**MA Comprehensive Exam Reading List**

Department of English & Rhetoric

Effective Fall 2017 – Spring 2020

It is recommended that students be prepared to discuss, broadly, all of the texts below and to analyze, closely, at least one work from each numbered section.

|  |
| --- |
| **British Literature** |
| 1 | Medieval | *Beowulf*“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”Chaucer, from *The Canterbury Tales*:“The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale” |
| 2 | Renaissance Drama | William Shakespeare: *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*Christopher Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus* |
| 3 | Seventeenth Century Poetry and Prose | Aemilia Lanyer“Eve’s Apology in Defense of Women”John Donne:“The Flea”“The Holy Sonnets”Andrew Marvell:“Bermudas”“The Garden”“To His Coy Mistress”John Milton: *Paradise Lost* Books I-IV, IX-XAphra Behn: *Oroonoko* |
| 4 | Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose | Alexander Pope: *The Rape of the Lock*Daniel Defoe: *Moll Flanders*Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver’s Travels* |
| 5 | Nineteenth Century Romantic Poetry | William Wordsworth:“The Two-Part Prelude” (1798-1799)“Tintern Abbey”“Ode: Intimations of Immortality”John Keats:“Ode to Psyche”“Ode to a Nightingale”“Ode on a Grecian Urn” |
| 6 | Nineteenth Century Novel | Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield*George Eliot: *Middlemarch* |
| 7 | Nineteenth Century Victorian Poetry | Alfred, Lord Tennyson:“Ulysses”“Tithonus”“Lady of Shalott”“The Coming of Arthur”Robert Browning:“Porphyria’s Lover”“Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came”“Caliban upon Setebos”Christina Rosetti: “Goblin Market” |
| 8 | Irish Renaissance | Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Ernest*William Butler Yeats“The Stolen Child”“The Second Coming”“Sailing to Byzantium”“Leda and the Swan” |
| 9 | Twentieth Century Modernism | Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* James Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*Virginia Woolf: *To the Lighthouse*Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot*Dylan Thomas: “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night”Tom Stoppard: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* |
| **American Literature** |
| 10 | Seventeenth Century | Mary Rowlandson:“Narrative”Anne Bradstreet:“Verses upon the Burning of Our House”“The Author to her Book” |
| 11 | Eighteenth Century  | Ben Franklin: *Autobiography* |
| 12 | Transcendentalism | Ralph Waldo Emerson:“Nature”“Self-Reliance”Henry David Thoreau: “Economy,” from *Walden*Nathaniel Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*Herman Melville: “Benito Cereno” |
| 13 | Nineteenth Century | Frederick Douglass:“Narrative of the Life” (1845 version)Walt Whitman:*Leaves of Grass* (1855 version)Emily Dickinson:“Because I could not stop for Death”“I felt a funeral in my brain”“I felt a fly buzz-when I died”“There’s a certain slant of light”“I’m nobody! Who are you?” |
| 14 | Realism | Mark Twain:*Huckleberry Finn*Henry James:*Daisy Miller*Edith Wharton:*House of Mirth* |
| 15 | Modernist Fiction | W. E. B. Du Bois:From *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chapters 1 and 3)William Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury*F. Scott Fitzgerald:*The Great Gatsby*Ernest Hemingway:*The Sun Also Rises* |
| 16 | Modernist Poetry | T. S. Eliot:*The Wasteland* William Carlos Williams:“The Red Wheelbarrow”“Spring and All” “This is Just to Say” |
| 17 | Harlem Renaissance | Langston Hughes:“The Negro Speaks of Rivers”“Dream Variations”“The Weary Blues”“Harlem”Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*Nella Larsen:*Passing* |
| 18 | Modern Drama | Eugene O'Neill: *Long Day's Journey Into Night* Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire* Lorraine Hansberry: *A Raisin in the Sun*August Wilson: *The Piano Lesson* |
| 19 | Postwar/Contemporary Fiction | Flannery O’Connor: “A Good Man is Hard to Find”Toni Morrison:*Beloved*Louise Erdrich:*Love Medicine*Thomas Pynchon: “Entropy” |
| 20 | Postwar/Contemporary Poetry | Allen Ginsberg: “Howl”Elizabeth Bishop:“Crusoe in England”“The Fish” Gwendolyn Brooks:“We Real Cool”“To the Diaspora” Joy Harjo:"She Had Some Horses"Sylvia Plath:“Lady Lazarus”“Daddy” |
| **International Literature** |
| 21 | Ancient Greece | Sophocles: *Antigone*  |
| 22 | Ancient Rome | Virgil: *The Aeneid* (Books 1 and 6) |
| 23 | Italian Middle Ages | Dante Alighieri: *Inferno* (Cantos 1-5 and 34) |
| 24 | French Renaissance | Michel de Montaigne: “Of Cannibals” |
| 25 | Twentieth-Century Argentina | Jorge Luis Borges: “The Garden of Forking Paths” |
| 26 | Twentieth-Century Colombia | Gabriel Garcia Marquez: “Death Constant Beyond Love” |
| 27 | Twentieth-Century Martinique | Aimé Césaire: *A Tempest* |
| 28 | Twentieth-Century Egypt | Naguib Mahfouz: “Zaabalawi” |
| 29 | Twentieth-Century Nigeria | Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*Wole Soyinka: *Death and the King’s Horseman* |
| 30 | Twentieth-Century India | Salman Rushdie: “Chekov and Zulu”Arundati Roy: *The God of Small Things* |