

Final Exam Topics

I. English Major (Anglistika)

In the oral exam students pick at random one item/task from group A and one from group B matching their study track. They are expected to synthesize what they have learnt in various courses. It is recommended that in preparation students use the notes they made during their studies as well as the bibliographical items included in the lecture syllabuses. There are Notes at the end of the whole list.

Group A

1. Describe the sound system of Present-day English and the recent sound changes of Standard British English.
2. Provide a general view of the structure of English words.
3. Categorize English verbs with respect to their valency patterns. Describe the different syntactic environments English verbs can have.
4. Identify levels of linguistic representation.
5. Discuss the contribution of the historical comparative study of English to the understanding of irregularities in the structure of modern English.
6. Discuss how interlanguage can be analyzed in various contexts.
7. Discuss ways of approaching and analyzing individual differences in L2 development.
8. Discuss how the English language was shaped by the various ethnic groups arriving in turn in the course of history, and how changes in the social status of the English language are reflected in early and medieval English literature.
9. Provide a historic argument for a multi-denominational, multi-religious and largely agnostic Britain.
10. Provide what you consider to be the most important moments in the 19-20th century history of British suffrage.
11. Explain immigration in historical and contemporary American social perspective.
12. Explain the historical contexts of race relations as conflicts in the USA.
13. Identify and discuss political and cultural issues in their historical embedding as they are portrayed in a play by Shakespeare.

14. Discuss social and cultural issues as well as questions of narrative style as they appear in a novel written by Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, one of the Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens, George Eliot or Thomas Hardy.

15. Discuss important modernist features through the analysis of a novel written by Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf or D. H. Lawrence and a poem written by W. B. Yeats or T. S. Eliot.

16. Discuss social and cultural issues in nineteenth-century prose fiction as they appear in two works by Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville or Mark Twain.

17. Discuss representations of the Afro-American historical and cultural experience in the slave narrative, the literature of the Harlem Renaissance, and in a novel by Alice Walker or Toni Morrison.

18. Discuss characteristics of modernism in three pieces of fiction and poetry by Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, or William Faulkner.

Group B

Linguistics Study Track

1. Describe internal and external means of vocabulary extension.
2. Discuss aspects of the Theory of Speech Acts.
3. Identify the modes of flexible meaning creation in contextualized utterances of conversation and discursive acts.
4. Discuss the Mental Lexicon as a major grammatical component of any natural language.
5. Identify diagnostic tools in comparing the major varieties of English.
6. Discuss how psycholinguistics contributes to a better understanding of processes and outcomes in SLA. What role do individual differences play?

Applied Linguistics Study Track

1. Discuss ways in which proficiency in a second language develops. Focus on vocabulary and grammar in interlanguage studies.
2. Discuss how psycholinguistics contributes to a better understanding of processes and outcomes in SLA. What role do individual differences play?
3. Discuss how sociolinguistics contributes to a better understanding of processes and outcomes in SLA.
4. Discuss ways in which oral presentations can be planned, rehearsed and conducted. What makes an oral presentation a good one?

5. Discuss ways in which written intercultural communication can be successful. Focus on informal and formal contexts.

6. Discuss the main issues of designing and implementing empirical studies in applied linguistics. How do focus and research questions influence research design?

English Literature and Culture Study Track

1. Show how popular culture has changed its environments over the past two centuries.

2. Discuss aspects of the media in contemporary Britain.

3. Discuss social and cultural issues as they appear in two literary pieces (novel, drama or poem) written after 1970.

4. Discuss characteristics of postmodern literature through the analysis of a contemporary novel or drama written after 1970.

5. Give an overview of postcolonial cultures and discuss aspects of the postcolonial identity in the countries of the British Isles.

6. Identify British filmic subgenres in the post-WW II period with examples.

American Studies Study Track

1. Discuss aspects of religious diversity in the United States of America.

2. Discuss the role of education in American democracy.

3. Discuss the portrayal of the ethnic experience in two pieces of contemporary fiction by 1) an African American, and 2) an ethnic American (Native American, Mexican-American, or Asian-American) author.

4. Discuss characteristics of postmodern literature in the USA through the analysis of a contemporary novel or drama written after 1970.

5. Identify and characterize the various forms of contemporary American popular culture.

6. Discuss the ways in which the historical and geographical features of Canada have contributed to the modern development of the country.