddy or the Colonel to say anything of the sort) deepens her inner certainty that she is "no more to him than them slippers", yet she has a sense, too, that his indifference is deeper than the infatuation of commoner souls. She is immensely interested in him. She has even secret mischievous moments in which she wishes she could get him alone, on a desert island, away from all ties and with nobody else in the world to consider, and just drag him off his pedestal and see him making love like any common man. We all have private imaginations of that sort. But when it comes to business, to the life that she really leads as distinguished from the life of dreams and fancies, she likes Freddy and she likes the Colonel; and she does not like Higgins and Mr. Doolittle. Galatea never does quite like Pygmalion: his relation to her is too godlike to be altogether agreeable.

26. The author's attitude towards the reader can best be described as
    A. condescending.
    B. exasperated.
    C. bemused.
    D. resigned.
    E. conciliatory.

27. As he uses it in this passage, by *transfiguration* Shaw most likely means
    A. alteration.
    B. improvement.
    C. awakening.
    D. metamorphosis.
    E. emergence.

28. From the context, one can infer that Nell Gwynne was
    A. another student of Higgins.
    B. Shaw's inspiration for Eliza.
    C. a well-known actress of her day.
    D. a theatrical colleague of Shaw's.
    E. the protagonist of another play by Shaw.

29. Eliza's ongoing relationship with Higgins and Pickering can best be categorized as
    A. financial.
    B. social.
    C. romantic.
    D. intellectual.
    E. familial.

30. The irony of Eliza's realization that Higgins's "indifference is deeper than the infatuation of commoner souls" is that
    A. Eliza is still infatuated with Higgins.
    B. All of Higgins's emotions are stronger than others'.
    C. Higgins's "indifference" masks deep affection.
    D. Indifference and infatuation are both superficial emotions.
    E. Eliza has grown equally indifferent to Higgins.

Answers with Explanations

1. Indifference (A) suggests that Shaw is uninterested in the action and the characters; this does not appear to be the case, and there is nothing particularly hopeful (E) about the commentary either. That leaves students with a choice between honest, impartial, or judgmental, and they must perform a close reading to discern which of the three is the best choice. Impartiality (C) implies a neutrality of opinion which Shaw lacks overall throughout Act I. Students could argue for honest (B), particularly in the description of the Flower Girl. **Shaw writes that she is "not at all an attractive person," her "mousy" colored hair "needs washing rather badly" and that "she needs the services of a dentist." However, these comments are more critical than mere honesty would be, so choice (D) is the best answer.**

2. Any one of the choices is plausible in the context of the scene. Because of the storm, Shaw is able quickly to characterize the collected characters as certain types (B) of people—the snob, the educator, the uneducated, the incompetent (E), etc. The storm also allows Higgins and Pickering to meet (C) and showcases Higgins's abilities as a phonetician (D). **However, Shaw's main reason for making this narrative and structural choice of using a sudden storm is to provide an impetus for these diverse people to be trapped in a confined area together (A). One would have trouble thinking of any other circumstance in which a linguist (Higgins), a wealthy gentleman (Pickering), a disdainful flower girl, and members of London's middle and lower classes would otherwise be brought together. The downpour's inception and termination provide a framework for the development of the play's action, the introduction of its main and minor characters, and the establishment of several themes: appearance versus reality, manners and morality, and social standing as a function of language.**

3. When we first meet the Flower Girl, she says, "There's menners f' yer! Te-oo banches o voylets trod into the mad." Shaw phonetically renders her syntax for a variety of reasons. It makes the reader aware of how drastically different her speech patterns are (A), reveals her lack of education (E), and could serve to illustrate to an actor the actual sounds of Eliza's accent (B). Also, we see similar renderings in Higgins's notebook later in Act I: "Cheer ap, Keptin; n' haw ya flahr orf a pore gel," so (D) is also a viable choice. **Therefore, choice (C) is the best choice, not only through process of elimination, but because her speech is <u>not</u> unintelligible to other people in and around London, particularly those who are from her region of Lisson Grove. It is likely that only the higher classes of England might have difficulty deciphering her dialect.**

4. The Mother cannot be described as less forgiving (D) or more condescending (E) than her difficult daughter, who treats the Flower Girl with utter disdain. Instead, the Mother initially appears magnanimous in her actions and speech towards the Flower Girl. She merely asks how she knows Freddy's name and then argues with her daughter about replacing the money the Flower Girl lost for the flowers ruined when colliding with Freddy. The Mother even insists that the girl keep the change, much to her daughter's dismay, showing her relative generosity (A) and kindness (C). **However, immediately following her charitable gesture, she again presses the Flower Girl as to how she knows her son's**

name and more forcefully insists, "Don't try to deceive me." It is now clear to the reader that the Mother's gesture was merely one of bribery to get the information she wanted. She clearly cannot bear the thought of her son consorting with such a person as the Flower Girl. Thus, though the Mother outwardly appears to have far better manners than her daughter, their attitudes are actually entirely the same (B).

5. (A) might immediately tempt some students, but as the final stage direction specifies, the crowd, something of a microcosm of society, is generally sympathetic to Eliza's fear of being prosecuted for vagrancy. They are upset by the disturbance she is making, not by the fact of her poverty. (B) is fairly easily eliminated as there is not enough text here to know what social values predominate and how they might be changing. (C) might tempt a few because the emerging conflict between the Flower Girl and the Note Taker is between a female and a male, but the conflict has more to do with speech and manners than anything intrinsic to their respective genders. Likewise, (E) might tempt a few, but like (A), the various levels of society are more sympathetic than oppositional to the Flower Girl. In fact, the Gentleman is actually kind to her. The only cause of the crowd's displeasure with Eliza is the disturbance she makes fearing the Gentleman's and the Note Taker's "power" over her. **It is her lack of education (D) that causes her distress and lessens the others' sympathy for her. Thus, (D) is the best answer.**

6. (A) might be extremely tempting until the student realizes that, in the conflict between Eliza and Higgins, Eliza cannot represent courtesy. Some might confuse Higgins's knowledge with wisdom (B), but Eliza's goals and attitudes, while naive, cannot be regarded as folly. Neither Eliza nor Higgins can be called weak (D), and though Higgins is called a "gentleman" by Mrs. Pearce, the issue of his wealth (E) never comes up in the scene. **Eliza, however, is clearly an idealist: she has an aspiration beyond her current sphere; she believes she can learn proper English well enough to be employed in a flower shop; she believes she knows what such lessons should cost and that she is able to pay. She also clearly believes in the equality of all human beings; she asserts her "right" to appear at Higgins's home and request his services and to be treated respectfully. Higgins, on the other hand, sees Eliza not as a human whom he treats rudely, but as a specimen, a challenge. His "rudeness" is more an all-engrossing preoccupation with phonetics and his ability to change Eliza than a lack of manners. What should it matter how he treats her as long as he is able to perform a great good for her? She is an idealist; he is a pragmatist. Thus, (C) is the best answer.**

7. There is nothing welcoming (B) in Mrs. Pearce's attitude in this scene—her first interaction with Eliza is to call her a "foolish ignorant girl." Her repeated attestations throughout this scene—that Eliza is "silly" and "foolish"—certainly eliminate indifference (C) and might suggest irritation or contempt, but she is anything but affectionate (D) towards Eliza, and nothing suggests that she is relieved (E) either. **Mrs. Pearce's insults are condescending, but she then implores Higgins to consider that he cannot just "walk over everybody" and pick a girl up as if she were a "pebble on the beach," that there are her parents and possibly a husband to consider, and it is she who raises the ultimate practical question of: "What's to become of her?" The best answer is therefore (A).**

8. Because he is speaking to Pickering and Mrs. Pearce, both of whom he respects, he would certainly not be condescending (A) in his manner towards them. (B) might prove to be true in the context of the play, but we are only being asked to look at this particular passage. Because Higgins has behaved abominably towards Eliza throughout this scene and he is being downright charitable here, (C) would not apply either. The question students need to ask themselves is whether Higgins is being genuinely sincere (D) in this sudden declaration of magnanimity. **Based on the text both before and particularly after this brief diversion, students must rightfully question his sincerity. He says she has "no feelings that we need to bother about" and that when he is "done with her, [he] can throw her back into the gutter." Given these comments, his insistence that he only wishes "to be kind to this poor girl" seems completely hollow. Choice (E) is the best answer.**

9. Higgins instructs Mrs. Pearce to burn Eliza's clothes (A) since they are disgusting and worthless. He refers to both her cleanliness (E) and her manners (D) when calling her "horribly dirty," though Eliza understands only the literal meaning and insists that she washed her face and hands before she came. Higgins constantly criticizes her speech (B). **The only aspect of Eliza which Higgins does not criticize her for is her profession. In fact, he is impressed by her offer of payment for elocution lessons and marvels at the fact that it would be equivalent to the same percentage from a millionaire. Choice (C) is then the best answer.**

10. (A) is ironic because a "washed" face and hands do not necessarily constitute cleanliness. Additionally, Eliza is responding literally to something that Higgins means—at least in part—figuratively. Shaw probably has Eliza utter this line to evoke a laugh from his audience. (B) is ironic because Eliza's "Lisson Grove prudery," like her notion of cleanliness, is a shallow and naive sense of goodness. The irony of (C) stems from the dual meaning of "gentleman." Regardless of social rank, in terms of manners and conduct, Higgins has been no gentleman. (E) is another ironic statement arising from Eliza's ignorance—another line probably intended to elicit laughter from the audience. **(D) might constitute foreshadowing, predicting outrageous consequences to the decisions being made in this scene, but the statement is actually a truth. Higgins may be speaking carelessly, but he is not speaking ironically. Therefore, (D) is the best answer.**

11. Higgins has just told his mother that he has "taught [Eliza] to speak properly," and that Eliza "has a quick ear." After the comment about his mother's French, he says, "I've got her pronunciation all right." Clearly, Higgins is describing a level of proficiency better than merely "passable" (A). Still, he admits that it is her "pronunciation" that has been perfected, but he laments, "you have to consider not only how a girl pronounces, but what she pronounces," which clearly admits that Eliza is not yet fluent (B). Flawed (D) might be tempting, but all discussion of Eliza's English focuses much more on what she's got right, and it is doubtful Henry would insult his mother's French in trying to describe his own accomplishment. (E) is probably even more tempting, but it is a less specific, and therefore less desirable, choice than the best answer. **Eliza's English—because of her having had to learn what basically amounts to a new language—is precise (C). Like Mrs. Higgins and her French, she has learned the rules and is able to apply them, but they are not yet second nature to her. In a country of native speakers, she would certainly be well understood, and there would be nothing wrong with her language, but she would still be identifiable as a foreigner.**

12. Since Mrs. Eynsford Hill's "straitened means" are the cause of "habitual anxiety," it is not likely that they have been improved (A) in their being "straitened." (B) might be more tempting but creates a redundancy: "worrisome anxiety." (C), like (A), is unlikely since satisfactory means are unlikely to cause anxiety. There is no reason to suspect that Mrs. Eynsford Hill had any expectations about her income that did not materialize (E). Clearly, however, all of the Eynsford Hills speak and act as if they are of an upper class. We are, in fact, told that she is "well bred." **That her *straitened* means are the cause of "habitual anxiety" and that she has been described as evincing "the bravado of genteel poverty" clearly suggests (D). Despite the social class of her ancestors, Mrs. Eynsford Hill is poor.**

13. Mrs. Higgins is decidedly annoyed with her son for barging in on her "at home day" of visitors, but Henry's attitude is definitely not apprehensive (B). Though Henry is joyful over his creation, Mrs. Higgins is anything but apathetic. Quite the contrary—she is very interested in Eliza's well-being (C). Anxious does not quite accurately describe Mrs. Higgins's attitude and reverent is perhaps too strong a word to describe Henry's (D). She is aggravated, but he shows minimal signs of disdain in this act (E). **Choice (A) is the best answer here. Henry is delighted to share his creation with his mother and her friends and congratulates himself repeatedly for all of his hard work. He is especially happy at the closing of the act when he recounts to his mother Eliza's abilities as a student, a mimic, and a musician. Mrs. Higgins, in contrast, is completely exasperated with her son throughout the act—first when he interrupts her day and then when he denies any responsibility for what will become of Eliza after he and Pickering are done with her.**

14. When Clara Eynsford Hill first enters, she greets Mrs. Higgins, "How d'you do?" When Freddy enters, he greets everyone with a series of "Ahdedo?" Eliza, of course, greets everyone with the proper, "How do you do?" Still, in this same scene, Mrs. Higgins pronounces the phrase correctly, as do Mrs. Eynsford Hill and even Clara. Thus, since Eliza is not unique in her correct pronunciation, neither (A) nor (C) can be the correct answer. (D) might tempt some, but this simple phrase in and of itself is not sufficient to foreshadow the plan's success. They all greet each other politely; it is the pronunciation, not the etiquette, that is in question (E). **However, since both incorrect pronunciations (one sloppy and one downright inarticulate) are spoken by the representatives of the upper class, and the most correct is pronounced by the sole representative of the lowest class, Shaw is clearly ridiculing upper-class pretension. Thus, (B) is the best answer.**

15. (A) is easily eliminated because even when Higgins does laugh, there is no joy, only derision, in the laughter. (C) might tempt some, but his curt bossiness is a symptom of his character, not the defining trait. Although he expresses some gratitude for having additional people at the "at-home," he is pleased to have additional subjects, not happy for human company (D). (E) might tempt some, but Higgins's early conversation with his mother and the manner in which he describes the Eliza project indicate that he is actually having a very good time. **He is, however, thoroughly preoccupied with the project and on discovering how well Eliza is doing in her transformation into a duchess. If one examines all of his rudeness, his quips about who's there, and his blunt commands to sit down, they are all relative to his anticipation for Eliza's entrance. The at-home, in Higgins's opinion, is merely a backdrop against which he can measure Eliza's progress. Thus, (B) is the best answer.**

16. It certainly cannot be considered "condescending" (A), by any understanding of the word, for a person of noble birth to call others of noble birth "fools." And while Pickering does share some views about the sources and origins of true social respectability and decorum, his tone and manner (again, calling his fellow nobles "fools") does not support the idea that his speech is enlightening (B). To *enervate* (D) means to sap the energy from and does not apply at all in this context. Nor is Pickering being aggravating (E) as everyone within hearing distance—audience included—is likely to agree with him. **By expressing an opinion about how some people who are genteel by birth lack all semblance of refinement and believe it is theirs by nature rather than something they must work to acquire, Pickering has become Shaw's mouthpiece, and he is being didactic. Thus, (C) is the correct answer.**

17. (A) might immediately tempt some students, especially those who focus too much on the fetching of the slippers and Higgins's obliviousness, but when Eliza first enters, we are told that she is tired, and her expression is "almost tragic." Throughout the conversation, Pickering and Higgins both refer to her success—though they do not address her directly—but (A) is an unlikely answer. (C) is also unlikely since, again, both Higgins and Pickering comment on it, and one of the first lines she utters in the scene is "I won your bet for you!" (D) is probably true but does not explain her attitude in this scene. (E) is as unlikely as (A) and (C) since, as illustrated with the slippers and Higgins's instructions to Eliza about the morning tea, this is the role Eliza has come to fill in this household, and nothing in this scene suggests she is unhappy with it. **Once she begins to speak, however, she reveals the cause of her "nearly tragic" expression: "What's to become of me? What's to become of me?" All of her subsequent protestations that Higgins does not care for her, that she is not more important to him than his slippers must be read in the context that, the project being completed, Eliza is no longer certain what her status is in the house or where she is to go, or what she is to do. Thus, (B) is the correct answer.**

18. Eliza enters quietly. She sits quietly. She performs the ritual of fetching Higgins's slippers quietly. She does not speak until she throws Higgins's slippers at him. Some students may read her early attitude as pensive (A), but what follows her throwing the slippers is more focused than what might be considered desperation. While some students may want to call her vehemence at the end of the scene aggressiveness (C), whatever is going on in the beginning of the scene that results in the aggressiveness cannot be considered apathy. Eliza certainly is not resigned (D) at the end of the scene, nor is she despondent (E), which connotes a quieter form of sorrow. **Clearly, however, given the manner in which Eliza throws herself to the floor in sobs as soon as Higgins leaves, the source of her quietness is tension or pent-up anxiety. It finally erupts into tears and sobs and the explosive act of throwing the genuinely clueless Higgins's slippers at him. Thus, (B) is the best answer.**

19. If either (A) or (B) were the correct answer, there would be no irony in the argument. (C) and (D), of course, are not wrong, but they do not address the complexities of their misunderstanding and the actual reason for their quarrel. **The fact is, as the audience most likely realizes, that the achievement of the evening was the result of both Eliza's learning and Higgins' teaching. Yet, since each realizes only his (or her) individual contribution, they quarrel. Thus, (E) is the best answer.**

20. This is a fairly easy question, coming as it does after #18. In the project and now in the aftermath, Higgins has no aspirations; he did it simply for the fun of it. Thus, (B) can be eliminated. (C) might tempt some, but there is no evidence in this passage that either is uncertain what his or her role is—or that either is dissatisfied. Nothing in the passage suggests that Higgins would regard Eliza better if she were a man or that Eliza would resent Higgins less if he were a woman (D). Likewise, in this one instance, neither of them plays the class card, and Higgins, though angry, does not dismiss Eliza as "beneath" him (E). **They do, however, have different assumptions about why the project was successful and what is to happen now that it is over; neither seems aware that the other misunderstands. Thus, (A) is the best answer.**

21. There are moments when Higgins might be eager for Eliza to return, and there is even one moment when he slips into sentimentality (though this may be false sentimentality just to tug at Eliza's heartstrings), but there is no acknowledgment of possible negative consequences if she were not to return, so he cannot be said to be anxious (A). Nor is he really bitter (B); he speaks to Eliza as if he were making a business proposition into which liking or hating did not enter. Higgins is precise in his speech, but he is not cautious (C), again, not in the sense that he fears negative consequences of Eliza's not returning. He cannot be considered benevolent since he offers Eliza no benefit for returning. **The most he offers is "for the fun of it." While students might not immediately agree that Higgins is indifferent to Eliza in this scene, close examination will reveal that he states no reason for wanting her to return other than "for the fun of it." He counters every one of her objections and essentially assumes a "take it or leave it" stance. Thus, (D) is the best answer.**

22. The fact that a gentlewoman and gentleman would consent to attend the wedding of a trash collector (A) who'd come into money (as well as the fact that the trash collector would be inside the gentlewoman's drawing room and feel free to invite her to the wedding) certainly supports a theme of social equality. Doolittle explains that the reason for the bequest was that the benefactor wanted to prove that even the lowest in society could prove themselves worthy if given the chance (C). The reason for Doolittle's marriage (D)—to become respectable—suggests that social respectability is a function of factors that *are* within the individual's control. Higgins's understanding of manners—the same as Pickering's, though Higgins expresses it less gracefully—is that everyone should be treated the same, regardless of social class or economic status. This clearly suggests social equality (E). **There is nothing, however, in Eliza's refusal to return to Higgins's home that speaks to this theme. Her reasons have nothing to do with class or economics but with personal treatment and relationships. Thus (B) is the correct answer.**

23. (B) is not untrue, but Eliza's slip into her old self is very brief and easily explained away, thus it is not a satisfactory answer. (C) is eliminated by the fact that Doolittle has now been "elevated" and in his new capacity no longer represents the cash-poor lower class. Likewise, he is too uncouth, uneducated, and underemployed to satisfactorily represent the middle class. (E) is tempting, but one character from one class alone cannot represent such a complex concept. **He is, however, virtually the mirror image of Higgins—even Higgins recognizes that Doolittle's social theories and lack of snobbery are similar to his own. He is Eliza's father, and Higgins has become something of a surrogate "father,"**

and Eliza has come to despise them both. He displays, however, a level of social etiquette that even Higgins lacks. Thus, (A) is the best answer.

24. Some students might be tempted by (A), as Eliza first says that it is manners and proper behavior that make a lady a lady ("it was from you that I learnt really nice manners; and that is what makes one a lady, isn't it? ... I should never have known that ladies and gentlemen didn't behave like that if you hadn't been there.") and then claims that the difference between a flower girl and a lady is not how she behaves but how she's treated—but neither view is ambiguous. (B) is easily eliminated because Eliza does indeed indicate that there is support for both of her claims in her behavior, Higgins's, and Pickering's. (C) is eliminated by the fact that the entire dialogue is essentially a reasonable explanation of what she means by her claims and how she came to realize them. (D) might tempt some, but there are no stage directions to suggest that Eliza is unemotional—in fact, given the placement of this dialogue in Act V, we know that we are almost at the highest point of the action, and the manner in which Eliza is tormenting Higgins (who is on stage during this dialogue) can hardly be considered without emotion. **There is, however, an inconsistency (E) in her two claims. First she acknowledges that the marks of a lady are her manners and behavior. Later, she claims that it is *not* how a lady behaves but how she's treated. Thus, (E) is the best answer.**

25. There is nothing to support Eliza feeling overjoyed by her conversation with Higgins (B). She is far too assertive in her speech here to be described as nervous, and there is nothing in the stage directions to indicate that she is anxious either (C). Stoic would imply a lack of feeling, which is surely not the case here (E). Students are then left with either (A) or (D). A case could certainly be made for the fact that she is argumentative here, as she has been for the entire scene. **However, the question asks about the <u>conclusion</u> of the scene. She repeatedly states that "you don't care for me," imploring him to say otherwise. She laments that he doesn't seem to notice her and clearly wants Higgins to give her a reason to come back. Eliza is uncharacteristically insecure in this scene; thus, (A) is the correct answer.**

26. Even though Shaw begins by criticizing his readers for their "enfeebled…imaginations" which read romance into every scenario, this outright condemnation cannot be considered "condescending" (A). Bemused (C) does not admit to the passion or vehemence with which Shaw begins his epilogue. If he were resigned (D) to his audience's and reader's ineptitude, he would not have bothered to write the epilogue; nor does he hold back on his disdain for the imagination-less reader, thus eliminating (E). **The word that most closely represents the author's attitude would be exasperated (B). Shaw outright tells us that he wouldn't even need an Epilogue if the readers were paying close enough attention throughout the play. He calls the assumption of romance "unbearable" and goes into great detail to prove how logical the outcome of Eliza marrying Freddy is if only the audience had been watching and listening more closely.**

27. Shaw uses the word *transfiguration* to name the process by which Eliza went from flower girl to "Duchess," and Nell Gwynne went from selling oranges to being hailed by royalty. Clearly "alteration" (A) is not a powerful enough word for such a change. (B) might tempt some, but it too is rather vague and perhaps too weak. Certainly, it is not the best of the

five choices. (C) and (E) might also tempt some, since clearly the potential for whatever Eliza and Nell Gwynne became was within them from the very beginning, but even these are not the strongest choices to describe the process. **The process by which the Liza at the beginning of the play became the Eliza at the end of the play can best be compared to the process by which a tadpole becomes a frog or a caterpillar becomes a butterfly—the transformation is complete, and a completely new creature is created, but the potential for the transformation is present from the very beginning. Thus, (D) is the best answer.**

28. Shaw writes of Nell Gwynne, "Such transfigurations have been achieved by hundreds of resolutely ambitious young women since Nell Gwynne set them the example by playing queens and fascinating kings in the theatre in which she began by selling oranges." There is no suggestion that she is a fictional character (A). That she may have been a model for Eliza is entirely possible, but this is not the strongest answer. The passage presents no reason to doubt (D), but it also does not present a reason in support. (E) might tempt some careless students, but to know it as the correct answer would require additional information about Shaw that cannot be gleaned from the passage. **Because Shaw does not offer any appositional information, we can infer that the readers of his time and place would recognize the name. He then specifies that Ms. Gwynne "play[ed] queens and fascinate[ed] kings in the theatre." Thus, (C) is the only possible answer.**

29. Finances (A) are certainly a factor in the ongoing relationship, but they are not the only factor, and Shaw does tell us of a time when Eliza and Freddy no longer need financial assistance. (B) is certainly true, but it is vague and does not really communicate the full nature of their relationship. (C) is easily eliminated by all indications of Eliza and Freddy's marriage being happy. We are also explicitly told that Eliza never even really *likes* Higgins. (D), like (A), is perhaps a single facet of the relationship, but does not define the whole. **(E) is clearly the best answer. Eliza becomes a fixture in the household, free to come and go as she pleases. She nags Higgins; they enjoy Sunday dinners and weekends in the country together; she seeks and heeds their advice—in short, they have become a sort of family.**

30. Students may not even have realized that this observation is either an oxymoron or a paradox until they read this question. Once they consider the apparently-contradictory-but-true nature of the statement, however, they should realize that the contrast is not between indifference and infatuation but between Higgins and "commoner souls." (A) is easily excluded because the entire passage makes it clear that Eliza is *not* infatuated with Higgins. This choice also does not address the actual comparison. (B) might tempt some because it does address the actual nature of the oxymoron, but it is too vague and general. The observation is about a specific emotion, not Higgins's entire emotional spectrum. (D) does not address the true comparison of the observation. (E) is incorrect in the same senses that (A) is. The observation is Eliza's but not *about* Eliza. In this one instance, her feelings are essentially irrelevant. **Shaw is telling us that if one examines the contrast between Higgins's well-established passion and other people's professed feelings, one will discover that Higgins's indifference carries more regard and affection than a normal person's infatuation. Higgins is *that passionate* a person. Thus, (C) is the best answer.**

Pygmalion

Preface

1. Explain what Shaw means in saying that "English is not accessible even to Englishmen." What other major points about the English's attitude towards language does the author expound upon?

   Shaw maintains that there are so many varied dialects in England that even the English often cannot understand one another. He says that they have no respect for the language, they don't teach their children to speak properly, and that they spell so poorly that they couldn't possibly teach themselves how to speak by reading. By way of social commentary, Shaw further states that "it is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him." Because social standing is a function of language, the English form an immediate judgmental impression based on the dialect people speak.

2. What is Shaw's explanation for the creation of the character of Henry Higgins? In what ways does Higgins both parallel and differ from Henry Sweet, whom Shaw greatly admired?

   Though Higgins is not meant to be a portrait of Henry Sweet, the phonetician Shaw greatly admired, Shaw says that there are elements of Sweet in Higgins and throughout the play as a whole. Higgins shares Sweet's passion for the science of language and his condescension towards those who do not appreciate or understand his craft. Though Higgins lacks common decency at times, he does not seem to share Sweet's "Satanic contempt" for those who underrate his profession or lack intellectual originality.

3. What reason does Shaw give for having written the play?

   Shaw says that he became interested in the subject of language and phonetics towards the end of the 1870s. He sees the artist's role as that of a teacher who makes his or her work "intensely and deliberately didactic." For those who argue that art should never be didactic, Shaw maintains that art should never be anything else.

Act I

1. Consider the narrative perspective from which the play is told. What is both predictable and unique about the narration?

   Because the genre is that of a play, there is the predictable format of the separate acts, dialogue, and the author's description of any action taking place or notable changes in the setting. What is unique is that Shaw imposes commentary on the characters and the action, particularly with respect to the Flower Girl. The reader, then, does not simply get the impartial, "The Flower Girl moves stage left under the portico … the Note Taker comes forward on her right … The Gentleman hands her three halfpence." Instead, the author informs us that the Flower Girl is "not at all an attractive person … Her hair needs washing rather badly" and that "she needs the services of a dentist." The Gentleman is "of the amiable military type," and the Note Taker is "overbearing but good-humored." These insertions by the author help a reader understand the characters in a way that would be revealed visually to the theater patron.

2. What is the reader's immediate impression of the Mother, the Daughter, and Freddy? Characterize their relationships as seen in the opening of the play.

   Though they are dry and under St Paul's portico, the Daughter and the Mother are full of complaints about the weather and Freddy's inability to get them a cab in the pouring rain. The Daughter complains about being chilled to the bone and chastises Freddy for having no "gumption." And though he comes back completely drenched, having run all about the city, they both accuse him of not having tried hard enough. His mother calls him "helpless" and his sister says he is a "selfish pig." Despite the torrent of insults from his family, Freddy unobjectionably returns to his task of finding a cab, however unappreciated his efforts are. At this point in the play, his sister and mother seem like helpless complainers and he an affable gentleman.

3. What is the significance of the author's comment that "her features are no worse than theirs" when comparing the Flower Girl to the Mother and Daughter? What other earlier comment does it parallel and why?

   The author describes at length how unattractive the Flower Girl is. She is excessively dirty, her hair needs to be washed, and she is dressed in a shoddy coat, skirt, and boots. The fact that Shaw then notes that her "features are no worse than theirs" in reference to the Mother and Daughter is an interesting distinction of class. The Flower Girl's features are similar but "their condition leaves something to be desired." She does not have the money or the resources that the Mother and Daughter clearly have and so cannot possibly appear to be as refined as they do. This hearkens back to the earlier comment that the Flower Girl is "no doubt as clean as she can afford to be." The Mother and Daughter, though no more fundamentally attractive than the Flower Girl, have the advantage of wealth to enhance their appearance.

4. How and why does the Mother's behavior differ from her Daughter's when confronting the Flower Girl about knowing her son's name? Ultimately, though, how are their attitudes actually similar?

   The Mother initially appears magnanimous in her actions and speech towards the Flower Girl. She merely asks how she knows Freddy's name and then argues with her Daughter about replacing the money the Flower Girl lost for the flowers ruined when colliding with Freddy. The Mother even insists that the girl keep the change, much to her daughter's dismay. However, immediately following her charitable gesture, she again presses the Flower Girl as to how she knows her son's name and more forcefully insists, "Don't try to deceive me." It is now clear to the reader that the Mother's gesture was merely one of bribery to get the information she wanted. She clearly cannot bear the thought of her son consorting with such a person as the Flower Girl. Though she outwardly appears to have far better manners than her Daughter, their attitudes are actually entirely the same.

5. Why does the Bystander tell the Flower Girl, "You be careful: give him a flower for it"? What is the fundamental misunderstanding and assumption being made in this scene? What is her reaction?

   The Bystander has noticed a man (Higgins) furiously taking notes behind the pillar and assumes that he is a cop or an informant ready to arrest the Flower Girl for prostitution. By advising her to give the Gentleman (Pickering) a flower, he is trying to help her remedy the situation so that she does not look like she is trying to sell herself. The Flower Girl repeatedly insists that she is a respectable girl and fears that they will slander her good reputation and "take away [her] character" just for speaking to gentlemen on the street.

6. Analyze Higgins's initial interactions with the Flower Girl. What does his attitude seem to be towards her?

   He calls her a "silly girl," tells her to shut up twice, and refers to her speech as "noise." His attitude is condescending at best and malicious at worst. Higgins does not seem to think that she is even worth considering seriously as a fellow human being and sees no reason to treat her with common decency or respect.

7. What societal stereotypes are revealed in the Bystander twice noting Higgins's boots?

   Despite all other evidence to the contrary, the Bystander insists there's no way that Higgins could be a cop due to the caliber of his boots, which denote the finances and social standing of a "gentleman." No policeman could afford such boots and no gentleman would wear boots suitable for a policeman since such a profession would be below his societal rank.

8. For what reason(s) might the author have included the commentary that the Bystander is "inept at definition"?

In contrast to Higgins, who seems to have a wealth of knowledge and ideas, the Bystander, is instead "inept at definition." The act proceeds with numerous references to class differences in wealth, dress, and education, and this is yet another example. Higgins does not understand the "copper's nark" slang any more than the Bystander can understand Higgins's ability to pinpoint people's origins from the sounds of their language.

9. Why is the Flower Girl so concerned with whether or not Higgins "took [her] down right" when recording what she said?

Far from convinced that she is out of trouble with the law, the Flower Girl insists on seeing what Higgins wrote about her to verify if it is a true rendering of the events on the street. It should be clear to the reader that someone of her means would be exposed to many unjust situations in which those with wealth and power are able to manipulate and take advantage of people like her who have no social standing. She is, then, understandably cynical and suspicious of Higgins.

10. At what point does the reader get a clear indication of what Higgins does for a living? Note the author's word choice in his references towards Higgins's actions and reactions as his profession is displayed to the crowd. What does the crowd initially think Higgins does professionally? What does he actually do?

Higgins first reveals his livelihood when he says, "And how are all your people down at Selsey?" He is so confident in his estimation of locale that even when the Bystander does not immediately concur, Higgins arrogantly says, "Never you mind. They did." Higgins then proceeds to conjecture correctly as to the origins of the other bystanders. Pickering speculates that Higgins is some kind of entertainer but he actually schools wealthy clients who want to erase any linguistic trace of their poorer backgrounds by learning how to speak like the aristocratic class.

11. Compare and contrast the varying reactions of the crowd to Higgins. How do the Flower Girl's reactions compare to those of the crowd in general? Those of the Mother and Daughter?

Initially there is some suspicion amongst the crowd and resentment that he is "meddling," but those sentiments are quickly replaced by excitement and admiration. The Flower Girl is suspicious throughout and still brooding over her lost flowers, the misunderstanding with Pickering, and her potentially sullied reputation. The Mother is fascinated while her Daughter, still upset about being caught in the rain, cannot even muster politeness. She reprimands Higgins and commands him not to speak to her. The wealth denoted by his boots seems of little consequence to her, perhaps because she has not even noticed them due to her self-centered quest to hail a cab.

12. Reflect on the role of the weather in this act with reference to action, character development, and themes.

Shaw makes a narrative and structural choice in using a sudden storm as the impetus for these diverse people to be trapped in a confined area together. One cannot think of any other circumstance where a linguist (Higgins), a wealthy gentleman (Pickering), a disdainful flower girl, and members of London's middle and lower classes would otherwise be brought together. The downpour's inception and termination provide a framework for the development of the play's action, the introduction of its main and minor characters, as well as the establishment of several themes: appearance versus reality, manners and morality, and social standing as a function of language.

13. Explain the significance of the Flower Girl's assertions about Higgins's conduct and her character: "He's no right to take away my character. My character is the same to me as any lady's."

Still brooding over her hurt feelings, the Flower Girl astutely proclaims two things which indicate her moral character. She first claims that Higgins has no right to take away her character and vilify her reputation just because he is more educated and has more money. Secondly, she has the confidence to assert that her character is the same as anyone else's, that her reputation, though worthless by some people's standards, means just as much to her as it would to a genteel lady.

14. What is the overall effect of the Flower Girl's musings interspersed with Higgins's and Pickering's conversation at the end of Act I?

Shaw seems to be making a commentary on the attitude of indifference that the educated upper class have towards the uneducated lower class. The Flower Girl repeatedly insists that she is a respectable girl who has been wrongly accused and bullied for no reason. Neither Higgins nor Pickering seems to take notice of her at all as they banter on about the importance of phonetics. The reader can see that the plight and feelings of a poor and dirty flower girl hold no weight in the face of such lofty discussions. When Higgins does finally take notice of her, it is only to further insult her.

15. Analyze Higgins's views expressed in his speech: "A woman who utters such depressing…" through "like a bilious pigeon." What fundamental contradiction exists in his argument here?

Higgins yet again insults the Flower Girl's speech as "depressing" and "disgusting," but his slanderous comments become increasingly more malicious as he claims that anyone who would utter such sounds "has no right to be anywhere – no right to live."

However, Higgins contradicts this attitude in also acknowledging that she is a "human being with a soul," though nothing in his words or actions thus far would indicate that he believes that.

16. Analyze what we know about the Flower Girl's character and her view of the world as presented so far.

Physically, we are told that she is "not at all an attractive person," her "mousy" colored hair "needs washing rather badly" and that "she needs the services of a dentist." Her clothes and boots are shoddy and ill-fitting and her speech is "unintelligible outside London." Given all of this information, it is interesting to note how assertive she is in her livelihood and how confident she is that her character is fundamentally the same as "any lady's." She does not appear to be intimidated by those who have a higher social standing and proclaims her "right to be here if I like, same as you" to Higgins. Though Higgins may think her insolent and defiant, the reader sees an emerging portrait of a self-assured, though unrefined, rebellious woman who can hold her own in any situation. Students can assume that these traits will likely serve her well in future acts.

17. What role does coincidence play in the closing of this act?

The Gentleman turns out to be Colonel Pickering, author of "Spoken Sanscrit," and the Note Taker is Henry Higgins, author of "Higgins's Universal Alphabet." Coincidentally, the men are admirers of each other's work. In fact, Higgins was on his way to India to meet Pickering, and Pickering had come to London to meet Higgins. The rain storm itself provides for the overall coincidence of these characters with diverse dialects coming together in one place, providing the two scholars with ample opportunity to discuss their craft.

18. What purpose does the ringing of the church clock serve? Discuss the significance of the author alluding to Higgins's "Pharisaic want."

Higgins does allow the Flower Girl a brief reprieve from his condescending spite at the closing of the act when the church bells remind him of God and his duty towards humanity. Like the Pharisees with Jesus, Higgins's desire to help the Flower Girl is self-serving and hypocritical since he is using her speech to further his own work. The bells metaphorically scold him for his behavior, and he "solemnly" throws a handful of coins into her basket.

19. What point in this act could be considered the "inciting incident" which will dictate the course of the rest of the play?

It may be difficult for students to answer this without first reading the following acts, but the inciting incident would be when Higgins tells Pickering: "Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party." He will subsequently do just that later in the play, but students have no way of knowing at this point under what circumstances Higgins will even see the Flower Girl again. However, many students familiar with the story already, and even many who are not, will be able to address this question correctly.

Act II

1. What is the significance of the description of the setting at the beginning of Act II? What do these details reveal about Higgins?

   Though much of the description is just meant to set the stage, there are several key articles in the room which help further illuminate Higgins's character. As befits someone of his profession, he has numerous objects related to sound: a phonograph, a laryngoscope, organ pipes, and tuning-forks. He is clearly a man committed to the science of his craft as the life-size image of the human head's vocal cords would suggest. The room seems free of extraneous or fanciful décor which is consistent with what we know of Higgins so far. Perhaps most telling is the lack of any paintings. The author specifically tells the reader: "No paintings," as if to reveal an important truth about the man dwelling in these quarters. Instead, there are only etchings and engravings. This, perhaps, parallels Higgins's own quest to transform people into better or more vibrant versions of themselves much as the artist does with the copper and steel plates in creating a work of art.

2. What seemingly inconsequential detail revealed at the end of Act I becomes pertinent in Act II?

   At the close of Act I, Higgins gives Pickering his home address. This becomes an important fact in this act because it is the only way in which Eliza would have been able to find the professor to seek his help.

3. Compare and contrast Shaw's descriptions of Henry Higgins in Act I and the beginning of Act II. What portrait is the reader given of his nature? Consider the extent to which the reader's perceptions of Higgins are therefore different than the audience's perceptions.

   In the previous act, Shaw describes Higgins as "overbearing but good-humored" and "wholly preoccupied" with his work and his performance for the crowd. At the start of Act II, we are informed of several more revealing character traits. He is "heartily, even violently" interested in his scientific subjects while "careless about himself and other people." He is like a "very impetuous baby" who requires constant attention and a watchful eye to prevent "unintended mischief." Like a child, he fluctuates between "genial bullying" and "stormy petulance" when things do not go his way. The author's final note in the opening is perhaps the most significant—that he remains likeable "even in his least reasonable moments" due to his frankness and lack of genuine malice.

   Students should be made aware of the fact that while the <u>reader</u> is informed outright of Higgins's personality in this opening, the <u>theater-goer</u> must come to these conclusions through the action and dialogue of the play. This is an important distinction and could be the basis of an interesting discussion or essay.

4. What significant information do we learn about Eliza's character in Act II?

She is a proud woman and does not want handouts. Though her monetary offer to Higgins is comical to him, she believes that it is a fair price given her meager income. She has no mother, and her father did almost nothing to help raise her except to give her "a lick of a strap now and again." Her mother was never married to her father, though Eliza does not know this. It was her sixth stepmother who turned her out, though Doolittle is not actually married to her either. Despite her father being a drunken vagabond, she does not drink and appears to be a hard worker. Her repetition that she is "like any lady" and "a good girl," as she stated in Act I, shows a confidence in her overall worth, but she also knows that she needs help to get ahead professionally and is motivated to do so. The one area in which she seems to lack self-assurance is romance. When Higgins assures her that men will be lining up to marry her after he is done training her, her only response is, "Whood marry me?"

5. Higgins's reaction to Eliza's arrival suggests what about his character? How does Pickering's reaction differ?

Having assumed he would have another new subject to study, Higgins is visibly disappointed to see Eliza enter the room since he has already extensively recorded the dialect from her region of Lisson Grove. He thinks of her only in terms of what he can gain from the relationship professionally and seems to have no regard for common decency as he tells her: "Be off with you. I don't want you." In contrast, Pickering is touched by her "innocent vanity" and "consequential air" and straightens himself accordingly as he had already done in the presence of Mrs. Pearce. Regardless of her social class, Pickering sees a lady in front of him and uses the manners appropriate for that occasion by calling her "my girl" and courteously offering her a seat.

6. Higgins refers to Liza as "this baggage". What does the use of this metaphor reveal about his attitude?

Higgins does not ask what her name is, nor does he even care, instead referring to her as "this baggage." The metaphor suggests that she is merely a burdensome piece of trash to be disposed of, and the use of the pronoun "this" gives the metaphor a particularly harsh connotation. She is neither person nor gender and is therefore of no consequence to Higgins, and he suggests throwing her out the window as you would a piece of garbage.

7. What is it that Eliza wants, and why does she need Higgins's help? Why is Higgins so intrigued by Eliza's offer? What does he offer her in return? Yet what is significant about the tone of his offer?

Liza wants to be a lady in a flower shop instead of having to sell on a street corner, but they will not hire her unless she can sound like a genteel lady. She comically offers Higgins a shilling per lesson since he is only teaching English, a language she already knows. When Higgins computes the mathematics of her offer when compared with her income, he becomes increasingly more excited at the idea since it is the equivalent of a millionaire offering him two-fifths of his salary. He claims that within six months he will be able to pass her off anywhere as a true lady. She will have clothes and taxis and chocolates and a place to live as long as she works hard and doesn't give him any trouble. Though this is an extraordinary offer on the surface, Higgins spares no opportunity to denigrate her feelings and malign everything about her character and physical appearance. She is solely an experiment in his estimation and is therefore undeserving of any common courtesy.

8. Describe the nature of the relationship between Mrs. Pearce and Henry Higgins. What dramatic purpose does she ultimately serve in terms of character and theme?

Though Mrs. Pearce is Higgins's housekeeper, she also appears to be somewhat of a moral compass for him as well and speaks freely about his deplorable habits and behaviors. And despite her apparent disgust at Eliza's initial entrance, it is she who brings a central question before her employer: "What is to become of her when you've finished your teaching?"

Aside from being an instrumental character in her own right, Shaw also uses her for the dramatic purpose of revealing pivotal information about Higgins. There would not be time in a stage play to illustrate all of Higgins's habits and idiosyncrasies to the audience, but it is crucial that the audience understand these facets of his character. As was stated earlier, the theater audience does not have the benefit of the author's comments at the opening of the act. Therefore, Mrs. Pearce becomes Shaw's vehicle to reveal Higgins's total disregard for other people's feelings, his lack of proper manners, and his incessant swearing. And it is she who ultimately reveals the major theme of the play of moral responsibility.

9. Compare and contrast Higgins's, Pickering's, and Mrs. Pearce's attitudes toward Eliza and the experiment. How do their differing opinions reveal important themes in the play?

With very little exception, Higgins's attitude towards Eliza is condescending and downright cruel at times. He treats her as "baggage," not as a human being, and is only concerned with proving to Pickering what he can do professionally with such a lost cause as Eliza. It is a fanciful game to him and no more, and he claims that Eliza hasn't "any feelings [he, Pickering, and Mrs. Pearce] need to bother about" and that "when [he is] done with her, [he, Pickering, and Mrs. Pearce] can throw her back in the gutter."

While Pickering is indeed interested in seeing if Higgins can achieve his goal of making Eliza into a lady, he is far more sensitive to her feelings and treats her like a worthwhile person. He agrees with Mrs. Pearce that Eliza must be a part of the process and entirely aware of what she is doing and why. He questions Higgins as to whether or not he is "a man of good character where women are concerned" because he has seen much evidence to the contrary in Higgins's dealings with Eliza.

As a conscientious housekeeper, Mrs. Pearce's primary concern is to shield her employer from distractions such as Eliza. Though initially appalled by Eliza's intrusive manner, her dress, and her poor etiquette, Mrs. Pearce has a change of heart when she realizes that her boss's attitude towards the experiment is supremely short-sighted, and she reminds him that he "can't walk over everybody like this," as he normally does, and that it is his moral responsibility to consider the effect this will have on Eliza.

10. Read the following speech, which Higgins gives concerning his intentions toward Eliza, and then assess whether Higgins is sincere.

> I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

Students may differ in their opinions as to the sincerity of Higgins's speech. Particularly if viewed in the context of what comes both before and after this speech, however, it is difficult for most readers to believe that he is being honest when nothing thus far has indicated the charitable personality displayed briefly here. Prior to this he has systematically insulted and dismissed Eliza, and after this, he manipulates her with promises with no regard for what happens at the end of the six months. Viewed in this light, Higgins is then only concerned with proving his professional worth to Pickering.

11. How does Higgins attempt to manipulate Eliza when she decides to leave? Why does it work? Is this an indication that Eliza's perspective is changing? Why or why not?

When Higgins senses that Eliza is going to abandon their arrangement, with a "twinkle of mischief" he offers her chocolates, unlimited taxis, jewels, a beautiful home, fine food, and the money to start her own shop. He then tries another tactic of giving her orders and sarcastically tells her that if she does not behave, she will sleep in the kitchen and have her head cut off by the King. Eliza becomes preoccupied with trying to decipher what in Higgins's speech was true and what was not as Mrs. Pearce shuttles her out of the room. It is likely that Eliza's perspective has not simply changed but instead that she is just overwhelmed and confused by the whole situation and is still anxious to reach her goal of working in a proper flower shop. She came to Higgins's for a few speech lessons and is now going to be living with him and is part of a complicated wager.

12. Discuss the author's use of irony in Act II and what it reveals about the characters involved in each instance.

There are numerous examples of both verbal and dramatic irony in Act II. Some of them are as follows:

Unschooled in the politics of the upper class, Eliza ironically believes that just because she is offering Higgins a fair wage he is obligated to treat her respectfully and honor her request.

Eliza tells Higgins, "Well, if you were a gentleman, you might ask me to sit down." The irony presented with this comment is that for the rest of the act, Higgins proves himself to be no gentleman in manners or in speech, despite his beautiful home, his fancy clothes, and his lucrative career.

When Higgins says how "horribly dirty" she is—referring not just to her physical self but to her lowly station in society—Eliza takes his comment literally and retorts with, "I washed my face and hands afore I come," showing her naiveté about the class system.

Higgins is terribly judgmental about other people's speech and manners, yet has abhorrent habits himself.

When Doolittle arrives, Higgins tells Pickering that they will "get something interesting out of him." Pickering assumes he means about Eliza but Higgins is thinking only of his dialect studies.

Doolittle poses as a protective father when he is really only there to try to get money. When Higgins tells him he brought up his daughter too strictly, the unintended irony of Doolittle's reply is comical: "Me! I never brought her up at all, except to give her a lick of a strap now and again."

Doolittle attempts to commiserate with Higgins by saying, "You and me is men of the world, ain't we?" It is ironic both because he believes they have anything in common and because they are from two entirely different worlds.

Doolittle wants only five pounds in exchange for his daughter. When he is offered ten, he declines, saying that it would make a man "feel prudent like; and then goodbye to happiness." He believes that more money would actually make his life worse by causing him to become one of the "deserving poor."

13. What is Higgins's attitude towards women in general? Why is it important for the reader to understand this aspect of his character?

He finds women difficult, jealous, exacting, and suspicious and feels that his behavior is selfish and tyrannical when he tries to be friends with a woman. He believes that women upset everything and prevent him from reaching his own goals. Higgins proclaims himself "a confirmed old bachelor, and likely to remain so." Though some readers may hope that his protestations will eventually lead to a romantic connection with Eliza, there is nothing in the text so far to indicate that this will happen, and students should be aware of that.

14. What do we learn from the author's description of Alfred Doolittle? Contrast this initial impression with what we learn about him in the scene that follows. What pivotal pieces of information do we learn about his relationship with Eliza?

Shaw reveals that Alfred Doolittle is a vigorous dustman clad in his profession's uniform, that he seems "free from fear and conscience," and that he unreservedly vents his feelings. The most telling detail presented by the author prior to Doolittle's entrance is the phrase "his present pose," suggesting that the "wounded honor" and "stern resolution" are actually a manufactured farce; we find this to be entirely true in the subsequent scene. Readers would expect an irate, protective father coming to his daughter's rescue, but it is just the opposite. Even if students miss the "pose" word choice here, they will plainly see Doolittle's attitude only a few lines later in his reaction to Higgins's insistence that he take Eliza away. It is clear in the scene which follows that Eliza and her father have no relationship at all and that he is only there to bribe Higgins for a mere pittance so he and "the missus" can go on a drinking spree. He had turned Eliza out two years previous to go and earn her own living and admits to Higgins that he had almost no role in her upbringing other than to beat her occasionally. She wants nothing to do with him and says he is a liar, a thief, and a drunk.

15. Examine the complex yet humorous argument raised by Higgins and Doolittle's discussion of social morality and the "undeserving poor." What is so ironic about Doolittle's attitude?

When his plot to blackmail Higgins fails, Doolittle initially feigns offense before basically offering to sell his daughter for five pounds. Higgins becomes increasingly more impressed with Doolittle's inventive way of thinking, as Eliza's father admits that he is of the "undeserving poor" but wishes for some consideration along with the "deserving poor" who everyone is always trying to help. He feels that middle-class morality prevents him from going on an occasional drinking spree. Ironically, when Higgins offers him ten pounds instead of the five that he asked for, Doolittle declines, explaining that ten pounds is too much and would entail too much responsibility; all he wants is enough to go on a binge before he returns to work on Monday so he can earn more money "same as if [he had] never had it." He assures Higgins, "You couldn't spend it better."

16. Compare and contrast Eliza and her father's attitudes towards the class system.

Whereas Alfred Doolittle is content to be part of the "undeserving poor," Eliza longs to join the respectable middle class and appear to be a proper lady in her own shop. She is willing to work towards her goal while her father wants nothing more than to live from week to week getting drunk and carousing between meager paychecks.

17. For what reason does Higgins start to call Liza "Eliza"? How is this related to a prevalent theme in the play?

Higgins, having committed to his task of producing a true lady, begins calling Liza "Eliza" as the first step towards his goal. He knows that names hold great meaning in terms of class and status and that Eliza is a far more refined and distinguished name than Liza, which is a lower-class nickname. This idea ties to the themes of class distinction and social standing as a function of language—in this case, names.

18. Examine three peripheral references to the Pygmalion myth in Act II and reflect on the significance in each case.

Aside from the obvious reference to the Pygmalion myth in the wager between Higgins and Pickering, there are several other peripheral references as well. As mentioned earlier in the description of the setting at the opening of Act II, Higgins has no paintings but only etchings and engravings. The artist takes a piece of copper or steel and transforms it into a thing of beauty, much as Pygmalion did with Galatea. Higgins tells Pickering that women "might as well be blocks of wood"—again, a reference to an object that can be shaped and molded to create a work of art. And finally, similar to his aim with Eliza, Higgins professes to Pickering that if given three months, he could ensure Doolittle's choice of a seat in the Cabinet or a pulpit.

Act III

1. What role does coincidence play in Act III? Why is the coincidence important to the play's narrative? And is the coincidence a believable one? Why or why not?

Shaw has manufactured the coincidence of the Eynsford Hill family coming to Mrs. Higgins's "at-home day" for tea. This provides Higgins, who does not recognize them (another coincidence), with the opportunity to test Eliza's progress with a proper audience. Not only does Higgins not recognize them, but they do not recognize him or Eliza either. Though the audience has no choice but to go along with these bizarre coincidences and enjoy the comical scene which follows, objectively speaking, it is not entirely believable since there is no explanation given as to why these people are in Mrs. Higgins's house and how she came to meet them in the first place. It is what would be termed "the willing suspension of disbelief," and is a common practice in both comedic and dramatic plays, particularly during the time period in which Shaw was writing.

2. Examine the relationship between Higgins and his mother and the role she plays in his life. What are her primary character traits?

   The fact that Higgins comes to his mother for help and advice suggests that he respects her opinion deeply since he arrogantly considers himself to be such an expert at his craft. He even admits to her that his "idea of a loveable woman is something as like you as possible." She is intelligent, liberal-minded, and compassionate in a way that her son lacks. Though she chastises him for his ill-mannered behaviors and scolds him for coming on a day when she will be entertaining guests which he might offend, it is clear that she adores him as well. Similar to Mrs. Pearce, she seems to be his moral compass, reminding him that his work with Eliza presents a future problem for the girl, who will acquire "the manners and habits that disqualify a fine lady from earning her own living without giving her a fine lady's income."

3. Explore the theme of feminism and the ideal woman as presented in Act III.

   Higgins claims that all women other than his mother are "idiots." He safely puts his mother on a pedestal as the ideal woman, knowing that no woman will ever measure up. His experiment with Eliza is, in some sense, a test of his ability to create the ideal woman without the emotional attachment present with his mother. He finds Eliza useful because she knows where his things are, remembers appointments, and can entertain him and Pickering with her astounding mimicry and music. His mother grows increasingly more frustrated with her son, and with Pickering, as the act progresses because they are thinking only of the scientific experiment and not of the potential repercussions for Eliza. Eliza is their "live doll"—a plaything to be discarded. Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Pearce represent Eliza's feminist interests, though their assertions fall on the deaf ears of the "two infinitely stupid male creatures." The act closes with the men trailing after their work of art as Mrs. Higgins exclaims, "Oh men! men!! men!!!"

4. What do the two subjects Higgins tells Eliza she is allowed to discuss suggest about the mentality of the upper class? How does Mrs. Higgins's version of what is considered appropriate conversation differ?

   Higgins tells Eliza that she may only discuss the weather and everybody's health. These are "safe" topics which present no opportunity to assert opinions or cause conflict, thus supporting Higgins's belief that members of the upper class care only to discuss superficial matters. His mother corrects his notion and tells him that he is silly for his notion of what is appropriate drawing room conversation. She is clearly a woman who will assert her opinions on any manner of subjects, and she is appalled that her son would not only limit Eliza's subject matter but also that the two topics he picks deal with "our insides" and "our outsides."

5. In bringing Eliza to Mrs. Higgins's house, what critical perspective is Higgins hoping his mother can provide that he cannot seem to manage on his own? What is his mother's evaluation of Eliza? And what irony is present in this situation?

   Higgins realizes that Eliza's correct pronunciation is not enough to pass her off as a genteel lady. She also must be aware of <u>what</u> she is pronouncing correctly. Though proud of his phonetic accomplishments with Eliza, his asking for his mother's opinion does suggest a slight insecurity over how Eliza is progressing. Mrs. Higgins confirms her son's misgivings in saying that he is crazy to think that Eliza "doesn't give herself away in every sentence she utters." The irony of this situation is that a man with manners only appropriate for a "canal barge," as his mother declares, is attempting to train Eliza to be a true lady. His limited perspective manifests itself in the absurd content of her speech.

6. Compare and contrast Clara and her mother in terms of their actions, reactions, and their overall attitudes. What is the primary difference between mother and daughter?

   Mrs. Eynsford Hill is described as having the "habitual anxiety of straitened means" and admits to Mrs. Higgins that she and her daughter are actually quite poor. She finds it stressful to pose continually as part of the genteel class whereas her daughter feels entitled and is "very much at home in society." Mrs. Eynsford Hill's manners are polite and apologetic while Clara's behavior towards Higgins fluctuates between dismissing him and considering him "quite eligible matrimonially." She is fascinated with Eliza, whom she considers to be someone to emulate, and mimics her "small talk," assuming that if a woman as refined as Eliza is using it, then it must be the appropriate thing to do. She is concerned with appearances and insists that they must leave as they have "three at homes to go to still," though her mother later tells Mrs. Higgins that "she gets so few parties." Clara considers herself to be liberal and modern, wishing that "people would only be frank and say what they really think," while her mother longs for the days of old-fashioned values and manners.

7. Contemplate the significance of Higgins's reaction to the landscape outside his mother's window and what it says about his character. Compare the settings of their two homes as described by the author and reflect on the subsequent character traits those settings would indicate.

   Higgins looks out his mother's window at the river and the flowers in Battersea Park, a scene which would inspire most people to sigh in wonder. Higgins, instead, views the landscape as only a "frozen desert." He has no time or patience for reveling in the beauty of nature because the wonder of science is both his profession and obsessive hobby. His home, as assessed in Act II, befits a bachelor interested only in furthering his work, not in décor. In contrast, his mother's drawing room exudes ornate taste in furniture and fanciful art. Her home is absent of the "useless things" cluttering her son's home. Whereas his home is functional, her home is formal and reflects refined and exquisite taste. These are the contrasting character traits the reader sees in the remainder of Act III.

8. Mrs. Higgins tells her son, "You are the life and soul of the Royal Society's soirees; but really you're rather trying on more commonplace occasions." What does she mean by this statement and how is it tied to any major themes in the play?

   Mrs. Higgins is reiterating the point that her son is an expert in his field and entirely engaging and respectful when surrounded by fellow scholars but that in social situations of any other kind, he falls drastically short. His intellect prevents him from being a decent human being, a fact of which he seems only dimly aware. This is tied to two major themes in the play: science versus emotion and the importance of manners, regardless of social standing.

9. Discuss the varying reactions to Eliza and her performance. What is inherently humorous about this scene? What is the irony of Higgins's own performance in this scene?

   Clara "devours" Eliza with her eyes, and Freddy is equally infatuated. Mrs. Eynsford Hill, though polite, is startled by Eliza's story about her aunt even after Higgins insists that Eliza's vernacular is just "the new small talk." Despite their varying responses to Eliza, they all genuinely believe that she is a lady. Mrs. Higgins, however, finds her wholly unpresentable in "every sentence she utters." The contrast between the perfect diction Eliza uses and the vulgar content of the story about her aunt's health produces an absurdly incongruous and humorous result. Ironically, Higgins is testing his subject on the propriety of her own manners when he himself has exhibited extremely objectionable manners himself.

10. What is Higgins's attitude towards his mother's guests, and what does it reveal about his character?

    Twice, Higgins thinks he recognizes the Hill family, and twice he gives up trying to remember them, dismissing the notion with the sentiment that "it doesn't matter anyhow." To him, it does not matter if he has ever met them, and they do not matter to him as his mother's guests except in terms of giving Eliza the opportunity to illustrate his scientific progress.

11. How does Act III further illuminate the theme of appearance versus reality?

    There are numerous examples of this theme in Act III which students might address: Eliza, though she appears wealthy and refined and speaks with great precision, cannot disguise who she is because of what she says. Mrs. Eynsford Hill, though she attends at-homes and struggles to appear of the genteel class, actually has no money. Clara, though she believes herself to be sophisticated and "up to date," is totally unaware of how foolish she actually looks. And Higgins, though a scholar with an irreproachable reputation in his field, has no manners himself.

12. Explain the irony of "the new small talk" and how it reflects on the themes of class distinction and manners.

When Eliza uses the phrase "it done her in" to explain her aunt's death, Higgins quickly explains her crass slang by convincing the Eynsford Hills that it is "the new small talk." Because they are of a lesser class and are in the presence of people whom they admire, they believe Higgins's absurd claim, and Clara even commits to using it. This shows the upper class's ability to set trends and control societal expectations of presentable manners merely because they are of a higher social standing.

13. Compare and contrast the portrait of Eliza in Act III versus the previous two acts. Reflect on both the outward and the inward changes apparent in her demeanor and dialogue.

For the Eynsford Hills not even to recognize Eliza, the contrast in her appearance and speech must be suitably dramatic. She is "exquisitely dressed" and "produces an impression of such remarkable distinction and beauty" that they are all awestruck by her presence. Though her outward appearance and speech have radically changed, Eliza still retains remnants of her former self. However confident she appears to be in her new role, she is still insecure about her romantic prospects with men. When Freddy, clearly infatuated, attempts to ask her to go for a walk with him, she does not even recognize it as an invitation. And the content of her tale regarding her aunt's health reminds the reader that her exterior is merely a façade attempting to conceal her vulgar tendencies.

14. Pickering tells Higgins, "Come, Higgins: you must learn to know yourself." What is ironic about this statement? How might the repercussions of this fact affect Eliza?

Pickering utters this statement when Mrs. Higgins scolds her son for his improper language and Higgins denies the accusation. Though seeking help from his mother suggests that he knows he cannot accomplish his task alone, he ironically seems remarkably unaware of his shortcomings in an overall sense, a fact which Pickering points out. Pickering sees that Higgins's lack of self-awareness could potentially affect his friend's ability to set a positive example for Eliza since it is Higgins she is trying to emulate.

15. Mrs. Higgins says to her son, "Don't you realize that when Eliza walked into Wimpole Street, something walked in with her?" What does she mean and how does this comment parallel the opinions expressed by Mrs. Pearce?

Similar to Mrs. Pearce, Mrs. Higgins can see the problem that Eliza will face after her son's experiment concludes—how will she go back to her former life when she is too well-trained as a lady to get a commoner's job and then has no job with which to support herself? She will have grown accustomed to fine things and polished manners and will have great difficulty returning to having nothing. Mrs. Pearce repeatedly tells her employer, "You don't think, sir" just as his mother echoes with "what is to be done with her afterwards?"

16. How is the overall tone of this act markedly different from the previous two in terms of Higgins's attitude towards Eliza? What is the sole indication in this act that Higgins might actually have sentimental feelings towards Eliza rather than just scientific awe?

Unlike Acts I and II, where Higgins was dismissive and utterly cruel to Eliza, Act III portrays Higgins as having developed respect for her ability as a student, a mimic, and a musician, and he openly compliments her progress. Not only does he resist insulting her, but he actually defends her to the Eynsford Hills by inventing the notion of "the new small talk." Though overall he seems focused only on the experiment itself and appears wholly unconcerned with what will happen to Eliza when the experiment ends, there is a singular piece of evidence which suggests otherwise. He tells his mother: "I'm worn out, thinking about her, and watching her lips and her teeth and her tongue, not to mention her soul which is the quaintest of the lot." The watching of her lips, teeth, and tongue could all be attributed to his study of language and the biological science of phonetics, but his mention of her "soul" is a curious one, and students may consider this a foreshadowing of a romantic inclination.

17. Compare the attitudes Higgins and Pickering display towards Eliza in Act III with the attitudes they displayed toward her in Acts I and II.

In Acts I & II, Pickering behaves like a gentleman towards Eliza whereas Higgins treats her like "garbage." The differences seen in Acts I & II in their treatment of Eliza are no longer here in Act III—they seem entirely in sync in their commitment to the experiment, their admiration for her progress and capabilities, and their complete denial of what is to become of her later.

18. Explain the significance of Mrs. Higgins's comment: "You certainly are a pretty pair of babies playing with your live doll." What is Higgins's defense, and why is it significant to the meaning of the work as a whole? Finally, explain the irony of Higgins's reference to Eliza's "soul" in this argument.

Mrs. Higgins can see that her son and Pickering are only concerned with the scientific aspect of their experiment with Eliza rather than considering her present or future feelings about the situation. For them, Eliza is merely a living toy, and they are the children entitled to play with her for as long as they see fit. Higgins's defense ("You have no idea how frightfully interesting it is to take a human being and change her into a quite different human being") alludes back to the myth of Pygmalion previously mentioned. Higgins's mention of Eliza's "soul" here is particularly significant because unlike Galatea, Eliza has a soul and a will of her own which Higgins will be unable to control, so the fact that he presently finds it "quaint" is ironic.

19. Analyze the primary rhetorical device used in the final paragraph of Act III and the effect on the reader and on the audience.

The primary rhetorical device which Shaw employs in the final paragraph of Act III is a building to the climax of the scene through the use of strong active verbs. Mrs. Higgins "rises" with an impatient bounce, she "sweeps" her disarranged papers, she "flings" her pen, and "grips" the table. The effect on the reader and on the audience is a gradual build-up of expressive actions of frustration which leads to the climax of the scene, culminating in a sole auditory cry, "Oh men! men!! men!!!"

Act IV

1. Through what narrative technique(s) does Shaw create dramatic tension in the first portion of Act IV?

A close reading of the opening three pages of Act IV will alert students to several key points. Eliza does not speak at all but instead reacts to what is going on around her, and these reactions are described very specifically by the author. Her expression is "tragic," she is "brooding" and "silent," she "flinches violently" and "sits stonily" until her "beauty becomes murderous." Pickering and Higgins appear not even to notice that she is there and continue with their self-congratulatory dialogue. It is Shaw's juxtaposition of the men's friendly banter with his descriptions of Eliza's simmering, growing, eventually explosive rage which imbues the first portion of this act with great tension.

2. Trace the changes in Eliza's demeanor throughout Act IV. Which incidents provoke her the most, and why? Do these actions and reactions seem consistent with her character?

Eliza's demeanor shifts emotionally throughout Act IV from silent and tragic desperation to murderous rage. When she, Higgins, and Pickering first arrive home from the garden party, she is noticeably upset and is described as silently brooding, though the men take no notice of her mood whatsoever. When Pickering congratulates Higgins on winning the bet, Higgins exclaims, "Thank God it's over," and Eliza "flinches violently" in reply. Pickering's further observation that the evening has been a triumph for Higgins, with no mention of Eliza's worth, provokes her even further; as the men go out, she flings herself on the floor "raging." What follows is a heated verbal and even potentially physical argument with Higgins. She seems frantic, bitter, and inconsolable as she demands to know both what will become of her and what she means to him. She begins to take control only when she regains her composure and asks Higgins, "Do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering?" For the remainder of the act, she appears to revel in his own hysteria and clearly feels that she finally has the upper hand in provoking him to fury.

Students may dispute the consistency of her actions and reactions in this act as compared with what we know of her so far. In one sense, her behavior is reminiscent of the flower girl we saw in Act I, a girl prone to argument and who possesses fiery confidence. However, some students may find this scene extreme in its portrayal of Eliza and may wonder as to the internal circumstances which have incited such violent feelings. These students may likely feel that her irrational reactions could only be those of a scorned woman in love rather than those of just a disappointed girl.

3. Analyze the shifts in Higgins's attitude towards Eliza in Act IV and what causes these shifts. What moments, if any, indicate that Higgins does, in fact, care about Eliza?

For the first portion of Act IV, Higgins does not even acknowledge Eliza's presence; he and Pickering verbally dismiss her as an integral part of the success of their evening. He claims that the experiment itself has been a boring, "silly notion" and "simple purgatory." In response to her frantic raging, he remains oblivious and merely asks, "Anything wrong?" He is defensive of his singular role in winning the bet, calling her a "creature," commanding her to put her "claws in." He then patronizingly tries to appease her—he pats her kindly and attributes her outburst to anxiety, reminding her that she is now free to do as she pleases and can open her own flower shop.

His attitude palpably shifts when she asks him whether or not the clothes belong to her. He becomes wounded, sulky, and ultimately furious with her for not relishing the "treasure of [his] regard" and knowledge. He leaves in a rage, slamming the door behind him.

His reactions in the latter part of the act might suggest to some students that his personal feelings run deeper than he is willing to admit. He expresses "sincere surprise" when she exclaims, once again, that she wishes she were dead. Some students may sense regret in Higgins's tone and therefore genuine affection.

At the close of the act, Higgins tells her that she has "wounded [him] to the heart." It remains to be seen whether this is just dramatic posturing or a statement born of genuine feelings.

4. Compare and contrast Higgins's and Pickering's view of the evening and the irony of Pickering's statement to Higgins: "Still, it's been a great occasion: a triumph for you." To what theme might this comment be tied?

   Pickering admits that he was nervous at the garden party and then downright frightened because Eliza was doing it so well. Higgins, on the other hand, was not nervous at all about Eliza and says that he knew she'd be all right. He found the whole evening to be a complete bore, especially once he could see that he would win the bet.

   As they recount their evening, both men talk about Eliza as if she is not even there and it does not occur to either one of them to congratulate her on her own success. They seem in complete agreement that the "triumph" is theirs alone and has nothing to do with all of her hard work and commitment. This idea is tied to the theme of science versus humanity—Pickering and Higgins have viewed her all along as a scientific experiment, and despite her stellar "results," their view is still wholly objective and completely detached from emotion.

5. What astute observation does Pickering make about people in high society? Does Higgins agree?

   Pickering says, "You see, lots of real people can't do it at all: they're such fools that they think style comes by nature to people in their position; and so they never learn." He is making the observation that people in high society need to learn manners just as anyone else would but that the affluent often feel their entitlement extends to the realm of style and etiquette when it does not. The wealthy view the poor as ill-mannered when ironically it is they who often fall short of displaying becoming conduct because they have not bothered to learn as Eliza has so studiously done. Higgins wholeheartedly agrees that they are "silly people" who "don't know their own silly business," that their behavior belies their social standing.

6. Examine instances of the theme of feminism present in Act IV and the commentary on gender roles. What detail should students be mindful of regarding the position Eliza finds herself in?

   Higgins tells Pickering to simply "chuck" his belongings over the bannister rather than put them away because Mrs. Pearce will take care of it in the morning and assume that they were just too drunk to realize what they were doing. He takes advantage of her role as the housekeeper and as a female much as he does with Eliza, telling her to put out the lights and instructing her to give Mrs. Pearce directions for his morning beverages without ever once acknowledging her impressive achievements. Perhaps the most condescending of Higgins's misogynistic comments is when he says to Eliza, "You go to bed like a good girl and sleep it off. Have a little cry and say your prayers: that will make you comfortable." His patronizing delivery only serves to further invoke her wrath. She caustically asserts that becoming a "lady" has meant that she is now qualified only to sell herself instead of flowers and wishes he had left her alone.

   One detail students should remember, however, is that Eliza sought Higgins out for elocution lessons, not the other way around. It is easy to see her as the victim here because of Higgins's abhorrent attitude, but the fact remains that she initially wanted his help.

7. Analyze the symbolic nature of Higgins's slippers and note the significance to the play as a whole in terms of character development and how the symbol ties to the Pygmalion myth.

   Higgins wonders where his slippers are at the beginning of Act IV, and Eliza wordlessly retrieves them without him even noticing. Like a puppy with her master, Eliza fetches the slippers and waits for praise that never comes. Higgins and Pickering have no intention of offering her any credit for the evening's success, and she grows increasingly more agitated, eventually turning on Higgins like an angry, vicious dog, hurling his slippers at him violently. Thus, Higgins's slippers come to take on a more symbolic nature.

   This symbol is significant to the work as a whole in terms of effectively characterizing the relationship between Higgins and Eliza and further illuminates the allusion to the Pygmalion myth—the master can only control his creation to the extent that the creation wants to be controlled.

8. Explore Eliza's purpose in asking Higgins, "Before you go, sir—Do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering?"

   Aside from wanting to ensure that she is not accused of stealing from Higgins, the main reason Eliza asks Higgins about her clothes is clearly to provoke him into having the exact reaction that he does. She has been emotionally wrought for the entire scene and is hoping that he too will experience some of her own doubt and insecurity—any indication that he is a human being with real feelings rather than just an indifferent god.

9. Noting each character's perspective, contemplate the fundamental issue over which Eliza and Higgins are arguing and how their argument is tied to the Pygmalion myth.

   For Eliza, the primary issue is "What's to become of me?" and for Higgins it is "What does it matter what becomes of you?" He feels that she is a selfish and "heartless guttersnipe" for not appreciating the indispensible knowledge he has imparted upon her, whereas she feels that all she has left to do is to sell herself since she cannot sell flowers anymore. Both Mrs. Pearce and Mrs. Higgins had warned Henry of this very issue, but he obviously has not given it a moment's thought.

   The tie to the Pygmalion myth is especially prevalent in this act. In the original myth, Pygmalion had to pray to the gods to give Galatea a soul, but Eliza, being human, already has a soul. Higgins has consciously, methodically created an exterior of perfection, as evidenced by her performance at the garden party, but he cannot control the interior willful emotions of his creation, and he does not know how to react.

10. Reflect on the concluding moments of Act IV and explain the significance of each character's final actions and reactions.

Higgins leaves in a rage, cursing Mrs. Pearce, the coffee, Eliza, and his own decision to become involved with the whole experiment. Eliza is visibly pleased with the effect she has had on Higgins and returns to looking for the ring. Higgins cannot bear the loss of control he has experienced—of his emotions and of her—and Eliza feels that she has finally regained control.

Act V

1. What is Mrs. Higgins's attitude towards Pickering and her son in the opening of Act V, and what do her reactions reveal about her character?

Despite the fact that Mrs. Higgins already knows why her son is so upset when he arrives at her home, she deliberately hides the fact that Eliza is upstairs. She cleverly manipulates the situation for two possible reasons: she wants an opportunity to talk to Henry and Pickering about their behavior the previous evening, and, perhaps, she wants to gauge her son's feelings about having "lost something." Mrs. Higgins has a keen understanding of human nature in general and of the folly of men when dealing with capable women. She scolds Higgins and Pickering, telling them that they have no more sense than two children for not realizing how little credit they have given Eliza for all of her efforts—that it would have taken little more than a thank you and some verbal admiration from them to make everything all right. Their view of the evening's events is markedly different, which Mrs. Higgins attributes to sheer stupidity and insensitivity.

2. How does Shaw use the character of Doolittle to provide commentary on middle-class morality in this act? In what ways has his life changed considerably? And what does it say about Doolittle's character that he does not just reject his new position in life? What is the irony present in his taking the money?

Doolittle blames Higgins for his current station in life—that of the middle-class moralist. His character becomes the mouthpiece for all the absurdity associated with the moral codes and conventions of the wealthier class. No longer of the "undeserving poor," Doolittle now has responsibilities to people other than himself. He has to keep a lawyer to protect his assets. Doctors who used to throw him out of the hospital before he was well because he had no money now claim that he is not healthy and need to look him over twice a day. Things he used to do for himself in his home he now is required to hire out. Relatives who never even acknowledged him all want a piece of his newfound wealth, as do all the "dreadful poor." And he cannot go on merely living with his girlfriend; he must marry her in order to be considered respectable.

Doolittle admits that he is too "intimidated" to reject the sum of money given to him, for even though the money thrusts him into middle-class morality, it is too large a sum to give up and face life in the workhouse again. His acceptance of the money is especially ironic given his rejection of the ten pounds for Eliza in Act II. For him, the situation is entirely similar to being offered the ten pounds earlier—it is too much money just to waste, so he must act responsibly even if he wishes to do otherwise.

3. Reflect on the relationship between Eliza and her father. What details suggest a total lack of paternal feeling? What small detail suggests otherwise? How are their current situations ironically similar?

   When Doolittle learns that Higgins has lost Eliza, his response is the seemingly heartless, "You have all the luck, you have," and he later states that he'll do "anything to help Henry keep her off [his] hands." These comments are consistent with what we saw of his behavior in Act II and with Eliza's own account of their relationship. There is one small detail, however, which suggests that there may be some modicum of affection and sensitivity in Doolittle for his daughter. He asks Pickering not to tell Eliza that he never actually married her mother, a fact she does not know, and says he "had a delicacy about telling her."

   Though Eliza does not have wealth of her own, she has grown accustomed to fine things over the months she has lived with Higgins and admits that she has become a "slave now, for all [her] fine clothes." Like her father, Eliza has become a slave to middle-class respectability.

4. What is Eliza's main purpose when she first enters the scene? Does she succeed in her mission? Why or why not?

   Eliza's main purpose when she enters the scene is to make Higgins feel as insignificant as she had felt the previous night. She attempts to accomplish this by completely ignoring him and focusing her attentions on Pickering instead, persistently comparing Higgins to the far more gentlemanly Pickering. In response, Higgins groans, chokes, swears, and continues to criticize her.

   Students may have varied opinions as to her success. She certainly provokes strong reactions from Higgins, and he is clearly agitated by her lack of attention. However, if her goal was to make him feel insignificant, that is not something he feels in this scene or is likely ever to feel given what we know of him already.

5. Compare and contrast Pickering and Higgins's attitudes towards Eliza and her overall attitude towards each of them. How has the audience's perspective been different from hers and why is this fact significant?

   Upon Eliza's entrance, Pickering is both "conscience stricken" at his own behaviors and "taken aback" by her "sunny, self-possessed" presence, whereas Higgins is completely disdainful of her pretense of playing "the fine lady." She contends that Higgins taught her only to speak and little else—that her real education came from Pickering, who always treated her like a lady in numerous small ways, unlike Higgins who always treated her like a flower girl in numerous large ways. She makes the realization that the only "difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves, but how she's treated."

   Because much of the action of this play takes place <u>between</u> each act, the audience is at a disadvantage in evaluating the veracity of Eliza's claims that Pickering has been so far superior to Higgins in his treatment of her. In both the closing of Act III—prompting Mrs. Higgins to scream, "Oh, men! men!! men!!!"—and virtually <u>all</u> of Act IV, Pickering seems almost entirely in sync with Higgins in his behavior towards her. What becomes clear in Act V are the details the audience has not been privy to that have made Eliza so much more forgiving of Pickering's actions from the previous evening.

6. Examine the extension of the slipper metaphor in Act V.

   Students should recall the incident in Act IV where Eliza, like a puppy seeking approval, retrieves Higgins's slippers without even being asked, and, more tellingly, without him even noticing that she has done so.

   The metaphor continues in Act V as Mrs. Higgins rebukes Higgins and Pickering: "You didn't thank her, or pet her, or admire her, or tell her how splendid she'd been." All of these remarks might easily be said in reference to a dog. Eliza insists that Higgins only wants her back to pick up his slippers and "fetch and carry" for him; Higgins later refers to these as her "little dog's tricks." Ultimately, Higgins determines that he prefers the strong-willed, confident Eliza who throws his slippers in his face to the subservient girl who merely fetches them.

7. Evaluate the truth of Higgins's claims about his manners when compared with his actions and reactions in this act and in the play as a whole.

   Higgins states: "The great secret, Eliza, is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls: in short, behaving as if you were in Heaven, where there are no third class carriages, and one soul is as good as another…The question is not whether I treat you rudely, but whether you ever hear me treat anyone else better."

   Higgins maintains that he has not been a snob but has treated all people of different classes exactly the same, and in so doing, causes social status to disappear. Students will likely be of strong split opinions on this point, and there is evidence both for and against Higgins as a socialist. Although his day-to-day dealings with people might indicate behavioral equality, his attitude towards Eliza does provide extensive evidence to the contrary. This issue will hopefully spur a healthy debate amongst the class.

8. Explain the significance of Higgins's comment: "I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask?"

   Higgins says this in response to Eliza's claim that he does not care about her or Mrs. Pearce. His reply is tied directly to the play's theme of the role of science versus human emotion. Higgins, the scientist, is completely lacking in interpersonal skills, and individual human relationships mean very little to him, whether it is someone he has known for six months or ten years. In Eliza's opinion, one can *ask for "more"—relationships are all that matter to her, and a life void of affection and love is not worth living.*

9. Contemplate evidence in the play for and against the existence of romantic feelings between Higgins and Eliza. In what ways are their feelings similar? In what ways is each character conflicted about the other, if at all? What, then, is your final assessment about their relationship?

In the case of Higgins, most of the evidence suggests a possessive detachment towards Eliza rather than any romantic feelings. Higgins briefly thinks Doolittle might take Eliza away and reminds her father that "she doesn't belong to him" because Henry paid five pounds for her. Higgins seems to think in terms of owning and creating her rather than as a person with emotional needs. He does seem marginally jealous when Eliza announces her intent to marry Freddy Hill, but as the conversation progresses, it is clear that he does not care <u>if</u> she marries, he just cares <u>who</u> she marries and if the person is an appropriate choice. One detail which might suggest a genuine attachment is when Higgins refers to missing her soul: "Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you." Students might recall that Higgins also refers to her soul in Act III as being "the quaintest of the lot." This reference was curious then as it is now and is a definite source of discussion for students.

Eliza is extremely concerned with the fact that Higgins doesn't appear to notice or care about her enough, has an almost constant need to garner his approval (exceedingly so in Act IV), and looks frantically for the ring Higgins had given her. All of these facts might lead the reader to believe that she is romantically interested in him, and this is, perhaps, far easier for the reader to embrace than is the prospect of Higgins's affection. However, Eliza makes it clear at the closing of Act V that infatuation is "not the sort of feeling I want from you," that she merely wants "a little kindness." Whether readers believe what she is saying or not depends upon their interpretation of these details and whether or not they think that Eliza's word is to be taken at face value.

Answers from students will vary as to the final assessment of Higgins's and Eliza's feelings for one another.

10. Ultimately, what does Higgins give as the reason that Eliza should return to Wimpole Street? What is her reaction? Viewing the play thus far, do you think this arrangement would work? Why or why not?

Higgins does not want her to stay to take care of him or to be cared for but for "the sake of good fellowship" and "for the fun of it." Eliza proceeds to question why he took her in at all if this was to be the end result. Though her feelings for him are complicated, the one certain truth for Eliza is that she needs and wants kindness above all else, and it is doubtful that Higgins will ever truly be able to provide this for her in any real way. He outright tells her: "If you can't stand the coldness of my sort of life, and the strain of it, go back to the gutter." Coldness, not kindness, is his natural inclination.

11. Discuss the distinctions Higgins makes between the life Eliza will experience with him versus returning to "the gutter." What commentary about society and humanity is Higgins making? How does Eliza's reply reveal a substantial change in her character—that she has truly become a lady?

Higgins paints a contrasting portrait of the "coldness" and "strain" of life with him versus the "real … warm … violent" life in the gutter. In his estimation, the lower-class men will intermittently snivel over her or give her black eyes. Instead of enjoying classical music, philosophy, and art, she will work until she's "more brute than human being; and then cuddle and squabble and drink" until she falls asleep. Higgins's view is highly simplistic and suggestive of his snobbery towards those of lower classes. Eliza's attitude does reveal a substantial shift in her character. She knows she cannot return to her former life and she cannot stand the idea of living with a "low common man" after living with Higgins and Pickering, who have essentially ruined the tolerance she formerly had. Eliza is, therefore, no longer only externally posing as a lady but has also internally embraced her role.

12. Analyze Higgins's reaction to Eliza's news that she intends to marry Freddy Hill. How does his reaction further the allusion to the Pygmalion myth?

The play's title alludes to the Pygmalion myth, in which Pygmalion creates Galatea, his perfect work of art. When Eliza, Higgins's Galatea, reveals her intention to marry Freddy Hill, Higgins's first reaction is, "Can he make anything of you? That's the point." He cares not for love or true companionship but about "making" something of her, like an artist molding his creation. Eliza does not think in terms of making anything of anyone else, yet Higgins seems to think of little else. His primary concern is not that he would lose Eliza but that all of his hard work would be completely lost on someone like Freddy, who would have no idea how to maintain his "masterpiece."

13. From a narrative perspective, what is the function of the scene where Eliza asserts that she would like to teach phonetics? What other crucial realization does Eliza make in this scene, and what is Higgins's reaction?

This particular interchange causes a drastic change in the tone of Act V, however temporary it is. Eliza's declaration that she intends to teach phonetics, perhaps under the tutelage of a rival scholar, triggers a violent reaction from Higgins—he literally attempts to wring her neck. Instead of eliciting fear, his reaction evokes a rational calm in Eliza. For the first time, she is able to see clearly not only her relationship with Higgins but also her own power in the context of that relationship. The knowledge he has given her combined with her own sense of worth and newfound strength enable her to proclaim that she is leaving for good.

Interestingly, after recovering from the initial shock of Eliza's outburst, Higgins asserts that he prefers her this way rather than the girl who would fetch his slippers and spectacles. However, it appears that his realization may have come too late if Eliza is indeed serious about never seeing him again.

14. Why is Higgins so certain that Eliza will come back? Are the readers as certain? Why or why not?

There are three main reasons for Higgins's confidence that Eliza will return. One is his self-satisfied ego. He is certain that Eliza could not possibly leave him for someone like Freddy even though he has given absolutely no indication that he intends to treat her any better than he has before. Secondly, Higgins thinks the matter has been settled because he compliments her newfound strength and says that he prefers this side of her. He arrogantly decides her future for her: "You and I and Pickering will be three old bachelors together instead of only two men and a silly girl." And third, Higgins underestimates Eliza's own confidence and her ability to make decisions independent of his tutelage.

Students will likely be divided on their opinions of the play's eventual outcome. The romantics will hope that Eliza returns to a remorseful and infatuated Higgins but the realists will see how unlikely that scenario is.

15. What are the central issues in this play over which Eliza and Higgins cannot agree?

There are two central issues in this play which cause contention between Eliza and Higgins: manners and changing yourself to fit someone else's needs. Eliza wants respect and kindness, and she appreciates the manners of someone like Pickering, who "treats a flower girl as if she were a duchess." Higgins's defense is that the "great secret" is not having good or bad manners but the same manners for all people, and therefore he "treat[s] a duchess as if she was a flower girl." He insists that he has treated her the same way he has treated everyone else, but Eliza does not accept that stance and feels that she deserves better.

The second issue relates back to the Pygmalion myth and addresses the concept of whether it's possible, or even proper, to change a person to fit one's own needs. Eliza just wants to be herself—"natural," as she calls it—and at the end of Act V, she realizes that she can do that on her own. Higgins, on the other hand, views her as his "masterpiece" and does not want to have all of his work wasted on Freddy, who can't possibly appreciate or, more importantly, cultivate his creation. Eliza thinks in terms of what she and Freddy can <u>give</u> to one another, whereas Higgins thinks only in terms of what they can <u>make</u> of one another. This is the primary conflict that drives the play.

Epilogue

1. What is the author's overall attitude toward the reader in the epilogue? How does his attitude toward the reader reveal his purpose in writing the epilogue?

   Shaw's overall attitude can best be described as one of exasperation. Shaw begins the epilogue by criticizing his readers for their "enfeebled…imaginations" which read romance into every scenario and further comments that were it not for reader ineptitude, he would not have even needed to write the epilogue. If readers were paying close enough attention throughout the play, they would find the assumption of romance as "unbearable" as he does. For the closely discerning reader, the outcome of Eliza marrying Freddy is then a predictable and logical one. In Shaw's view, any other assumptions are unfounded and downright ludicrous.

2. What reasons does Shaw provide as to why Eliza would never marry Higgins?

   Shaw goes to great lengths to explain the formula for young, attractive women who wish to marry versus the lack of choices open to women who are less attractive and older. Since Eliza is neither one of these, she would indeed be free to choose a mate for herself, and why would she choose a man twice her age who berates her on a near constant basis? The author tells us that Eliza was "instinctively aware that she could never obtain a complete grip" of Higgins or come between him and his mother. Even regardless of all of these factors, Eliza "would still have refused to accept an interest in herself that was secondary to philosophic interests"—she astutely knows that Higgins's academic interests rank far higher than she ever would and knows that she wants more than that out of a relationship. She wants equality and kindness, neither of which Higgins can provide.

3. What concerns do Freddy's family have about him opening a flower shop? What ultimately leads to Clara and her mother granting their approval?

   The key word in this question is "ultimately." Shaw reveals that Freddy, who has always wanted to open a shop, is afraid to do so because Clara believes it will "damage her matrimonial chances," and Mrs. Eynsford Hill finds retail trade impossible to entertain on their current social ladder step. However, it is through Clara's discovery of the books of H.G. Wells that she undergoes a significant transformation and embraces the retail trade, working in an old furniture shop owned by a fellow Wellsian. Once Clara becomes a retail worker, the family drops their opposition to Freddy's opening a shop.

4. Describe the nature and function of Eliza's ongoing relationship with Higgins and Pickering.

   Finances are certainly a factor in their ongoing relationship, but it is not the only factor, and Shaw does tell us of a time when Eliza and Freddy no longer need financial assistance. Eliza becomes a fixture in Higgins's household, free to come and go as she pleases. She nags Higgins; they enjoy Sunday dinners and weekends in the country together; she seeks and heeds their advice—in short, they have become a family of sorts.

5. Explain the irony present in Eliza's realization that Higgins's "indifference is deeper than the infatuation of commoner souls."

Students may not even have realized that this observation is either an oxymoron or a paradox until they read this question. Once they consider the apparently-contradictory-but-true nature of the statement, however, they should realize that the contrast is not between indifference and infatuation but between Higgins and "commoner souls." The observation is Eliza's but not about Eliza. In this one instance, her feelings are essentially irrelevant. If one examines the contrast between Higgins's well-established passion and others' professed feelings, Shaw is telling us that in Higgins's indifference there is more regard and affection than in a normal person's infatuation. Higgins is that passionate a person.

Pygmalion

Preface

1. Explain what Shaw means in saying that "English is not accessible even to Englishmen." What other major points about the English's attitude towards language does the author expound upon?

2. What is Shaw's explanation for the creation of the character of Henry Higgins? In what ways does Higgins both parallel and differ from Henry Sweet, whom Shaw greatly admired?

3. What reason does Shaw give for having written the play?

Act I

1. Consider the narrative perspective from which the play is told. What is both predictable and unique about the narration?

2. What is the reader's immediate impression of the Mother, the Daughter, and Freddy? Characterize their relationships as seen in the opening of the play.

3. What is the significance of the author's comment that "her features are no worse than theirs" when comparing the Flower Girl to the Mother and Daughter? What other earlier comment does it parallel and why?

4. How and why does the Mother's behavior differ from her Daughter's when confronting the Flower Girl about knowing her son's name? Ultimately, though, how are their attitudes actually similar?

5. Why does the Bystander tell the Flower Girl, "You be careful: give him a flower for it"? What is the fundamental misunderstanding and assumption being made in this scene? What is her reaction?

6. Analyze Higgins's initial interactions with the Flower Girl. What does his attitude seem to be towards her?

7. What societal stereotypes are revealed in the Bystander twice noting Higgins's boots?

8. For what reason(s) might the author have included the commentary that the Bystander is "inept at definition"?

9. Why is the Flower Girl so concerned with whether or not Higgins "took [her] down right" when recording what she said?

10. At what point does the reader get a clear indication of what Higgins does for a living? Note the author's word choice in his references towards Higgins's actions and reactions as his profession is displayed to the crowd. What does the crowd initially think Higgins does professionally? What does he actually do?

11. Compare and contrast the varying reactions of the crowd to Higgins. How do the Flower Girl's reactions compare to those of the crowd in general? Those of the Mother and Daughter?

12. Reflect on the role of the weather in this act with reference to action, character development, and themes.

13. Explain the significance of the Flower Girl's assertions about Higgins's conduct and her character: "He's no right to take away my character. My character is the same to me as any lady's."

14. What is the overall effect of the Flower Girl's musings interspersed with Higgins's and Pickering's conversation at the end of Act I?

15. Analyze Higgins's views expressed in his speech: "A woman who utters such depressing…" through "like a bilious pigeon." What fundamental contradiction exists in his argument here?

16. Analyze what we know about the Flower Girl's character and her view of the world as presented so far.

17. What role does coincidence play in the closing of this act?

18. What purpose does the ringing of the church clock serve? Discuss the significance of the author alluding to Higgins's "Pharisaic want."

19. What point in this act could be considered the "inciting incident" which will dictate the course of the rest of the play?

Act II

1. What is the significance of the description of the setting at the beginning of Act II? What do these details reveal about Higgins?

2. What seemingly inconsequential detail revealed at the end of Act I becomes pertinent in Act II?

3. Compare and contrast Shaw's descriptions of Henry Higgins in Act I and the beginning of Act II. What portrait is the reader given of his nature? Consider the extent to which the reader's perceptions of Higgins are therefore different than the audience's perceptions.

4. What significant information do we learn about Eliza's character in Act II?

5. Higgins's reaction to Eliza's arrival suggests what about his character? How does Pickering's reaction differ?

6. Higgins refers to Liza as "this baggage". What does the use of this metaphor reveal about his attitude?

7. What is it that Eliza wants, and why does she need Higgins's help? Why is Higgins so intrigued by Eliza's offer? What does he offer her in return? Yet what is significant about the tone of his offer?

8. Describe the nature of the relationship between Mrs. Pearce and Henry Higgins. What dramatic purpose does she ultimately serve in terms of character and theme?

9. Compare and contrast Higgins's, Pickering's, and Mrs. Pearce's attitudes toward Eliza and the experiment. How do their differing opinions reveal important themes in the play?

10. Read the following speech, which Higgins gives concerning his intentions toward Eliza, and then assess whether Higgins is sincere.

> I walk over everybody! My dear Mrs. Pearce, my dear Pickering, I never had the slightest intention of walking over anyone. All I propose is that we should be kind to this poor girl. We must help her to prepare and fit herself for her new station in life. If I did not express myself clearly it was because I did not wish to hurt her delicacy, or yours.

11. How does Higgins attempt to manipulate Eliza when she decides to leave? Why does it work? Is this an indication that Eliza's perspective is changing? Why or why not?

12. Discuss the author's use of irony in Act II and what it reveals about the characters involved in each instance.

13. What is Higgins's attitude towards women in general? Why is it important for the reader to understand this aspect of his character?

14. What do we learn from the author's description of Alfred Doolittle? Contrast this initial impression with what we learn about him in the scene that follows. What pivotal pieces of information do we learn about his relationship with Eliza?

15. Examine the complex yet humorous argument raised by Higgins and Doolittle's discussion of social morality and the "undeserving poor." What is so ironic about Doolittle's attitude?

16. Compare and contrast Eliza and her father's attitudes towards the class system.

17. For what reason does Higgins start to call Liza "Eliza"? How is this related to a prevalent theme in the play?

18. Examine three peripheral references to the Pygmalion myth in Act II and reflect on the significance in each case.

Act III

1. What role does coincidence play in Act III? Why is the coincidence important to the play's narrative? And is the coincidence a believable one? Why or why not?

2. Examine the relationship between Higgins and his mother and the role she plays in his life. What are her primary character traits?

3. Explore the theme of feminism and the ideal woman as presented in Act III.

4. What do the two subjects Higgins tells Eliza she is allowed to discuss suggest about the mentality of the upper class? How does Mrs. Higgins's version of what is considered appropriate conversation differ?

5. In bringing Eliza to Mrs. Higgins's house, what critical perspective is Higgins hoping his mother can provide that he cannot seem to manage on his own? What is his mother's evaluation of Eliza? And what irony is present in this situation?

6. Compare and contrast Clara and her mother in terms of their actions, reactions, and their overall attitudes. What is the primary difference between mother and daughter?

7. Contemplate the significance of Higgins's reaction to the landscape outside his mother's window and what it says about his character. Compare the settings of their two homes as described by the author and reflect on the subsequent character traits those settings would indicate.

8. Mrs. Higgins tells her son, "You are the life and soul of the Royal Society's soirees; but really you're rather trying on more commonplace occasions." What does she mean by this statement and how is it tied to any major themes in the play?

9. Discuss the varying reactions to Eliza and her performance. What is inherently humorous about this scene? What is the irony of Higgins's own performance in this scene?

10. What is Higgins's attitude towards his mother's guests, and what does it reveal about his character?

11. How does Act III further illuminate the theme of appearance versus reality?

12. Explain the irony of "the new small talk" and how it reflects on the themes of class distinction and manners.

13. Compare and contrast the portrait of Eliza in Act III versus the previous two acts. Reflect on both the outward and the inward changes apparent in her demeanor and dialogue.

14. Pickering tells Higgins, "Come, Higgins: you must learn to know yourself." What is ironic about this statement? How might the repercussions of this fact affect Eliza?

15. Mrs. Higgins says to her son, "Don't you realize that when Eliza walked into Wimpole Street, something walked in with her?" What does she mean and how does this comment parallel the opinions expressed by Mrs. Pearce?

16. How is the overall tone of this act markedly different from the previous two in terms of Higgins's attitude towards Eliza? What is the sole indication in this act that Higgins might actually have sentimental feelings towards Eliza rather than just scientific awe?

17. Compare the attitudes Higgins and Pickering display towards Eliza in Act III with the attitudes they displayed toward her in Acts I and II.

18. Explain the significance of Mrs. Higgins's comment: "You certainly are a pretty pair of babies playing with your live doll." What is Higgins's defense, and why is it significant to the meaning of the work as a whole? Finally, explain the irony of Higgins's reference to Eliza's "soul" in this argument.

19. Analyze the primary rhetorical device used in the final paragraph of Act III and the effect on the reader and on the audience.

Act IV

1. Through what narrative technique(s) does Shaw create dramatic tension in the first portion of Act IV?

2. Trace the changes in Eliza's demeanor throughout Act IV. Which incidents provoke her the most, and why? Do these actions and reactions seem consistent with her character?

3. Analyze the shifts in Higgins's attitude towards Eliza in Act IV and what causes these shifts. What moments, if any, indicate that Higgins does, in fact, care about Eliza?

4. Compare and contrast Higgins's and Pickering's view of the evening and the irony of Pickering's statement to Higgins: "Still, it's been a great occasion: a triumph for you." To what theme might this comment be tied?

5. What astute observation does Pickering make about people in high society? Does Higgins agree?

6. Examine instances of the theme of feminism present in Act IV and the commentary on gender roles. What detail should students be mindful of regarding the position Eliza finds herself in?

7. Analyze the symbolic nature of Higgins's slippers and note the significance to the play as a whole in terms of character development and how the symbol ties to the Pygmalion myth.

8. Explore Eliza's purpose in asking Higgins, "Before you go, sir—Do my clothes belong to me or to Colonel Pickering?"

9. Noting each character's perspective, contemplate the fundamental issue over which Eliza and Higgins are arguing and how their argument is tied to the Pygmalion myth.

10. Reflect on the concluding moments of Act IV and explain the significance of each character's final actions and reactions.

Act V

1. What is Mrs. Higgins's attitude towards Pickering and her son in the opening of Act V, and what do her reactions reveal about her character?

2. How does Shaw use the character of Doolittle to provide commentary on middle-class morality in this act? In what ways has his life changed considerably? And what does it say about Doolittle's character that he does not just reject his new position in life? What is the irony present in his taking the money?

3. Reflect on the relationship between Eliza and her father. What details suggest a total lack of paternal feeling? What small detail suggests otherwise? How are their current situations ironically similar?

4. What is Eliza's main purpose when she first enters the scene? Does she succeed in her mission? Why or why not?

5. Compare and contrast Pickering and Higgins's attitudes towards Eliza and her overall attitude towards each of them. How has the audience's perspective been different from hers and why is this fact significant?

6. Examine the extension of the slipper metaphor in Act V.

7. Evaluate the truth of Higgins's claims about his manners when compared with his actions and reactions in this act and in the play as a whole.

8. Explain the significance of Higgins's comment: "I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask?"

9. Contemplate evidence in the play for and against the existence of romantic feelings between Higgins and Eliza. In what ways are their feelings similar? In what ways is each character conflicted about the other, if at all? What, then, is your final assessment about their relationship?

10. Ultimately, what does Higgins give as the reason that Eliza should return to Wimpole Street? What is her reaction? Viewing the play thus far, do you think this arrangement would work? Why or why not?

11. Discuss the distinctions Higgins makes between the life Eliza will experience with him versus returning to "the gutter." What commentary about society and humanity is Higgins making? How does Eliza's reply reveal a substantial change in her character—that she has truly become a lady?

12. Analyze Higgins's reaction to Eliza's news that she intends to marry Freddy Hill. How does his reaction further the allusion to the Pygmalion myth?

13. From a narrative perspective, what is the function of the scene where Eliza asserts that she would like to teach phonetics? What other crucial realization does Eliza make in this scene, and what is Higgins's reaction?

14. Why is Higgins so certain that Eliza will come back? Are the readers as certain? Why or why not?

15. What are the central issues in this play over which Eliza and Higgins cannot agree?

Epilogue

1. What is the author's overall attitude toward the reader in the epilogue? How does his attitude toward the reader reveal his purpose in writing the epilogue?

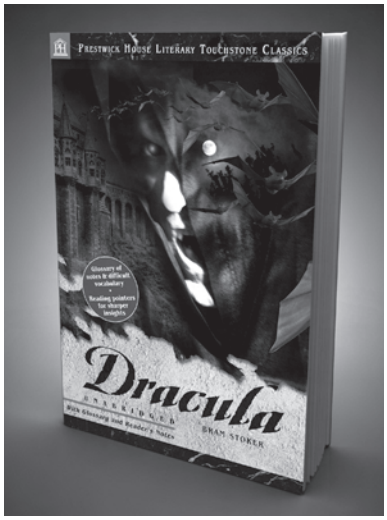
2. What reasons does Shaw provide as to why Eliza would never marry Higgins?

3. What concerns do Freddy's family have about him opening a flower shop? What ultimately leads to Clara and her mother granting their approval?

4. Describe the nature and function of Eliza's ongoing relationship with Higgins and Pickering.

5. Explain the irony present in Eliza's realization that Higgins's "indifference is deeper than the infatuation of commoner souls."

The Perfect Balance Between Cost and Quality for Classic Paperbacks



With all of the different editions of classics available, what makes *Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics*™ better?

Our editions were designed by former teachers with the needs of teachers and students in mind. Because we've struggled to stretch tight budgets and had to deal with the deficiencies of cheaply made paperbacks, we've produced high-quality trade editions at remarkably low prices. As a result, our editions have it all.

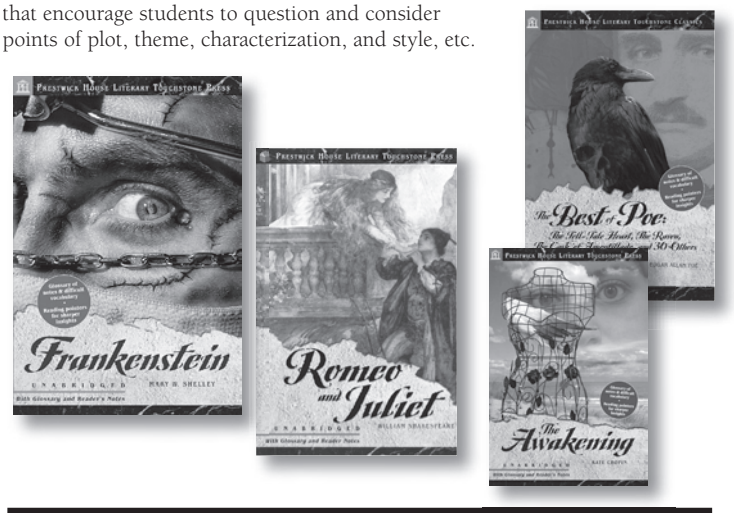
Value Pricing – With our extraordinary Educators' Discount, you get these books at **50% or more off the list price**.

Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights – Concise notes that encourage students to question and consider points of plot, theme, characterization, and style, etc.

Glossary and Vocabulary – An A-to-Z glossary makes sure that your students won't get lost in difficult allusions or archaic vocabulary and concepts.

Sturdy Bindings and High-Quality Paper – High-quality construction ensures these editions hold up to heavy, repeated use.

Strategies for Understanding Shakespeare – Each *Shakespeare Literary Touchstone Classic*™ contains line numbers, margin notes, and a guide to understanding Shakespeare's language, as well as key strategies for getting the most from the plays.



Special Introductory Discount for Educators only –
At Least 50% Off!

New titles are constantly being added; call or visit our website for current listing.

		Retail	Price Intro.	Discount
200053	**Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** - *Twain* TU RJ AT AP		$4.99	$2.49
200473	**Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The** - *Twain* TU RJ AT		$4.99	$2.49
202116	**Alice's Adventure in Wonderland** - *Carroll* TU RJ		$3.99	$1.99
202118	**Antigone** - *Sophocles* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
200141	**Awakening, The** - *Chopin* TU RJ AT AP		$3.99	$1.99
202111	**Beowulf** - *Roberts (ed.)* TU		$3.99	$1.99
204866	**Best of Poe, The: The Tell-Tale Heart, The Raven, The Cask of Amontillado, and 30 Others** - *Poe*		$4.99	$2.49
200150	**Call of the Wild, The** - *London* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
200348	**Canterbury Tales** - *Chaucer* TU		$3.99	$1.99
200179	**Christmas Carol, A** - *Dickens* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
201198	**Crime and Punishment** - *Dostoyevsky* TU		$6.99	$3.49
200694	**Doll's House, A** - *Ibsen* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
200190	**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde** - *Stevenson* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
202113	**Dracula** - *Stoker* TU RJ		$5.99	$2.99
200166	**Ethan Frome** - *Wharton* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
200054	**Frankenstein** - *Shelley* TU RJ AT AP		$4.99	$1.99
202112	**Great Expectations** - *Dickens* TU RJ AT AP		$5.99	$2.99
202108	**Gulliver's Travels** - *Swift* TU		$4.99	$2.49
200091	**Hamlet** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT AP		$3.99	$1.99
200074	**Heart of Darkness** - *Conrad* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
202117	**Hound of the Baskervilles, The** - *Doyle* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
200147	**Importance of Being Earnest, The** - *Wilde* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
301414	**Invisible Man, The** - *Wells* TU RJ		$3.99	$1.99
202115	**Jane Eyre** - *Brontë* TU RJ		$6.99	$3.49
200146	**Julius Caesar** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
201817	**Jungle, The** - *Sinclair* TU RJ AT		$5.99	$2.99
200125	**Macbeth** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT AP		$3.99	$1.99
204864	**Medea** - *Euripides* TU		$3.99	$1.99
200133	**Metamorphosis, The** - *Kafka* TU RJ		$3.99	$1.99
200081	**Midsummer Night's Dream, A** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
202123	**Much Ado About Nothing** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
301391	**My Antonia** - *Cather* TU RJ		$3.99	$1.99
200079	**Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass** - *Douglass* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
301269	**Odyssey, The** - *Butler (trans.)* TU RJ AT		$4.99	$2.49
200564	**Oedipus Rex** - *Sophocles* TU		$3.99	$1.99
200095	**Othello** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT AP		$3.99	$1.99
202121	**Picture of Dorian Gray, The** - *Wilde* TU RJ		$4.99	$2.49
200368	**Pride and Prejudice** - *Austen* TU RJ AT		$4.99	$2.49
202114	**Prince, The** - *Machavelli* TU		$3.99	$1.99
200791	**Pygmalion** - *Shaw* TU		$3.99	$1.99
200102	**Red Badge of Courage, The** - *Crane* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
200193	**Romeo and Juliet** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$0.99
200132	**Scarlet Letter, The** - *Hawthorne* TU AT AP		$4.99	$2.49
202119	**Siddhartha** - *Hesse* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
204863	**Silas Marner** - *Eliot* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
200251	**Tale of Two Cities, A** - *Dickens* AT AP		$5.99	$2.99
200231	**Taming of the Shrew, The** - *Shakespeare* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
204865	**Time Machine, The** - *Wells* TU RJ AT		$3.99	$1.99
202120	**Treasure Island** - *Stevenson* TU RJ		$4.99	$2.49
301420	**War of the Worlds** - *Wells* TU RJ		$3.99	$1.99
202122	**Wuthering Heights** - *Brontë* TU AT		$5.99	$2.99

TU Teaching Units RJ Response Journals AT Activity Pack AP AP Teaching Units

PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.
"Everything for the English Classroom!"
P.O. Box 658 • Clayton, DE 19938 • (800) 932-4593 • (888) 718-9333 • www.prestwickhouse.com

PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.

Order Form

Call 1-800-932-4593 Fax 1-888-718-9333

Prestwick House, Inc.
P.O. Box 658
Clayton, DE 19938

Bill To: ■ Home ■ School

School:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: Email:

Ship To: ■ Home ■ School

School:
Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone: Email:

ITEM NO	TITLE	QUANTITY	X	PRICE	=	TOTAL

Method of Payment (Choose one)

❒ **Check or Money Order Enclosed**

❒ Visa ❒ MasterCard ❒ Discover Card ❒ American Express

❒ Purchase Order Enclosed
We accept purchase orders and authorized orders charged to institutions. Personal orders not on a credit card must be accompanied by a check.

Signature

Telephone # Exp. Date

Credit Card #

Subtotal	$
Shipping 12% S&H ($6.00 minimum)	$
Total	$

Shipping & Handling
For orders of $50.00 or less, please add $6.00 for shipping and handling charges. For orders from $50.01 to $799.99 add 12% For orders of $800.00 and more, add 10%

Delivery Service
Most orders are shipped FedEx and you can expect delivery within 7-10 working days. Items in stock are usually shipped within one working day of receiving your order.

Expedited Delivery
for expedited delivery ask about the following options:
- Overnight Air
- 2nd day air
- 3 Day Select

Because charges for air delivery are based on weight and distance, heavy packages can be expensive to ship air freight. Typographic and photographic errors are subject to revision. Prestwick House is the sole source of all proprietary materials listed in this catalogue. Please be sure to include a street address. FedEx ground/UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box.