

English Language Arts Assessment
Task 2 Form C

Directions:

In this part of the test you are going to read an article called "Evictions of Peasantry in Ireland" and a poem called "An Old Woman of the Roads." First you will answer questions and write about what you have read. You may look back at the article and at the poem as often as you like. Then you will be asked to write an essay.

Now turn the page.

The suffering of the poor during the Irish famine was made more miserable by evictions. Those who could not afford to pay their rent saw their little houses pulled down, their possessions scattered and their families put out on the road. Eviction was the word for the legal process of recovering property from a tenant who failed to pay rent; ejectment was the action of putting a tenant out of the property he or she occupied. A simoon is hot, dry, dust-laden wind. In Ireland, the word "mere" means unmixed or pure, but it also means "nothing more than" and in that sense, "mere Irish" meant nothing more than Irish, unimportant.

EVICTIIONS OF THE PEASANTRY IN IRELAND

The work of undermining the population is going on stealthily, but steadily. Each succeeding day witnesses its devastations - more terrible than the simoon and more deadly than the plague. We do not say that there exists a conspiracy to uproot the "mere Irish," but we do aver, that the fearful system of wholesale ejectment, of which we daily hear, and which we daily behold, is a mockery of the eternal laws of God - a flagrant outrage on the principles of nature.

Whole districts are cleared. Not a roof-tree is to be seen where the happy cottage of the labourer or the snug homestead of the farmer at no distant day [ago] cheered the landscape. The ditch side, the dripping rain, and the cold sleet are the covering of the wretched outcast the moment the cabin is tumbled over him; for who dare give him shelter or protection from "the pelting of the pitiless storm?"

Who has the temerity to afford him the ordinary rites of hospitality, when the warrant has been signed for his extinction? There are vast tracts of the most fertile land in the world in this noble country now thrown out of tillage. No spade, no plough goes near them. There are no symptoms of life within their borders, no more than if they were situated in the midst of the Great Desert- no more than if they were cursed by the Creator with the blight of barrenness. Those who labored to bring those tracts to the condition in which they are- capable of raising produce of any description - are hunted like wolves, or they perish without a murmur.

The tongue refuses to utter their most deplorable - their unheard-of suffering. The agonies endured by the "mere Irish" in this day of their unparalleled affliction are far more poignant than the imagination could conceive or the pencil of a Rembrandt picture. We do not exaggerate; the state of things is absolutely fearful; a demon, with all the vindictive passions by which alone a demon could be influenced, is let loose and menaces destruction. Additional sharpness, too, is imparted to his appetite.

Christmas was accustomed to come with many healing balsams, sufficient to remove irritation, if not stanch wounds; but its place is usurped by other and far different qualifications. The howl of misery has succeeded the merry carol which used to usher in the season; no hope is felt that an end will be soon put to this state of wretchedness. The torpor and apathy which have seized on the masses are only surpassed by the atrocities perpetuated by those who set the dictates of humanity and the decrees of the Almighty at equal defiance.

Tipperary Vindicator quoted in Illustrated London News, December 16, 1848. John Killen ed., The Famine Decade. Contemporary Accounts 1841-1851. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1995. pp. 206-207.

Complete the chart with words or phrases that describe the results of the famine evictions. Identify information from "Evictions of the Peasantry" that supports each result.

RESULTS OF EVICTIONS	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
1.	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Does writer of "Evictions of the Pesantry in Ireland" suggests that there are higher laws than the law that protects the right of a landlord to recover his property if a tenant fails to pay rent? Explain your answer using details from the article.

Read Padraic Colum's "The Old Woman of the Road." How does the poet's use of imagery contribute to the tone of the poem? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

Choose a line or lines from the poem. Discuss the meaning of your selection and explain how it applies to "Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland." Use ideas from BOTH the poem and the article in your answer.

In your answer, be sure to include:

- * the line or lines you have selected from the poem.
- * an explanation of how your selection applies to "Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland."

Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.