



STUDY GUIDE FOR ENGLISH 200 DEPARTMENTAL EXAM

Members of WKU's English Department believe that taking and passing English 200: Introduction to Literature is the best way to ensure that students have acquired a good understanding of literature and have attained the necessary writing skills to provide a foundation for success in future coursework. However, we realize that some students may have already attained the skills and knowledge covered in English 200, so we have created a departmental exam to measure whether or not students have met the Colonnade learning outcomes (11-15) for Literary Studies (see <http://www.wku.edu/colonnade/goalsandoutcomes.php>).

In general terms, the test measures how well students read, interpret, analyze, and write about literature. Students need to be familiar with concepts covered in introductory literature courses and Modern Language Association (MLA) Documentation Style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/>). The test has four parts described below. Students must earn 58/70 total points in order to fulfill the English 200 (Colonnade F-AH) requirement.

Part I Interpreting Literature (30 Points)

Students will answer 30 multiple-choice questions related to drama, fiction, and poetry; and requiring knowledge of literary devices, the ability to identify the use of literary devices in literary texts, and the ability to interpret literature. Some questions will require students to read a passage and answer multiple questions about it.

Students should understand the following vocabulary and recognize the use of the elements/devices in literary texts:

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| 1. allegory | 17. closed form |
| 2. alliteration | 18. comedy |
| 3. allusion | 19. conceit |
| 4. antagonist | 20. conflict |
| 5. antihero | 21. connotation |
| 6. apostrophe | 22. consonance |
| 7. archetype | 23. couplet |
| 8. assonance | 24. denotation |
| 9. ballad | 25. <i>deus ex machina</i> |
| 10. blank verse | 26. diction |
| 11. caesura | 27. drama |
| 12. <i>carpe diem</i> | 28. dramatic irony |
| 13. catharsis | 29. dramatic monologue |
| 14. characterization (direct and indirect) | 30. elegy |
| 15. chorus | 31. end-stopped line |
| 16. climax | 32. enjambment |

33. epic
34. epiphany
35. falling action
36. fiction
37. figurative language
38. flashback
39. flat character
40. foil
41. foreshadowing
42. free indirect discourse
43. free verse
44. genre
45. *hubris*
46. hyperbole/exaggeration
47. iambic pentameter
48. imagery (different types)
49. imperfect rhyme/slant rhyme
50. *in medias res*
51. irony
52. literature
53. lyric
54. metaphor
55. meter
56. metonymy
57. monologue
58. motif
59. motivation
60. narrative poetry
61. narrator/persona/speaker
62. non-fiction
63. novel
64. octave
65. onomatopoeia
66. oxymoron
67. paradox
68. parody
69. personification
70. plot
71. poetry
72. point of view
73. prosody
74. protagonist
75. quatrain
76. refrain
77. rhyme
78. rising action
79. round character
80. satire
81. sestet
82. setting
83. short story
84. simile
85. soliloquy
86. sonnet (English/Elizabethan & Italian/Petrarchan)
87. stanza
88. stock character
89. style
90. symbol
91. synesthesia
92. synecdoche
93. syntax
94. theme
95. tone
96. tragedy
97. understatement
98. unities/ Classic unities
99. unreliable narrator
100. verisimilitude

Sample Questions

1. Plot refers to the
 - a) place the story is located
 - b) the main character of the story
 - c) the main idea of the story
 - d) the action of the story.

2. A lyric is a type of
- play
 - poem
 - essay
 - story.
3. Hubris refers to a character's
- excessive pride
 - large physique
 - primary trait
 - tone.

Read the poem by World War I poet Siegfried Sassoon and then answer the following five questions.

The Glory of Women (1917)

YOU love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
 Or wounded in a mentionable place.
 You worship decorations; you believe
 That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
 You make us shells. You listen with delight, 5
 By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
 You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
 And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed.
 You can't believe that British troops 'retire'
 When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run, 10
 Trampling the terrible corpses—blind with blood.
 O German mother dreaming by the fire,
 While you are knitting socks to send your son
 His face is trodden deeper in the mud.

4. In line 11, "blind with blood" is an example of
- metaphor
 - alliteration
 - symbolism
 - slant rhyme.
5. The poem is a good example of the literary device of *apostrophe*. Who does the poet apostrophize in the poem?
- women
 - soldiers
 - nature
 - irony

6. The tone of this poem would best be described as
- comical
 - sincere
 - ironic
 - reverent.
7. The best denotation of the word retire in line 9 is
- to give up employment
 - to retreat
 - to vanish
 - to go to sleep.
8. Sassoon fought in World War I for Great Britain, yet at the end of the poem, he references a German mother. His point is to show
- how all soldiers are harmed by war
 - how Germany is mostly responsible for the horrors of war
 - how Great Britain is mostly responsible for the war
 - how war affects German soldiers more than British soldiers.

Answers: D, B, A, B, A, C, B, B

Part II Evidence & Argument (10 points)

Students will answer 5 multiple-choice questions (worth 2 points each) about a brief excerpt of literary criticism and about documentation practices. They will identify types of evidence, the meaning of criticism, the validity of arguments, and documentation practices.

Students should understand the following concepts and be familiar with MLA Documentation Style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/>).

Writing Terms

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. analysis | 7. paraphrase |
| 2. annotation | 8. plagiarism |
| 3. argument | 9. primary source |
| 4. bibliography/works cited | 10. secondary source |
| 5. close reading | 11. signal phrases, citation, documentation |
| 6. explication | 12. thesis |
| | 13. topic sentences |

Sample Questions

Read the following excerpt from Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's book, *The Mad Woman in the Attic*, originally published in 1979. After you have finished, answer the questions that follow.

Dramatizations of imprisonment and escape are so all-pervasive in nineteenth-century literature by women that we believe they represent a uniquely female tradition in this period. Interestingly, though works in this tradition generally begin by using houses as primary symbols of female

imprisonment, they also use much of the other paraphernalia of “woman’s place” to enact their central symbolic drama of enclosure and escape. Ladylike veils and costumes, mirrors, paintings, statues, locked cabinets, drawers, trunks, strongboxes, and other domestic furnishing appear and reappear in female novels and poems throughout the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth to signify the woman writer’s sense that, as Emily Dickinson put it, her “life” has been “shaven and fitted to a frame,” a confinement she can only tolerate by believing that “the soul has moments of escape / When bursting all the doors / She dances like a bomb abroad.”

Significantly, too, the explosive violence of these “moments of escape” that women writers continually imagine for themselves returns us to the phenomenon of the mad double so many of these women have projected into their works. For it is, after all, through the violence of the double that the female author enacts her own raging desire to escape male houses and male texts, while at the same time it is through the double’s violence that this anxious author articulates for herself the costly destructiveness of anger repressed until it can no longer be contained.

1. In the passage above, Gilbert and Gubar support their argument primarily by citing which type of evidence?

- a) A primary source
- b) A secondary source
- c) A tertiary source
- d) All of the above

2. When quoting lines of poetry (as Gilbert and Gubar do above), forward slashes (/) are used to indicate which of the following:

- a) caesuras
- b) line breaks
- c) stanza breaks
- d) ellipses

3. Why do Gilbert and Gubar cite Emily Dickinson’s poem?

- a) To critique Dickinson’s poetry
- b) To advance a broader argument about Dickinson’s body of work
- c) To support a broader argument about women’s writing
- d) To rebut what other critics have written about Dickinson’s work

4. Which of the following best represents the argument Gilbert and Gubar are trying to make in this passage?

- a) that female characters were positively portrayed in most 19th-20th-century novels by women
- b) that the theme of confinement features prominently in much 19th-20th-century writing by women
- c) that 19th-20th-century female writers have tended to ignore issues facing women
- d) that novels by women always end with the heroine’s emancipation or escape

5. When Gilbert and Gubar list objects that recur in 19th and 20th century women’s writing (“Ladylike veils and costumes, mirrors, paintings, statues, locked cabinets, drawers, trunks, strongboxes...”) they imply such objects are best understood as

- a) metaphors
- b) allegories
- c) archetypes
- d) symbols.

Correct Answers: A, B, C, B, D

Part III Literature, History, Society, and Culture (10 points w/rubric)

Students will write a long paragraph on the relationship between a literary text and history, society, and/or culture. They will read a historical excerpt during the test and apply that document to support an interpretation of a literary text provided on the exam.

Faculty will use the following rubric to evaluate the prompt:

Topic

	writer has a clear topic sentence which frames the paragraph and indicates how the literary text reflects and or responds to its social, cultural, and/or historical context.
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Development/Analysis

	writer uses specific evidence from the historical text (quotations) to explain a social, cultural, and/or cultural concept
	writer uses specific evidence from the literary text (quotations) to explain how it reflects or responds to the social, cultural, and/or cultural concept.
	writer uses reason effectively to explain the connection between the historical and literary text

Sentence Structure/Mechanics/Diction

	writer uses a variety of effective, grammatically correct sentences; uses correct MLA documentation; and integrates quotations effectively with signal phrases
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Excellent= fully meets the criterion (2 points)

Satisfactory=Adequately meets the criterion (1 point)

Unsatisfactory=Inadequately meets the criterion (0 points)

Sample Question:

Read the following extract from the *Autobiography* of the English philosopher John Stuart Mill (1873). Then read the following poem, “The Tables Turned,” by William Wordsworth (1798). Write a long paragraph explaining how the poem addresses the cultural and social concerns expressed in Mill’s *Autobiography*.

From the winter of 1821, when I first read Bentham, and especially from the commencement of the *Westminster Review*, I had what might truly be called an object in life; to be a reformer of the world. My conception of my own happiness was entirely identified with this object. The personal sympathies I wished for were those of fellow labourers in this enterprise. I endeavoured to pick up as many flowers as I could by the way; but as a serious and permanent personal satisfaction to rest upon, my whole reliance was placed on this; and I was accustomed to felicitate myself on the certainty of a happy life which I enjoyed, through placing my happiness in something durable and distant, in which some progress might be always making, while it could never be exhausted by complete attainment. This did very well for several years, during which the general improvement going on in the world and the idea of myself as engaged with others in struggling to promote it, seemed enough to fill up an interesting and animated existence. But the time came when I awakened from this as from a dream. It was in the autumn of 1826. I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times, becomes insipid or indifferent. . . . In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.

At first I hoped that the cloud would pass away of itself; but it did not. A night's sleep, the sovereign remedy for the smaller vexations of life, had no effect on it. I awoke to a renewed consciousness of the woful fact. I carried it with me into all companies, into all occupations. Hardly anything had power to cause me even a few minutes' oblivion of it. For some months the cloud seemed to grow thicker and thicker. . . .

I now saw . . . that the habit of analysis has a tendency to wear away the feelings: as indeed it has, when no other mental habit is cultivated, and the analysing spirit remains without its natural complements and correctives. The very excellence of analysis (I argued) is that it tends to weaken and undermine whatever is the result of prejudice; that it enables us mentally to separate ideas which have only casually clung together: and no associations whatever could ultimately resist this dissolving force, were it not that we owe to analysis our clearest knowledge of the permanent sequences in nature; the real connexions between Things, not dependent on our will and feelings; natural laws, by virtue of which, in many cases, one thing is inseparable from another in fact; which laws, in proportion as they are clearly perceived and imaginatively realized, cause our ideas of things which are always joined together in Nature, to cohere more and more closely in our thoughts. Analytic habits may thus even strengthen the associations between causes and effects, means and ends, but tend altogether to weaken those which are, to speak familiarly, a *mere* matter of feeling. . . .

I felt that the flaw in my life, must be a flaw in life itself; that the question was, whether, if the reformers of society and government could succeed in their objects, and every person in the community were free and in a state of physical comfort, the pleasures of life, being no longer

kept up by struggle and privation, would cease to be pleasures. And I felt that unless I could see my way to some better hope than this for human happiness in general, my dejection must continue; but that if I could see such an outlet, I should then look on the world with pleasure; content, as far as I was myself concerned, with any fair share of the general lot.

This state of my thoughts and feelings made the fact of my reading Wordsworth for the first time (in the autumn of 1828), an important event of my life. I took up the collection of his poems from curiosity, with no expectation of mental relief from it, though I had before resorted to poetry with that hope. These poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery; to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life, but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. In this power of rural beauty over me, there was a foundation laid for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry. . . . What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connection with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence. There have certainly been, even in our own age, greater poets than Wordsworth; but poetry of deeper and loftier feeling could not have done for me at that time what his did. I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this, not only without turning away from, but with a greatly increased interest in, the common feelings and common destiny of human beings. . . . I found that he too had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought for compensation, and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it. The result was that I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it.

The Tables Turned
By William Wordsworth

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
 Or surely you'll grow double:
 Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
 Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun above the mountain's head,
 A freshening lustre mellow
 Through all the long green fields has spread,
 His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
 Come, hear the woodland linnet,
 How sweet his music! on my life,
 There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
 He, too, is no mean preacher:
 Come forth into the light of things,
 Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
 Our minds and hearts to bless—
 Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
 Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man,
 Of moral evil and of good,
 Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
 Our meddling intellect
 Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
 We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
 Close up those barren leaves;
 Come forth, and bring with you a heart
 That watches and receives.

Part IV Analysis Essay (Pass/Fail with rubric—20 points)

Students will write an organized, well-developed, thesis-driven essay arguing for how the writer uses specific literary devices to develop a theme in a literary text. Students will write about either a short play, poem, or story provided on the exam. Essays will be graded holistically (pass/fail) using the following rubric:

Topic

	writer has an introduction introducing a suitable theme and leading readers toward the thesis
	writer discusses literary devices as part of the thesis
	writer has a clear, arguable thesis

Development/Analysis

	writer uses specific evidence from the text (quotations) to argue for the thesis
	writer makes logical assumptions about the text and has no factual errors
	writer uses reason effectively to argue for the interpretation
	writer reinforces the thesis in each section

Organization

	writer divides the essay into paragraphs with topic sentences and uses effective transitions to move between points
	writer's ordering is purposeful

Sentence Structure/Mechanics/Diction

	writer uses a variety of effective, grammatically correct sentences
	writer uses precise diction
	writer uses correct MLA documentation and integrates quotations effectively with signal phrases

Overall Impression--

	the writer's purpose is to explain how an author uses literary devices to develop a theme
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Base prompt: Write an organized, well-developed, thesis-driven essay arguing for how the writer uses specific literary devices to develop a theme in the literary work.

The Story of An Hour**Kate Chopin**

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "Free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.

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GENERAL RESOURCES

- Writingaboutliterature.com is a useful website on how to write essays about literature.
- Purdue University's Online Writing Center offers helpful information about MLA documentation: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/>
- Murfin & Ray's *Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* is an excellent book about literary devices and concepts.
- There are a number of helpful web sites that explain literary devices and concepts. Most basic introduction to literature textbooks provide helpful glossaries and explanations of how to interpret and write about literature.