



# MONUMENTS OF ROME IN ENGLISH CULTURE

A National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute

## English Language Exam

### Question 1

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

The following passage comes from the 63 B.C. Catilinarian Oration, a speech given by Cicero to expose Catiline conspiracy to overthrow the Roman government. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies Cicero uses to develop his argument against Catiline.

To this holy address of the republic, and to the feelings of those men who entertain the same opinion, I will make this short answer:—If, O conscript fathers, I thought it best that Catiline should be punished with death, I would not have given the space of one hour to this gladiator to live in. If, forsooth, those excellent men and most illustrious cities not only did not pollute themselves, but even glorified themselves by the blood of Saturninus, and the Gracchi, and Flaccus, and many others of old time, surely I had no cause to fear lest for slaying this parricidal murderer of the citizens any unpopularity should accrue to me with posterity. And if it did threaten me to ever so great a degree, yet I have always been of the disposition to think unpopularity earned by virtue and glory, not unpopularity.

Though there are some men in this body who either do not see what threatens, or dissemble what they do see; who have fed the hope of Catiline by mild sentiments, and have strengthened the rising conspiracy by not believing it; influenced by whose authority many, and they not wicked, but only ignorant, if I punished him would say that I had acted cruelly and tyrannically. But I know that if he arrives at the camp of Manlius to which he is going, there will be no one so stupid as not to see that there has been a conspiracy, no one so hardened as not to confess it. But if this man alone were put to death, I know that this disease of the republic would be only checked for awhile, not eradicated for ever. But if he banishes himself, and takes with him all his friends, and collects at one point all the ruined men from every quarter, then not only will this full-grown plague of the republic be extinguished and eradicated, but also the root and seed of all future evils.

We have now for a long time, O conscript fathers, lived among these dangers and machinations of conspiracy; but somehow or other, the ripeness of all wickedness, and of this long-standing madness and audacity, has come to a head at the time of my consulship. But if this man alone is removed from this piratical crew, we may appear, perhaps, for a short time relieved from fear and anxiety, but the danger will settle down and lie hid in the veins and bowels of the republic. As it often happens that men afflicted with a severe disease, when they are tortured with heat and fever, if they drink cold water, seem at first to be relieved, but afterwards suffer more and more severely; so this disease which is in the republic, if relieved by the punishment of this man, will only get worse and worse, as the rest will be still alive.

Wherefore, O conscript fathers, let the worthless begone,—let them separate themselves from the good,—let them collect in one place,—let them, as I have often said before, be separated from us by a wall; let them cease to plot against the consul in his own house,—to surround the tribunal of the city praetor,—to besiege the senate-house with swords,—to prepare brands and torches to burn the city; let it, in short, be written on the brow of every citizen, what are his sentiments about the republic. I promise you this, O conscript fathers, that there shall be so much diligence in us the consuls, so much authority in you, so much virtue in the Roman knights, so much unanimity in all good men, that you shall see everything made plain and manifest by the departure of Catiline,—everything checked and punished.

With these omens, O Catiline, begone to your impious and nefarious war, to the great safety of

the republic, to your own misfortune and injury,  
and to the destruction of those who have joined  
themselves to you in every wickedness and  
atrocious. Then do you, O Jupiter, who were  
consecrated by Romulus with the same auspices as  
this city, whom we rightly call the stay of this city  
and empire, repel this man and his companions  
from your altars and from the other temples,—  
from the houses and walls of the city,—from the  
lives and fortunes of all the citizens; and  
overwhelm all the enemies of good men, the foes  
of the republic, the robbers of Italy, men bound  
together by a treaty and infamous alliance of  
crimes, dead and alive, with eternal punishments.