

The Eolian Harp (1795)
By Samuel Tayler Coleridge (England)

Directions: This part consists of selections from prose works and questions on their content form and style. After reading each passage, choose the best answer to each question.

Note: Pay particular attention to the requirement of questions that contain the words NOT, LEAST, or EXCEPT.

Questions 1-15 concern “The Eolian Harp” by Samuel Tayler Coleridge.

1. In the first section of the poem (lines 1-12), the speaker seeks to convey a feeling of
 - (A) curiosity
 - (B) contentment
 - (C) remoteness
 - (D) resignation
 - (E) foreboding
2. In context, “saddening” (line 7) suggests that the
 - (A) clouds have become darker
 - (B) speaker is increasingly melancholy
 - (C) happiness of the speaker will fade
 - (D) security of the couple will be threatened
 - (E) prospect of night vexes the speaker
3. The speaker gives symbolic significance to which of the following?
 - I. The “Jasmin” (line 4)
 - II. The “Myrtle” (line 4)
 - III. The “star” (line 7)
 - IV. The “Sea” (line 11)
 - (A) I and II only
 - (B) III and IV only
 - (C) I, II, and III only
 - (D) I, II, and IV only
 - (E) I, II, III, and IV
4. Lines 11 and 12 (“The . . . silence”) are best understood to mean which of the following?
 - (A) The silence is such that even the sea itself is aware of it.
 - (B) We are in a quiet place, but the sea, however distant, is at least not silent.
 - (C) Even the gentle murmuring of the sea is fading into silence.
 - (D) The fact that we can just hear the far-off sea shows how quiet our surroundings are.
 - (E) The silence of the sea speaks more forcefully than words can of the hushed world around us.
5. In lines 14-15, the breeze is compared to
 - (A) a lute
 - (B) a maiden
 - (C) a lover
 - (D) an elf
 - (E) a wave
6. Which of the following occurs directly because the breeze is “desultory” (line 14)?
 - (A) The speaker cannot clearly hear the harp.
 - (B) The music of the harp is not evenly sustained.
 - (C) The speaker is obliged to personify the harp.
 - (D) Only the speaker can understand the meaning of the music.
 - (E) The music of the harp distracts the speaker.

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7. The speaker's description of the sound of the lute emphasizes all of the following EXCEPT its
- (A) seductiveness
 - (B) magical quality
 - (C) sweetness
 - (D) sensuousness
 - (E) remoteness
8. In lines 32-33, "the mute still air . . . instrument" suggests that the
- (A) sound of the lute makes the speaker drowsy
 - (B) air itself contains potential music
 - (C) sound of the lute can make the air itself mute
 - (D) lute can make music even without the breeze
 - (E) music cannot exist while the air remains still
9. In line 38, "tranquil" functions as which of the following?
- (A) an adjective modifying "I" (line 36)
 - (B) an adverb modifying "behold" (line 36)
 - (C) an adjective modifying "sunbeams" (line 37)
 - (D) an adjective modifying "muse" (line 38)
 - (E) an adverb modifying "muse" (line 38)
10. In lines 34-43, the speaker compares
- (A) his muse to tranquillity
 - (B) his brain to the lute
 - (C) the midpoint of his life to noon
 - (D) his thoughts to the ocean
 - (E) his muse to a sunbeam
11. In the poem, the Eolian harp is, for the speaker, all of the following EXCEPT
- (A) a source of inspiration
 - (B) a source of pleasure
 - (C) a gentle reproof
 - (D) a suggestive symbol
 - (E) an enchanting voice
12. Lines 44-48 can best be described as a
- (A) digression from the main subject of the poem
 - (B) change from description to narration
 - (C) counterargument to establish the speaker's credibility
 - (D) metaphorical application of the image of the lute
 - (E) simile for the relationship between the speaker and Sara
13. In the last section of the poem, the speaker implies that to try to fathom the "Incomprehensible" (line 59) is
- (A) every thinking person's duty
 - (B) possible only through metaphor
 - (C) difficult except during privileged moments
 - (D) the true function of music and poetry
 - (E) an act of overweening pride
14. It can be inferred that Sara's attitude toward the speaker's speculations is one of
- (A) open hostility
 - (B) gentle disapproval
 - (C) mild amusement
 - (D) fond admiration
 - (E) respectful awe
15. The poem is an example of which of the following verse forms?
- (A) Blank verse
 - (B) Heroic couplet
 - (C) Terza rima
 - (D) Ballad meter
 - (E) Free verse