May 10, 2020

To my esteemed 11th Grade students:

I want to thank you all for the enthusiastic response to a most challenging assignment. You guys gave it your all, and I am very proud of all of you! However, a very special SHOUT OUT goes to the following Bochurim for truly exceptional responses: Shalom Federman, Naftuli Friedman (best regards to the "alter heim" Seagate), Meir Kipper, Yisroel Meir Greisman, Yehuda Ze'ev Boiangiu, Yitzchak Mosoev, Avi Beckerman.

I owe two apologies to the Olam.

Firstly, even though I have a way of receiving and printing out your assignments submitted, and I do read them and mark them, I have not yet returned them. Iy'h in the near future I will scan each paper and return please indicate on this week's work where you would like me to send all your work. In the interim feel free to call me at 718-404-8422 between 4:00-10:00 PM to discuss your paper. It's always great to hear from you.

Secondly, we were scheduled to start this week the final segment of our Common Core curriculum – Writing An Argument, along with a phone conference call to explain all the details of how to properly write an argument. However, due to the fact that an important piece of equipment did not arrive on time, this segment will be delayed at least by one week.

I was very encouraged that many of you are eagerly looking forward to doing this segment of the curriculum. Bnei Yeshiva usually excel on this part of the Common Core ELA. Plus on the actual Regents, they are rewarded with a "whopping" 24 credits for a well written response.

I received a flood of phone calls requesting the missing part to the 2003 Staten Island Ferry story with Chief Lt. Carmino of the N.Y.P.D. Counter Terrorism Task Force, so here it is.

THE REST OF THE STORY: THE STATEN ISLAND FERRY TERMINAL – AUGUST 2003.
As my family was riding the long escalator from the subway level to the Staten Island Ferry boarding area, an alarm went off that was "bli guzma" at least 10-20 times louder that our MIrrer Yeshiva fire alarm.

Turned out, it was an alarm that indicated something dangerously radioactive had entered the area.

Lieutenant Carmino immediately "chapped the matzav", and followed up behind us on the escalator. Using a pre-arranged signal, he waved off the two plain clothes man Police Officers waiting for us at the top of the escalator, in order not to waste giving away their presence to the other people in the huge terminal. But, the uniformed officer with the weapons sniffing dog did remain. Lieutenant Carmino asked the group on the escalator (we were all sandwiched in between him and the officer with the dog) to please stop while he interviewed us.

It turned out that the person standing next to us on the escalator had taken a dose of radioactive medicine at Mt. Sinai hospital and was heading home via the ferry.

After speaking at length to the "radioactive" elderly gentleman, he then engaged us in conversation, which led to the conversation about the story Rain, Rain Go Away.

As a postscript, the elderly "radioactive" gentleman, after leaving us behind to speak with Lieutenant Carmino, was subsequently surrounded by 4 Coast Guard soldiers carrying the largest guns I had ever seen. (To this day, they accompany every voyage of the Staten Island Ferry.) They detained him for quite a while, until they got Mt. Sinai Hospital on the phone to verify his claim.

Lieutenant (at the time Sargent) Carmino upon seeing this, smiled, pointing out that even the smallest radioactive bomb required the minimum of a briefcase size container, something that no one on the escalator was carrying, and a fact that was overlooked by the Coast Guard. (Boy, was I happy I wasn't teaching that day!)

As you can see, Lieutenant Carmino really knew his stuff even back then in 2003.

TWO FINAL NOTES ABOUT YOUR SUBMISSIONS:

1. Please make sure that **EACH PAGE** of your submission has your name, class number and date on it as well as an email address for returns. **NOT** at the very top of the page, but slightly lower (as it can get cut off during the scanning process)
2. As of this writing, it has not yet been decided if there will be NUMERICAL, LETTER or PASS/FAIL grades on your records. You will be notified when a final decision is reached by the Sate Department of Education.

TODAY'S ASSIGNMENT

We are giving you two reading comprehension passages from previous Regents. Both are passage C, which is the non-fiction reading comprehension segment of the Common Core ELA Regents. (Passage A is always fiction and Passage B is always Poetry)

Please take note that the vast majority of the multiple choice questions are in reality Text Analysis questions, as will become abundantly clear as you do the assignment.

As it is with all Regent questions, it is important to note the Title, Date and Source of the excerpt. It supplies a lot of useful information for understanding the passage.

As a special note, the section from the June 2016 Regents is quite "famous" as it was the very first Common Core Regents Exam given in the Mirrer Yeshiva Mesivta.

Answer All questions in june 2016 and any seven out of ten in August 2018

Any questions on the assignment, please feel free to call me.

JUNE 2016

Reading Comprehension Passage C

...Memory teaches me what I know of these matters. The boy reminds the adult. I was a bilingual child, but of a certain kind: "socially disadvantaged," the son of working-class parents, both Mexican immigrants. ...

In public, my father and mother spoke a hesitant, accented, and not always grammatical English. And then they would have to strain, their bodies tense, to catch the sense of what was rapidly said by *los gringos*. At home, they returned to Spanish. The language of their Mexican past sounded in counterpoint to the English spoken in public. The words would come quickly, with ease. Conveyed through those sounds was the pleasing, soothing, consoling reminder that one was at home.

During those years when I was first learning to speak, my mother and father addressed me only in Spanish; in Spanish I learned to reply. By contrast, English (*inglés*) was the language I came to associate with gringos, rarely heard in the house. I learned my first words of English overhearing my parents speaking to strangers. At six years of age, I knew just enough words for my mother to trust me on errands to stores one block away—but no more.

I was then a listening child, careful to hear the very different sounds of Spanish and English. Wide-eyed with hearing, I'd listen to sounds more than to words. First, there were English (gringo) sounds. So many words still were unknown to me that when the butcher or the lady at the drugstore said something, exotic polysyllabic sounds would bloom in the midst of their sentences. Often the speech of people in public seemed to me very loud, booming with confidence. The man behind the counter would literally ask, "What can I do for you?" But by being so firm and clear, the sound of his voice said that he was a gringo; he belonged in public society. There were also the high, nasal notes of middle-class American speech—which I rarely am conscious of hearing today because I hear them so often, but could not stop hearing when I was a boy. Crowds at Safeway or at bus stops were noisy with the birdlike sounds of *los gringos*. I'd move away from them all—all the chirping chatter above me.

My own sounds I was unable to hear, but I knew that I spoke English poorly. My words could not extend to form complete thoughts. And the words I did speak I didn't know well enough to make distinct sounds. (Listeners would usually lower their heads to hear better what I was trying to say). But it was one thing for *me* to speak English with difficulty; it was more troubling to hear my parents speaking in public: their high-whining vowels and guttural[1] consonants; their sentences that got stuck with "eh" and "ah" sounds; the confused syntax; the hesitant rhythm of sounds so different from the way gringos spoke. I'd notice, moreover, that my parents' voices were softer than those of gringos we would meet.

I am tempted to say now that none of this mattered. (In adulthood I am embarrassed by childhood fears.) And, in a way, it didn't matter very much that my parents could not speak English with ease. Their linguistic difficulties had no serious consequences. My mother and father made themselves understood at the county hospital clinic and at government offices. And yet, in another way, it mattered very much. It was unsettling to hear my parents struggle with English. Hearing them, I'd grow nervous, and my clutching trust in their protection and power would be weakened. ...

But then there was Spanish: *español*, the language rarely heard away from the house; *español*, the language which seemed to me therefore a private language, my family's language. To hear its sounds was to feel myself specially recognized as one of the family, apart from *los otros*.[2] A simple remark, an inconsequential comment could convey that

[1] guttural — throaty

[2] los otros — the others

assurance. My parents would say something to me and I would feel embraced by the sounds of their words. Those sounds said: *I am speaking with ease in Spanish. I am addressing you in words I never use with* los gringos. *I recognize you as someone special, close, like no one outside. You belong with us. In the family. Ricardo.*

At the age of six, well past the time when most middle-class children no longer notice the difference between sounds uttered at home and words spoken in public, I had a different experience. I lived in a world compounded of sounds. I was a child longer than most. I lived in a magical world, surrounded by sounds both pleasing and fearful. I shared with my family a language enchantingly private—different from that used in the city around us. ...

If I rehearse here the changes in my private life after my Americanization, it is finally to emphasize a public gain. The loss implies the gain. The house I returned to each afternoon was quiet. Intimate sounds no longer greeted me at the door. Inside there were other noises. The telephone rang. Neighborhood kids ran past the door of the bedroom where I was reading my schoolbooks—covered with brown shopping-bag paper. Once I learned the public language, it would never again be easy for me to hear intimate family voices. More and more of my day was spent hearing words, not sounds. But that may only be a way of saying that on the day I raised my hand in class and spoke loudly to an entire roomful of faces, my childhood started to end. ...

—Richard Rodriguez
excerpted from "Aria: A Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood"
The American Scholar, Winter 1981
The Phi Beta Kappa Society

15 The phrase "the boy reminds the adult" in the first paragraph establishes the narrator's

(1) mood
(2) perspective
(3) creativity
(4) disposition

16 The use of the word "counterpoint" in line 7 helps to develop a central idea by presenting

(1) differing memories
(2) opposing principles
(3) contrasting cultures
(4) conflicting philosophies

17 The use of figurative language in line 17 demonstrates the narrator's

(1) eagerness to learn
(2) desire for recognition
(3) frustration with authority
(4) anxiety about adulthood

18 The use of the word "public" in line 23 emphasizes the narrator's feeling of

(1) accomplishment
(2) disillusionment
(3) satisfaction
(4) separation

19 The description of the narrator speaking English in lines 28 through 31 emphasizes his inability to

(1) communicate effectively
(2) understand the culture
(3) distinguish between languages
(4) express emotions

20 In lines 38 through 42 the narrator's reaction to his parents' "linguistic difficulties" (line 38) reveals his

(1) low expectations
(2) conflicting feelings
(3) educational concerns
(4) hostile thoughts

21 Lines 43 through 50 contribute to a central idea in the text by focusing on the

(1) narrator's sense of security
(2) family's economic status
(3) family's traditional beliefs
(4) narrator's feeling of confusion

22 Which quotation best reflects the narrator's overall experience with language?

(1) "The words would come quickly, with ease" (lines 7 and 8)
(2) "I'd listen to sounds more than to words" (line 17)
(3) "My own sounds I was unable to hear, but I knew that I spoke English poorly" (line 28)
(4) "Hearing them, I'd grow nervous" (line 41)

23 The phrase "the loss implies the gain" (line 58) contributes to a central idea in the text by indicating that when the narrator speaks English comfortably he is

(1) disconnected from his family
(2) distressed by hearing English sounds
(3) uninterested in his school work
(4) undeterred from making new friends

24 The narrator's tone in lines 63 through 65 suggests

(1) distrust
(2) respect
(3) confidence
(4) intolerance

Reading Comprehension Passage C

I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills. The Equator runs across these highlands, a hundred miles to the North, and the farm lay at an altitude of over six thousand feet. In the day-time you felt that you had got high up, near to the sun, but the early mornings and evenings were limpid[1] and restful, and the nights were cold. ...

We grew coffee on my farm. The land was in itself a little too high for coffee, and it was hard work to keep it going; we were never rich on the farm. But a coffee-plantation is a thing that gets hold of you and does not let you go, and there is always something to do on it: you are generally just a little behind with your work. ...

Coffee-growing is a long job. It does not all come out as you imagine, when, yourself young and hopeful, in the streaming rain, you carry the boxes of your shining young coffee-plants from the nurseries, and, with the whole number of farm-hands in the field, watch the plants set in the regular rows of holes in the wet ground where they are to grow, and then have them thickly shaded against the sun, with branches broken from the bush, since obscurity is the privilege of young things. It is four or five years till the trees come into bearing, and in the meantime you will get drought on the land, or diseases, and the bold native weeds will grow up thick in the fields,—the black-jack, which has long scabrous[2] seed-vessels that hang on to your clothes and stockings. Some of the trees have been badly planted with their tap-roots bent; they will die just as they begin to flower. You plant a little over six hundred trees to the acre, and I had six hundred acres of land with coffee; my oxen dragged the cultivators up and down the fields, between the rows of trees, many thousand miles, patiently, awaiting coming bounties.

There are times of great beauty on a coffee-farm. When the plantation flowered in the beginning of the rains, it was a radiant sight, like a cloud of chalk, in the mist and the drizzling rain, over six hundred acres of land. The coffee-blossom has a delicate slightly bitter scent, like the black-thorn blossom. When the field reddened with the ripe berries, all the women and the children, whom they call the Totos, were called out to pick the coffee off the trees, together with the men; then the waggons and carts brought it down to the factory near the river. Our machinery was never quite what it should have been, but we had planned and built the factory ourselves and thought highly of it. Once the whole factory burned down and had to be built up again. The big coffee-dryer turned and turned, rumbling the coffee in its iron belly with a sound like pebbles that are washed about on the sea-shore. Sometimes the coffee would be dry, and ready to take out of the dryer, in the middle of the night. That was a picturesque moment, with many hurricane lamps in the huge dark room of the factory, that was hung everywhere with cobwebs and coffee-husks, and with eager glowing dark faces, in the light of the lamps, round the dryer; the factory, you felt, hung in the great African night like a bright jewel in an Ethiope's ear. Later on the coffee was hulled, graded, and sorted by hand, and packed in sacks sewn up with a saddler's needle. ...

My farm was a little too high up for growing coffee. It happened in the cold months that we would get frost on the lower land and in the morning the shoots of the coffee-trees, and the young coffee-berries on them, would be all brown and withered. The wind blew in from the plains, and even in good years we never got the same yield of coffee to the acre as the people in the lower districts of Thika and Kiambu, on four thousand feet.

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[1]limpid — clear

[2]scabrous — rough

We were short of rain, as well, in the Ngong country, and three times we had a year of real drought, which brought us very low down. In a year in which we had fifty inches of rain, we picked eighty tons of coffee, and in a year of fifty-five inches, nearly ninety tons; but there were two bad years in which we had only twenty-five and twenty inches of rain, and picked only sixteen and fifteen tons of coffee, and those years were disastrous to the farm.

At the same time coffee-prices fell: where we had got a hundred pounds a ton we now got sixty or seventy. Times grew hard on the farm. We could not pay our debts, and we had no money for the running of the plantation. My people at home, who had shares in the farm, wrote out to me and told me that I would have to sell. ...

Our real trouble was that we were short of capital, for it had all been spent in the old days before I took over the running of the farm. We could not carry through any radical improvements, but had to live from hand to mouth,—and this, in the last years, became our normal mode of living on the farm. ...

When I had no more money, and could not make things pay, I had to sell the farm. A big Company in Nairobi bought it. They thought that the place was too high up for coffee, and they were not going in for farming. But they meant to take up all the coffee-trees, to divide up the land and lay out roads, and in time, when Nairobi should be growing out to the West, they meant to sell the land for building-plots. That was towards the end of the year.

Even as it was then, I do not think that I should have found it in me to give up the farm if it had not been for one thing. The coffee-crop that was still unripe upon the trees belonged to the old owners of the farm, or to the Bank which was holding a first mortgage in it. This coffee would not be picked, handled in the factory and sent off, till May or later. For such a period I was to remain on the farm, in charge of it, and things were to go on, unaltered to the view. And during this time, I thought, something would happen to change it all back, since the world, after all, was not a regular or calculable place. ...

—Karen Blixen
excerpted from *Out of Africa*, 1948
Putnam

15 The second paragraph introduces a central idea of

(1) security in the farm's abundance
(2) perseverance in spite of obstacles
(3) trust in the crop's profitability
(4) success in spite of inexperience

16 The language in lines 9 through 14 suggests that new coffee plants require

(1) isolation
(2) fertilization
(3) irrigation
(4) protection

17 The words "black-jack" (line 16) and "tap-roots" (line 18) provide evidence of the

(1) narrator's knowledge
(2) workers' responsibility
(3) farm's prosperity
(4) trees' hardiness

18 The imagery in lines 22 through 25 highlights the farm's

(1) diversity
(2) routine
(3) appeal
(4) history

19 The figurative language in lines 30 through 32 reinforces the

(1) power of the ocean
(2) rattle of the machine
(3) heat of the dryer
(4) noise of the night

20 The purpose of lines 39 through 43 is to explain the

(1) impact of the farm's elevation
(2) benefits of the farm's size
(3) fragility of the immature berries
(4) success of the annual harvests

21 The details in lines 44 through 49 demonstrate that the

(1) growing conditions are beneficial
(2) natural events are unpredictable
(3) excessive rain lowers coffee prices
(4) careful records improve crop yields

22 The phrase "hand to mouth" (line 56) most likely means

(1) using unusual resources
(2) enjoying occasional luxuries
(3) covering basic necessities
(4) ignoring financial problems

23 The statement in lines 69 and 70 reflects the narrator's

(1) sympathy
(2) indifference
(3) ignorance
(4) optimism

24 Which statement best represents a central idea of the text?

(1) "Our machinery was never quite what it should have been, but we had planned and built the factory ourselves" (lines 28 and 29)
(2) "That was a picturesque moment, with many hurricane lamps in the huge dark room of the factory" (lines 33 and 34)
(3) "But they meant to take up all the coffee-trees, to divide up the land and lay out roads" (lines 60 and 61)
(4) "Even as it was then, I do not think that I should have found it in me to give up the farm" (line 64)