

Qualification Exam: English Literature since 1800

Part I.

1. Compare and contrast Romantic poetry and Victorian poetry. You may illustrate the core issues of poetic movements in the two ages and transition from Romanticism to Victorianism. It is advisable to take some examples of the major poets and their works to make your arguments. (25%)

2. Choose only one of the following questions to answer. (25%)

a. Nineteenth-Century women novelists created unique fictional narratives that convey a wide variety of concerns with such issues as empire, class, authorship, reform, marriage, faith and doubt. A lot of their novels portray sexuality, female body, homosexuality and many ideas that help us understand their preoccupations, social conditions and self identity. Take one woman novelist and her works as an example to demonstrate how her representative works reveal any of the above points in her frame of mind.

b. The nineteenth-century Britain saw an explosion of scientific discoveries and advance of technology. Inventions of machines, world-wide scientific expeditions, and scientific speculations often spurred philosophical debates and caused crisis of faith. Take one novelist and his works (of the beginning, the mid-century or the end of the century) that represent the preoccupations of the time and the impact science made on literature during that period. The perspective you use in your answer may be historical or critical.

Part. II.

Please answer **TWO** of the following questions. 50%

1. How do you evaluate, in terms of T.S. Eliot's ideas explicated in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," twentieth-century English literature as a unique part of the history of English literature?
2. Critics have different theories of the relationship between modernism and postmodernism in the twentieth century. Explain your own point of view with illustrations of at least four literary works.
3. Sexuality has gained legitimacy as a critical category since the late nineteenth century. Discuss twentieth century English literature in relation to sexual politics.