

Question Bank

Paper 1: Indian Classical Literature

- Q1. Comment on the concept of Rasa in Indian Drama.
- Q2. Discuss the significance of the depiction of nature in the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam*.
- Q3. In Kalidasa's *Abhijnanashakuntalam* the curse acts as an impediment to the action and the ring as a token of recognition solves the problem. Discuss.
- Q4. Comment on the question posed by Draupadi after the dice game.
- Q5. Discuss the role of Vidur in *The Dicing* and *The Sequel to The Dicing*.
- Q6. Briefly define the concept of 'Dharma'.
- Q7. Briefly discuss the transformation of Samvahaka into a Buddhist monk in *The Little Clay Cart*.
- Q8. "Sir...deposits are entrusted to persons, not houses." Evaluate the character of Charudatta in light of this remark.
- Q9. Critically discuss the concept of chastity and power in *Cilappatikaram*.
- Q10. "Rejoicing over what the Brahmin Matalan had said, the King offered grants to the temple of the immortal pattini." Discuss the deification of Kannaki as a strategy to legitimise the institution of kingship in *Cilappatikaram*.

Paper 2: European Classical Literature

1. Oedipus calls himself 'abomination' for killing his father and marrying his mother. If he was aware of neither, why does he call himself evil? Is a man responsible for the evil of his actions if he is truly unaware that they are evil? Explain Oedipus's ancient Greek thinking and your own.
2. With whom does 'I' of the Chorus identify as it vows to keep an open mind about Oedipus until there is 'certain proof' of his guilt? Also explain its significance as a technical structure of drama?
3. Tiresias replies that he is beholden to no one but Apollo, the 'higher authority' who the Greeks thought was God. This allows him to speak the painful truth to Oedipus. Explain

the hierarchy visibilized in the then Greek society, as against Plato's proclamation of a democratic structure.

4. What is 'tragedy' according to Aristotle? How is it compared to 'epic' and 'comedy'?
5. CHORUS"

O the generations – adding the total
Of all your lives I find they come to nothing...
Does there exist, is there a man on Earth
Who seizes more joy than just a dream, a vision?
And the vision no sooner dawns than dies
Blazing into oblivion.

Critically comment on the contradiction between prophecy (foretold future) and rationality (free human will) in the context of Sophocles's 'Oedipus the King.'

Paper 4: British poetry and Drama: 14th-17th centuries

1. 'The Wife of Bath' is an engagingly and even vibrantly 'liberative' figure of her time, but the tendencies she embodies are not blemish free and unproblematic. Comment.
2. What are Alisoun's motives for attacking Church and what methods does she employ to do so? Answer with reference to *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*.
3. How successful, in your view, is *The Wife of Bath* an attack on anti- women attitude in her Prologue? To what extent do you think that Chaucer undermined her case by allowing her to reveal deceitful and violent behavior?
4. Explain how Chaucer's portrayal of the Wife supports or refutes the long tradition of misogynistic and anti-feminist literature that presents women as lustful and morally corrupt.
5. *Macbeth* is a play about crime and punishment. Do you agree? Give a reasoned answer.
6. Discuss Dr. Faustus as a text which embodies the contradiction its age.
7. Write a short note on role of Mephostophilis in Faustus's damnation.
8. Comment on the concept of hell and heaven in Dr. Faustus.
9. Disguises are central to the plot of Twelfth Night. Discuss
10. "Doublings and Inversions are the main sources of humour in Twelfth Night." Explain with examples.

Paper 5: American Literature

1. How does Morrison use the technique of 'Flash Back' to bring out the history and experience of slavery? Elucidate.
2. Belief in supernatural is an integral part of the narrative in *Beloved*. Respond to the supernatural elements used by Morrison in the novel.
3. Analyse and evaluate *Beloved* as neo-slave narrative?
4. *Beloved* is rich in symbolism. Bring out some prominent symbols and analyse them in relation to the text.
5. What according to you does Morrison suggest by asking the readers not to pass on this story. Explain
6. Comment on the historical elements in *Beloved*.
7. *Beloved* as a novel can be seen as a puzzle and it is reader's task to fit the pieces together. What is your response to such narrative strategy?
8. A major aspect of *Beloved* is the role of memory its power ,importance and limitations. How does Sethe's recollection of Sweet Home develop the idea of power and complexity in the novel?
9. What is Transcendentalism ? Explain in relation to the text prescribed in your syllabus.
10. Write a note on Black Movement. How do you think Dauglas' Autobiography is significant in the movement?
11. What is Expressionism? Write a note on American Experimental Drama with reference to *The Glass Menagerie*.
12. Establish the significance of the title *The Glass Menagerie*. Why it has been called a "plastic play"?
13. Evaluate TGM as a "memory play".

Paper 6: Popular Literature

1. What do you understand by the term 'Popular literature'? Define its categories as per the syllabus.
2. In what way does chess in *Through the Looking Glass* suggest a deterministic conception of life?
3. It's a great huge game of chess that's being played—all over the world—if this is the world at all, you know. Explain with relevance to the text, *Through the Looking Glass*.

4. How does the text evolve with grammar and logic? Explain with reference to the text, *Through the Looking Glass*.
5. Almost everyone in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* has something to hide. What does the novel say about deceit by having so many “guilty” characters?
6. Although the novel contains murder, blackmail, drug abuse, and suicide, there is nevertheless lightness to its tone. How does Christie achieve this lightness, and what purpose does it serve?
7. How does Christie challenge or subvert the typical mystery format with *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*? In what ways does the novel diverge from the expected?
8. Discuss about the traditional art form discussed in the text, *Bhimyana*.
9. *Funny Boy* breaks boundaries in its telling of the homosexuality of the young protagonist, Arjie.
10. How does Arjie come to terms with his love for Shehan and his understanding of his homosexual identity? How does this change Arjie socially, specifically in relation to figures of authority?

Paper 7: British Poetry and Drama 17th and 18th century

Q1. Bosola in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* is a complex and intricate character and remains so till the end. Discuss.

Q2. *The Duchess of Malfi* is filled with animal imagery and disease imagery. Explain the significance of these images in terms of Webster's skill in portraying characters.

Q3. The social class of the women in *The Rover* affects the amount of sexual liberty they are allowed in the way they treat men. Elaborate.

Q4. Critically comment on how *The Rape of the Lock* satirises the displaced values of a world that sets more stock on appearances than realities.

Q5. Comment on the ‘dramatic elements in *Paradise Lost* with special reference to Book IX.

Paper 8: British Literature 18th century

Q1. Swift uses Lemuel Gulliver as both instrument and target of his satire in Gulliver's Travels. Discuss with specific references to ways in which satire operates in the text.

Q2. Gulliver's Travels is an amalgamation of different genres: travelogue, parody, philosophical treatise, fantasy, adventure, allegory, science fiction. What, in terms of literary form, holds the work together despite such generic diversity, and in what way does Swift employ this diversity in the service of his satiric objectives.

Q3. Part 3 of Gulliver's Travels has often been read as disjointed from the rest of the book. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons tracing continuities and discontinuities in terms of structure and themes.

Q4. Discuss Samuel Johnson's London as a topical satire.

Q5. Discuss the title of the play The Way Of the World in relation to the social problems of Restoration society.

Paper 9: British Romantic Literature

Q1. Give a nuanced analysis of the symbols, themes and concerns in the poems of William Blake.

Q2. 'Dejection: An Ode' and 'The Immortality Ode' are a pessimistic lament for the loss of imaginative potential and the visionary gleam in nature. Would you agree? Give a reasoned answer.

Q3. The odes of Keats can be read as "an investigation of the imagination's ability to cope with time and change." Discuss.

Q4. Examine Frankenstein as a critique of the age in which it was written.

Q5. Frankenstein responds to "a nexus of ideas about the relationship between the individual and society." Give a detailed analysis of the novel in the light of this remark.

Q6. One of the central concerns of Blake's poems is the plight of the child and the conditions of childhood. Elucidate.

Q7. Blake's 'Songs of Innocence and Experience' express a complex vision in deceptively simple language. Comment.

Q8. 'Tintern Abbey' is a poem that concerns itself with "the still sad music of humanity". Elucidate.

Q9. Keats's poetry is sensuous rather than visionary. Discuss.

Q10. 'To Autumn' is the most complete expression of Keats's ideas of poetry. Discuss.

Paper 12- British Literature: the Early Twentieth Century

1. Write short notes on:
 - a. Kurtz.
 - b. Use of binary oppositions in the *Heart of Darkness*.
 - c. Big Ben.
 - d. Goddesses of Proportion and Conversion.
 - e. Light and Darkness in the *Heart of Darknes*.
 - f. White man's burden.
2. Autobiographical elements in *Sons and Lovers*.
3. *Sons and Lovers* as a modern novel.
4. Narrative technique in *Sons and Lovers*.
5. Psychoanalytical technique in *Sons and Lovers*.
6. Stream of Consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway*.
7. Use of myth in the poetry of TS Eliot.
8. Role of women in the life of Paul.
9. Depiction of women in *Mrs Dalloway*.
10. Epigraphs to *The Hollow Men*.
11. Use of symbols in TS Eliot.

Paper 12: British Literature: The Early 20th Century – Modernism

1. Write short notes on any one of the following:
 - (i) The treatment of Europeans in Heart of Darkness

- (ii) The Intended
 - (iii) Kurtz's African Mistress
2. The conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Morel is in effect a conflict of two classes. Discuss.
 3. Kate Millet believed that Lawrence subordinates all the women in *Sons and Lovers* to Paul's needs. Do you agree? Give a reasoned answer.
 4. Discuss Freud's theory of 'The Oedipus Complex' relating it to one of the novels prescribed in your course.
 5. Comment on the use of the 'Stream of Consciousness' technique in early twentieth century novel.
 6. Write a critical note on any one of the following:
 - (i) To what extent does Marlow's Congo experience change him? Write a reasoned answer.
 - (ii) Symbolism in *Heart of Darkness*
 7. Write a critical note on any one of the following:
 - (i) Marlow
 - (ii) The harlequin
 8. Discuss the 'stream of consciousness' as a modernist technique for exploring the inner life of fictional characters.
 9. Write a note on the depiction of the 'New Woman' in the fiction of the early twentieth century.
 10. "The central theme of *Sons and Lovers* is the crippling effects of a mother's love on the emotional development of her sons." Comment.

Paper 13: Modern European Drama

1. Discuss how theatre can plead for social change with reference to the any of a play that you have studied.
2. Realism, Symbolism and Ritualism are Ibsen's main dramatic element in *Ghosts* – Explain
3. Analyse Ibsen's portrayal of Mrs. Alving's character from a feminist perspective.

4. To what extent does ghostly past dictate the present action in *Ghosts*? Elaborate
5. Discuss the significance of the title *Ghosts*.
6. “Well, you too shall receive a helping hand for your seamen's home that you can rely upon” reflect on Pastor Manders in the light of this statement.
7. Would it be correct to say that absurd elements in the play *Rhinoceros* dilute the political agenda? Give reasoned answer
8. Establish Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* as an avant-garde drama.
9. Discuss the significance of the alienation effect in Brecht's theatre with reference to *The Good Person of Szechwan*.
10. Write a short note on the Epic Theatre.

Paper 14: Postcolonial Literature

1. How does Marquez build the suspense about the fate of Santiago Nasar in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*? Does it matter that you know what has happened from the beginning? Why or why not?
2. Discuss how violence and brutality are shown to be intrinsic parts of the life of the town and its culture in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*?
3. Neruda's “Discoverers of Chile” and Walcott's “The Sea is History” share a common pain arising out of the recollection of the past in an attempt to discover an identity. Discuss.
4. Atwood speaks “simultaneously from a private and cultural or civic consciousness.” Discuss the validity of this statement, analysing the poems you have read.
5. Discuss briefly the theme of up-rootedness in Walcott's poetry.
6. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe presents the colonial experience without romanticizing it. Discuss.
7. If Mother is Supreme, why is there so much abuse of women in *Things Fall Apart*? Discuss the gender politics of the novel.
8. How is the white man represented in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*?

9. Clotilde Armenta tells the narrator: “I realized just how alone we women are in the world.” In the light of this comment discuss the position of women in Marquez’s *Chronicle of a Death foretold*.
10. One of the things Marquez’s *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* gives us is “a portrait of a town and its collective psyche.” Discuss some of the aspects of this community and its psyche.

DCE papers:

1. Modern Indian Writing in English Translation

- Q1. Is Krishna as depicted in “Andha Yug” a warmonger or a peacemaker? (Justify your stand with illustrations from the text).
- Q2. Discuss in brief the context around which the play “Andha Yug” by Dharamvir Bharati revolves.
- Q3. To what extent, in your opinion, does the title “Andha Yug” represent/misrepresent the epic story underneath it?
- Q4. Discuss in brief Gandhari’s character in “Andha Yug”.
- Q.5 “Thinking about God was unavoidable in times of atrocities”, says Martin Buber — a Jewish philosopher. How far do you agree/disagree with the above statement and why? (Discuss from the appropriate play prescribed in your course).
- Q.6 How seriously/casually do you view the death of Krishna in the play, “Andha Yug”?
- Q.7. “We did not violate honour because we did not have any”. Explain with reference to the context.
- Q.8 My only dharma is: ‘kill, kill, kill and kill again!’” Explain with reference to the context.
- Q.9 Sanjaya recalls Vyasa’s curse, “You will survive disasters, floods, revolutions and wars of annihilation so that you can tell the truth.” Discuss the depiction of Sanjaya in the play, “Andha Yug” in the light of the above statement.
- Q.10. Discuss “Andha Yug” as an anti-war, historical play.

2. Literary Theory

1. Said defines Orientalism as “a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western Experience.”
 - (i) What is the nature of the “special place that the Orient occupies in European Western Experience”?
 - (ii) How does this affect the way the West comes to terms with the Orient?

2. “For a variety of reasons it would be more accurate to describe Orientalism and Anglicism not as polar opposites but as points along a continuum of attitudes towards the manner and form of native governance, the necessity and justification for which remained by and large an issue of remarkably little disagreement.”
 - (i) Explain the terms Orientalism and Anglicism as used by the writer.
 - (ii) How does the writer demonstrate that these attitudes converge ‘where native governance’ is concerned?

3. “It is not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power...but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural within which it operates at the present time.”
 - (i) Examine critically Foucault’s radical understanding of the “power of truth.”
 - (ii) Does he manage to shed traditional notions of truth?

4. “There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of sign, of play. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of the sign, and which lives the necessity of interpretation as an exile. The other, which no longer turned towards the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism.”

Which of the two interpretations does Derrida choose? Why? With what consequences?

5. Explain Gramsci’s notion of hegemony. What role, according to him, do intellectuals play in upholding/subverting hegemonic activity?

6. Elucidate Althusser’s notion of ideology. Would you agree that it leaves little room for the possibility of change in society?

7. "I am also uncomfortable with the notion of a female imagination'. The theory of a female sensibility revealing itself in an imagery and form specific to women always runs dangerously close to reiterating the familiar stereotypes."
 - (i) What stereotypes is Elaine Showalter referring to in the above lines?
 - (ii) What alternative notion of the 'female imagination' does she suggest?
8. Discuss Irigaray's definition of homosexuality in the context of her essay "When Goods Get Together."
9. "Certain varieties of the Indian elite are at best native informants for first-world intellectuals interested in the voice of the Other. But one must nevertheless insist that the colonised subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous."

How does Spivak develop this thesis in her essay?

10. "The nexus of knowledge and power creating "the Oriental" and in a sense obliterating him as a human being is therefore not for me an exclusively academic matter. Yet it is an intellectual matter of some very obvious importance."

Elucidate Said's multiple levels of engagement with the idea of Orientalism in the light of the above statement.

3.Literature of Indian Diaspora

1. Why has Mistry chosen not to name the Prime Minister or the City by the Sea, when they are easily recognizable? Does recognition of these elements make any difference in your attitude toward the story?
2. Is Nusswan presented entirely as a villain, or does he have redeeming features? What are his real feelings toward Dina?
3. The government's birth control program is enforced with violence and cruelty, with sterilization quotas and forced vasectomies. But is birth control policy in itself a bad thing? Dina tells Om, for example, "Two children only. At the most, three. Haven't you been listening to the family planning people?" [p. 466]. How might family planning be implemented in a humane fashion?
4. Critically analyze gender, post-colonialism and withholding in Vassanji's '*The Book of Secrets*'.

5. Describe the presentation of history in *The Book of Secrets*.
6. The text is often termed as 'frontier fiction'; explain with instances from the text.
7. Explain how the relationship between Ashoke, Ashima, and Gogol develops throughout the novel.
8. How is Gogol's name tied to his identity?
9. How does the language barrier affect the Gangulis?
10. What do the different women in Gogol's life represent to him?

Generic Elective papers:

1. GE 1 (Women Empowerment and Contemporary India)

1. "One is not born a woman but one becomes a woman." comment
2. Write a short note on social construction of gender.
3. How does the system of patriarchy operate at different levels? Discuss with reference to the essay "Interrogating Gender".
4. The concept of masculinity and femininity is historically and culturally variables and not fixed by nature. Discuss.
5. What do you understand by 'Hegemonic masculinity'? explain.
6. Do you think media is a crucial tool in propagating the patriarchy perceptions of gender? Give a reasoned answer.
7. "Religious ideologies play a crucial role in legitimising the subordinate position of women" Elucidate.
8. Write a short note on the historical development of Feminist Movement in the West.
9. Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* reflect on politics, sexual politics and how patriarchy becomes the foundation of politics of sexual relation. Discuss
10. Do you think that patriarchal societies have institutionalised violence through their laws? Give reasoned answer.

2. Academic writing and Composition:

1. Write a note on Academic Writing and how is it important in research.
2. How is planning and structuring of a Conclusion significant? Enumerate the ways to make a Conclusion effective.
3. Plagiarism is STEALING! Elaborate and write the ways to avoid it.
4. What things should be kept in mind while paraphrasing?
5. What is Peer Review in academics and how is it important?
6. Style and tone conventions of Academic Writing.
7. Compare and contrast Narrative and Argumentative Writing. Explain various characteristics of both.
8. Explain various steps in developing a thesis.
9. Explain various strategies used during the stage of re-writing or revising a thesis after one draft has already been written.
10. Explain the significance of coherence and cohesion in writing through some suitable examples.
11. What are the various principles of academic writing?
12. Explain certain language conventions necessary for academic writing. Provide suitable examples.

3. Text & Performance:

1. Discuss the forms and periods of the Western theatre.
2. Explain the contemporary, stylized and naturalist forms in particular.
3. Give an account of the Greek theatre.
4. Elaborate the different types of theatre with examples.
5. Explain the term 'performance' in the English theatre tradition.
6. Draw an explanatory map of historical development of theatrical forms.
7. Explain theatrical conventions and performance styles.
8. Explain any two theories of drama
9. Explain 'avant garde theatre'.
10. Explain *Rasa* and *Abhinaya* techniques in Bharata's *Natyastra*.

1. Write short notes on the following:
 - a. Sign Language
 - b. Paralanguage
 - c. Grapevine
 - d. Types of Listening
 - e. Glass ceiling
2. What are the advantages of oral and written communication each? Elaborate with examples.
3. Explain two situations each of informal, formal and a combination of the two at a workplace.
4. Elucidate the term 'Noise' in communication by elaborating its types through examples.
5. 7 Cs are considered essential for effective communication. Elaborate them through examples.
6. Write about networks of communication through illustrations.
7. In an organization communication moves in some fixed directions. Elaborate presenting at least one situation each for each level.
8. Draft a report on the issue of putting in place adequate institutional laws to discourage acts of littering in college campus.
9. Write a letter to your Area Councilor for getting the menace of stray dogs resolved by adopting a caring and humanitarian approach.
10. As the Secretary of the Students' Body of your College, write a report of the Annul Function of your College to be published in University News, a magazine which covers all the main events of the Colleges across various Campuses.