

M.A. PROGRAM IN ENGLISH COMPREHENSIVE EXAM PART II READING LIST  
Last updated in 2020

**BRITISH LITERATURE**

PRE-1800

**Medieval:**

Beowulf  
*The Dream of the Rood*  
Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*; “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”; “The Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale”  
*The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*  
*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*  
Marie de France (Lanval, Bisclavet)  
Malory, *The Death of Arthur*

**Early Modern:**

Shakespeare, *Macbeth* or *King Lear*; *As You Like It*  
Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* or *Dr. Faustus*; “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”  
Jonson, *Volpone*  
Spenser, *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*  
Sidney, *Defense of Poesy*  
Donne, “Holy Sonnets 10, 13, 18”; “The Flea”; “The Good Morrow”; “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”  
Middle and Rowley, *The Changeling*  
Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*  
Elizabeth I, “The Golden Speech” and “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury”

**Late 17th – 18th Century:**

Behn, *Oroonoko*  
Wycherly, *The Country Wife*  
Pope, *Rape of the Lock*  
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2  
Swift, *A Modest Proposal*  
Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*  
Johnson, *Rambler* no. 4 (“On Fiction”)  
Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*  
Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*

POST-1800

**Romantic – Early 19th Century:**

Blake, “The Tyger”; “The Chimney Sweeper”

Wordsworth, "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*; "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey,"  
Coleridge, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; "Kubla Khan"  
Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; "Ode to a Nightingale"; "To Solitude"  
Byron, *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*  
Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*  
Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry"; *Prometheus Unbound*

**Victorian:**

Carlyle, "Signs of the Times"  
Brontë, *Jane Eyre*  
Gaskell, *North and South* or *Cranford*  
Mill, *On Liberty*, Chapters 1 and 2  
Dickens, *Bleak House* or *Our Mutual Friend*  
Rossetti, "Goblin Market"  
Arnold, "Dover Beach"  
Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, Part 1  
Stoker, *Dracula*  
Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

**20th-Century Anglophone:**

Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* or *The Secret Agent*  
Joyce, *Ulysses* or *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; "Araby" and "The Dead" from *Dubliners*  
Mansfield, "The Garden Party"; "Daughters of the Late Colonel"; "Bliss"  
Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* or *To the Lighthouse*  
Yeats, "Easter, 1916"; "The Second Coming"; "Sailing to Byzantium"  
Forster, *A Passage to India*  
Lawrence, "Rockinghorse Winner"; "The Prussian Officer"; "The Odour of Crysanthemums"  
Tutuola, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*  
Beckett, *End Game*  
Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*  
Coetzee, *The Life and times of Michael K.*  
Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

**AMERICAN LITERATURE**

Many are selections from *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* Vol. A, B, C, D, & E (9<sup>th</sup> Ed.) R. Levine, Ed.

PRE-1800

*Winnebago Trickster Cycle*  
*Cabeza de Vaca, Relación*

John Smith, *General History of Virginia*  
Mary Rowlandson, *Sovereignty & Goodness of God*  
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*  
Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*

## POST-1800

### Early 19th Century:

William Apess, "Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man"  
Emerson, "The Poet"  
Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher"; "The Black Cat"  
Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"; "My Kinsman, Major Molineux"  
Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*  
Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"; *Benito Cereno*  
Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (sels)  
Thoreau, *Walden*, Ch. II  
Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"; "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed"  
Dickinson, #s 49, 67, 124, 199, 202, 216, 225, 241

### Late 19th Century:

Rebecca Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills* Mark Twain,  
*Huckleberry Finn* Chapter 1 & 2  
Jose Marti, "Our America"  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"  
W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings"  
Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories*  
Stephen Crane, *Maggie*  
Sui Sin Far, "Mrs. Spring Fragrance"  
Abraham Cahan, *Yekl*

### 20th Century:

Gertrude Stein, "The Gentle Lena"  
Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*  
Robert Frost, "Mowing"; "Mending Wall"  
Susan Glaspell, *Trifles*  
T.S. Eliot, "Prufrock"; "The Hollow Men"  
Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"; "Mother to Son"; "Weary Blues"  
William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"; "Barn Burning"  
Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, Ch. 16  
Zora Neale Hurston, "How It Feels to be Colored Me" Ralph  
Ellison, "Prologue" & Chapter 1 of *Invisible Man* Sylvia  
Plath, "Daddy"  
Adrienne Rich, "Diving into the Wreck"  
Joan Didion, "Slouching Toward Bethlehem"  
Luis Valdez, *Actos*  
Maxine Hong Kingston, "No Name Woman"

Louise Erdrich, "Fleur;" "Dear John Wayne"

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Tim O'Brien, "How to Tell a True War Story"

Lorna Dee Cervantes, "Visions of Mexico"

Junot Diaz, "How to Date a Brown Girl (Black Girl, White Girl, or Halfie)"