

GRADUATE ADMISSIONS TEST FOR AMERICAN LITERATURE

PART ONE 30 MINUTES/30 POINTS

Answer ONE of the following questions.

- 1] Describe Whitman's portrayal of the natural world in his poetry. Consider some of the following issues: What is the relationship between humans and the natural world? Is there a spiritual aspect or power in nature or is it purely "physical"? How should we think of the fact of death? You do not have to take all of these issues into account and you may consider others you think are relevant.
- 2] Describe Emily Dickinson's portrayal of love in her poetry. Refer to at least two poems that illustrate some of the range of ideas she had with respect to this theme.
- 3] Explore the topic of the influence of history upon the individual in Hawthorne. Draw examples from EITHER two of the shorter stories OR one of the novels.

PART TWO 30 MINUTES/30 POINTS

Write an essay on ONE of the following broad themes. Use examples from TWO of the writers in this list.

William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, F Scott Fitzgerald, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, Robinson Jeffers, Hart Crane, Henry James, Katharine Anne Porter, John Steinbeck, Willa Cather, Stephen Crane, Mark Twain, Theodore Dreiser, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Eugene O'Neil.

Themes:

- 1] the need for new artistic forms
- 2] the immigrant experience
- 3] the clash of values
- 4] cultural decline
- 5] the death of God
- 6] humans and nature
- 7] modern ethics
- 8] the issue of race

PART THREE

40 MINUTES/40 POINTS

Choose ONE.

1] Define one aspect of the American experience and say why it is characteristically American. Then show how it is dealt with in any TWO writers in American literature. For the purposes of this question, things which might characterize the American experience would be: the westward expansion, the immigrant experience, the issue of slavery and racism, the Civil War, the Great Depression, the McCarthy "red scare", or any other major social or political event or factor. Focus discussion specifically on social and historical issues and how they are either reflected in the works or directly dealt with.

2] Choose one character trait and say why it should be considered characteristically American. Show how it is reflected in any TWO writers in American literature. For the purposes of this question, traits might be things such as: individualism, democratic spirit, optimism, sense of human frailty and corruption, etc. Focus on such subjective traits rather than on historical and social factors (the focus of question 1).