

MCQ for MA Entrance

Topic: Modern English Literature (English)

(Correct options are in bold font)

Modern Poetry and Poetics

Which of the following phrases best describes the central goal of Imagist poets ?

- A. "Inclusion of natural objects as symbols"
- B. "Exploration of philosophical paradoxes through visual images"
- C. "Clarity of expression through the use of precise visual images"**
- D. "Emotional power achieved through suggestive visual images"

Many critics see similarities between the tenets of Futurism and which of the following political philosophies ?

- A. Democracy
- B. Fascism**
- C. Marxism
- D. Libertarianism

Which of the following features of Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" make it classifiable as a Victorian poem ?

- A. It is primarily a narrative poem.
- B. It has a regular rhyme scheme (aa/bb/cc/dd...), which is sustained throughout the poem.
- C. It is concerned with conventional 19th century relations between a man and a woman.
- D. All of these answers**

Complete the following sentence. Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach" is illustrative of modernist poetry, because it _____?

- A. is chauvinistic about British “exceptionalism.”
- B. has an undertow of nihilism.**
- C. employs free verse.
- D. was composed between WW I and WW II.

Which of the following statements best characterizes the role played by Gertrude Stein in American modernism ?

- A. Stein was a crucially important figure in the Paris émigré community.**
- B. Stein was a proponent of low modernism.
- C. Stein was primarily a muse for modernist poets.
- D. Stein was an opponent of vanguard trends.

Which of the following traditions was particularly important in Hart Crane’s modernist poetry ?

- A. British Romanticism
- B. French Classicism
- C. American Romanticism**
- D. German Romanticism

Which of the following statements best characterizes Randall Jarrell’s 1945 poem “The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner” ?

- A. The poem contrasts the image of a child in its mother’s womb with cruel devaluation of human life in wartime.**
- B. The poem presents the war as a natural part of the perennial cycles of human history.
- C. The poem uses images of the apocalypse to criticize the cruelty of war.
- D. The poem praises those technological achievements which protect human life in wartime.

According to Professor Hammer, which of the following characteristics did Langston Hughes share with modernist poets like William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, Hart Crane, and Robert Frost ?

- A. Hughes introduced new subject-matter and new language into poetry.
- B. Hughes wrote about the legacy of the American Civil War and its long-term cultural consequences.
- C. Hughes was very conscious that he was an American poet, and this profoundly influenced his writing.
- D. Both A and C**

World War I drastically changed the political and cultural climate in Europe. Which of the following was NOT among the changes brought about by World War I ?

- A. By the end of the 1920s, almost every state that had participated in World War I faced an economic depression and political upheavals.
- B. In the course of World War I, the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia.
- C. Successful parliamentary democracies were established throughout the continent and remained stable until the outbreak of World War II in 1939.**
- D. Germany was defeated and blamed for causing the war.

Which of the following traditions was an important influence on Louis Zukofsky's poetry ?

- A. British Neo-Classicism
- B. American Romanticism
- C. Kabbalistic Judaism**
- D. Taoism

The first stanza of Countee Cullen's "A Brown Girl Dead" reads: "With two white roses on her breasts,/White candles at head and feet,/Dark Madonna of the grave she rests;/Lord Death has found her sweet." Which of the following statements accurately characterizes these lines ?

- A. These lines evoke Christian imagery to suggest that death erases racial divisions.
- B. These lines evoke Christian imagery to emphasize the dignity of the girl who died.
- C. These lines present the problem of racial prejudice in an ironic mode.
- D. Both A and B**

One of the dominant themes in Wallace Stevens's poem "Sunday Morning" consists of the juxtaposition of nature against which set of cultural symbols ?

- A. The Renaissance concept of humanism
- B. Elements of the Christian narrative of salvation**
- C. The alchemical concept of the philosopher's stone
- D. The ideal of courtly love

According to the literary critic, Paul Fussell, which of the following was a central trope of English poetry written during the Great War ?

- A. Nihilism
- B. Irony**
- C. Patriotic imagery
- D. Apocalyptic imagery

Which of the following best characterizes the contrast between Gertrude Stein's poetry and Imagist poetry ?

- A. Stein sought to combine classical poetic form with contemporary content, whereas the Imagists used traditional poetic subject matter but experimented with form.
- B. Stein experimented with language that skirted the edges of sense, whereas the Imagists sought precision and clarity of expression.**
- C. Stein experimented only with the sound qualities of language, whereas the Imagists focused on visual imagery.
- D. Stein sought precision and clarity in her poems, whereas the Imagists sought experimental forms that enhanced visual imagery.

Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier" opens with the following lines: "If I should die, think only this of me:/That there's some corner of a foreign field/That is for ever England." Which of the following statements best describes these lines and Brooke's poem as a whole ?

- A. These lines and the poem as a whole use both the political concept of a nation and the spiritual concept of eternity to give meaning to soldiers' deaths on the battlefield.**
- B. These lines and the poem as a whole seek to directly express the horrors of war.
- C. These lines and the poem as a whole are primarily concerned with the extension of Britain's imperial power.
- D. These lines and the poem as a whole rely on assonance to magnify the critique of war expressed in the poem.

According to Professor Hammer, Wallace Stevens's understanding of the imagination has most in common with which of the following literary traditions ?

- A. Classicism
- B. Imagism
- C. British Romanticism**
- D. Vorticism

Complete the following sentence. Professor Hammer argues that Ezra Pound's interest in fascism and his anti-Semitic views were likely an outcome of his _____?

- A. interest in ancient Rome.
- B. endorsement of Marxism.
- C. anti-capitalism.**
- D. interest in Fourier's utopian socialist thought.

What is the "double-bind" that African- American women poets encountered in the thirties and forties, according to Anthony Walton's essay ?

- A. Being ignored by a traditional poetry reading public because what they wrote about was the travails of subsistence living
- B. Being a subordinated woman in a male dominated culture and a member of a suppressed minority race in the middle of a dominant white culture**
- C. Having little formal education with little access to publishers
- D. Being overworked in menial jobs having to raise large families

In Amy Lowell's imagist poem, "This Green Bowl," a handmade bowl is compared to a pond in the woods. Can one say that, as in Pound's "Cantos," this poem's dominant tone is impersonal? Why, or why not ?

- A. Yes, the lyrical voice in Lowell's poem seeks to express universal rather than individual experience.
- B. Yes, Lowell's detailed description of nature draws attention away from human realities.
- C. No, Lowell's poem is not impersonal; it addresses the maker of the bowl directly and speculates about his state of mind.**
- D. No, even though Lowell strives for impersonal expression by borrowing poetic devices from Pound, she fails to accomplish this

Which of the following best describes the types of imagery used in Louis Zukofsky's poem, "A: Seventh Movement: There Are Different Techniques" ?

- A. Historic and contemporary imagery**
- B. Nationalist imagery
- C. Kabbalistic imagery
- D. Everyday imagery

Which of the following literary devices are present in Langston Hughes's poem "Ku Klux" ?

- A. Irony**
- B. Oxymoron
- C. Allegory
- D. Alliteration

The poem "Dulce et Decorum Est" ends with the following lines: "My friend, you would not tell with such high zest/To children ardent for some desperate glory,/The old Lie; Dulce et Decorum est/ Pro patria mori." Which of the following statements best describes these lines ?

A. These lines suggest the author's anger and disillusionment with cultural norms which glorify war.

the distance between the ideals of Western civilization and its realities.

B. Brooke's inclusion of a quotation from Horace in these lines serves to emphasize

C. In these lines, Brooke seeks to bridge the gap between individual experience and cultural norms and beliefs.

D. All of the above

English Romantic Poetry MCQs

Which of the following best describes the reasons why World War I had a profound impact on modern poetry ?

A. The mechanized killing, which took place on a massive scale during World War I, made it necessary to reflect about the effects of technological progress.

B. The devastation wrought by World War I was so enormous that it put Europe's cultural and political norms and values into question.

C. World War I was the first global conflict where the distinction between combatants and civilians was erased, and this had a devastating effect on the European psyche.

D. Both A and B

According to W.E.B. Dubois in his Atlantic Monthly essay, "The Strivings of the Negro People," what are some of the personal consequences for an African- American living in a racist society at the beginning of the 20th century ?

A. Becoming a stuttering sycophant just to survive

B. Feeling like an outcast in your own house

C. Wrapping yourself in the armor of anger and resentment

D. All of the above

Violet Cristoforo was honored for collecting what kind of poetry in her anthology "May Sky" ?

- A. Jewish dissident poetry from the gulags in Siberia
- B. American G.I. poetry from German prisoner of war camps
- C. Love sonnets from the Nazi death camps
- D. Haiku poetry from the Japanese internment camps in the US**

Langston Hughes was among the most important figures of the Harlem Renaissance. Which of the following is an accurate characterization of his experiences before he published his first book

- A. He moved to New York from Alabama and the stark contrast between these places deeply influenced his writing.
- B. He was a native New Yorker who did not travel much but who was keenly aware of New York's complexity and diversity.
- C. He was born in Missouri and traveled extensively throughout the United States and the world before he moved to New York City.**
- D. He spent most of his life in Washington, DC, moving to Harlem only after he gained literary fame.

Which of the following statements best characterizes the central questions faced by poetry after the Holocaust ?

- A. Is there a relationship between poetry and rationality after the Holocaust?
- B. The horror of the Holocaust was inexpressible; how can poetry speak of what is inexpressible?**
- C. Is it possible for Romantic themes in poetry to be meaningful after the Holocaust?
- D. Is there a meaningful relationship between World War I poetry and World War II poetry?

In his essay "The Symbolism of Poetry," William Butler Yeats argues that which of the following is the purpose of rhythm ?

- A. To "make poetry new"
- B. To "prolong the moment of contemplation"**

- C. To “counteract the forces of dispersal inherent in metaphorical language”
- D. To “amplify and clarify the indistinct emotions created by metaphorical symbols”

Wilfred Owen’s “Anthem for Doomed Youth” begins with the following lines: “What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?/ Only the monstrous anger of the guns./ Only the stuttering rifles’ rapid rattle/Can patter out their hasty orisons.” Which of the following statements best describes these lines ?

- A. These lines suggest that the Great War lasted much longer than it should have.
- B. These lines suggest that it was difficult to define patriotism during the Great War, but soldiers who died in battle provided the best example of patriotism.
- C. These lines equate humans with animals, and they anthropomorphize weapons to show a world where there is no place for human values.**
- D. These lines represent a modern funeral dirge that mimics the rhythm of ancient Greek funeral dirges.

Which of the following statements best characterizes the last two stanzas of Charles Baudelaire’s symbolist poem “Correspondences” ?

- A. They use metaphors with subtle political connotations.
- B. They describe the author’s experiences as a young child.
- C. They ascribe colors and sounds to scents, relying on a device known as synesthesia.**
- D. They describe a scene in the countryside, which symbolizes the state of the author’s soul.

Which of the following events increased the appeal of communism among American intellectuals both black and white in the years between 1918 and 1939 ?

- A. The Great Depression**
- B. Hitler’s invasion of Poland in 1939
- C. World War I
- D. The Russian Civil War

In his first lecture on William Butler Yeats, Professor Hammer says that the young Yeats identified with King Goll. What does he mean by this ?

- A. Yeats believed that each person was an instance of a general cultural type or symbol.
- B. Yeats's poetry was autobiographical, but he understood his life through the prism of myths and symbols; symbolism was therefore present in both Yeats's life and in his poetry.
- C. The young Yeats wished to emphasize his identity as an English poet and draw attention away from his Irish heritage.

D. Both A and B

Which of the following statements best characterizes the difference between Futurism and Vorticism ?

- A. Members of both movements were fascinated by speed and dynamism, but unlike the Futurists, Vorticists did not celebrate technology and industrialization.**
- B. Vorticists celebrated technology and industrialization, whereas Futurists explored impending cultural challenges regarding technology and industrialization.
- C. Futurism lasted for several decades, whereas Vorticism was short-lived.
- D. Futurism was a politically-inclined movement, whereas Vorticism was free of all political entanglements.

Complete the following sentence. Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" is a good example of High Modernism, because it _____?

- A. does not employ rhyme.
- B. was written at the very beginning of the 20th century.
- C. attempts to create a modernist high culture.**
- D. embraces the rhythms and diction of common man's speech.

In his essay "The Roots of Modernism," Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe defines the modern period in the history of art as the time from roughly 1860 to 1970. How does he say modernism is typically defined ?

- A. Modernism is the philosophy of modern art.
- B. Modernism is the historical period which followed the modern period.
- C. Modernism is the art produced during the modern period.
- D. Both A and C**

Siegfried Sassoon's "The Dragon and the Undying" includes the following lines: "Yet, though the slain are homeless as the breeze,/Vocal are they, like stormbewilder'd seas."

Which of the following literary devices does Sassoon use in these lines and to what effect ?

- A. Metonymy to describe the brutality of modern warfare
- B. Simile to suggest a connection between soldiers and nature**
- C. Metaphor to suggest a connection between soldiers and nature
- D. Onomatopoeia to describe the brutality of modern warfare

Which of the following statements accurately compares Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier" and Siegfried Sassoon's "The Rear Guard" ?

- A. Both poems describe Britain's civilizing mission in the world.
- B. Both poems praise Britain's military power and its imperial ambitions.
- C. Both poems seek to respond to the harsh political and military realities of their day.**
- D. Both poems romanticize war and glorify the life of the soldier.

Which of the following poets would most likely be categorized as a modernist poet ?

- A. William Carlos Williams**
- B. George Herbert
- C. John Greenleaf Whittier
- D. Robert Browning

Which of the following literary devices is most prominent in Gertrude Stein's poem "New" ?

- A. Assonance and word repetition**
- B. Metaphor and allusion

- C. Simile
- D. Circumlocution

According to Professor Hammer, which of the following is the central question explored by T.S. Eliot in “The Waste Land” ?

- A. Given the diversity of the world’s poetic traditions, can there be a universal language of poetic symbolism?
- B. Is authentic poetry possible in the aftermath of the carnage of World War I?
- C. How can a shared world be created out of the fundamentally different and private experiences of individual people?**
- D. Given that each person experiences trauma differently, is it possible for all to understand the modern world as a shared “waste land”?

Which of the following statements best characterizes Langston Hughes’s poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” ?

- A. It is a meditation on the alienation of the modern person from nature.
- B. It is a meditation on the poet’s personal experience of assimilation.
- C. It is a meditation on the communal and historical aspects of individual identity.**
- D. It is a meditation on the cultural isolation of African Americans in New England.

Which of the following statements best characterizes Langston Hughes’s poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” ?

- A. The poem is an analytical exploration of racial differences in the United States.
- B. Hughes uses a universal speaker for an exploration of a profound racial divide between blacks and whites.
- C. Similar to Hart Crane and Whitman, Hughes uses a personal and universal “I” to address issues of history, race, and identity.**
- D. The poem is an indictment of racial prejudice in Harlem.

Which of the following poets would most likely be categorized as a late-Victorian poet ?

- A. Allen Ginsberg
- B. Alfred Tennyson**
- C. John Milton
- D. Amy Lowell

The Gothic Novel MCQs

Which of the following political themes was explored by American Objectivist poets ?

- A. American attitudes toward Jews and Israel
- B. Slavery
- C. Capitalism and social inequalities
- D. All of these answers**

Which of the following poets did NOT write about his experiences in World War II ?

- A. Wilfred Owen**
- B. Randall Jarrell
- C. Keith Douglas
- D. Karl Shapiro

Which of the following was an important influence on Charles Reznikoff's shift away from romantic rhetoric ?

- A. His study of medicine
- B. His study of law**
- C. His study of ancient history
- D. His study of Sanskrit

Professor Hammer argues that in Hart Crane's poem "Legend," Crane introduces himself to his readers. The poem opens with the lines: "As silent as a mirror is believed/ Realities plunge in silence by .../I am not ready for repentance;" according to Professor Hammer, Crane's refusal to repent is an assertion of which of the following ?

- A. His political views
- B. His will to sexual freedom
- C. His will to imaginative freedom
- D. Both B and C**

What is the principal subject of Marianne Moore's poem "An Octopus" ?

- A. The ocean
- B. Mt. Rainier**
- C. Death
- D. An octopus

Ezra Pound's "Canto I" opens with the following lines: "And then went down to the ship,/Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and(...)." Which of the following statements best characterizes these lines and the poem as a whole ?

- A. These lines set an impersonal tone which dominates the entire poem.**
- B. These lines are the only impersonal lines in the poem, the rest of which is primarily focused on the complexity of human emotions.
- C. These lines establish a rhythmical pattern, which is followed strictly throughout the poem.
- D. These lines establish a personal tone, focusing on a lyrical perspective similar to late-Victorian era poetry.

What are some of the surface similarities between Robert Frost's poem "Out, Out" and John Greenleaf Whittier's poem "Telling the Bees" ?

- A. They are both set in rural New England.
- B. Both use formal meter to present a narrative structure.
- C. They both address the theme of death.
- D. All of these answers**

Which of the following does Professor Hammer identify as one of the most important goals of Imagist poetry ?

- A. The privileging of rhythm over meaning
- B. The privileging of image over sound
- C. The privileging of individual detail over the larger pattern**
- D. The privileging of colors over textures

Which of the following statements best describes the relationship between Georgian poetry and English World War I poetry ?

- A. Unlike World War I poetry, Georgian poetry was concerned primarily with the effects of urbanization and industrialization.
- B. Georgian poetry was modeled on World War I poetry and adapted its insights to postwar realities.
- C. Unlike World War I poetry, Georgian poetry was concerned primarily with women's rights.
- D. World War I poets like Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen adapted the Georgian poetic manner to write about modern subjects; most Georgian poets focused on individual experience and avoided writing about the upheavals of modernity.**

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