

You have 100 minutes for this examination. Please read the instructions carefully and answer the following questions in a well-written and well-supported manner to show your knowledge of and insight into English literature.

※注意：請於試卷內之「非選擇題作答區」作答，並應註明作答之題號。

Group A

Section I. Passage analysis (20%; 5% for each)

Choose **FOUR** from the following five passages to identify the title of the work and briefly analyze the text, focusing on the work's significance in English literary history. If you answer all the five questions, only the **FIRST FOUR** will be graded.

1.

“Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.”

2.

“They have seen my strength for themselves,
Have watched me rise from the darkness of war,
Dripping with my enemies' blood. I drove
Five great giants into chains, chased
All of that race from the earth. I swam
In the blackness of night, hunting monsters
Out of the ocean, and killing them one
By one; death was my errand and the fate
They had earned. Now Grendel and I are called
Together, and I've come.”

3.

“One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men, who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; and the understanding of the sex has been so hobbled by this specious homage, that the civilised women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect.”

4.

“...One who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time.
The mind is its own place, and in it self
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less then he
Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence”

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5.

"I could not but agree, that the laws of this kingdom relating to the *Struldbruggs*, were founded upon the strongest reasons, and such as any other country would be under the necessity of enacting in the like circumstances. Otherwise, as avarice is the necessary consequence of old age, those immortals would in time become proprietors of the whole nation, and engross the civil power; which, for want of abilities to manage, must end in the ruin of the public."

Section II. Answer ONE question (30%)

Answer ONE of the following questions. Be sure to support your points with specific textual and contextual information. If you answer both questions, only the FIRST one you answered will be graded.

1. As Oxford scholar Laura Ashe points out, "In the Middle Ages, the greatest knight was not simply the greatest warrior. He was also kind, courteous, generous and devoted to his lady: qualities that combined to produce perfect chivalry." Discuss the ways in which love and chivalry are portrayed in medieval English literature, with special references to texts such as *Sir Gawain and The Green Knight*, *Morte Darthur*, and *The Canterbury Tales*. (Choose TWO of the three texts for discussion.)

2. In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Stephen Greenblatt (i.e. general editor of the Norton Anthology of English Literature) argues that: "...self-fashioning derives its interest precisely from the fact that it functions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life. It invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one's own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one's control, the attempt to fashion other selves." How does this apply to Shakespeare and his plays? (Choose TWO of Shakespeare's plays for discussion.)

Group B

Section III. The following passages are all descriptions about contagious diseases. Please choose to analyze TWO out of the following passages and explain the work's significance in relation to the concerns of authors and the cultural politics of their time. (30%)

- a. "Nor was this by any new Medicine found out, or new Method of Cure discovered, or by any Experience in the Operation, which the Physicians or Surgeons had attain'd to; but it was evidently from the secret invisible Hand of him, that had at first sent this Disease as a Judgment upon us... the Disease was enervated, and its Malignity spent, and let it proceed from whencesoever it will, let the Philosophers search for Reasons in Nature to account for it by, and labour as much as they will to lessen the Debt they owe to their Maker; those Physicians, who had the least Share of Religion in them, were oblig'd to acknowledge that it was all supernatural, that it was extraordinary, and that no Account could be given of it." (Daniel Defoe. *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 1722)
- b. "Poor and rich were now equal, or rather the poor were the superior, since they entered on such tasks with alacrity and experience; while ignorance, inaptitude, and habits of repose, rendered them fatiguing to the luxurious, galling to the proud, disgusting to all whose minds, bent on intellectual improvement, held it their dearest privilege to be exempt from attending to mere animal wants." (Mary Shelley. *The Last Man*, 1824.)
- c. "Jo lives--that is to say, Jo has not yet died--in a ruinous place known to the like of him by the name of Tom-all-Alone's. It is a black, dilapidated street, avoided by all decent people, where the crazy houses were seized upon, when their decay was far advanced, by some bold vagrants who after establishing their own possession took to letting them out in lodgings. Now, these tumbling tenements contain, by night, a swarm of misery." (Charles Dickens. *Bleak House*, 1852)
- d. "Before the medical men of Eccleston had had time to meet together and consult, and compare the knowledge of the fever which they had severally gained, it had, like the blaze of a fire which had long smouldered, burst forth in many places at

once—not merely among the loose-living and vicious, but among the decently poor—nay, even among the well-to-do and respectable. And to add to the horror, like all similar pestilences, its course was most rapid at first, and was fatal in the great majority of cases—hopeless from the beginning. There was a cry, and then a deep silence, and then rose the long wail of the survivors.” (Elizabeth Gaskell. *Ruth*, 1853.)

- e. “Instead she sucked hard on her cigarette and said, in a voice far quieter than I’d ever heard her use: ‘Thing is, we’re a community, and we got each other’s back. You’ll be there for me, and I’ll be there for you, and we’ll all be there for each other, the whole building. Nothing to be afraid of—we’ll get through this, all of us, together.’

‘Yes, we will,’ I whispered, hardly audible, even to myself, and walked on, maintaining a six-foot distance, whether to conform with the new regulations or to avoid Beck biting me in some vulnerable spot I couldn’t tell.” (Zadie Smith. *Intimidation*, 2020.)

Section IV. Choose **ONE** out of the following passages. Write an essay in which you would apply the insights of the quotes to current studies of English Literature. Provide specific examples from specific texts to illustrate your point. (20%)

- a. “Firstly, we must widen our common literary world to include many more voices from beyond our comfort zones of the elite first-world cultures. We must search more energetically to discover the gems from what remain today unknown literary cultures, whether the writers live in faraway countries or within our own communities. Second, we must take great care not to set too narrowly or conservatively our definitions of what constitutes good literature. The next generation will come with all sorts of new, sometimes bewildering ways to tell important and wonderful stories. We must keep our minds open to them, especially regarding genre and form, so that we can nurture and celebrate the best of them. In a time of dangerously increasing division, we must listen. Good writing and good reading will break down barriers. We may even find a new idea, a great humane vision, around which to rally.” (Kazuo Ishiguro. Nobel Lecture in 2017)
- b. “I grew up in the world colonialism made, and I was taught to be ashamed of where we came from. My father, brought up in British India, used to say: we were told by the white master what a lavish favour they were doing us by colonising us. While they wouldn’t want to be colonised themselves, they were, in fact, civilising us – and more: bringing us education, democracy, trains!” (Hanif Kureishi. “Racism has been the grinding backdrop to my life. Is a different future now possible?” *The Guardian*, 2020.)
- c. “We must not be too hard on ourselves. If we were banished to another galaxy tomorrow, we would soon be fatally homesick for our brothers and sisters and all their flaws: somewhat co-operative, somewhat selfish, and very funny. But we will not rescue the earth from our own depredations until we understand ourselves a little more, even if we accept that we can never really change our natures. All boot rooms need good systems so that flawed creatures can use them well. Good science will serve us well, but only good rules will save the boot room. Leave nothing to idealism or outrage, or even good art - we know in our hearts that the very best art is entirely and splendidly useless.” (Ian McEwan. “Save the boot room, save the Earth.” *The Guardian* 2005.)
- d. “Why should businesspeople read fiction?”
“Nonfiction sells better than fiction these days. But one thing you learn as a history major is how contested events are. Facts are slippery. The truth is imperfect. Fiction recognizes that. There’s also another kind of truth—the truth of how we human beings relate to one other, to place, to ideas and belief systems—and you find that in a novel. As people have access to better translations, they can use literature to understand other parts of the world. If you see Afghanistan on the news, it’s explosions and people shouting. But if you read, say, *The Kite Runner*, you begin to understand the lived experience of an Afghan.” (Salmon Rushdie. “Life’s Work: An Interview with Salman Rushdie.” *Harvard Business Review* 2015.)