

The Master's Comprehensive Examination is based on the following reading list of works that represent the major genres, periods and authors of these literatures. The student is expected to be familiar with all of the works in two of the listed subject areas, unless submitting a thesis, and to be able to place and discuss the works in critical and historical contexts. A selection of standard works on criticism and literary history is appended to the reading list, though the student will not be examined on these works specifically.

The examination consists of a morning and an afternoon session, each lasting two hours. The morning session includes 5 brief, key passages chosen from works on the reading list. Each passage represents a significant moment in the text from which it is taken, or is characteristic of its author's thought or literary style. The examinee is asked to identify the passages by author and title, and to write a one paragraph (four or five sentence) explanation of why the passages are significant in terms of the work as a whole and in terms of the literary historical period in question. In the afternoon session, the student will write a one-hour essay which refers to at least four works from the period.

Students who write a scholarly thesis may likewise be responsible for one, rather than two, subject areas. However, the area must be a different one than the area covered in the thesis.

Students must inform the Graduate Director of their intention to take the exam at least one month prior to the exam date. At this time, they must identify the one or two periods on which they would like to be tested.

Major Subject Areas

Medieval & Renaissance

17th & 18th Century British Literature

Romantic and Victorian Literature

American Literature (Colonial to 1900)

20th Century Literature

Literary Criticism

Supplemental List of Historical and Critical Reading

Bibliographies

Literary Histories

Literary Theory and Criticism

I. Medieval and Renaissance (to 1640)

1. *Beowulf*
2. Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*: General Prologue; Prologues and Tales of the Knight; Miller; Wife of Bath; Merchant; Franklin
3. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
4. *The Second Shepherds' Play*
5. More, *Utopia*
6. Sidney, *Apologie for Poesie*
7. Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus*
8. Jonson, *Volpone*
9. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Bk. I

10. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; *King Lear*; *The Tempest*; *Henry V*; *Twelfth Night*; *Measure for Measure*
11. Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*
12. 10. Donne, "Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star"; "The Sun Rising"; "The Indifferent"; "The Flea"; "The Canonization"; "A Valediction, Forbidding Mourning"; "The Ecstasy"; "Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward"; "Hymne to God my God, in My Sickness"; the following Holy Sonnets: "Batter My Heart"; "I Am a Little World"; "Since She Whom I Lov'd"; "Death Be Not Proud."
13. Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"

II. 17th and 18th Centuries

1. Milton, *Paradise Lost*
2. Wycherley, *The Country Wife*
3. Dryden, *All for Love*
4. Behn, *Oroonoko*
5. Pope, "The Rape of the Lock"; "Eloisa to Abelard"; "An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"; "An Essay on Criticism"
6. Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
7. Swift, "A Modest Proposal"; *Gulliver's Travels*
8. Gay, *The Beggar's Opera*
9. Fielding, *Tom Jones*
10. Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*
11. Burney, *Evelina*
12. Austen, *Emma*

III. Romantic and Victorian

1. Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*; *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.
2. Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, including the 1802 Preface; "Michael"; "Resolution and Independence"; "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"
3. Coleridge, "The Eolian Harp"; "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; "Kubla Khan"; "Christabel"; "Frost at Midnight"; "Dejection: An Ode"
4. Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto 3; *Don Juan*, Canto 1
5. P. Shelley, "Mont Blanc"; "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"; "Ode to the West Wind"; "Adonais"; "To a Skylark"; "Ozymandias"
6. Keats, "The Eve of St. Agnes"; "To a Nightingale"; "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; "Ode on Melancholy"; "The Fall of Hyperion"; "To Autumn"
7. M. Shelley, *Frankenstein*
8. Tennyson, "Ulysses"; *In Memoriam, A.H.H.*
9. Browning, "My Last Duchess"; "Meeting at Night"; "Parting at Morning"; "The Bishop Orders His Tomb"; "Fra Lippo Lippi"; "Andrea Del Sarto"
10. Dickens, *Hard Times*
11. E. Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*
12. G. Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*
13. Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

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IV. American Literature, Colonial - 1900

1. Bradstreet, "The Prologue"; "To Her Father with Some Verses"; "The Author to Her Book"; "Contemplations"; "The Flesh and the Spirit"; "Before the Birth of One of Her Children"; "To My Dear and Loving Husband"; "In Reference to Her Children, 23 June, 1659"; "In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet"; "Upon the Burning of Our House"
2. Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*
3. Franklin, *The Autobiography*
4. Emerson, *Nature; The American Scholar*
5. Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*
6. Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter.*
7. Melville, *Moby Dick.*
8. Thoreau, *Walden*, Chapters 1,2,7,11,16-18.
9. Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*
10. Whitman, Preface to the 1855 Edition of *Leaves of Grass*; "Song of Myself"; "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"; "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"; Democratic Vistas.
11. Dickinson, "I felt a funeral, in my Brain" (P280); "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church-" (P324); "After great pain, a formal feeling comes" (P341); "This was a Poet-It is That" (448); "I heard a Fly buzz-when I died-" (P465); "Because I could not stop For Death-" (P712); "She rose to His Requirement-dropt" (732); "My Life had stood-a Loaded Gun-" (P754); "Title divine-is Mine!" (P1072); "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant-" (P1129)
12. Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.*
13. James, *Portrait of a Lady.*
14. Chopin, *The Awakening*

V. 20th Century Literature

1. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
2. Wharton, *The House of Mirth.*
3. Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man.*
4. Woolf, *To the Lighthouse; A Room of One's Own.*
5. Yeats, "Among School Children"; "Sailing to Byzantium"; "The Magi"; "Leda and the Swan"; "Easter 1916"; "The Second Coming"; "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"; "Lapis Lazuli"; "The Circus Animals' Dersertion".
6. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; *The Waste Land.*
7. Frost, "Mowing"; "Mending Wall"; "Home Burial"; "After Apple-Picking"; "An Old Man's Winter Night"; "The Oven Bird"; "Birches"; "Out, Out --"; "Design"; "Directive."
8. Stevens, "The Snow Man"; "Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock"; "Sunday Morning"; "Peter Quince at the Clavier"; "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"; "The Idea of Order at Key West"; "Of Modern Poetry"; "Not Ideas about the Thing But the Thing Itself."
9. Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"; "The Weary Blues"; "I, Too"; "Come to the Waldorf-Astoria"; "Goodbye Christ."

10. Hemingway, "Big Two-Hearted River"; "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"; "Hills like White Elephants"; "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"; "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber."
11. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*.
12. Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*.
13. O'Neill, *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*.
14. Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
15. Ellison, *Invisible Man*.
16. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*.

VI. Literary Criticism

1. Plato, *Republic*, Book X.
2. Aristotle, "Poetics."
3. Horace, "Ars Poetica."
4. Sidney, "An Apologie for Poesie."
5. Pope, "An Essay on Criticism."
6. Wordsworth, Preface (1802) to *Lyrical Ballads*.
7. Poe, "The Poetic Principle."
8. Arnold, "The Study of Poetry."
9. James, "The Art of Fiction."
10. Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming."
11. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent."
12. Ransom, "Criticism, Inc."
13. De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*.
14. Derrida, *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*.
15. Eagleton, "Marxism and Literary Criticism."

Supplemental List of Historical and Critical Reading

The following list of standard works is offered to graduate students for reference in preparing for the Master's Comprehensive Examination; these works will not themselves be the subject of the exam. The list is by no means exhaustive - students should ask course instructors for titles of critical and historical works in specialized areas.

I. Bibliographies

1. Altick, Robert D., and Andrew Wright, eds. *Selective Bibliography for the Study of English and American Literature*. 6th ed., 1978.
2. Bateson, F.W. *A Guide to English Literature*. 1965.
3. Pickles, J.D., ed. *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*. 1976.

II. Literary Histories

1. Baugh, Albert C., et al. *A Literary History of England*. 2nd ed., 1967.
2. Bercovitch, Sacvan. *The Cambridge History of American Literature* (1997).
3. Burrow, John A. *Medieval Writers and Their Work: Middle English Literature and its Background, 1100-1500*. 1982.
4. Elliott, Emory. *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (1988).
5. Ford, Boris, ed. *The Pelican Guide to English Literature*. 1982 (7 vols.).
6. Ward, A.W., and A.R. Waller, eds. *Cambridge History of English Literature*. 1907-1927 (14 vols.).



7. Westbrook, Perry. *Literary History of New England* (1988).
8. Wilson, F.P., and B. Dobree, eds. *Oxford History of English Literature*. 1945-63 (12 vols.).

III. Criticism and Theory

1. Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 1983.
2. Selden, Raman, and Peter Widdowson. *Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory and Criticism*. 3rd ed., 1993.