

PART I

9:00 A.M. TO 12:00 P.M.

Develop a thesis-driven comparative analysis in response to one of the following prompts.

1. Benjamin is pessimistic that the novelist can replace the storyteller. Based on the novels on this list, do you agree with Benjamin's critique? Work from a minimum of two *Short List* texts to support your position.
2. Many writers choose to interweave other forms of art within their fiction. Examples would include the visual images of the urn in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by John Keats or the painting of Gray in Oscar Wilde's "Portrait of Dorian Gray." Using two of the *Short List* works designated for this exam, identify the art within the work as well as the function and/or purpose of the author's use of art within art.
3. The dynamic work of literary criticism displaces and relocates the value of literary texts as artistic, material, cultural, and/or political artifacts. Do you consider certain critical approaches (e.g. feminist, Marxist, New Critical, historical) superior to others in articulating the full value of texts? Or, do you believe the relative worth of a critical approach is circumstantial? Work with a minimum of two *Short List* texts and two approaches to support your position.

2013 MA Exam Short List

- Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"; "Theses on the Philosophy of History"; "The Storyteller"; What is Epic Theater? From *Illuminations*
- Brontë, *Jane Eyre*
- Dante, *The Inferno*
- Dickinson, selected poems: consult the *Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume B, 8th edition* for representative selection (available online)
- Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
- Saro-Wiwa, *Sozaboy*
- Shakespeare, *King Lear*

EVALUATION CRITERIA—ESSAY I

The essay demonstrates the following:

- An identifiable thesis statement that proposes a nuanced idea in response to the prompt
- A well-reasoned and cohesive argument that works closely with at least two literary texts from the *MA Exam Short List*
- Interpretations of texts that demonstrate knowledge and understanding developed over time through close, critical study.
- The use of concrete textual evidence—quotes, paraphrases, summaries—in support of your thesis
- A Clear style, appropriately formal for academic discourse

Part II

1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Develop an explication of one of the three following texts.

1. F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Thank You for the Light"
2. Robert Frost, "Out, Out—"
3. Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?"

(Texts are attached.)

EVALUATION CRITERIA—ESSAY II

The essay demonstrates the following:

- Close attention to relationships among form, structure and meaning
- Close attention to specific parts of the work, and the literary devices (e.g. tropes and figurative language) that relate the parts to the whole
- The use of concrete textual evidence—quotes, paraphrases, summaries—in support of your interpretation
- A clear style, appropriately formal for academic discourse