

ETS Major Field Test English Literature (British) Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. What style of poetry is characterized by vivid imagery and focuses on sensory experience?**
 - A. Lyricism**
 - B. Free verse**
 - C. Imagism**
 - D. Romanticism**

- 2. Which playwright is known for the works "King Lear" and "Hamlet"?**
 - A. John Donne**
 - B. William Shakespeare**
 - C. Ben Jonson**
 - D. Robert Herrick**

- 3. Which novel by Charles Dickens features themes of industrial society and social reform?**
 - A. Great Expectations**
 - B. Bleak House**
 - C. A Tale of Two Cities**
 - D. Oliver Twist**

- 4. Who penned the poem "The Blessed Damozel"?**
 - A. Robert Browning**
 - B. Dante Gabriel Rossetti**
 - C. John Keats**
 - D. Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

- 5. In the context of British literature, what does "stream of consciousness" refer to?**
 - A. A narrative technique that presents the thoughts and feelings of a character**
 - B. A genre of poetry focused on nature and beauty**
 - C. A form of drama focusing on the intricacies of human relationships**
 - D. A style of writing based on chronological events**

- 6. In which poem does "the road not taken" become a symbol?**
- A. "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost**
 - B. "Crossing the Bar" by Alfred Lord Tennyson**
 - C. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot**
 - D. "The Road" by Cormac McCarthy**
- 7. In which work would you find the character Elizabeth Bennet?**
- A. Sense and Sensibility**
 - B. Emma**
 - C. Pride and Prejudice**
 - D. Northanger Abbey**
- 8. What narrative technique is particularly evident in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald?**
- A. First-person narration with unreliable perspectives**
 - B. Third-person omniscient narration**
 - C. Stream of consciousness writing**
 - D. Epistolary form**
- 9. What is the primary conflict faced by the protagonist in Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein"?**
- A. The struggle for love**
 - B. The consequences of unchecked ambition and the quest for knowledge**
 - C. The challenge of friendship**
 - D. The fight against societal norms**
- 10. Which author is linked with the work "Elegy To His Mistress Going to Bed"?**
- A. Ben Jonson**
 - B. John Milton**
 - C. John Donne**
 - D. Robert Herrick**

Answers

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1. C
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. A
6. A
7. C
8. A
9. B
10. C

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Explanations

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1. What style of poetry is characterized by vivid imagery and focuses on sensory experience?

- A. Lyricism
- B. Free verse
- C. Imagism**
- D. Romanticism

The choice of Imagism as the correct answer aligns well with the characteristics defined by this poetic movement. Imagism emerged in the early 20th century and is primarily defined by its emphasis on clear, precise imagery and a focus on capturing a moment's sensory experience. The poets associated with Imagism, such as Ezra Pound and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), sought to create vivid pictures through their words, prioritizing clarity and economy of language. Imagists aimed to strip away unnecessary words and use direct, concrete language to evoke emotions and experiences. This is why the emphasis on vivid imagery and sensory detail is a hallmark of this style. The poems often depict everyday objects or scenes, presenting them in a way that engages the reader's senses directly. In contrast, while lyricism also involves personal expression and emotion, it may not specifically prioritize vivid imagery as Imagism does. Free verse, on the other hand, refers to a poetic form that does not adhere to regular meter or rhyme, which can sometimes lack the focused imagery that is central to Imagism. Romanticism, while rich in emotional expression and often featuring nature, does not exclusively focus on the kind of stark, clear images that Imagism celebrates. Thus, Imagism stands out

2. Which playwright is known for the works "King Lear" and "Hamlet"?

- A. John Donne
- B. William Shakespeare**
- C. Ben Jonson
- D. Robert Herrick

William Shakespeare is renowned for his profound contributions to English literature, particularly in the realm of drama. "King Lear" and "Hamlet" are two of his most significant plays, both hailed as masterpieces that explore complex themes such as madness, betrayal, and the human condition. Shakespeare's ability to create multifaceted characters and intricate plots is exemplified in these works. In "Hamlet," he delves into themes of revenge, mortality, and existentialism through the troubled Prince of Denmark. Similarly, "King Lear" explores themes of power, family dynamics, and the consequences of folly as it follows the tragic descent of Lear into madness after dividing his kingdom among his daughters. In contrast, the other playwrights listed, such as John Donne, Ben Jonson, and Robert Herrick, while notable figures of their time, are not known for these particular works. Donne is primarily recognized for his poetry, Jonson is known for his comedies and satire, and Herrick is famous for his lyrical poetry. Thus, Shakespeare stands out as the author of these defining tragedies.

3. Which novel by Charles Dickens features themes of industrial society and social reform?

- A. Great Expectations
- B. Bleak House**
- C. A Tale of Two Cities
- D. Oliver Twist

The novel "Bleak House" is a prominent example of Charles Dickens's exploration of themes related to industrial society and social reform. Set during the Victorian era, the narrative delves into the complexities of the legal system and the social injustices prevalent in a rapidly industrializing England. Through a range of characters and plotlines, Dickens critiques the inefficiencies of the Court of Chancery and highlights the impact of industrialization on various social classes. "Bleak House" effectively illustrates the stark contrasts between wealth and poverty, and it underscores the necessity for social reform, making it a powerful commentary on the issues of the time. Dickens's depiction of the foggy, smog-laden environment of London serves as a metaphor for the obscure moralities arising from industrial growth, emphasizing the need for change in both society and governance. The other options, while also significant works in their own right, focus on different themes. "Great Expectations" primarily deals with personal growth and identity; "A Tale of Two Cities" centers on themes of resurrection and sacrifice in the context of the French Revolution; and "Oliver Twist" highlights the plight of orphans and the harsh realities of child labor but does not address the broader societal critique to the extent seen in "

4. Who penned the poem "The Blessed Damozel"?

- A. Robert Browning
- B. Dante Gabriel Rossetti**
- C. John Keats
- D. Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The poem "The Blessed Damozel" was written by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a leading figure in the Pre-Raphaelite movement. His work often explored themes of love, beauty, and spirituality, which are central to this poem. "The Blessed Damozel" presents a vision of a woman in paradise, yearning for her lover on Earth, illustrating Rossetti's characteristic blending of romantic longing with ethereal imagery. This poem reflects not only Rossetti's personal symbolism and artistic concerns but also embodies the Pre-Raphaelite ideal of merging art with deep emotional resonance. The use of vivid imagery and the exploration of the connection between love and spirituality are hallmarks of Rossetti's style, which align perfectly with the content of "The Blessed Damozel."

5. In the context of British literature, what does "stream of consciousness" refer to?

- A. A narrative technique that presents the thoughts and feelings of a character**
- B. A genre of poetry focused on nature and beauty**
- C. A form of drama focusing on the intricacies of human relationships**
- D. A style of writing based on chronological events**

"Stream of consciousness" refers to a narrative technique that presents the thoughts and feelings of a character in a fluid and often unstructured manner, mimicking the natural flow of consciousness. This style aims to provide readers with a deeper understanding of a character's inner life by capturing the chaotic and spontaneous nature of thoughts, emotions, and perceptions as they occur. Authors such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf expertly employed this technique to explore complex psychological states and to blur the boundaries between a character's thoughts and the external world. This approach allows for a more intimate and immersive experience, as readers gain insight into a character's mind in real-time, often with little regard for traditional narrative structure or linear progression. The other options, while related to literature, do not accurately define "stream of consciousness." They reference different forms or styles of writing that do not encapsulate the essence of this particular narrative technique.

6. In which poem does "the road not taken" become a symbol?

- A. "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost**
- B. "Crossing the Bar" by Alfred Lord Tennyson**
- C. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot**
- D. "The Road" by Cormac McCarthy**

"The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost employs "the road not taken" as a powerful symbol representing the choices and decisions we face in life. The poem illustrates the speaker's moment of contemplation at a diverging path in a yellow wood, which serves as a metaphor for life's many choices. The choice to take one road over another symbolizes the impact of decisions on an individual's life journey. The speaker reflects on the implications of those choices, suggesting that they shape one's identity and future experiences. The imagery of the roads not taken invites readers to consider the nature of regret and the significance of choices, highlighting how certain decisions can lead to unforeseen outcomes and ultimately define a person's path. This rich symbolism resonates throughout the poem and is central to its theme, making the first option the clear and correct choice.

7. In which work would you find the character Elizabeth Bennet?

- A. Sense and Sensibility**
- B. Emma**
- C. Pride and Prejudice**
- D. Northanger Abbey**

Elizabeth Bennet is the central character in Jane Austen's novel "Pride and Prejudice," which was published in 1813. The novel focuses on her personality, her relationships, particularly with Mr. Darcy, and her struggles with societal expectations regarding marriage and class. Elizabeth is known for her wit, intelligence, and strong sense of self, making her a pivotal figure in the story as she navigates issues of love, family, and social standing. The novel intricately explores themes of pride, prejudice, and the complexities of human relationships, all of which are encapsulated through Elizabeth's character arc. The other options present characters from different works by Austen. For example, "Sense and Sensibility" features the Dashwood sisters, "Emma" revolves around the character of Emma Woodhouse, and "Northanger Abbey" centers on Catherine Morland. Each of these novels represents distinct narratives and themes, separate from the story of Elizabeth Bennet in "Pride and Prejudice."

8. What narrative technique is particularly evident in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald?

- A. First-person narration with unreliable perspectives**
- B. Third-person omniscient narration**
- C. Stream of consciousness writing**
- D. Epistolary form**

F. Scott Fitzgerald is known for his use of first-person narration, particularly in works like "The Great Gatsby." This narrative technique allows readers to experience the story through the eyes of a character, often revealing their personal thoughts and feelings. The narrator, Nick Carraway, provides an unreliable perspective that colors the reader's understanding of other characters and events. This subjectivity contributes to the novel's themes of illusion and reality, as Nick's interpretation is influenced by his biases and emotions. The first-person perspective also allows for a deeper exploration of Gatsby's character and the world of the Jazz Age, drawing readers into the intricacies of personal relationships and societal expectations. Other narrative techniques, while present in various literary works, do not encapsulate Fitzgerald's signature style as clearly. For instance, third-person omniscient narration provides a broader scope and insight into various characters but lacks the intimate, subjective viewpoint that characterizes Fitzgerald's narratives. Stream of consciousness writing emphasizes the flow of thoughts and feelings, often in a disjointed manner, which is not Fitzgerald's primary approach. The epistolary form, which presents the narrative through letters or diary entries, is also distinct from Fitzgerald's typical first-person style. Thus, the use of an unreliable first

9. What is the primary conflict faced by the protagonist in Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein"?

A. The struggle for love

B. The consequences of unchecked ambition and the quest for knowledge

C. The challenge of friendship

D. The fight against societal norms

In Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein," the primary conflict faced by the protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, revolves around the consequences of unchecked ambition and the quest for knowledge. This theme is central to the narrative, as Victor's insatiable desire to push the boundaries of science leads him to create a living being from dead matter. His ambition drives him to defy natural laws and ethical considerations, ultimately resulting in tragic consequences for himself and those he loves. Victor's obsession with scientific discovery blinds him to the moral implications of his actions. As he grapples with the creature he has brought to life, the narrative explores the repercussions of his ambition—loss, guilt, and the devastating impact of his quest on his relationships and mental state. The conflict illustrates the dangers inherent in the pursuit of knowledge when it disregards ethical boundaries, making the exploration of ambition and its consequences the pivotal struggle in the story. This thematic concern is at the heart of Shelley's work and reflects broader anxieties about the potential for science to transcend moral limits.

10. Which author is linked with the work "Elegy To His Mistress Going to Bed"?

A. Ben Jonson

B. John Milton

C. John Donne

D. Robert Herrick

The work "Elegy To His Mistress Going to Bed" is attributed to John Donne, a prominent figure in the metaphysical poetry movement of the early 17th century. This poem is characterized by its blending of sensuality and spiritual themes, which is a hallmark of Donne's style. In this piece, Donne uses intricate metaphors to explore the physical and emotional aspects of love, as well as the complexities of intimacy and desire. Donne's unique approach often included the use of wit and intellectual discourse, elevating themes of love beyond mere physicality, which is evident in the structure and language of this elegy. His work reflects the interplay between carnal and spiritual dimensions, making it a quintessential example of his poetic voice. Other authors listed, such as Ben Jonson, John Milton, and Robert Herrick, were also significant literary figures but are known for different styles and themes. Jonson is celebrated for his satirical plays and lyric poetry, while Milton is revered for his epic works and theological reflections, particularly in "Paradise Lost." Herrick is known for his lyric poetry, particularly his celebration of nature and carpe diem themes but does not connect with the same metaphysical explorations found in Donne's elegy.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://etsmajfieldtestenglitbrit.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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