A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF EXAM QUESTIONS – OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE BA

In your written exam in week 11 (if we follow the original lesson plan and the COVID19 is resolved according to the governmental plans), you will be given app. 20 of these questions. Thus, a thorough analysis and home preparation will secure you a decent grade.

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Elaborated: March 17, 2020.

1. Battle of Maldon: When and where did the battle take place? Which two armies were in the battle? Who won the battle? What was the Danelaw?
2. Battle of Maldon (extract): Briefly define the Old English Period (Britannica: What was the “kenning”, alliterative verse?). Find three Old English words and structures.
3. Battle of Maldon (extract): Give three adjectives that describe the English and the Vikings.
4. Battle of Maldon (extract): Who is described as cowardly? How is the passive voice used to indicate lack of abilities in battle?
5. Battle of Maldon (extract): How did the boy in battle behave? Was he brave?
6. Battle of Maldon (extract): Did Aldorman Byrhtnoth survive the battle? What did the Earl do when he killed the “great man of spirit”? 54/II
7. Battle of Maldon (extract): Discuss the language: explain expressions: band of doomed men 15/II; Ravens vs. Eagles 15/II, advanced wolves of slaughter 1/II, find alliteration.
8. Is the narrator of Battle of Maldon (extract) objective or does he side with one group?
9. Canterbury Tales (extract): Identify the author, literary period, when was it written? Is the work finished?
10. Canterbury Tales (extract): Britannica: Did Dante and Petrarch influence Chaucer?
11. Canterbury Tales (learn by heart these lines form the general prologue), complete the missing words:

When \_\_\_\_\_\_ with his showers sweet with fruit

The drought of \_\_\_\_\_\_ has pierced unto the root

And bathed each vein with liquor that has power

To generate therein and sire the flower;

When \_\_\_\_\_\_ also has, with his sweet breath,

Quickened again, in every holt and heath,

The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun

Into the \_\_\_\_\_ one half his course has run,

And many little birds make melody

That sleep through all the night with open \_\_\_\_\_

(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-

Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage

1. Canterbury Tales (extract): Canterbury Tales is a combination of genres: fabliau, romance, beast fable, etc. Explain.
2. Canterbury Tales (extract): Is the text rhymed? What is interesting about the use of final “e” in many words?
3. Canterbury Tales (extract): Where did the pilgrims go? Why did they go in April? What did they pray for?
4. Canterbury Tales (extract): How many pilgrims there were? How many stories? Give one example of low rank pilgrims, middle class and high-class pilgrims.
5. Canterbury Tales – General Prologue (extract): How is the Knight described? Which lines prove that he is pious and God abiding? (paraphrase)
6. Canterbury Tales – The Pardoner´s Tale (read the whole tale): What did the three youths go for? What did they get instead? How does the tale finish? Is there a poetic justice?
7. Sir Henry Howard: Sonnet VIII: Give periods and general context of Renaissance. Who was Sir Henry Howard?
8. Sir Henry Howard: Sonnet VIII: Analyse the sonnet: is it traditional? (14 lines, rhymed, antithesis, tropes)
9. Sir Henry Howard: Sonnet VIII: Identify the speaker & the audience. Identify the speaker´s relationship to God.
10. Shakespeare: Procreation Sonnets (I-X): Who was Shakespeare? Is he a typical Renaissance poet/dramatist?
11. Shakespeare: Procreation Sonnets (I-X): How many sonnets did Shakespeare write? Identify three groups of Shakespeare´s sonnets.
12. Shakespeare: Procreation Sonnets (I-X): What do Shakespeare´s Procreation sonnets deal with? Give three reasons why, according to Sonnets I-X, one should procreate.
13. Shakespeare: Procreation Sonnets (I-X): How open was Shakespeare sexually? Identify words connected with the body, sex, childbirth, etc. Did Renaissance celebrate the Body or despise it?
14. Shakespeare: Procreation Sonnets (I-X): How does Shakespeare view the age of 40 in Sonnet II? Is the person young or old?
15. Shakespeare: Procreation Sonnets (I-X): What is the role of Nature and Time in Sonnets I-X, especially in Sonnet IV?
16. Shakespeare: Procreation Sonnets (I-X): Explain the extended metaphor of music in Sonnet VIII.
17. Shakespeare: (Selected) Love Sonnets (18,91,113,116,130 /learn by heart/148,150): Are these sonnets typical for the Renaissance period? Does Shakespeare idealize love? Explain more detail.
18. Shakespeare: Sonnet 130: Complete the missing words:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the \_\_\_;   
Coral is far more red than her lips' \_\_\_;   
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;   
If hairs be wires, black \_\_\_\_\_ grow on her head.   
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,   
But no such roses see I in her \_\_\_\_\_;   
And in some perfumes is there more delight   
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.   
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know   
That music hath a far more pleasing \_\_\_\_\_;   
I grant I never saw a \_\_\_\_\_\_ go;   
My mistress when she \_\_\_\_\_\_ treads on the ground.   
     And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare   
     As any she belied with false compare.

1. Shakespeare: (Selected) Love Sonnets: In Sonnet 91, Shakespeare prizes love above three things or objects. Identify them.
2. Shakespeare: (Selected) Love Sonnets: Why is the poet´s love better than the Summer´s day in Sonnet 18? Give two reasons.
3. Shakespeare: Political Sonnets: Explain how is the Sonnet 66 different from traditional sonnets (structurally, content-wise).
4. Shakespeare: Political Sonnets: Give min. three phenomena of the Renaissance England Shakespeare is critical of in Sonnet 66.
5. Classicism: John Donne: Give periods, general characteristics and representatives of Classicism. Is John Donne a typical poet of Classicism? Why is he called a “metaphysical poet”? Britannica: Why is Donne called “the first London Poet”?
6. Classicism: John Donne: Analyse the poem Batter my heart…. Is it a sonnet? Explain.
7. Classicism: John Donne: Identify the speaker and the audience of the poem Batter my heart… What is the speaker´s relationship to the God in the poem?
8. Classicism: John Donne: What is the role of Reason in the poem?
9. Classicism: Alexander Pope: Is Pope a typical poet of Classicism? Why do the critics call him the father of literary criticism?
10. Classicism: Alexander Pope (Rape of the Lock, Canto V., extract): Give short summary of the whole poem (app. Number of lines, sujet, Belinda, Who “raped” the lock, etc.). What does Pope specifically criticize in Canto V. ?
11. Classicism: Alexander Pope (Rape of the Lock, Canto V., extract): Explain the lines: “sight wins the eye but merit wins the soul”. Is this idea relevant today?
12. Pre-romanticism: Robert Burns: To a Mouse: Identify the period, general features and representatives of Pre-Romanticism. Is Robert Burns a typical Pre-Romantic writer? Which dialect did he use?
13. Pre-romanticism: Robert Burns: To a Mouse: Analyse the poem. Identify the speaker and the audience. Why was burns called “the poet of the country”? How accurate is he in his descriptions of the Nature?
14. Pre-romanticism: Robert Burns: To a Mouse: Why did Burns dedicate his poem to such a trivial object as a “mouse”? Can we call this poem “an environmental poem”? What is the role of the Nature and the Man in this poem?
15. Romanticism: John Keats: On English Verse: Identify the period, general features and representatives of Romanticism. What was the difference between two Generations of Romantic poets? Where did Keats belong?
16. Romanticism: John Keats: On English Verse: Britannica: Did Boccacio influence Keats? Explain briefly.
17. Romanticism: John Keats: On English Verse: Is the poem a traditional sonnet? Is it critical in any way? How does the author view the English language?
18. Romanticism: John Keats: On English Verse: Identify the tropes: sweet sonnet, like Andromeda, Sandals…