

Only after handing in both part I and part II will you be allowed to use your personal dictionary, which you can collect at the desk of the teacher in charge. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted.

I. LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Answers on the separate exam paper according to the instructions given. (Time allotted: 40 minutes)

II. READING COMPREHENSION

All comprehension answers on the paper provided by the school according to the instructions given. Vocabulary on this paper (part II. B).

III. ESSAY

(Time allotted for comprehension Exercise and Essay: 3 hours and twenty minutes)

II. OPTIMISTIC BUT JOBLESS: A GENERATION ADRIFT

After breakfast, his parents left for their jobs, and Scott Nicholson, alone in the house in this comfortable suburb west of Boston, went to his laptop in the living room. He had placed it on a small table that his mother had used for a vase of flowers until her unemployed son found himself reluctantly stuck at home, The daily routine seldom varied. Mr Nicholson, 24, a
5 graduate of Colgate University, winner of a dean's award for academic excellence, spent his mornings searching corporate Web sites for suitable job openings. When he found one, he mailed off a résumé and cover letter — four or five a week, week after week.

Over the past five months, only one job materialized. After several interviews, the Hanover Insurance Group in nearby Worcester offered to hire him as an associate claims adjuster¹⁾, at
10 \$40,000 a year. But even before the formal offer, Mr. Nicholson had decided not to take the job.

Rather than waste early years in dead-end work, he reasoned, he would insist on a management position in which he could use his college training and which would put him, as he sees it, on the bottom rungs of a career ladder.

15 "The conversation I'm going to have with my parents now that I've turned down this job is more of a concern to me than turning down the job," he said.

He was prepared for the unpleasant conversation with his father in particular. While Scott Nicholson viewed the Hanover job as likely to threaten his career, David Nicholson, 57, accustomed to better times and easier mobility, viewed it as an opportunity.

20 Once he is in the door, the father has insisted to his son, opportunities will present themselves — as they did in the father's rise over 35 years to general manager of a manufacturing company.

"You did it your way and you did not worry what it would lead to," the father says. "You knew it would lead to something good." Complicating the generation gap, Scott's grandfather,
25 William S. Nicholson, a World War II veteran and a retired stockbroker, has watched what he describes as the United States' once mighty economic engine losing its pre-eminence in a global economy. The grandfather has encouraged his unemployed grandson to go abroad — to "Go West," so to speak.

"I view what is happening to Scott with dismay," said the grandfather, who has concluded, in part from reading *The Economist*, that Europe has passed America in offering opportunity for an ambitious young man. "We hate to think that Scott will have to leave," the grandfather said, "but he will." The grandfather's statement startled the grandson. But as the weeks pass, Scott Nicholson, handsome as a marine officer in a recruiting poster, has gradually realized that his career will not roll out in the Greater Boston area or anywhere in the United States as easily as that of his father and grandfather.

"I don't think I fully understood the severity of the situation I had graduated into," he said, speaking in effect for an age group — the so-called millennials, 18 to 29, whose unemployment rate of nearly 14 percent approaches the levels of that group in the Great Depression in the 1930s.

And then he veered into²⁾ the optimism that, polls show, is persistently, perhaps perversely, characteristic of millennials today. "I am absolutely certain that my job hunt will eventually pay off," he said.

For young adults, even for the college-educated, the prospects in the workplace have rarely been so bleak. Apart from the 14 percent who are unemployed and seeking work, as Scott Nicholson is, 23 percent are not even seeking jobs, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The total, 37 percent, is the highest in more than three decades and a rate reminiscent of the 1930s.

Yet surveys show that the majority of the United States' millennials remain confident (as Scott Nicholson is) that they will have satisfactory careers.

They have a lot going for them.

"They are better educated than previous generations and they were raised by baby boomers who lavished a lot of attention on their children," said Andrew Kohut, the Pew Research Center's director. That helps to explain their persistent optimism, even as they struggle to succeed.

So far, Scott Nicholson is a stranger to the triumphal stories that his father and grandfather tell of their working lives.

They said it was rather connections than perseverance that got them started — the father in 1976 when a friend who had just opened a factory hired him, and the grandfather in 1946 through a U.S. Army buddy whose father-in-law owned a brokerage firm in nearby Worcester and needed another stockbroker.

From these accidental starts, careers unfolded and lasted. David Nicholson, now the general manager of a company that makes tools, is still in manufacturing.

William Nicholson spent the next 48 years, until his retirement, as a stockbroker.

"Scott has got to find somebody who knows someone," the grandfather said, "someone who can get him to the head of the line." While Scott has tried to make that happen, he has come under pressure from his parents to compromise: to take, if not the Hanover job, then one like it. "I am beginning to realize that refusal is going to provoke reactions," he said.

"My parents are subtly pointing out that beyond room and board, they are also paying other

expenses for me, like my cell phone charges and the money they pay for a life insurance
70 policy." Scott Nicholson also has connections, of course, but no one in his network of family
and friends has been able to steer him into marketing or finance or management training or
any career-oriented opening at a big corporation — his goal. The jobs are simply not there.

Many hard-pressed millennials are falling back on their parents, as Scott Nicholson has.
75 While he has no college debt (his grandparents paid all his tuition and board) many others do,
and that helps force them back home.

In 2008, the first year of the recession, the percentage of the population living in households
in which at least two generations were present rose nearly a percentage point, to 16 percent,
according to the Pew Research Center. The high point, 24.7 percent, came in 1940, as the
Depression ended, and the low point, 12 percent, in 1980.

80 "Going it alone," "earning enough to be self-supporting" — these are awkward concepts for
Scott Nicholson and his friends. Of the 20 college classmates with whom he keeps up, 12 are
working, but only half are in jobs they "really like." Three are entering law school this fall
after frustrating experiences in the work force, "and five are looking for work, just as I am,"
he said.

85 Like most of his classmates, Scott tries to get by on a tight budget and manages to earn
enough in odd jobs to pay some expenses.

The jobs are catch as catch can. He and a friend recently put up a white wooden fence for a
neighbor, embedding the posts in cement, a day's work that brought Scott \$125. He mows
lawns and gardens for half a dozen clients in Grafton, some of them family friends,
90 And he is an active volunteer firefighter.

"As frustrated as I get now, and I never intended to live at home, I'm in a good situation in a
lot of ways," Scott said. "I have very little overhead and no debt, and it is because I have no
debt that I have any sort of flexibility to look for work. Otherwise, I would have to have a job,
some kind of full-time job." His brother in Boston lost his roommate, and early last month
95 Scott moved into the empty bedroom, with his parents paying Scott's share of the \$2,000- a-
month rent until the lease expires on Aug. 31.

And if Scott does not have a job by then? "I'll do something temporary; I won't go back
home," Scott said. "I'll be a bartender or get work through a temp agency. I hope I don't find
myself in that position."

Louis Uchitelle, *Financial Chronicle*, July 7, 2010 (slightly adapted)

Annotation:

¹)claims adjuster (l. 9): a person who inspects damages for an insurance company

²)to veer into (l. 40): to change direction suddenly

A) Comprehension questions:

Answer the following questions in your own words as far as possible. (1 – 4 sentences for each answer).

1. Explain why Scott Nicholson decided not to take the job offered by the Hanover Insurance Group. (4 points)
2. Describe the different views father and grandfather have on Scott's career problem. (6 points)
3. Compare and contrast Scott's situation with that of other millenials. (6 points)
4. How do Scott's career opportunities differ from those of his father and grandfather? (6 points)
5. Explain the following sentence: *I'm beginning to realize that refusal is going to provoke reactions, ...* (l. 68) (4 points)
6. Explain why Scott is prepared to take on a temporary job whereas he refused to become an associate claims adjuster. (6 points)

B) Vocabulary (answers on this sheet)

I. Explain (in English) the meaning or give a synonym of the following words as they appear in the text (1 point each)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. reluctantly (l. 4) | 7. bleak (l. 44) |
| 2. turned down (l. 15) | 8. keeps up (l. 81) |
| 3. threaten (l. 18) | 9. get by on a tight budget (l. 85)
..... |
| 4. dismay (l. 29) | 10. catch as catch can (l. 87)
..... |
| 5. startled (l. 32) | |
| 6. eventually (l. 41) | |

II. Transform the following words - the forms needn't be related to the text (1/2 point each)

Give an **abstract noun** from:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. varied (l. 4) | 4. reminiscent (l. 47) |
| 2. losing (l. 26) | 5. intended (l. 91) |
| 3. rarely (l. 43) | |

Give an **adjective** form: (no *-ing* or *-ed* forms)

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6. decided (l. 10) | 8. attention (l. 52) |
| 7. severity (l. 36) | 9. succeed (l. 54) |

Give an **adverb** form:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10. suitable (l. 6) | 12. temporary (l. 97) |
| 11. characteristic (l. 41) | |

III. ESSAY

Write an essay of reasonable length on ONE of the following topics (on a separate sheet provided).

1. Any job is better than none.
2. Is education a means to an end or an end in itself?
3. Water
4. Specific literary essay topic for each class
 - 4AZ: Did Victor Frankenstein create a monster?
 - 4B Examine the treatment of 'good and bad' in any two of Oscar Wilde's plays.
 - 4E Last term we read Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*. What significance does this title have?
 - 4 IS: Examine the treatment of 'good and bad' in any two of Oscar Wilde's plays.
 - 4LM: What do the witches in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* represent and what is their function?
 - 4S T. C. Boyle has been criticized for his one-dimensional and thus “inaccurate” and “perhaps exaggerated” portrayal of both Americans and Mexicans. Discuss to what extent the “Tortilla Curtain” can still be regarded as an important factor in the immigration issue.
 - 4WS T. C. Boyle has been criticized for his one-dimensional and thus “inaccurate” and “perhaps exaggerated” portrayal of both Americans and Mexicans. Discuss to what extent the “Tortilla Curtain” can still be regarded as an important factor in the immigration issue.
 - 4W Villains and victims in Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*.