

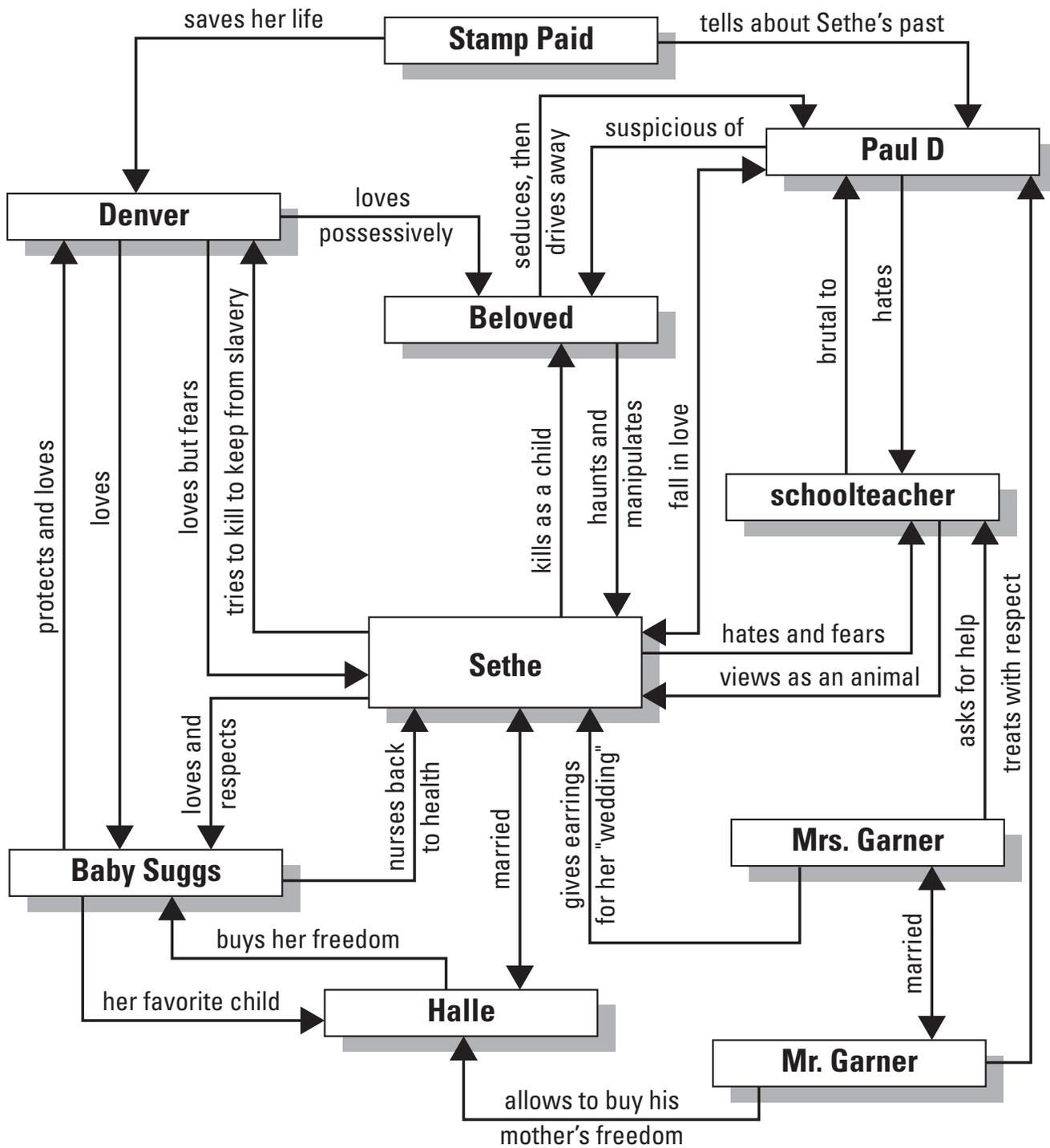
Sample Open Free-Response Question (Question 3)

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay question score.)

The following prompts model the third type of free-response question you will be asked to answer on the exam (often referred to as Question 3). On the actual exam, you will have *one* question with multiple suggested titles of texts from which to choose. On the exam, you will write about *one* text only. As you prepare for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam, spend 40 minutes answering *each* of these prompts. Although these prompts specifically ask you to use *Beloved*, another way to prepare for the exam is to substitute the title of another text you have studied and determine whether you recall sufficient details and examples from that text to write your critical essay.

1. Select a character from *Beloved* who demonstrates irrational behavior. In a well-organized essay, analyze how this behavior can be considered reasonable and relate the behavior to the text as a whole.
2. Choose a character from *Beloved* who is pulled in conflicting directions. Identify the forces of conflict and explain how this illustrates the meaning of the novel as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.
3. The setting of a literary text often has special significance for the development of characters, plot, and/or theme. Write an essay in which you analyze the significance of the setting of *Beloved* and its effect on the novel as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.
4. Choose a specific death scene from *Beloved*, and write an essay in which you analyze the significance this scene has on the novel as a whole. Do not just summarize the plot.
5. No act of violence exists without a specific purpose or intention. Choose one such scene from *Beloved*, and write a well-organized essay in which you identify the violence and analyze its significance to the text as a whole. Avoid plot summary.
6. The quest for power is a strong human drive. Choose a character from *Beloved* who either seeks to gain power over another or seeks to free himself or herself from the power of another. Write an essay in which you illustrate how this power struggle is essential to the meaning of the text. Avoid mere plot summary.
7. Select a character from *Beloved* who is in opposition to his or her society. Identify the conflict and its implications as well as addressing how it affects the text as a whole. Avoid plot summary.
8. Select a memorable scene from *Beloved*. Then write an essay in which you identify the scene and analyze its effectiveness and its relationship to the text as a whole.
9. Select a character from *Beloved* who serves as the instrument for the suffering of others and analyze how this action contributes to the meaning of the text as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.
10. Choose a character from *Beloved* who has to deal with guilt. Identify the situation and analyze how effectively the character deals with his or her struggle. Relate this situation to the meaning of the text as a whole, avoiding mere plot summary.

Beloved Character Map



Activity: Reading Questions—Part One, Sections 5–7

Date: _____

Name: _____

Answer the following questions as you read *Beloved*.

Part One, Section 5

- How are the images associated with Beloved childlike?
- What is Denver's reaction to the stranger? Why?
- What is the nature of Sethe's response to the stranger? Paul D's?
- What are some contradictory elements of Beloved's character?
- Who is more likely to be lying, Paul D or Denver?

Part One, Section 6

- What is the nature of the developing relationship between Sethe and Beloved?
- What types of cravings does Beloved have?
- What do we learn about Sethe's mother? How does this help develop the complex relationship between slavery and motherhood? How is Sethe's role as a mother partially formed by the experience she had with her own mother?
- Why does Beloved draw forth so many stories from Sethe? What does Beloved use to elicit responses from Sethe? Who is seemingly in control of the stories and the storytelling? What does this illustrate about the nature of their relationship?
- What do the stories that Sethe tells reveal about herself? her experiences?
- What role does knowledge and the understanding of that knowledge play in the development of plot in this section? in character development?

Part One, Section 7

- Why does Paul D begin to resent Beloved? What is significant about the fish imagery?
- How do Paul D and Sethe use their own memories to reconstruct what happened to Halle?
- What are the painful images from this section? Which images are humiliating? Which stir up anger? Taken as a whole, what do we learn about the lives of Sethe and Paul D before life at 124?
- What role does Mister play in Paul D's memories?
- Why do Sethe and Paul D both work so hard to escape and forget the past? What effect does Beloved have on them reliving and remembering the past?
- What images are used to describe the keeping of secrets and the forgetting of bad memories?

Activity: Motif Sheet

Date: _____

Name: _____

Your teacher will assign a specific motif that you should use to complete the following chart while you read *Beloved*. Your assignment is to follow the development of this specific idea throughout the novel.

1. Identify your motif: _____.
2. Understand the purpose of motifs. An author may use a motif for a variety of reasons, and many motifs achieve multiple purposes. Some of these purposes are listed here:
 - To develop character
 - To develop plot
 - To develop theme
 - To establish atmosphere/mood
 - To foreshadow events
 - To reinforce earlier events
3. As you read *Beloved*, look for the various ways that Morrison uses your motif. At the completion of each chapter, record all the occurrences of your motif that you find. Be sure to record the complete citation (page number) for all direct quotations.

Passage	Context (Who/What/Where/When)	Purpose

Activity: Symbolism

Date: _____

Name: _____

As you read and reread *Beloved*, use the following table and the back side of this page to keep track of the instances and examples of each of the following items. After completing the novel and discussing your findings, you should be able to determine the potential symbolic function of each item or name. Which is the most significant symbol in *Beloved*?

Object	Examples from Text (Reference and Page Numbers)
Beloved	
Chokecherry tree	
Hummingbird	
Milk	
Mister (the rooster)	

Advice for Answering the Open Free-Response Question (Question 3)

Text selection is one of the most important aspects of earning a high score on the third and final essay question of the AP English Literature and Composition Exam. In preparation for this question, it is better for students to know five varied texts extremely well than to have a superficial understanding of ten or more. *Students should choose a text that they know extremely well and that fits the nature of the prompt.*

Just as the case is with the analytical free-response questions, the prompt must be their guide. Their essay must address each aspect of the prompt *completely*, using textual evidence for support. Because students should assume that they are writing for someone who has read the text, there's no need to prove that they have read the text. They should avoid unnecessary details. Instead, they should prove that they have read and thought about the prompt. Above all else, they need to avoid summarizing the text.

Question 3 is an opportunity to demonstrate a contextualized literary discussion regarding a text of their choice—provided the text meets the specifics of the prompt. Students should *not* alter the prompt in order to write about a text they prefer; no matter how well written their essay is, it will not even earn a midrange score. They should demonstrate their ability to analyze cogently, to persuade convincingly, and to write impressively.

For success on this prompt, students need to remember that “specific is terrific.” Too many students fail to prepare any texts and are forced to rely on memory and generalizations rather than the specific details and examples that will differentiate the higher scores from the midrange and lower ones.

You can modify the time allotment in the following advice for students as you see fit.

- 1. Spend 3 minutes reading and marking the prompt.** Students must make sure they understand fully and completely what they are asked to do. They should underline or box the important verbs and instructions so that they know specifically what is expected.
- 2. Spend 5 minutes selecting your text.** Students should read over the list and see if one of the texts they prepared is specifically mentioned. If it is, congratulations! If none of the texts that were prepared is specifically mentioned, students need to decide whether they know one of the suggested titles well enough *or* decide which of their prepared texts best fits. They should not rush the selection of their text.
- 3. Spend 5 minutes listing names, details, examples, characters, and themes from your chosen text.** Students are going to be evaluated both on what they say and how they say it. Planning and organizing their response will enable them to exhibit greater control over their essay.
- 4. Take 1 minute to reread the prompt.** They should make sure they have included all aspects of the prompt in their plan.
- 5. Spend 5 minutes crafting an introduction.** Students should be sure to include a thesis.

Remember, regardless of the specific wording in the prompt, every question always comes back to theme.

Getting Started on the Open Free-Response Question

Planning an open-response essay is just as important as writing it. Students should be sure to choose the most appropriate characters, events, and themes to answer completely the prompt.

The following three steps represent the planning some students did on the sample open-response questions found in the *Student Edition*. The following are suggested initial responses for Prompt 2, followed by the complete development and sample essay for Prompt 3.

Step 1: Making Initial Choices to Address the Prompt

Prompt 2: Choose a character who is pulled in conflicting directions

- Denver* —the nature of the ghost, her role in relation to the ghost
 —her relationship with her mother, love her or fear her, protect Beloved from her or her from Beloved
 —her relationship with Paul D, he rids 124 of the ghost, her only friend; he has a relationship and history with her mother
- Paul D* —he's conflicted about Sethe; does he need her to help deal with the demons of his own past?
 —he has conflicted feelings about Beloved
- Sethe* —has conflicted feelings about her husband, about her children, about her actions

Obviously, the writer of this essay will need to choose which of these three characters he or she would like to use to answer the prompt; all three are strong choices. But, if the writer could not make a connection between being pulled in conflicting directions and a larger thematic significance, then clearly this would not be an ideal text to choose for this question.

Prompt 3: The significance of setting to the development of character, plot, and/or theme

Specific Setting	Significance
<i>Middle passage and unnamed plantations</i>	<i>Character, plot, and thematic development; greater significance and symbolism of the text; is this where Beloved is from? What does she represent?</i>
<i>Sweet Home</i>	<i>Character, plot, and thematic development; before and after Mr. Gardner's death; Schoolteacher and his abusive nephews; the deaths of the Sweet Home men</i>
<i>124</i>	<i>Character, plot, and thematic development; Beloved arrives, Denver's growth; boys leaving; Sethe atoning for action</i>
<i>Specific places in Cincinnati</i>	<i>Character, plot, and thematic development; Stamp Paid, Baby Suggs, the Bodwins</i>

Step 2: Choosing Specific Details and Examples from the Novel

For prompt 3, selecting one or two settings in the text isn't enough. Students need to remember to relate the setting to the development of character, plot, and/or theme.

Average responses (and students who did not fully prepare *Beloved*) will undoubtedly remember the following settings:

- 124
- Sweet Home

However, those who are more prepared will also recall the following settings:

- Georgia prison camp
- Cherokee village
- the banks of the Ohio River
- the unnamed plantation of Sethe's birth
- the middle passage of many slaves
- the various stops on Paul D's journey to Sethe
- the Clearing
- the carnival
- the cold house
- the Church of the Holy Redeemer
- Sawyer's Restaurant
- the Bodwins' house

Clearly, the more specific details and examples students have from the text, the more they will be able to incorporate apt and specific references from the text into their essay. Although students should not just rehash the plot, they do want to use details and examples from the text to illustrate and support their assertions.

Step 3: Completing a Planning Chart

Organizing the details, examples, and direct quotations and their relation to theme is the last planning activity *before* students begin to draft their essay.

Specific Incidents at Specific Setting	Direct Quotation from Text	Thematic Topics
<i>Sethe's birth</i>		<i>Separation from parents; effects of slavery; lack of individuality; oral stories; origins; naming; memory</i>
<i>Sethe's marriage to Halle at Sweet Home</i>		<i>Love; relationships; privacy; normalcy; absence; ownership; intimacy</i>
<i>Schoolteacher at Sweet Home</i>		<i>Man's inhumanity to man; greed; ignorance, fear; ownership</i>

Specific Incidents at Specific Setting	Direct Quotation from Text	Thematic Topics
<i>Hauntings of 124</i>		<i>Ghosts; hauntings; revenge; love; loss; danger; motherhood; danger; stories; memory; escape; enslavement</i>
<i>Birth of Denver on the banks of the Ohio River</i>		<i>Birth; freedom; slavery; oral stories; memory; motherhood; love</i>
<i>The shed</i>		<i>Justice; motherhood; love; slavery; memory; stories</i>
<i>Ice-skating pond</i>		<i>Freedom; love; respect; motherhood; memory</i>
<i>Life without Paul D at 124</i>		<i>Justice; revenge; love; loss; memory; stories; slavery</i>

Now students are ready to write their response to Prompt 3. See pages 120–121 for a sample student response to Prompt 3.