

Please manage your time for each question according to the percentage of grade it represents. Answer in clear English and well-organized paragraphs. Give specific examples.

I. Please choose two key concepts from the list, explain their significance in their historical context / development, and give specific examples (such as authors, texts) to support your argument. (25%)

1. The Wandering Jew
2. The Great Exhibition
3. Stream of Consciousness
4. Shakespeare as the English Bard

II. Textual Analysis: please choose one passage and explain the following (25%)

- (1) Identify the author
- (2) Explain its detailed significance in its historical context
- (3) Explain its stylistic features
- (4) Explain any connection with our contemporary period

1. Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

2. About suffering they were never wrong,
The old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position: how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

- III. Essay questions. Please answer two questions. (25% each)
1. Wordsworth justifies his aim to write a new kind of poetry in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1802): "For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse." Please answer in the following three aspects:
 - (1) What is the crisis of literature at the turn of 18th and 19th century that Wordsworth is describing here?
 - (2) What does Wordsworth propose in order to defuse the crisis?
 - (3) How do we connect Wordsworth's anxiety with our Age of the Internet / AI?
 2. The novel as a significant genre gathers moment in the late 18th century in the form of the Gothic fiction and comes to its fruition in the Victorian period as the realist fiction. With at least two novels by two authors of different periods as examples, explain the development of the English novel in terms of themes and styles as steeped in historical context.
 3. Pilgrimage (or travel) has been a major theme and evolving structure of literary works, the most notable examples of which include Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Choose two works among the above-mentioned works, compare their themes, styles, and characterization in their specific historical contexts, and explain their differences.