Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble, great care was taken to break
to her as gently as possible the news of her husband’s death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences. By trying to avoid the truth,
she revealed the truth. Her husband’s friend Richard was there, too, near her. It was he who had
been at the newspaper office when news of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently
Mallard’s name leading the list of those killed. Richard had taken just enough time to ensure,
through a second telegram, that the news of his friend’s death was true, before he hurried to
prevent Mrs. Mallard from hearing the sad message from someone less careful or tender.

She did not respond to the story as many women would have, with a paralysed inability to
accept reality. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister’s arms. When the
storm of grief had spent itself she went to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank,
pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all a quiver
with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below, children
were shouting at play. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her
faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met
and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except
when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep
continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines revealed control and even a certain
strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, and her gaze was fixed on a distant point in
one of those patches of blue sky. She was not reflecting or soul-searching in her stillness. She
was, rather, on the verge of a brilliant thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it?
She did not know; it was too subtle and too mysterious to name. But she felt it, creeping out of
the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize the thought
that was creeping up on her, and she was struggling to beat it back with her will.

When she surrendered herself to it, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips.
She said it over and over under her breath: “free, free, free!” The blank stare and the look of
terror that had followed it had gone from her eyes. They were now lively and bright. Her pulses
beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw his kind, tender hands folded in death,
and his face, that had always looked upon her with love, now fixed and grey and dead. But she
saw beyond that bitter moment the long years ahead that would belong to her entirely. And she
opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.
13 There would be no one else to live for during those coming years. She would live for herself. There would be no one controlling her life, exerting power, or intruding upon her free will. It didn’t matter whether such an act was intended to be kind or cruel – it was a crime. That was how she looked at it in that brief moment of insight.

14 And yet she had loved him – sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What place did love have in this moment of self-realization which was the strongest impulse of her being!

15 “Free! Body and soul free!” She kept whispering.

16 Josephine was kneeling in front of the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, begging to be let in, “Louise, open the door! Please! You will make yourself sick with grief.” No; she was drinking the very elixir* of life through that open window.

17 Her imagination was running through all those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days with blue skies that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had trembled to think that life might be long.

18 She arose finally and opened the door to her sister’s pleadings. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and without realizing it, she stood tall like the goddess of Victory. She put her arm around her sister’s waist and they descended the stairs. Richard stood waiting for them at the bottom.

19 Someone was turning a key in the front door. It was her husband, Brently Mallard who entered, a little rumpled and messy from travel, calmly carrying his briefcase and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there was one. He stood amazed at his wife’s piercing cry.

21 When the doctors came they said she had died of a heart attack – of joy that killed.

*elixir – a potion thought to prolong life

Selected Response Items: Circle the letter of the correct or BEST answer.

1. From which point of view is this short story narrated?
   a. First person
   b. Second person
   c. Third person limited
   d. Third person omniscient

2. “Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously.” (paragraph 10). Based on the context in which the word “tumultuously” is found, what is its meaning?
   a. Joyously
   b. Sadly
   c. Weakly
   d. Wildly
3. “The delicious breath of rain was in the air.” (paragraph 5). Which literary device is used to create this image?
   a. Allusion
   b. Juxtaposition
   c. Metaphor
   d. Personification

4. In the opening paragraph, the reader is told that “Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with heart trouble.” Which plot device has the author created in this line?
   a. Climax
   b. Denouement
   c. Flashback
   d. Foreshadowing

5. Which type of conflict is developed as the main conflict in this story?
   a. External
   b. Internal
   c. Interpersonal
   d. Societal

6. Examine the following sentence in context: “And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.” (paragraph 12) To what does the pronoun “them” refer?
   a. Bitter moments
   b. Josephine and Richard
   c. Long years ahead
   d. Tender hands folded in death

7. Which stylistic device is employed in the following sentence: “There would be no one controlling her life, exerting power, or intruding upon her free will.” (paragraph 13)
   a. Brevity
   b. Parallel structure
   c. Placement
   d. Unusual punctuation

**Constructed Response Items:** ANSWER IN YOUR EXERCISE BOOK

8. Explain TWO examples of irony from this story.

9. The image of a “sky” is repeated in the story (paragraphs 6, 8, 9 and 17). What does the sky symbolize in this story? You must refer to the story in your answer.
The Mate

I was only sixteen
And sat trying not to cry in the woods.
I had had no luck
And the October sun was nearly gone.

Uncle Rance, over to my right,
Already had a dozen partridges,
And Lute McSween, a quarter of a mile to the left,
A brace of ducks.

I stood up, wiped my eyes,
And tiptoed into a little clearing
With only the sound of hidden insects
To accompany my ritual stalk¹ and breath.
Suddenly my heart leaped into my hand
As I saw a movement not fifty feet away

The sunlight filtering through the leaves
To envelop the gorgeous creature
In a golden-brown haze,
Strange, proud scion² of sky and earth,
Its neck firm and erect,

Its tuft of wing flecked with a lost-world tint
Of rainbow trout in a pool of ferns.
There was no sound
But the beating of two wild hearts,
With the ancient thirst ripe within me

My finger squeezed the lock of my 20-guage³
And the long-tailed ring-necked pheasant
Surprised in its solitary foraging
Collapsed like a rag doll
The prize was mine!

Why did I not move?
I saw something greenish-blue and red
Come running from the brush
In a frenzy of clucking
Seeking to lead it to safety.
Rance called from the farther hill
But I did not answer.
I looked at my gun.
The woods and the bird and I

Were equally still.

¹my ritual stalk – way of hunting, slowly and cautiously
²scion - child, offspring
³20-guage - a hunting rifle

Selected Response Questions

Circle the letter of the correct or BEST answer.

10. Who is the “mate” referred to in the title of the poem?
   a. A pheasant
   b. Luke McSween
   c. Uncle Rance
   d. The speaker
11. Which of the following best describes the poetic form of this piece?
   a. Blank verse
   b. Lyric
   c. Narrative
   d. Sonnet

12. “Suddenly my heart leaped into my hand.” (line 13). Which literary device is represented in this line?
   a. Apostrophe
   b. Figurative language
   c. Hyperbole
   d. Literal language

13. Line 24 refers to “the ancient thirst”. To what does this allude?
   a. Greed
   b. Insanity
   c. Instinct to kill
   d. The speaker is hot and thirsty

14. What atmosphere is created through the setting of the first 23 lines?
   a. Calm
   b. Confusion
   c. Eeriness
   d. Excitement

15. Which literary device is contained in the following line: “Surprised in its solitary foraging” (line 27)?
   a. Alliteration
   b. Assonance
   c. Consonance
   d. Onomatopoeia

**Constructed Response Items:**  ANSWER IN YOUR EXERCISE BOOK

16. “I saw something greenish-blue and red
    Come running from the brush
    In a frenzy of clucking
    Speaking to the lump of bone, flesh, and feathers” (lines 31 - 34)

    Identify TWO examples of effective diction from the above excerpt and explain why each example is effective.

**Linking Question:**  ANSWER IN YOUR EXERCISE BOOK

17. For each of the selections, The Story of an Hour AND The Mate, identify and explain the change of mood experienced by the main character. With TWO references to EACH piece, show how imagery is used to effectively illustrate these changes in mood.