

Choose FOUR questions and respond to each of them with a roughly 250-word essay (25 points for each). Indicate clearly which question you are answering by writing the correct number at the beginning of your essay. Print, not scrawl, your answers. Use the provided answer book for all your essays.

1. Satire against the corruption and abuses of the Catholic Church was a major theme running through English literature of the late Medieval and Early Modern (i.e., Renaissance) ages. Discuss how these three poets—Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, Edmund Spenser—address the theme. How are they similar to or different from one another in handling related issues?
2. When John Milton composed his *Paradise Lost*, epic as a poetic genre had developed into a set of conventions or “rules.” How does *Paradise Lost* conform to or diverge from these conventions? Besides, how does Milton play on these conventions to highlight the theme of his epic?
3. Class struggles between aristocracy and bourgeoisie characterize the literary arena of the eighteenth century. Briefly describe how the struggles unfolded in the tensions between the “high art” and the “popular taste.” Draw on a few literary works to exemplify several related issues.
4. “Solitude” is an important theme in the works of major Romantic poets. Discuss how some of these poets represent this state of mind as an essential factor of character formation and literary creativity.
5. Among the fierce controversies that implicated virtually all intellectuals of the Victorian age was the so-called “Woman Question.” Discuss how some of these writers address such related issues as women’s education, female vocational career, and domestic ideology.
6. Around the turn of the twentieth century the British Empire began to show signs of incapable management or even imminent collapse. Discuss how the novels of Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, or Rudyard Kipling respond to these signs.