

Part A

Directions: Read the passages on the following pages (a short story excerpt and an autobiographical excerpt) and answer each multiple-choice question. Then write the essay as described in **Your Task**. You may use the margins to take notes as you read and scrap paper to plan your response.

Your Task:

After you have read the passages and answered the multiple-choice questions, write a unified essay about the things mothers do for their children as revealed in the passages. In your essay, use ideas from *both* passages to establish a controlling idea about the things mothers do for their children. Using evidence from *each* passage, develop your controlling idea and show how the author uses specific literary elements or techniques to convey that ideas.

Guidelines:

Be sure to

- Use ideas from *both* passages to establish a controlling idea about the things mothers do for their children
- Use specific and relevant evidence from *each* passage to develop your controlling idea
- Show how each author uses specific literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, structure, point of view) or techniques (for example: symbolism, irony, figurative language) to convey the controlling idea
- Organize your ideas in a logical and coherent manner
- Use language that communicates ideas effectively
- Follow the conventions of standard written English

Passage I

...“Well, Mary.” Aunt Elvera heaved herself up the porch steps and drew off her gauntlet gloves. “I can see you are having a busy day.” Mama’s hands were fire red from strawberry juice and the heat of the stove. Mine were scratched all over from picking every ripe berry in the patch.

5 “One day’s like another on the farm,” Mama remarked.

“Then I will not mince words,” Aunt Elvera said, overlooking me. “I’d have rung you up if you were connected to the telephone system.”

“What about, Elvera?” She and Mama weren’t sisters. They were sisters-in-law.

10 “Why, the Fair, of course!” Aunt Elvera bristled in an important way. “What else? The Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. The world will be there. It puts St. Louis at the hub of the universe.” Aunt Elvera’s mouth worked wordlessly.

“Well, I do know about it,” Mama said. “I take it you’ll be going?”

15 Aunt Elvera waved her away. “My stars, yes. You know how Schumate can be. Tight as a new boot. But I put my foot down. Mary, this is the opportunity of a lifetime. We will not see such wonders again during our span.”

20 “Ah,” Mama said, and my mind wandered—took a giant leap and landed in St. Louis. We knew about the Fair. The calendar the peddler gave us at Christmas featured a different pictorial view of the Fair for every month. There were white palaces in gardens with gondolas in waterways, everything electric-lit. Castles from Europe and paper houses from Japan. For the month of May the calendar featured the great floral clock on the fairgrounds.

“Send us a postal,” Mama said.

“The thing is ...” Aunt Elvera’s eyes slid toward Dorothy. “We thought we’d invite Geneva to go with us.”

25 My heart liked to lurch out of my apron. Me? They wanted to take me to the Fair?

“She’ll be company for Dorothy.”

30 Then I saw how it was. Dorothy was dim, but she could set her heels like a mule. She wanted somebody with her at the Fair so she wouldn’t have to trail after her mother every minute. We were about the same age. We were in the same grade, but she was a year older, having repeated fourth grade. She could read, but her lips moved. And we were cousins, not friends.

35 “It will be educational for them both,” Aunt Elvera said. “All the progress of civilization as we know it will be on display. They say a visit to the Fair is tantamount to a year of high school.”

“Mercy,” Mama said.

40 “We will take the Wabash Railroad directly to the gates of the Exposition,” Aunt Elvera explained, “and we will be staying on the grounds themselves at the Inside Inn.” She leaned nearer Mama, and her voice fell. “I’m sorry to say that there will be stimulants for sale on the fairgrounds. You know how St. Louis is in the hands of the breweries.” Aunt Elvera was sergeant-at-arms of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and to her, strong drink was a mocker. “But we will keep the girls away from that sort of thing.” Her voice fell to a whisper. “And we naturally won’t set foot on the Pike.”

45 We knew what the Pike was. It was the midway of the Fair, like a giant carnival with all sorts of goings-on.

“Well, many thanks, but I don’t think so,” Mama said.

My heart didn’t exactly sink. It never dawned on me that I’d see the Fair. I was only a little cast down because I might never get another glimpse of the world.

50 "Now, you're not to think of the money," Aunt Elvera said. "Dismiss that from your mind. Schumate and I will be glad to cover all Geneva's expenses. She can sleep in the bed with Dorothy, and we are carrying a good deal of our eats. I know these aren't flush times for farmers, Mary, but do not let your pride stand in Geneva's way."

55 "Oh, no," Mama said mildly. "Pride cometh before a fall. But we may be running down to the Fair ourselves."

Aunt Elvera's eyes narrowed, and I didn't believe Mama, either. It was just her way of fending off my aunt. Kept me from being in the same bed with Dorothy, too....

60 I could tell you very little about the rest of that day. My mind was miles off. I know Mama wrung the neck off a fryer, and we had baking-powder biscuits to go with the warm jam. After supper my brothers hitched up Fanny to the trap and went into town. I took a bottle brush to the lamp chimneys and trimmed the wicks. After that I was back out on the porch swing while there was some daylight left. The lightning bugs were coming out, so that reminded me of how the Fair was lit up at night with electricity, brighter than day.

Then Mama came out and settled in the swing beside me, which was unusual, since she never sat out until the nights got hotter than this. We swung together awhile. Then she said in a quiet voice, "I meant it. I want you to see the Fair."

70 Everything stopped then. I still didn't believe it, but my heart turned over.

"I spoke to your dad about it. He can't get away, and he can't spare the boys. But I want us to go to the Fair."

Oh, she was brave to say it, she who hadn't been anywhere in her life. Brave even to think it. "I've got some egg money put back," she said. We didn't keep enough chickens to sell the eggs, but anything you managed to save was called egg money.

"That's for a rainy day," I said, being practical.

"I know it," she said. "But I'd like to see that floral clock."

80 Mama was famous for her garden flowers. When her glads were up, every color, people drove by to see them. And there was nobody to touch her for zinnias.

Oh, Mama, I thought, *is this just a game we're playing?* "What'll we wear?" I asked, to test her.

"They'll be dressy down at the Fair, won't they?" She said. "You know those artificial cornflowers I've got. I thought I'd trim my hat with them. And you're getting to be a big girl. Time you had a corset."

85 So then I knew she meant business....

—Richard Peck
"The Electric Summer"
from *Time Capsule*, 1999
Delacorte Press

Passage II

I began working in journalism when I was eight years old. It was my mother's idea. She wanted me to "make something" of myself and, after a levelheaded appraisal of my strengths, decided I had better start young if I was to have any chance of keeping up with the competition....

5 With my load of magazines I headed toward Belleville Avenue. That's where the people were. There were two filling stations at the intersection with Union Avenue, as well as an A&P, a fruit stand, a bakery, a barber shop, Zuccarelli's drugstore, and a diner shaped like a railroad car. For several hours I made myself highly visible, shifting position now and then from corner to corner, from shop window to shop window, to make sure everyone could see the heavy black lettering on the canvas bag that said THE SATURDAY EVENING POST. When
10 the angle of the light indicated it was suppertime, I walked back to the house.

"How many did you sell, Buddy?" my mother asked.

"None."

15 "Where did you go?"

"The corner of Belleville and Union Avenues."

"What did you do?"

"Stood on the corner waiting for somebody to buy a *Saturday Evening Post*."

"You just stood there?"

20 "Didn't sell a single one."

"For God's sake, Russell!"

Uncle Allen intervened. "I've been thinking about it for some time," he said, "and I've about decided to take the *Post* regularly. Put me down as a regular customer." I handed him a magazine and he paid me a nickel. It was the first
25 nickel I earned.

Afterwards my mother instructed me in salesmanship. I would have to ring doorbells, address adults with charming self-confidence, and break down resistance with a sales talk pointing out that no one, no matter how poor, could afford to be without the *Saturday Evening Post* in the home.

30 I told my mother I'd changed my mind about wanting to succeed in the magazine business.

"If you think I'm going to raise a good-for-nothing," she replied, "you've got another think coming." She told me to hit the streets with the canvas bag and start ringing doorbells the instant school was out next day. When I objected that I
35 didn't feel any aptitude for salesmanship, she asked how I'd like to lend her my leather belt so she could whack some sense into me. I bowed to superior will and entered journalism with a heavy heart.

My mother and I had fought this battle almost as long as I could remember. It probably started even before memory began, when I was a country child in
40 northern Virginia and my mother, dissatisfied with my father's plain workman's life, determined that I would not grow up like him and his people, with calluses on their hands, overalls on their backs, and fourth-grade educations in their heads. She had fancier ideas of life's possibilities. Introducing me to the *Saturday Evening Post*, she was trying to wean me as early as possible from my father's
45 world where men left with their lunch pails at sunup, worked with their hands until the grime ate into the pores, and died with a few sticks of mail-order furniture as their legacy. In my mother's vision of the better life there were desks and white collars, well-pressed suits, evenings of reading and lively talk, and

- 50 perhaps—if a man were very, very lucky and hit the jackpot, really made something important of himself—perhaps there might be a fantastic salary of \$5,000 a year to support a big house and a Buick with a rumble seat and a vacation in Atlantic City....

— Russell Baker
from *Growing Up*, 1982
Congdon & Weed

11

Mama's statement, "One day's like another on the farm," (line 5) indicates that Mama felt

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| (1) homesick | (3) jealous |
| (2) resigned | (4) curious |

12

The narrator concludes that she is being invited to the Fair primarily because

- (1) Aunt Elvera pities her
- (2) Dorothy admires her
- (3) Aunt Elvera values education
- (4) Dorothy wants a companion

13

In line 74 "egg money" refers to money set aside for

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| (1) investment | (3) emergencies |
| (2) supplies | (4) food |

14

The narrator thinks that Mama is brave to talk about going to the Fair because Mama

- (1) has never traveled before
- (2) dislikes being in a crowded place
- (3) fears Geneva would be embarrassed
- (4) is worried about her husband and sons

15

The narrator implies that Mama's true reason for visiting the Fair is to

- (1) sell the eggs and chickens
- (2) find a husband for Geneva
- (3) show off her new clothes
- (4) give Geneva an unusual experience

16

The sentence, "So then I knew she meant business," (line 86) suggests that Mama's talk about the Fair is becoming a

- (1) plan
- (2) burden
- (3) fantasy
- (4) disaster

17

The list of details in lines 6 through 8 establishes the setting as

- (1) an elegant residential area
- (2) a busy shopping area
- (3) an empty railway station
- (4) a quiet office building

18

The dialogue in lines 13 through 21 reveals the mother's sense of

- (1) fear
- (2) greed
- (3) dismay
- (4) remorse

19

Uncle Allen probably decided to buy the *Post* because he

- (1) preferred the *Post* to other magazines
- (2) hoped to impress Russell's mother
- (3) wanted a career in journalism
- (4) felt sorry for Russell

20

The narrator suggests that his battle with his mother was the result of her

- (1) appreciation of journalism
- (2) desire to get him out of the house
- (3) ideas about success
- (4) admiration for her husband's work