

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

- 1. Read the following poem carefully, paying particular attention to the physical intensity of the language. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain how the poet conveys not just a literal description of picking blackberries but a deeper understanding of the whole experience. You may wish to include analysis of such elements as diction, imagery, metaphor, rhyme, rhythm, and form.

Blackberry-Picking

est. setting/season

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
 For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
 At first, just one, a glossy purple clot

Line (5) Among others, red, green, hard as a knot
 You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
 Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
 Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
 Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
 Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam pots

(10) Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots,
 Round hayfields, cornfields and potato drills¹
 We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
 Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
 With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned

(15) Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
 With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.²
 We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.³
 But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
 A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.

(20) The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
 The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
 (always) felt like crying. It wasn't fair
 That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
 Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

—Seamus Heaney

1st person
simile
brings you in poem
est. setting/season
symbolic of?
start rhyme
children?
personification/figurative
stanza 1
cadence = on the run/symbolic
alliteration
alliteration
cannot. ewe / not discerning
alliter.
alliteration
Stanza 2:
breity -> unseen of life = gathered & fungus = ruin
traditions = fun = will do again
Narrative follow passage when writing essay; with about stanzas in order 2 stanzas only?
children?
onomat.
simile
understanding of process; reflection (past action)
start rhyme est. dark tone brevity

¹ Planted rows
² Bluebeard is a character in a fairy tale who murders his wives.
³ Barn

