

Today you will read and analyze a short story and a passage from another short story. As you analyze these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about each text and its relationship to the other so that you can craft a written response.

Read the story "Departure," about a young man leaving home, by United States writer Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941). Then answer questions 1 through 3.

Departure

by Sherwood Anderson

- 1 Young George Willard got out of bed at four in the morning. It was April and the young tree leaves were just coming out of their buds. The trees along the residence streets in Winesburg are maple and the seeds are winged. When the wind blows they whirl crazily about, filling the air and making a carpet underfoot.
- 2 George came downstairs into the hotel office carrying a brown leather bag. His trunk was packed for departure. Since two o'clock he had been awake thinking of the journey he was about to take and wondering what he would find at the end of his journey. The boy who slept in the hotel office lay on a cot by the door. His mouth was open and he snored lustily. George crept past the cot and went out into the silent deserted main street. The east was pink with the dawn and long streaks of light climbed into the sky where a few stars still shone.
- 3 Beyond the last house on Trunion Pike in Winesburg there is a great stretch of open fields. The fields are owned by farmers who live in town and drive homeward at evening along Trunion Pike in light creaking wagons. In the fields are planted berries and small fruits. In the late afternoon in the hot summers when the road and the fields are covered with dust, a smoky haze lies over the great flat basin of land. To look across it is like looking out across the sea. In the spring when the land is green the effect is somewhat different. The land becomes a wide green billiard table on which tiny human insects toil up and down.
- 4 All through his boyhood and young manhood George Willard had been in the habit of walking on Trunion Pike. He had been in the midst of the great open place on winter nights when it was covered with snow and only the moon looked down at him; he had been there in the fall when bleak winds blew and

on summer evenings when the air vibrated with the song of insects. On the April morning he wanted to go there again, to walk again in the silence. He did walk to where the road dipped down by a little stream two miles from town and then turned and walked silently back again. When he got to Main Street clerks were sweeping the sidewalks before the stores. "Hey, you George. How does it feel to be going away?" they asked.

- 5 The westbound train leaves Winesburg at seven forty-five in the morning. Tom Little is conductor. His train runs from Cleveland to where it connects with a great trunk line railroad with terminals in Chicago and New York. Tom has what in railroad circles is called an "easy run." Every evening he returns to his family. In the fall and spring he spends his Sundays fishing in Lake Erie. He has a round red face and small blue eyes. He knows the people in the towns along his railroad better than a city man knows the people who live in his apartment building.
- 6 George came down the little incline from the New Willard House at seven o'clock. Tom Willard carried his bag. The son had become taller than the father.
- 7 On the station platform everyone shook the young man's hand. More than a dozen people waited about. Then they talked of their own affairs. Even Will Henderson, who was lazy and often slept until nine, had got out of bed. George was embarrassed. Gertrude Wilmot, a tall thin woman of fifty who worked in the Winesburg post office, came along the station platform. She had never before paid any attention to George. Now she stopped and put out her hand. In two words she voiced what everyone felt. "Good luck," she said sharply and then turning went on her way.
- 8 When the train came into the station George felt relieved. He scampered hurriedly aboard. Helen White came running along Main Street hoping to have a parting word with him, but he had found a seat and did not see her. When the train started Tom Little punched his ticket, grinned and, although he knew George well and knew on what adventure he was just setting out, made no comment. Tom had seen a thousand George Willards go out of their towns to the city. It was a commonplace enough incident with him. In the smoking car there was a man who had just invited Tom to go on a fishing trip to Sandusky Bay. He wanted to accept the invitation and talk over details.
- 9 George glanced up and down the car to be sure no one was looking, then took out his pocketbook and counted his money. His mind was occupied with a desire not to appear green. Almost the last words his father had said to him concerned the matter of his behavior when he got to the city. "Be a sharp one,"

Tom Willard had said. "Keep your eyes on your money. Be awake. That's the ticket. Don't let anyone think you're a greenhorn."

- 10 After George counted his money he looked out of the window and was surprised to see that the train was still in Winesburg.
- 11 The young man, going out of his town to meet the adventure of life, began to think but he did not think of anything very big or dramatic. Things like his mother's death, his departure from Winesburg, the uncertainty of his future life in the city, the serious and larger aspects of his life did not come into his mind.
- 12 He thought of little things—Turk Smollet wheeling boards through the main street of his town in the morning, a tall woman, beautifully gowned, who had once stayed overnight at his father's hotel, Butch Wheeler the lamp lighter of Winesburg hurrying through the streets on a summer evening and holding a torch in his hand, Helen White standing by a window in the Winesburg post office and putting a stamp on an envelope.
- 13 The young man's mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams. One looking at him would not have thought him particularly sharp. With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.

"Departure" by Sherwood Anderson—Public Domain

1. Part A

In paragraph 9, what does the phrase **a desire not to appear green** suggest about George?

- A. that he wants to appear healthy and energetic
- B. that he wants other people to think he is clever and mature
- C. that he wants to be well-mannered throughout his trip
- D. that he wants other people to learn from his high moral standards

Part B

Which quotation provides evidence that **contradicts** the answer to Part A?

- A. "All through his boyhood and young manhood George Willard had been in the habit of walking on Trunion Pike." (paragraph 4)
- B. "Tom Willard carried his bag. The son had become taller than the father." (paragraph 6)
- C. "On the station platform everyone shook the young man's hand." (paragraph 7)
- D. "One looking at him would not have thought him particularly sharp." (paragraph 13)

2. Part A

Which statement describes George's interaction with the townspeople in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the story?

- A.** The townspeople wish George well, but their attention makes him uncomfortable.
- B.** The townspeople eagerly await George's departure, and he is glad to be seeking new adventures elsewhere.
- C.** The townspeople support George's ambitions, and he resolves to fulfill their hopes for him.
- D.** The townspeople and George will miss each other, but he is comforted by their heartfelt goodbyes.

Part B

Select **one** quotation from paragraph 7 and **one** quotation from paragraph 8 that **best** support the answer to Part A.

- A.** "Then they talked of their own affairs." (paragraph 7)
- B.** "Even Will Henderson, who was lazy and often slept until nine, had got out of bed." (paragraph 7)
- C.** "In two words she voiced what everyone felt. 'Good luck,' she said sharply and then turning went on her way." (paragraph 7)
- D.** "When the train came into the station George felt relieved. He scampered hurriedly aboard." (paragraph 8)
- E.** "Helen White came running along Main Street hoping to have a parting word with him, but he had found a seat and did not see her." (paragraph 8)
- F.** "It was a commonplace enough incident with him." (paragraph 8)

3. Part A

Which statement **best** describes a central theme of the story?

- A. Leaving home is a common rite of passage that can be marked by a variety of emotions.
- B. People who choose to pursue a new life elsewhere can cause resentment in those who stay behind.
- C. Leaving familiar surroundings can prompt one to place added importance on family and friends.
- D. Major life changes are generally accompanied by a focus on important events in one's life.

Part B

Which **two** statements from the passage provide the **best** support for the answer to Part A?

- A. "George crept past the cot and went out into the silent deserted main street." (paragraph 2)
- B. "All through his boyhood and young manhood George Willard had been in the habit of walking on Trunion Pike." (paragraph 4)
- C. "'Hey, you George. How does it feel to be going away?' they asked." (paragraph 4)
- D. "Tom had seen a thousand George Willards go out of their towns to the city." (paragraph 8)
- E. "George glanced up and down the car to be sure no one was looking, then took out his pocketbook and counted his money." (paragraph 9)
- F. "The young man's mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams." (paragraph 13)