Sample C

[1] From an excerpt of his *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, William Dean Howell portrays sisters Penelope and Irene as dependent on their family yet independent from society through selection of detail, words focused on self-reliance, and a significant shift in tone in order to challenge why we feel the need to constantly seek the acceptance and adoration of others but also warn against the dangers of living an overly sheltered life.

[2] Howell has a careful selection of detail to show how these sisters are different from other girls of that time period. In fact, the excerpt opens with "They were not girls who..." which implies that these sisters deviated from the societal norm. The younger sister Irene "dressed herself very stylish, and spent hours on her toilet every day", which was not so others could see and admire her, but simply for her own contentment because the Laphams "lived richly to themselves." Howell shows how in theory there is nothing particularly destructive about the mindset that family can rely on each other and live for each other. In account of the elder daughter, Howell shows how she "went to many church lectures on a vast variety of secular subjects" and "[made] fun of nearly everything," her wit deterred potential suitors, differentiating her from the marriage-obsessed girls of her day. Through highlighting the sisters' odd social behavior but apparent contentment and peace, Howell criticizes how most girls and families are obsessed with impressing others and climbing up the social ladder.

[3] Howell also uses words like "self-guided," "self-improvement," and "mutual affection" to highlight the strong, but isolated bonds that the Lapham family shares. The Laphams are implied to be not of great social status because "a great gulf divided" them from wealthier families; however, the Laphams "had no skill or courage to make themselves noticed", but more specifically, "The elder daughter did not care for society apparently." They are described as "lurk[ing] helplessly... looking on and not knowing how to put themselves forward" in social settings which could be of detriment to the daughters when they want to get married of course a liberal perspective would claim there is no need for the daughters to get married, but as social norms of the day define, it is pure ignorance that the Laphams sheltered their daughters so much from social interaction. Here, Howell warns against overreliance of family and groups for support because once you're in, you may find it hard to get out.

[4] Howell finally shifts his tone from objective and observant to critical of this excessive sheltering from societal values and mannerisms from line 58 and onwards. Irene attracts the attention of one young man, but is completely at a loss on how to act for "so wholly had she depended on her mother and sister for her opinions": "she began for the first time to form ideas, which she has not derived from her family." Howell illustrates the importance in thinking for yourself, for although her family's nonconformity suited them, Irene was only conforming to her family's beliefs.

[5] With almost contrasting and ironic messages, Howell calls for his readers to seek a balance of conformity to social norms and individualism, all the while discerning yourself what fraction of each should guide your actions and thoughts.
[1] People develop understanding of the world and of life in several different ways, depending on who they spend time with and how they spend their time. America has often emphasized learning values from ones family but always making sure to spend time in society to truly cultivate your personality and identity. In his novel “The Rise of Silas Lapham” William Dean Howell portrays an example and experience of two sisters, Penelope and Irene, who [illegible] their main affection and family bond are sheltered from society’s attitudes. The social world and the world of the family sit in opposition. The tension between familial intimacy and the inaccessibility of society organize their experience. Howell utilizes descriptors of and imagery of the sisters family life, the metaphor of a flower to describe the younger daughter, and contrasts the younger daughter experience with the young man at Baie St. Joan with her experience at home.

[2] Howells utilizes imagery of the Lapham family life to portray the insular and idealistic nature of family. For example, Howells describes the coordination of the girls and the mother as “[taking] long naps every day, and [sitting] hours together minutely discussing what they saw out of the window.” This description set up the image of 3 well dressed, sequestered women who slept for long periods of time and simply stared out the window talking about [illegible] things. His description of them spending “hours” together and taking “long naps” makes them look unusually bonded and surprises the reader, given that in the late 1800s there was a lot occurring in society and work to be done. Rather than actively engaging with what was outside the Laphams stared out the window and wanted in it, including passivity and the lack of readiness to engage with the world around them. Looking through a window is symbolic of the Laphams looking out at the world/life that they could not access or understand.

[3] Furthermore, Howells utilizes the metaphor of vegetable and flower to convey the sisters’ natural state and contrast it with the artificially organized social world around them. Howells describes the younger sister as “having an innocence almost vegetable” and as eventually “bloom[ing] and grow[ing] with the unconsciousness of a flower.” Through this Howells conveys the importance of engaging with society and actively contributing to it and learning from it; he also lends support to the natural human state, represented by the family. Howells comparing the same girl to a glowing but unconscious flower. The girls beauty was evident but meant little because she had no one to admire her or desire her beauty. Despite her happiness with her family, this shows how her beauty and personality were wasted by her constantly being in the house and with her sibling and family.

[4] Finally Howell utilized the details of the younger daughters interactions to portray the contrast between her home life and the experience she would have interacting with society. The girl’s entire perspective of people and her entire mindset was entirely based off two people, showing truly how narrow minded the girl must be and the extent of her narrative. The girls are unable to exist in the world around them or understand its rules. Her interaction with the boy in Baie St. John shows this clearly.
A family unit can have a profound impact on peoples' lives. It can be the glue that holds them together, or the chaos that tears them apart. Family units lay the foundation upon which all ideas are built off of, however, sometimes the foundation is faulty and it is necessary to rebuild from scratch. In his novel "The Rise of Silas Lapham," William Dean Howells describes the complex relationships two sisters have with their family and society through his selection.

Both sisters, Penelope and Irene, are described as having a similar relationship with their family. Both sisters are described as making their mother "a kind of idol," buying her expensive things that are "beyond her capacity to wear." Through the use of the word "idol," Howells portrays a relationship that doesn't seem to possess any long bond between the individuals, but it is rather something that is entirely materialistic. Furthermore, idols are generally objects of great value that are worshipped and desired, a stark of mind that Howells connects to how the sisters view their mother, a force in their life that is to be worshipped. The entire family seems to be emotionally unhealthy devoted to one another, as they "dreaded for one another" and "lived richly to themselves on because they did not know otherwise." They are a family that live entirely for each other, and the sisters have no knowledge of what other life there could be because this is the foundation that has been built for them. Howells rarely discusses each sister individually, when discussing the family as a whole, using "they" and "the sisters" to describe them instead. This dehumanizes the sisters in the context of their interactions with the family, making them seem less like individuals and more just small parts of a larger and more important unit.
Howells also discusses and shows the effects of the family unit on how the sisters interact with society. However, this is where the sisters differ slightly. Throughout the whole passage, Howells makes a conscious effort to not use Penelope's name, opting to just refer to her as the "oldest daughter" or "oldest sister." This further establishes just how entranced Penelope is into her family and how she is not a self-thinking individual. Even when the passage mentions her "self-guided" search for self-improvement, it was ultimately just for "satisfaction of reform" for the whole family. By just focusing on how Penelope used the experience to contribute to the family and not on the benefit she personally saw in it, Howells establishes how all of Penelope's interactions with society are tainted with the lens of her family unit, and how "the very strength of their mutual affection was a barrier to worldly knowledge." Irene however, is presented in a different way in relation to society. Howells mentions her by name, which immediately contrasts her to Penelope and makes her feel more human. Also, being younger has a connotation of being more wild and free-thinking, as opposed to the elder sister who is stuck in her ways. Howells puts a lot of focus on Irene's interaction with a young man, and how she "took account of everything he said and did and acted...the least indication of a syllable, the slightest movement or gesture." By focusing on such small details, Howells reveals that Irene is hungry for knowledge outside of her family and wants to form ideas which she has not derived from her family. While she still depends on that foundation built for her, Irene is becoming more conscious of the harmful nature of it, and is exploring alternatives. By presenting the complex relationships of the daughters in slightly different ways, Howells establishes the importance of being able to think for yourself and questioning harmful authority. Penelope was
Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

merely merged with her family. Thinking as they think, while young Irene
is forewaded as this hopeful flower that is beginning to bloom.