Reading List for the M.A. Comprehensive and Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations

The following list provides an overview of representative works in different genres from the beginnings of literature in English to the present. The list is intended to supplement students’ coursework. Students taking the exam are expected to demonstrate their knowledge of major movements in literary history. Students may draw from their knowledge beyond the works represented on the list; however, they are expected to read all items on the list. All readings designated as “selected” passages refer to the selections in either the Norton Anthology of English Literature, 8th ed., Major Authors Edition, vols. A-B, 2006, ISBN 0-393-92830-6 and 0-393-92830-4; or the Norton Anthology of American Literature, 7th ed., vols. A-E, ISBN 0-393-92739-3, 0-393-92740-7, 0-393-92741-5, 0-393-92742-3, 0-393-92743-1.

Beowulf (trans. Seamus Heaney or Roy Luizza)

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (trans. Marie Boroff)


Everyman

The Second Shepherds’ Play

Marie de France, Lanval and “Nightingale”

Thomas More, Utopia

Sir Philip Sidney, Defense of Poesy and selected sonnets

Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, Books I and III

Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: selected lyrics

Queen Elizabeth, poems and selected speeches

Christopher Marlowe, Hero and Leander and Dr. Faustus

William Shakespeare, 1 Henry IV, Twelfth Night, Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, The Tempest and selected sonnets

John Donne, selected poems and prose

Ben Jonson, Volpone, “To Penhurst,” and “On My First Son”

Aemilia Lanyer, selected poems

George Herbert, Robert Herrick, Andrew Marvell, and Katherine Philips: selected lyrics
Anne Bradstreet, selected poems
John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (books 1, 2, 4, 9), “Lycidas,” *Areopagitica*
John Dryden, *Mac Flecknoe* and selected poems
Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism* and *The Rape of the Lock*
Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels* (book 4)
Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer*
Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
Wordsworth and Coleridge, Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*
Washington Irving, selected sketches
Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*
Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Elizabeth B. Browning, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, both Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti: selected poems
Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*
Matthew Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time”
Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*
Emily Dickinson, selected poems
Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*
George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*
Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and selected poems

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

Stephen Crane, *The Open Boat* and selected poems

Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady* and “The Art of Fiction”

Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*

Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

W.B. Yeats, selected poems

D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*


Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*

Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, H.D., and Langston Hughes: selected poems

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

James Baldwin, selected essays and "Sonny's Blues"


Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*
Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Sylvia Plath, Adrienne Rich, and Gwendolyn Brooks: selected poems

Eugene O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*

Harold Pinter, *The Homecoming*

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

Edward Albee, *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Adrienne Kennedy, *Funnyhouse of a Negro*

John Ashbery, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*

Raymond Carver, *What We Talk about When We Talk about Love*

Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman*

Salman Rushdie, “The Prophet’s Hair”

August Wilson, *Fences*

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Derek Walcott, selected poems

Tony Kushner, *Angels in America* (parts 1 and 2)

Naomi Wallace, *One Flea Spare*