



BA Exam in British and American Literature – maximus

The description of the written exam for “maximus”:

- there are 20 multiple-choice questions, 8 open-ended questions, and 4 more questions related to a quotation from one of the works on the maximus reading list (four different quotations with questions are offered to choose from - you choose only one quotation and answer only the questions related to the quotation of your choice);
- for the multiple-choice questions, mark only one correct answer: you get 3 points for every correctly marked answer, you lose 1 point for every incorrectly marked answer (if you skip a question with no answer marked, you do not lose points);
- for the open-ended questions, answer in 1-3 full sentences, try to answer as fully and concisely as possible; you get up to 5 points for each answer (there are no negative points in this part of the exam);
- for the questions related to the quotation, you answer in 1-3 full sentences, try to answer as fully and concisely as possible; you get up to 5 points for each answer (there are no negative points in this part of the exam);
- you can get the maximum of 120 points, there is a 60% (72 points) pass limit;
- make sure you write clearly as illegible answers will be considered incorrect;
- the time limit is 120 minutes.

A. For each of the following multiple-choice questions circle one correct answer. You must mark only one answer, otherwise your answer will be considered incorrect. If you want to change your answer, make sure it is clear which one is your final answer.

For each correct answer you get 3 points. For each wrong answer you lose 1 point.

1. Where is *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper set?
 - a) Wild West
 - b) Prairies
 - c) Frontier
 - d) New England
2. Which of the following authors is NOT a representative of American Romanticism?
 - a) Ralph Waldo Emerson
 - b) Mark Twain
 - c) Nathaniel Hawthorne
 - d) Edgar Allan Poe
3. “Song of Myself” is written in
 - a) heroic couplets
 - b) free verse
 - c) blank verse
 - d) sprung rhythm



4. Mark Twain and Kate Chopin are representatives of
 - a) Regionalism
 - b) Modernism
 - c) Naturalism
 - d) Symbolism

5. What period best describes when William Carlos Williams was most active in writing and publishing?
 - a) Modernism
 - b) The 1960s
 - c) Postmodernism
 - d) Late 19th century

6. What “movement/mode of writing” is Flannery O’Connor associated with?
 - a) Harlem Renaissance
 - b) Southern Gothic
 - c) Feminism
 - d) Beat Generation

7. Which of the following works does NOT belong to the same genre as *Death of a Salesman*?
 - a) *A Streetcar Named Desire*
 - b) *Angels in America*
 - c) *Ceremony*
 - d) *A Long Day’s Journey into Night*

8. What poem is most often cited as the best example of a “high modernist” piece of literature?
 - a) “Song of Myself”
 - b) *Howl*
 - c) “Ode to a Nightingale”
 - d) *The Waste Land*

9. Which century did English metaphysical poets mostly write in?
 - a) 14th
 - b) 15th
 - c) 17th
 - d) 19th

10. Which of the following plays by William Shakespeare is NOT a tragedy?
 - a) *The Tempest*
 - b) *Hamlet*
 - c) *Othello*
 - d) *King Lear*



11. Which one of the following authors was NOT a Romantic poet?
 - a) George Gordon Byron
 - b) Percy Bysshe Shelley
 - c) William Wordsworth
 - d) Alexander Pope

12. Oscar Wilde was born in:
 - a) England
 - b) Scotland
 - c) Wales
 - d) Ireland

13. Leopold Bloom is a character created by
 - a) D. H. Lawrence
 - b) James Joyce
 - c) Thomas Hardy
 - d) Charles Dickens

14. What do Joseph Conrad and Salman Rushdie have in common?
 - a) they are not originally British
 - b) these names are their pen-names
 - c) they both emigrated to the United States
 - d) they published important works in the 1950s

15. Which of the following works could NOT be considered historical fiction?
 - a) *The French Lieutenant's Woman*
 - b) *The Remains of the Day*
 - c) *Women in Love*
 - d) *Wide Sargasso Sea*

16. Which of the following poems is an example of romanticism?
 - a) "The Flea"
 - b) *Beowulf*
 - c) "Charge of the Light Brigade"
 - d) "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

17. Which of the following works is NOT a short story?
 - a) "Kew Gardens"
 - b) "The Dead"
 - c) "Bartleby, the Scrivener"
 - d) "A Room of One's Own"



18. Heathcliff is a character in
- Waiting for Godot*
 - Wuthering Heights*
 - Pride and Prejudice*
 - “Kew Gardens”
19. Which of the following is NOT true about typical Modernist works?
- They are experimental.
 - They are optimistic.
 - They are critical of realism.
 - They focus on modern life.
20. William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* is
- a novel
 - a poem
 - a collection of poems
 - a collection of short stories

B. In response to each of the questions below, write 1 to 3 sentences that best answer the question. Make sure to read the questions carefully and write the answers legibly. Illegible answers will be considered incorrect. You will get maximum of 5 points for each answer (there are no “negative” points in this part of the exam).

- Describe the narrative structure of *Canterbury Tales*. Include the name of the author and the time of publication.
- What are the main characteristics of British (and Irish) modernist fiction? Name three authors and their works.
- Explain the term “Harlem Renaissance” and name two of its representatives.
- Comment on the main characteristics of American drama in the 20th century and name four major playwrights.
- Why can Kate Chopin be considered a proto-feminist writer? Name her most famous novel.
- Briefly explain the position of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in the context of anti-slavery literature. Include the name of the author and the year/decade of publication.
- The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has many “gothic fiction” features. Explain what they are. Name the author of the novel, list another 19th century novel that could be characterized as “gothic” and briefly explain why.
- Who wrote the *Lyrical Ballads* and when? Why is the book considered important?



C. Choose **ONLY ONE** of the following quotes from a work on the BA reading list and answer the questions related to that quote. Use 1-2 long sentences, be brief but concise, where possible, refer to the quote. You can get the maximum of 5 points for each question (20 points total, no “negative” points here).

Quote no. 1

His three boats stove around him, and oars and men both whirling in the eddies; one captain, seizing the line-knife from his broken prow, had dashed at the whale, as an Arkansas duellist at his foe, blindly seeking with a six inch blade to reach the fathom-deep life of the whale. That captain was Ahab. And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby Dick had reaped away Ahab’s leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. No turbaned Turk, no hired Venetian or Malay, could have smote him with more seeming malice. Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever since that almost fatal encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations.

(Herman Melville: *Moby Dick, or The Whale*)

1. What is the situation described in the quote in the context of the plot of the novel?
2. With reference to the above quote, comment on the character of captain Ahab.
3. What does the white whale represent for Ahab? Refer to the quote in your answer.
4. Who is the narrator of *Moby Dick*? Briefly comment on the narrative style of the novel.

Quote no. 2

The Red Wheelbarrow by William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

1. Describe the formal structure of the poem.
2. The poem is considered an example of “Imagism”. What is Imagism? How does this poem exemplify it?
3. Briefly comment on the visual qualities of the poem.
4. Comment on the speaker and the tone of the poem.



Quote no. 3

When I was thirteen years of age we all went on a party of pleasure to the baths near Thonon; the inclemency of the weather obliged us to remain a day confined to the inn. In this house I chanced to find a volume of the works of Cornelius Agrippa. I opened it with apathy; the theory which he attempts to demonstrate and the wonderful facts which he relates soon changed this feeling into enthusiasm. A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind, and bounding with joy, I communicated my discovery to my father. My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book and said, "Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash."

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded and that a modern system of science had been introduced which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical, under such circumstances I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside and have contented my imagination, warmed as it was, by returning with greater ardour to my former studies. It is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents, and I continued to read with the greatest avidity.

(from Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*)

1. Identify the speaker in this passage and why his encounter with the works of Cornelius Agrippa are important for his story.
2. What is the train of ideas that the narrator pursues and how did it lead to his fate?
3. Describe the importance of education in the novel and the responsibility of parents towards their children, refer to the above passage in your answer.
4. The passage is taken from a letter written by Captain Walton, comment on Shelley's use of the novel of letters and its effects on the reader.

Quote no. 4

Algernon: Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

Jack: Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

Algernon: I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

(from Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*)

1. What is a Bunburyist? Explain the term and its origin in the play.
2. Discuss the main themes of the play and how does the idea of Bunburyism relates to them.
3. Describe the personality of the two friends Algernon and Jack in the play.
4. Comment on Wilde's attitude towards the social conventions of Victorian England and its reflection in the play.

TOTAL 120 points (72 pass limit)