

Master of Arts in English Exam Reading List

This list is not designed to be restrictive; you may read as much as you like from any period in which you have an interest. Nor should you try simply to memorize the plots, characters or most famous lines from each work on the list; we are more interested in seeing how you apply a deep knowledge of some of these texts to an informed discussion of their formal structure, cultural backgrounds, audiences, and critical histories. To this end, we recommend the following as guides in your study:

- ◆ Introductory material and selections from one or more of the major teaching anthologies of British and American Literature (Norton, Longman, Broadview, Heath, etc.)
- ◆ *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (in particular, entries on major schools of thought such as Marxist, feminist, historicist, psychoanalytic, gender, critical race, and post-colonial theories, as well as entries on literary movements and historical periods)
- ◆ *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*

Successful examinations will show that a student has a sense of the literary periods covered, a sense of key developments in literary history, and some acquaintance with the critical debates which have shaped and challenged the current canon.

I. Old English (in translation)

Beowulf

Selected shorter poems, including *Cædmon's Hymn*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Wife's Lament*, and some Exeter Book *Riddles*

Prose: Ælfric's *Life of St. Edmund* and Wulfstan's *Sermon of 'Wolf' to the English*

Selections from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*

II. Middle English (Chaucer in Middle English; other texts in translation or original)

Arthurian literature: excerpts from Malory, *Morte D'Arthur*.

lyrics: selected texts such as those in MS Harley 2253 (ed. G. L. Brook) or the anthology *Middle English Lyrics*, ed. Luria and Hoffman (Norton, 1974)

Chaucer: the "General Prologue" and at least five of the *Canterbury Tales*

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Pearl

Langland: selections from *Piers Plowman*

Middle English drama: selected mystery and morality plays, including *The Second Shepherd's Play* and *Everyman*

III. The English Renaissance and Seventeenth Century

Thomas More: *Utopia*

Sir Thomas Wyatt: selected poetry

Henry Howard: Earl of Surrey: selected poetry

Edmund Spenser: "Letter to Raleigh," *The Faerie Queen*, Book I; *The Shepheardes Calendar* (Dedicatory Epistle and several selections); *Amoretti* (selections)

Christopher Marlowe: *Hero and Leander*, *Doctor Faustus*

Sir Philip Sidney *An Apology for Poesy*; *Astrophel and Stella* (selections)

William Shakespeare: *Sonnets* (selections); *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, and five other plays, balanced among histories, comedies and tragedies; selected sonnets (Norton)

John Donne: *Songs and Sonnets* (Selections); *The First Anniversary*; *The Holy Sonnets* (selections); *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (selections)

Francis Bacon: *Essays* (selected); either *The Advancement of Learning* or *The New Atlantis*

Ben Jonson: *Volpone*, selected poetry

John Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi*

Andrew Marvell: "The Garden," "To His Coy Mistress," "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland"; at least four other poems

Seventeenth-century lyric poets: at least four poems by each of the following: Herrick, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Carew, Suckling, Crashaw

John Milton: "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Lycidas," *Paradise Lost*; selections from prose.

IV. Restoration and Eighteenth-Century

Dryden: *Mac Flecknoe*, and "An Essay of Dramatic Poesie" (selections)

Wycherley: *The Country Wife*

Rochester: "A Satyr Against Reason and Mankind"

Behn: *Oroonoko* or *The Rover*

Congreve: *The Way of the World*

Gay: *The Beggar's Opera*

Early Eighteenth-century Novel: Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe* or *Moll Flanders*; Richardson: *Pamela* or *Clarissa*; Fielding: *Joseph Andrews* or *Tom Jones*

Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*, "A Modest Proposal," and at least two poems

Pope: *The Rape of the Lock*; *Moral Epistles 1* and *3*; *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* and at least one other poem

Addison: *The Spectator*, at least four numbers. Suggestions: 6, 21, 58, 61, 62, 63, 65, 69, 105, 112, 113, 117, 120, 125, 160, 226, 267, 409, 411, 412, 420, 421, 465, 519

Sheridan or Goldsmith: *The Rivals* or *The School for Scandal* or *She Stoops to Conquer*

Johnson: "The Vanity of Human Wishes," "Preface to Shakespeare," and *Rasselas*

Boswell: *Life of Samuel Johnson* (excerpts)

Later Poetry: Thomson: "Winter" from *The Seasons*; Gray: "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"; Collins: "Ode on the Poetical Character"; Goldsmith: "The Deserted Village"

Later Eighteenth-century Novel: one of the following: Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*; Smollett: *Humphry Clinker*; Burney, *Evelina*; or Radcliffe, *The Italian*

V. Romantics/19thC

Blake: *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (at least 4 from each)

Wordsworth/Coleridge: From the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads: Ancient Mariner, Tintern Abbey, Simon Lee, We are 7*

Wordsworth: Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802); Two Book Prelude (1799), "Ode: Intimations of Immortality,"

Coleridge: *Biographia Literaria*, Chapters XIII-XIV and XVII; "Kubla Khan," "Christabel," "Dejection: An Ode,"

Byron: Manfred; *Don Juan*, Cantos I-IV

Shelley: "Mont Blanc," "Adonais," *A Defence of Poetry*, "Ode to the West Wind," "England, 1819"

Keats: "The Eve of St. Agnes," the five major odes, and one other poem

Hemans: From "Records of Woman": Properzia Rossi

Lamb: "Old China"

Austen : *Pride and Prejudice* or *Emma*

Bronte, E.: *Wuthering Heights*

Bronte, C.: *Jane Eyre*

Dickens: *David Copperfield* or *Great Expectations* or *Bleak House*

Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*

Eliot, George: *Middlemarch* or *Mill on the Floss*

Hardy: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or *Jude the Obscure*

Tennyson: selections from *In Memoriam* (Norton); "Lady of Shalott," "Ulysses," "The Passing of Arthur," "Crossing the Bar," and "Tithonus."

Browning, R.: "My Last Duchess," "The Bishop Orders His Tomb...", "Caliban upon Setebos," "Childe Roland from the Dark Tower Came"

Arnold : "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," "Sweetness and Light" from *Culture and Anarchy*, "The Scholar Gypsy," "Dover Beach."

Browning, E.B.: "Aurora Leigh" (books 1, 2, and 5)

Rossetti, C.: "Goblin Market"

VI: American Literature to 1900

Bradstreet, Taylor, Wheatley, Freneau: Three poems each

Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

Franklin: *Autobiography*

Irving: "Rip Van Winkle"

Cooper : *The Pioneers* or *The Last of the Mohicans*

Poe: "The Philosophy of Composition" and "Twice-Told Tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne: A Review" and two short stories

Emerson: "Nature" and two essays from the following: "The American Scholar," "Self-Reliance," "The Divinity School Address," and "The Poet"

Thoreau: *Walden*

Douglass: *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)

Jacobs: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (selections)

Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter* and two tales
 Melville: *Moby Dick* and either *Billy Budd* or "Benito Cereno"
 Whitman: "Song of Myself," "Preface" to 1855 Edition of *Leaves of Grass*, "Out of the Cradle
 Endlessly Rocking," and two other poems
 Dickinson: Ten poems. Suggestions (Johnson numbers): 49, 67, 130, 214, 241, 258, 280, 303, 324,
 328, 348, 435, 449, 465, 500, 712, 986, 1100, 1129, 1263, 1545, 1624, 1732
 Two poems by one of the following: Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Lowell
 One of the following: Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* or *Maggie*; Norris, *McTeague*; Dreiser, *Sister
 Carrie* (restored UPenn text, 1981.); Wharton, *The House of Mirth*; or, in lieu of one novel,
 these four short stories: Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," Jewett, "The White Heron,"
 Freeman, "A New England Nun," Wharton, "Roman Fever."
 James: "The Art of Fiction"; *Portrait of a Lady* or *The Ambassadors*;
 Twain: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
 Chesnut: *The Conjure Woman* or *The Marrow of Tradition*
 Chopin : *The Awakening*

VII: 20th Century

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
 Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*
 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or *Ulysses*
 D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*
 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* or *To the Lighthouse*
 G. B. Shaw, *Man and Superman*
 Sean O'Casey, *Juno and the Paycock*
 J. M. Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*
 T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland* and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
 W. B. Yeats, selected poems
 W. H. Auden, selected poems
 Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
 Caryl Churchill, *Cloud Nine*
 Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*
 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*
 Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*
 W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
 Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*
 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
 Willa Cather, *My Antonia*
 William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
 Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*
 Richard Wright, *Native Son*
 Ralph Ellison, *The Invisible Man*
 Ezra Pound, selected poems
 Robert Frost, selected poems
 Wallace Stevens, selected poems

William Carlos Williams, selected poems

Eugene O'Neill, *A Long Day's Journey into Night*

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

One play by Shepard, Mamet, Hwang, or Kushner

Poems by Jarrell, Lowell, Bishop, Plath, Ginsberg, Rich, Giovanni, Baraka, and Lorde

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*