

Instructions: For Question 1, break your essay into three parts: a clear introductory passage, the main comparative analysis, and a conclusion. For Question 2, in one paragraph write a clear topic sentence followed by your rhetorical analysis of this passage.

1. Often poets work self-consciously in a literary tradition, conceiving themselves as having significant precursors whose presence becomes palpable in their work. Compose an essay that discusses the presence of poetic or literary influence and/or allusion in four works (two from the nineteenth- and two from the twentieth centuries). The four works could be poetry, fiction, or/and drama. Be specific with reference to precursors and their works and detail how the poets/novelists/dramatists you choose employ their literary inheritance. 80%
2. Analyze the ways in which the following poem uses poetic and rhetorical devices—including word choice, figures of speech, imagery, rhythm, theme, and other formal elements to shape its meaning. 20%

Passage to India

Singing my days,
Singing the great achievements of the present,
Singing the strong light works of engineers,
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven outvied,)
In the Old World the east the Suez canal,
The New by its mighty railroad span'd,
The seas inlaid with eloquent gentle wires;
Yet first to sound, and ever sound, the cry with thee O soul,
The Past! the Past! the Past!

The Past—the dark unfathom'd retrospect!
The teeming gulf—the sleepers and the shadows!
The past—the infinite greatness of the past!
For what is the present after all but a growth out of the past?
(As a projectile form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line, still keeps
on,
So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)