

MA in English Studies Final Exam Topics

In this oral exam students pick at random one item/task from group A and another from group B or C, matching their specialization track. They are expected to synthesize what they have learnt in various courses. Where there is an option the student must not choose a topic that is obviously connected with his/her own thesis, unless s/he is asked to do so.

Group A

1. Provide a socio-cultural overview of a period in British history of your own choice.
2. Outline how major models of modern linguistics view semantics and syntax as well as their interfacing.
3. How can the historical study of English contribute to the understanding of Modern English grammatical irregularities? Use some data to support your arguments.
4. Describe how the development of word meanings reflects the socio-cultural context of speakers.
5. Outline the basic concepts and refer to the main representatives of one of the following trends in literary studies: reader-response criticism, structuralism, Marxist criticism, or feminist literary discourse.
6. Introduce the generic features of a distinct form of literature in a freely chosen period of its socio-cultural history.
7. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and/or qualitative approaches in applied linguistics research by referring to examples from your thesis (for students specializing in English applied linguistics).

Elaborate on the relevance of literary history and critical theory for the research related to your thesis topic (for students specializing in English literature).

Group B for students of the specialization track in English applied linguistics

1. Discuss possible applications of vocabulary profiles in applied linguistics research.
2. Discuss affective, cognitive and linguistic benefits of using narratives in the classroom.
3. Discuss how methods of discourse analysis can be used in the interpretation and application of narratives.
4. Select two individual differences and discuss their role in second language acquisition.
5. Discuss the interactional opportunities and limitations of two electronic media of your choice.
6. Discuss the issues of plurilingualism or pluriculturalism in language education and assessment.

7. Evaluate the relevance of individual differences in sociolinguistics.
8. Compare pragmatic and cognitive approaches to metaphor.
9. Describe pragmatic parameters of language use facilitating social cognition (deixis, contextual cues, knowledge types and inferential mechanisms).
10. Discuss the universal tendencies of language change that can be observed in the emergence of “new Englishes” and explain how these trends contribute to the globalization of English.
11. Discuss the vertical and horizontal dimensions of human categorization with reference to the classical and prototypical views as well as to the importance of basic level categories.
12. Describe and characterize figurative, idiomatic and metaphorical uses of language in everyday discourse.
13. Explain possible applications of corpora in applied linguistics.

Group C for students of the specialization track in English literature

1. Describe the nature, significance and social context of oral literature in Britain.
2. Provide an overview of the development and most salient characteristics of either Elizabethan or Jacobean drama and illustrate your account with examples from appropriate primary sources.
3. Provide an overview of one major trend in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century lyric poetry and illustrate your account with examples from representative primary sources.
4. Discuss how the form of the novel represents the cultural and national status of the rising reading public.
5. Identify trends in the development of British and Irish drama along with changes in the discourse of theatre before WW II. Introduce one of these in some detail by focusing on experimental techniques in a major play.
6. Identify trends in the development of British and Irish drama along with changes in the discourse of theatre after WW II. Introduce one of these in some detail by focusing on experimental techniques in a major play.
7. Discuss how postcolonial theories reflect the undermining of the narratives of British imperialism.
8. Discuss a representative piece of British literature in the context of empire and identity.
9. Discuss a representative piece of postcolonial literature in the context of empire and identity.
10. Identify and discuss the most important characteristics of the Gothic mode by referring to some relevant theoretical approaches.

11. Introduce a representative piece of British or postcolonial Gothic literature in its socio-cultural context.
12. Introduce a British canonical author by giving an account of his/her literary significance in its socio-cultural and artistic context. Refer to some major works of different genres and the possible critical approaches to them.
13. Discuss aspects of the reception of a chosen British writer in Hungary by referring to translations and critical works.