

READING LIST: THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH

(updated Fall 2012)

This list is arranged according to the **three historical periods** into which the examination is divided. In studying for the examination, you should not only compare texts within a historical period, but also familiarize yourself with the context in which the texts were produced. You should understand the significance for these texts of historical events, literary movements, nationality, the writer's career, etc.

The examination will require you to answer **one literary theory-based essay question**. If you have taken ENGL 508A (Seminar in Criticism and Theory) you should be well prepared to answer this question. If you have not taken ENGL 508A, we recommend that you study at least the first eight chapters of Steven Lynn's *Texts and Contexts* (4th ed. or later).

To familiarize yourself with the terms on the list of terms for the Comprehensive Exam, the Graduate Committee recommends *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*.

To 1780	
Anonymous	<i>Beowulf</i>
Geoffrey Chaucer	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i> : "The General Prologue" (lines 1-100; 285-360; 445-477; 545-566; 669-858) "The Wife of Bath's Prologue & Tale" "Retraction"
The Pearl Poet	"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"
The Wakefield Master	"The Second Sheppards' Play"
Sir Thomas Malory	from <i>Le Morte D' Arthur</i> : "The Healing of Sir Urry" "The Day of Destiny" "The Dolorous Death and Departing out of this World of Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere"
Edmund Spenser	<i>Amoretti</i> Sonnets 1, 15, 37, 54, 70, 75, 79 "Epithalamion"
William Shakespeare	Sonnets 2, 18, 29, 30, 55, 64, 73, 116, 130, 137 <i>Othello</i> <i>Twelfth Night</i>
Ben Jonson	"To Penshurst"
Robert Herrick	"The Hock-Cart, or Harvest Home"
Margaret Cavendish	"An excuse for so much writ upon my Verses"

	"The weight of Atomes" "A World in an Eare-Ring"
John Donne	"The Flea" "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" "Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star" "Batter My Heart, Three-Personed God"
John Milton	"L'Allegro" "Il Penseroso" <i>Paradise Lost</i> , Book I
John Winthrop	"A Modell of Christian Charity"
Anne Bradstreet	"Upon the Burning of Our House" "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Publick Employment" "The Author to Her Book"
Andrew Marvell	"To His Coy Mistress"
William Wycherley	<i>The Country Wife</i>
John Dryden	"Absalom and Achitophel"
Aphra Behn	<i>Oroonoko</i>
Edward Taylor	"Upon Wedlock, and Death of Children" Preparatory Meditations, First Series: 7, 8, 9, 10 from Gods Determinations "The Preface"
Daniel Defoe	<i>Moll Flanders</i>
Jonathan Swift	<i>Gulliver's Travels</i> , Books I, II, IV
Alexander Pope	"An Essay on Man"
Jonathan Edwards	<i>Personal Narrative</i> "A Divine and Supernatural Light"
Mary Rowlandson	<i>Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson</i>
Samuel Johnson	"The Vanity of Human Wishes"
Thomas Gray	"Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"
Oliver Goldsmith	"The Deserted Village"
Benjamin Franklin	<i>The Autobiography</i> (Parts I & II)
Phillis Wheatley	"On Being Brought from Africa to America" "On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield" Letter to Samson Occom of February 11, 1774
1780-1900	
Olaudah Equiano	<i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i>
Jane Austen	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>
Mary Wollstonecraft	<i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> (Introduction & Chapters 2-3)

William Blake	<i>Song of Innocence and Experience</i> "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell"
William Wordsworth	"We Are Seven" "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" "The Ruined Cottage" "The Preface to <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> " (1800)
Dorothy Wordsworth	<i>The Alfoxden Journal</i>
S. T. Coleridge	"Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1817) "Kubla Khan" "The Eolian Harp"
Lord Byron	<i>Don Juan: Canto 1 (including the one-stanza "Fragment" and the "Dedication")</i> <i>Canto 2</i> "She Walks in Beauty" "Stanzas for Music" "Darkness"
P. B. Shelley	"Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" "England in 1819" "Ode to the West Wind" "Mont Blanc"
John Keats	"On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" "The Eve of St. Agnes" "Ode on a Grecian Urn" "Ode to a Nightingale"
Charlotte Smith	<i>Elegaic Sonnets</i> (selections) : I ("The partial Muse has from my earliest hours") XLIV ("Press'd by the Moon, mute arbitress of tides") LXX ("Is there a solitary wretch who hies") "Is there a solitary wretch" (sonnet)
John Clare	" <i>The Nightingale's Nest</i> " " <i>Pastoral Poesy</i> "
Mary Shelley	<i>Frankenstein</i>
Washington Irving	"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
Alfred, Lord Tennyson	"The Lady of Shalott" "Ulysses" "Lotus Eaters" <i>In Memoriam A.H.H.</i> (Prologue, sections 9, 54-57, 95-96, 103-106 123-124, 130, Epilogue)
Frederick Douglass	The Narrative of the Life
Harriet Jacob	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Chap. V-XXI)

Charlotte Bronte	<i>Jane Eyre</i>
Edgar Allan Poe	"The Fall of the House of Usher" "The Purloined Letter" "The Cask of Amontillado"
Nathaniel Hawthorne	The Scarlet Letter
Ralph Waldo Emerson	"The Over-Soul" "The American Scholar" "Self-Reliance"
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	From Sonnets from the Portuguese: 20, 21,43
Robert Browning	"My Last Duchess" "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church"
Herman Melville	"Benito Cereno" "Bartleby, the Scrivener"
Henry David Thoreau	"Civil Disobedience" ("Resistance to Civil Government")
Walt Whitman	"Song of Myself" "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"
Emily Dickinson	258 ("There's a certain Slant of Light"), 280 ("I felt a Funeral, in my Brain"), 315 ("He fumbles at your Soul"), 322 ("There came a Day at Summer's full"), 341 ("After great pain, a formal feeling comes"), 448 ("This was a Poet"), 465 ("I heard a Fly buzz"), 510 ("It was not Death"), 518 ("Her sweet Weight on my Heart a Night"), 520 ("I started Early"), 712 ("Because I could not stop for Death"), 754 ("My Life had stood--a Loaded Gun--"), 1129 ("Tell all the Truth but tell it slant--"), 651 ("A Word made Flesh is seldom")
Charles Dickens	<i>Great Expectations</i>
Matthew Arnold	"Dover Beach"
Gerard Manley Hopkins	"Spring and Fall" "The Windhover"
Zitkala-Sâ	"The Soft-hearted Sioux"
Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)	<i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
Henry James	"Daisy Miller"
Oscar Wilde	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>

Stephen Crane	<i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i>
Kate Chopin	<i>The Awakening</i>
1900-present	
Joseph Conrad	<i>Heart of Darkness</i>
Henry James	"The Beast in the Jungle"
William Dean Howells	"Editha"
William Butler Yeats	"Easter 1916" "The Second Coming" "Leda and the Swan"
Robert Frost	"Mending Wall" "Home Burial" "After Apple-Picking" "The Wood-Pile" "Birches" "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" "Design"
D.H. Lawrence	<i>The Fox</i>
James Joyce	<i>Dubliners</i>
Ezra Pound	"Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (Life and Contacts)"
Eugene O'Neill	<i>The Hairy Ape</i>
T.S. Eliot	"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" <i>The Waste Land</i> "Journey of the Magi"
Virginia Woolf	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> <i>A Room of One's Own</i> (Chap. 3)
F. Scott Fitzgerald	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
William Carlos Williams	"Tract" "The Red Wheelbarrow" "This is Just to Say" "The Dance" (When the snow falls) "The Ivy Crown" "To Elsie"
Wallace Stevens	"Sunday Morning" "Anecdote of the Jar" "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman" "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" "The Idea of Order at Key West" "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"
John Crowe Ransom	"Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter"
Ernest Hemingway	<i>In Our Time</i>
William Faulkner	<i>As I Lay Dying</i>
Zora Neale Hurston	"Sweat"
Katherine Anne Porter	"The Grave" "Flowering Judas"

Langston Hughes	"The Negro Speaks of Rivers" "The Weary Blues" "Lenox Avenue: Midnight" "Let America Be America Again"
W. H. Auden	"Paysage Moralisé" "The Unknown Citizen" "In Memory of Sigmund Freud" "A Summer Night" "Sept. 1, 1939"
Doris Lessing	"To Room Nineteen"
Arthur Miller	<i>The Death of a Salesman</i>
Richard Wright	"Bright and Morning Star"
Eudora Welty	"Why I live at the P.O." "The Petrified Man"
James Baldwin	"Sonny's Blues"
Ralph Ellison	"Prologue" and "The Battle Royal" from <i>Invisible Man</i>
Flannery O'Connor	"Good Country People" "Revelation"
Saul Bellow	"Looking for Mr. Green"
Bernard Malamud	"The Magic Barrel"
Seamus Heaney	"Casualty" "Punishment" "Act of Union"
Joyce Carol Oates	"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been"
Raymond Carver	"Cathedral" (the short story)
Toni Morrison	<i>Sula</i>
Alice Walker	<i>The Color Purple</i>
Louise Erdrich	"Fleur"
Thomas Pynchon	<i>The Crying of Lot 49</i>
V. S. Naipaul	<i>A Bend in the River</i>
Robert Penn Warren	"American Portrait: Old Style" "Mortal Limit" "Doubleness in Time"
Robert Lowell	"Skunk Hour" "Memories of West Street and Lepke" "Man and Wife"
Elizabeth Bishop	"The Fish" "In the Waiting Room" "The Armadillo"
Theodore Roethke	"My Papa's Waltz" "I Knew a Woman" "The Far Field" "In the Dark Time" "Dolor"

Gwendolyn Brooks	"We Real Cool" "a song in the front yard" "The Lovers of the Poor"
Amy Clampitt	"Beach Glass" "The Cormorant in Its Elements"
Philip Larkin	"High Windows" "Aubade" "Posterity"
Allen Ginsberg	"A Supermarket in California" "Howl" "White Shroud"
Robert Creeley	"The World" "I Know a Man" "Bresson's Movies"
Robert Bly	"Waking from Sleep" "Snowbanks North of the House" "Six Winter Privacy Poems"
John Ashbery	"Self Portrait in a Convex Mirror" "Paradoxes and Oxymorons"
James Wright	"Autumn Begins in Martin's Ferry, Ohio" "A Blessing" "Judas"
Sylvia Plath	"Daddy" "Lady Lazarus"
Gary Snyder	"Axe Handles" "The Bath" "I Went into the Maverick Bar"
Thom Gunn	"The Missing" "From the Wave" "A Map of the City"
Adrienne Rich	"Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" "Diving into the Wreck" "Paula Becker to Clara Westhoff"