MA / PhD ENTRANCE EXAM STUDY GUIDE

This is a study guide for our MA and PhD entrance exams. The candidate is expected to have a good grasp of the terms below and should be able to synthesize information while providing examples.

Note: This is not an all-inclusive list, but a representation of the material that is likely to appear on the exam.

AMERICAN HISTORY / CULTURAL CONCEPTS

Pilgrims and Puritans

Monroe Doctrine / Roosevelt Corollary

Puritan Work Ethic

Frontier Thesis

Quakers

Rugged Individualism

Laissez-Faire Capitalism / Liberalism

Ellis Island

Individualism

Open Door Policy

Pragmatism

Yellow Journalism

American Exceptionalism

Spanish American War

American Volunteerism

Muckraking

WASP

Fourteen Points

American Revolutionary War

Darwinism vs. Creationism

The Declaration of Independence

New Deal

First Amendment Rights

Social Security Act

Bill of Rights

Truman Doctrine / Marshall Plan

Separation of Powers / Checks and Balances

McCarthyism

The Great Awakenings

Cold War / Berlin Wall

Republicanism

Civil Rights Movement

Trail of Tears

Brown v. Board of Education

Manifest Destiny

The Vietnam War

Mexican American War

Labor Movement

Seneca Falls Convention

Affirmative Action

Woman Suffrage Movement

Great Society

Abolitionism

Immigration Reform

The Civil War

Cultural Imperialism / Internationalism

Emancipation Proclamation

Watergate

Reconstruction Era

Evangelical Protestantism

U. S. Federalism

Bible Belt

Little Big Horn / Wounded Knee

9/11
LITERARY CRITICISM / MOVEMENTS

LITERARY CRITICISM

New Criticism
Reader Response
Feminist Criticism
Marxist Criticism
Psychoanalytic Criticism
Structuralism and Semiotics
Poststructuralism
New Historicism/Cultural Materialism
Gender Studies and Queer Theory
Post-Colonial Theories
Ecocriticism

MOVEMENTS

EXAMPLES OF AUTHORS

Puritan Legacy
John Winthrop, Roger Williams, Anne Bradstreet,
Mary Rowlandson, Cotton Mather

Age of Reason / Enlightenment
Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson

Romanticism / Transcendentalism
Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe,
Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry
David Thoreau, Walt Whitman

The Gilded Age
Henry Adams, Edward Bellamy, Upton Sinclair
Realism / Naturalism  Henry James, W. D. Howells, Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Edith Warton, Jack London

Modernism  Robert Frost, T. S. Elliot, Ezra Pound, H.D., Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, William Faulkner

The Jazz Age / The Lost Generation  Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald

Harlem Renaissance  Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, W.E.B. DuBois, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston

Beat Generation  Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady, Gary Snyder, Gregory Corso, William S. Burroughs

Postmodernism  John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Paul Auster, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, Robert Coover

SHORT FICTION

The candidate should be familiar with at least one story from each author.

Washington Irving  “Rip Van Winkle” (1819)
“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1820)

Nathaniel Hawthorne  “The Minister’s Black Veil” (1832)
“My Kinsman, Major Molineux” (1832)
“Young Goodman Brown” (1835)
“The Birth-Mark” (1843)
“Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844)
Edgar Allan Poe
“Ligeia” (1838)
“The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839)
“The Purloined Letter” (1844)
“The Cask of Amontillado” (1846)
“The Masque of the Red Death” (1850)
“The Tell-Tale Heart” (1850)

Herman Melville
“Bartleby, the Scrivener” (1853)
“Benito Cereno” (1855)

Mark Twain
“The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” (1865)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman
“The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)

Kate Chopin
“Desireé’s Baby” (1893)
“The Story of an Hour” (1894)

Stephen Crane
“The Open Boat” (1897)
“The Blue Hotel” (1898)

O. Henry
“The Gift of the Magi” (1905)

Jack London
“To Build a Fire” (1908)

Zitkala-Sa
“The School Days of an Indian Girl” (1921)

Ernest Hemingway
“Hills Like White Elephants” (1927)
“A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” (1933)
“The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” (1936)

William Faulkner
“A Rose For Emily” (1930)
“Dry September” (1931)
“Barn Burning” (1939)
Katherine Anne Porter  
“Flowering Judas” (1930)  
“The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” (1930)

John Steinbeck  
“The Chrysanthemums” (1937)

Eudora Welty  
“Why I Live at the P.O.” (1941)  
“A Worn Path” (1941)

J. D. Salinger  
“A Perfect Day for Bananafish” (1948)  
“Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters” (1955)  
“Seymour: An Introduction” (1959)

Carson McCullers  
The Ballad of the Sad Café (1951)

Flannery O’Connor  
“A Good Man Is Hard to Find” (1955)  
“Everything That Rises Must Converge” (1965)

Tillie Olsen  
“I Stand Here Ironing” (1961)

John Cheever  
“The Swimmer” (1964)

Tony Cade Bambara  
“The Hammer Man” (1966)  
“The Lesson” (1972)

Joyce Carol Oates  
“How I Contemplated the World From the Detroit House of Correction and Began My Life Over Again” (1969)

John Barth  
“Lost in the Funhouse” (1968)

Alice Walker  
“Everyday Use” (1973)

Donald Barthelme  
“The School” (1974)
Raymond Carver  “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” (1981)
“Cathedral” (1983)


Jhumpa Lahiri  “Interpreter of Maladies” (1999)

**FICTION**

The candidate should be familiar with the authors below and their suggested works.

James Fenimore Cooper  *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)

Nathaniel Hawthorne  *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)
*The Blithedale Romance* (1852)

Herman Melville  *Moby Dick* (1851)
*Billy Budd* (1924)

Henry James  *Daisy Miller: A Study* (1878)
*An International Episode* (1878)
*The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)

Mark Twain  *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)

Stephen Crane  *Maggie, a Girl of the Streets* (1893)
*Red Badge of Courage* (1895)

Kate Chopin  *The Awakening* (1899)
Theodore Dreiser  
*Sister Carrie* (1900)

Willa Cather  
*My Ántonia* (1918)

Sherwood Anderson  
*Winesburg, Ohio* (1919)

F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*This Side of Paradise* (1920)
*The Great Gatsby* (1925)

Ernest Hemingway  
*The Sun Also Rises* (1926)
*A Farewell to Arms* (1929)
*For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)

William Faulkner  
*The Sound and the Fury* (1929)
*As I Lay Dying* (1930)
*Absalom, Absalom* (1936)

John Steinbeck  
*Of Mice and Men* (1937)
*Grapes of Wrath* (1939)

Zora Neale Hurston  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)

J. D. Salinger  
*Catcher in the Rye* (1951)

Truman Capote  
*The Grass Harp* (1951)
*Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1958)
*In Cold Blood* (1966)

Ralph Ellison  
*Invisible Man* (1952)

Philip Roth  
*Goodbye, Columbus* (1959)

Harper Lee  
*To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)
Thomas Pynchon
- V. (1961)
- The Crying of Lot 49 (1965)
- Vineland (1990)

Ken Kesey
- One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1962)

Kurt Vonnegut
- Cat’s Cradle (1963)
- Slaughterhouse-Five (1969)

Toni Morrison
- The Bluest Eye (1970)
- Sula (1973)
- Beloved (1987)
- Jazz (1992)
- Paradise (1997)

Maxine Hong Kingston
- The Woman Warrior (1976)
- China Men (1980)

Paul Auster
- Leviathan (1992)

Alice Walker
- The Color Purple (1982)

Don DeLillo
- The Names (1982)
- White Noise (1985)
- Libra (1988)

Sandra Cisneros
- The House on Mango Street (1984)

Louise Erdrich
- Tales of Burning Love (1996)
Amy Tan  
*The Bonesetter’s Daughter* (2001)

**AMERICAN POETRY**

**Major Movements / Influences:**

**Puritanism and Colonial Era**

Examples of Poets:
- Anne Bradstreet, Edward Taylor, Philip Freneau, Phillis Wheatley

**Fireside Poets / Genteel Poetry**

Examples of Poets:

**Romanticism / Transcendentalism**

Examples of Poets:
- Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau

**Early Modernism**

Examples of Poets:
- Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson

**Chicago / Black / Harlem Renaissance**

Examples of Poets:
- Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay

**Modernism / Imagism / Vorticism**

Examples of Poets:
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary Movement</th>
<th>Representative Poets</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formalism / New Criticism</strong></td>
<td>T. S. Elliot, John Crow Ransom, Richard Wilbur</td>
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<td><strong>Confessional Poetry</strong></td>
<td>Robert Lowell, W. D. Snodgrass, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, John Berryman</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beat Poetry</strong></td>
<td>Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso, Gary Snyder, Diane Di Prima, Anne Waldman</td>
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<td><strong>Black Mountain School</strong></td>
<td>Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Joel Oppenheimer, Denise Levertov</td>
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<td><strong>New York School</strong></td>
<td>Frank O’Hara, John Ashbery, James Schulyer, Kenneth Koch, Barbara Guest</td>
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<td><strong>Black Arts Movement</strong></td>
<td>Amiri Baraka, Gwendolyn Brooks, Mari Evans, Nikki Giovanni, Lorraine Hansberry, Adrienne Kennedy, Sonia Sanchez, Ntozake Shange</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Poetry</strong></td>
<td>Charles Bernstein, Michael Palmer, Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, Susan Howe, Rae Armantrout</td>
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AMERICAN DRAMA

1) The candidate should have read one example of:

**Greek Tragedy**
Aeschylus *Agamemnon*
Sophocles *Antigone, Oedipus Rex*

**Greek Comedy**
Aristophanes *Lysistrata*

**Morality Play**
*Everyman* (1510)

**Shakespearian Tragedy**
*Romeo and Juliet* (1597), *Macbeth* (1606), *Hamlet* (1609)

**Comedy of Manners**
Royall Tyler *The Contrast* (1787)
Oscar Wilde *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)

**Melodrama**
Harriet Beecher Stowe *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)
Augustin Daly *Under the Gaslight* (1867)

2) The candidate should know the basic tenets of the following literary movements in drama and should have read/seen one example from each movement:

**Realism**
Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov

**Expressionism**
August Strindberg, Elmer Rice

**Antonin Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty**
Bertolt Brecht’s Epic Theater

The Theatre of the Absurd

Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Harold Pinter, Jean Genet

3) The candidate is expected to have read at least one play from the following major American playwrights:

Susan Glaspell

*Trifles* (1916)

Eugene O’Neill


Lillian Hellman

*The Children’s Hour* (1934), *The Little Foxes* (1939)

Tennessee Williams


Arthur Miller

*Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible* (1953)

Edward Albee


Everett Leroi Jones / Amiri Baraka

*Dutchman* (1964)

Sam Shepard


4) The Ph.D. candidate should also be familiar with the following American playwrights and should have read at least one play by each.

Maria Irene Fornes
Megan Terry
John Guare
Marsha Norman
Luis Valdez
Cherrie Moraga
David Henry Hwang
August Wilson
Ntozake Shange
Velina Hasu Houston
Wendy Wasserstein