

Questions 48–55. Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

As thoughts of Pete came to Maggie’s mind, she began to have an intense dislike for all of her dresses.

Line “What ails yeh? What makes ye be allus
5 fixin’ and fussin’?” her mother would frequently roar at her.

She began to note with more interest the well-dressed women she met on the avenues. She envied elegance and soft palms. She craved
10 those adornments of person which she saw every day on the street, conceiving them to be allies of vast importance to women.

Studying faces, she thought many of the women and girls she chanced to meet smiled with serenity as though forever cherished and watched over by those they loved.

The air in the collar-and-cuff establishment strangled her. She knew she was gradually and surely shriveling in the hot, stuffy room. The
20 begrimed windows rattled incessantly from the passing of elevated trains. The place was filled with a whirl of noises and odors.

She became lost in thought as she looked at some of the grizzled women in the room, mere mechanical contrivances sewing seams and grinding out, with heads bent over their work, tales of imagined or real girlhood hap-
25 piness or of past drunks, or the baby at home, and unpaid wages. She wondered how long her youth would endure....

Maggie was anxious for a friend to whom she could talk about Pete. She would have liked to discuss his admirable mannerisms with a reliable mutual friend. At home, she found
35 her mother often drunk and always raving. It seemed that the world had treated this woman very badly, and she took a deep revenge upon such portions of it that came within her reach. She broke furniture as if she were at last getting
40 her rights....

Jimmie came when he was obliged to by circumstances over which he had no control. His well-trained legs brought him staggering home and put him to bed some nights when
45 he would have rather gone elsewhere.

Swaggering Pete looked like a golden sun to Maggie. He took her to a dime museum, where rows of meek freaks astonished her. She

50 contemplated their deformities with awe and thought them a sort of chosen tribe.

Pete, racking his brains for amusement, discovered the Central Park Menagerie¹ and the Museum of Arts. Sunday afternoons would sometimes find them at these places. Pete did
55 not appear to be particularly interested in what he saw. He stood around looking heavy, while Maggie giggled in glee....

Usually he submitted with silent dignity to all that he had to go through, but at times
60 he was goaded into comment.

“Aw!” he demanded once. “Look at all dese little jugs! Hundred jugs in a row! Ten rows in a case, an’ about a t’ousand cases! What d’blazes use is them?”

In the evenings of week days he often took her to see plays in which the dazzling heroine was rescued from the palatial home of her treacherous guardian by the hero with the beautiful sentiments. The latter spent most of
70 his time out at soak in pale-green snow-storms, busy with a nickel-plated revolver rescuing aged strangers from villains.

Maggie lost herself in sympathy with the wanderers swooning in snow-storms beneath happy-hued church windows, while a choir within sang “Joy to the World.”² To Maggie and the rest of the audience this was transcendental realism. Joy always within, and they, like the actor, inevitably without....

¹ zoo.

² popular Christmas carol celebrating the birth of Jesus.

48. In light of the passage as a whole, Maggie’s growing dislike for all of her dresses (lines 2–3) is plausibly motivated by all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) a desire to impress her suitor, Pete
 - (B) a longing to dress like the women who pass her on the avenue
 - (C) the fear that they too readily expose her lower-class background
 - (D) a wish to liberate herself from the environment in which she toils
 - (E) the pleasure she takes in annoying her drunk and belligerent mother
49. The diction in lines 17–19 suggests that the impact of the sweat-shop environment upon Maggie is both literally and figuratively
- (A) exhausting
 - (B) besmirching
 - (C) rattling
 - (D) stifling
 - (E) devaluing
50. The description of the other women in the sweat-shop (lines 24–29) primarily emphasizes the
- (A) attention they pay to detail
 - (B) jealousy they feel for Maggie’s romantic prospects
 - (C) fatigue they experience during the course of their day
 - (D) surplus of problems that exacerbate their situations
 - (E) deformity of posture that is a by-product of their craft
51. The “rights” to which the narrator refers in line 40 are BEST understood to mean the ability of Maggie’s mother to
- (A) vote legally
 - (B) assert her independence by leaving her husband
 - (C) drink to whatever capacity she desires
 - (D) censure her daughter’s interest in Pete
 - (E) rage against the injustice of her lamentable lot
52. The comparison of Pete to a “golden sun” (line 46) is primarily intended to
- (A) illustrate one of his “admirable mannerisms” (line 33)
 - (B) highlight the degree to which he brightens Maggie’s drab existence
 - (C) show how the places Pete takes Maggie increase her intelligence
 - (D) provide a foil for her drunken brother Jimmie
 - (E) make Maggie pine to be the “dazzling heroine” (lines 66–67) she sees in the theater
53. Which of the following phrases does LEAST to establish Pete’s general indifference to the places he takes Maggie?
- (A) “racking his brains for amusement” (line 51)
 - (B) “did not appear to be particularly interested” (lines 54–55)
 - (C) “stood around looking heavy” (line 56)
 - (D) submitted with silent dignity to all he had to go through” (lines 58–59)
 - (E) “goaded into comment” (line 60)
54. The concluding paragraph suggests that the emotional impact of the play upon Maggie and other members of the audience lies in the
- (A) mesmerizing performance of the show’s heroine
 - (B) fleeting escape it provides from their wretched everyday existence
 - (C) exultant spirit instilled by the seasonal music
 - (D) ready identification of the audience with the outcast lot of the wanderers
 - (E) stock archetypal natures of both hero and villain
55. Which of the following does NOT contribute to the local color of the passage?
- (A) ethnic stereotypes
 - (B) period affectations
 - (C) colloquial language
 - (D) urban landmarks
 - (E) social misfortune

Précis and Explication of Passage Five: From Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*

Stephen Crane's naturalistic novella, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, depicts the hardships of an Irish-American girl living in the tenements of the Lower East Side of New York City during the mid-to-late 1800s. Though Maggie's domestic, workplace and personal existences are predictably bleak, factors that contribute to her suicide at the book's end, this particular episode is one of the lighter ones in the novel as Maggie revels in the attention of a suitor who takes her interesting places. For Maggie, Pete is a ray of light in her otherwise bleak existence though, as the novel eventually reveals, also the architect of her downfall.

Lines 1–3, “As thoughts of Pete came to Maggie's mind, she began to have an intense dislike for all of her dresses,” establish Maggie's thought as that of a young girl eager to impress her new suitor and equally eager to conceal her decidedly lower-class status. Her mother's carping complaint, ““What ails yeh? What makes ye be allus fixin' and fussin'?”” (lines 4–5), reveals through its idiom her uneducated, oft-drunken nature, showing her to be a woman with more to worry about than her daily attire. Maggie's consciousness of Pete's romantic interest leads her to reassess her world, to begin “to note with more interest the well-dressed women she met on the avenues. She envied elegance and soft palms. She craved those adornments of person which she saw every day on the street, conceiving them to be allies of vast importance to women” (lines 7–12). She imagines that she shares with them an unspoken affinity, the serenity of those “forever cherished and watched over by those they loved” (lines 15–16).

This sidewalk fancy contrasts sharply with the ambience of the workplace in which she labors. Maggie immediately describes how “The air in the collar-and-cuff establishment strangled her. She knew she was gradually and surely shriveling in the hot, stuffy room” (lines 17–19). Sentenced to sewing garments in a room with “begrimed windows [that] rattled incessantly from the passing of elevated trains” (lines 20–21), she is surrounded by “grizzled women...mere mechanical contrivances sewing seams and grinding out, with heads bent over their work, tales of imagined or real girlhood happiness or of past drunks, or the baby at home, and unpaid wages” (lines 24–29). With a “mother often drunk and always raving” (line 35) and an equally inebriated brother whose “well-trained legs brought him staggering home and put him to bed some nights when he would have rather gone elsewhere” (lines 43–45), Maggie knows her sole hope of redress from a similarly desolate fate lies in Pete's becoming the instrument of her deliverance.

So impactful is his presence that the narrator observes that “Swaggering Pete looked like a golden sun to Maggie” (lines 46–47). Hardly an aesthete, he takes her to a carnie show, the Central Park zoo, and the Museum of Arts where he does “not appear to be particularly interested in what he [sees]” (lines 54–56). The diction of the passage—words and phrases such as “submitted” (line 58) and “go through” (line 59)—implies that for Pete these visits are an ordeal, if one that is necessary for courting Maggie. His observation upon viewing what is likely an exhibit of ancient pottery—“Look at all dese little jugs! Hundred jugs in a row! Ten rows in a case, an' about a t'ousand cases! What d'blazes use is them?”” (lines 61–64)—reveals his lack of refinement and belies any attempt on his part at cultural appreciation. Though no mention is made of his response to the theater (yet another place he takes her), Maggie herself is fascinated by the melodramatic and romantic plots “in which the dazzling heroine was rescued from the palatial home of her treacherous guardian by the hero with the beautiful sentiments” (lines 66–69), or by how this hero “with a nickel-plated revolver rescu[ed] aged strangers from villains” (lines 71–72). That said, such romantic actions are foreign to her world, and Maggie “los[es] herself in sympathy” (line 73) with other characters, the “wanderers swooning in snow-storms beneath happy-hued church windows, while a choir within sang ‘Joy to the World.’ To Maggie and the rest of the audience this was transcendental realism. Joy always within, and they, like the actor, inevitably without...” (lines 74–79).

Crane's novella has a very deterministic bent to it, and as readers familiar with the novella know, Maggie's happiness with Pete is not meant to be. Discarded by Pete, spurned by her family, and ostracized by her neighbors, she sinks into a life of prostitution before ostensibly drowning herself in the dark waters of the river.

48. In light of the passage as a whole, Maggie’s growing dislike for all of her dresses (lines 2–3) is plausibly motivated all of the following EXCEPT **(E) the pleasure she takes in annoying her drunk and belligerent mother.**

Maggie first begins to have an “intense dislike” (line 2) for her dresses when she thinks of Pete (lines 1–2). Later, as she walks down the avenue, the narrator observes how “She began to note with more interest the well-dressed women she met on the avenues. She envied elegance and soft palms. She craved those adornments of person which she saw every day on the street, conceiving them to be allies of vast importance to women” (lines 7–12). This supports B and, by extension, C since she is clearly contrasting what she is wearing with the more fashionable attire worn by women who are better off. Choice D is reasonable in that Maggie sees Pete as a ticket out of the “collar and cuff establishment” (line 17), the oppressive sweat-shop environment that is strangling her. Clearly, she does not wish to be like the “grizzled women...mere mechanical contrivances sewing seams and grinding out, with heads bent over their work, tales of imagined or real girlhood happiness or of past drunks, or the baby at home, and unpaid wages” (lines 24–29). She wants to liberate herself from this fate. Though Maggie’s mother does appear drunk and belligerent, nowhere is Maggie seen deliberately annoying her.

49. The diction in lines 17–19 suggests that the impact of the sweat-shop environment upon Maggie is both literally and figuratively **(D) stifling.**

As the narrator notes, “The air in the collar-and-cuff establishment strangled her. She knew she was gradually and surely shriveling in the hot, stuffy room.” The emphasis is on heat and suffocation. By extension, the environment is stifling her ability to thrive. Choice D reflects this best.

50. The description of the other women in the sweat-shop (lines 24–29) primarily emphasizes the **(D) surplus of problems that exacerbate their situations.**

As Maggie gazes about the sweat-shop, she sees “the grizzled women in the room, mere mechanical contrivances sewing seams and grinding out, with heads bent over their work, tales of imagined or real girlhood happiness or of past drunks, or the baby at home, and unpaid wages” (lines 24–29). Here the word “mechanical” suggests that they are carrying out their duties in a joyless, rote fashion while entertaining either nostalgic fantasies of better times or conceding to an inescapable consciousness of the bleak domestic reality of their lives outside of the workplace. That is the rationale behind the selection of D as the correct answer.

51. The “rights” to which the narrator refers in line 40 are BEST understood to mean the ability of Maggie’s mother to **(E) rage against the injustice of her lamentable lot.**

Lines 34–40—“At home, she found her mother often drunk and always raving. It seemed that the world had treated this woman very badly, and she took a deep revenge upon such portions of it that came within her reach. She broke furniture as if she were at last getting her rights....”—pretty much determine E as the best answer. The lot of Maggie’s mother has not been a kind one, and her attack upon the furniture marks a feeble and futile attempt to get back at life for treating her in this manner.

52. The comparison of Pete to a “golden sun” (line 46) is primarily intended to **(B) highlight the degree to which he brightens Maggie’s drab existence.**

The simile comparing Pete to a “golden sun” (line 46) shows the degree of brightness Pete brings into Maggie’s dull world. Seemingly sentenced to life as a seamstress in a room darkened by begrimed windows and shaken by the rattle of a passing elevated train, Maggie sees in Pete a liberating presence, someone to emancipate her from her drab home and workplace existences and introduce her to the worlds of park, theater and museum. Her new consciousness of her attire and her daydreaming about Pete on the job (lines 1–3) provide further support for choice B.

53. Which of the following phrases does LEAST to establish Pete’s general indifference to the places he takes Maggie? **(A) “racking his brains for amusement” (line 51).**

That Pete seemed bored by the visits to zoo and museum (B), that he just “stood around” and did not delight in the pictures (C), that he “submitted” rather than avidly embraced these excursions (D), and that he had to be “goaded” by Maggie into saying something (E), all suggest that he is only taking her to these places as part of the ritual of courtship. Choice A, on the other hand, suggests he is trying find some new activity with which to entertain her.

54. The concluding paragraph suggests that the emotional impact of the play upon Maggie and other members of the audience lies in the **(D) ready identification of the audience with the outcast lot of the wanderers.**

This pretty much derives directly from the content of lines 76–79: “To Maggie and the rest of the audience this was transcendental realism. Joy always within, and they, like the actor, inevitably without...”. Just like the “wanderers swooning in snow-storms beneath happy-hued church windows, while a choir within sang ‘Joy to the World’” (lines 74–76), they remain beyond the pale of prosperity and future.

55. Which of the following does NOT contribute to the local color of the passage? **(B) period affectations.**

Choice A is evident in the stereotype of the drunken Irish, choice C in the manner in which Maggie’s mother and Pete talk which reflects an extremely limited level of literacy. Choice D is manifest by the references to the Museum of Art and the Central Park zoo, Choice E in the stifling sweat-shop which marked the exploitation of an impoverished and desperate work force in New York City in the mid-to-late 1800s, the period in which the story is set. Choice B, on the other hand, implies taking on an attitude or behavior that is not natural to oneself in order to impress others; this is not evident in the passage.