

# Find out how to prove — and improve — the effectiveness of your English program with the ETS® Major Field Tests.

## Content Validity

The Major Field Test (MFT) in Literature in English, first administered in 1989, assesses mastery of concepts, principles and knowledge by graduating seniors. To ensure fairness and content relevance, the test is revised approximately every four to five years.

## Developed by Leading Educators in the Field

Experienced faculty members representing all of the relevant areas of the discipline determine test specifications, questions and types of scores reported. ETS assessment experts subject each question to rigorous tests of sensitivity and reliability. Every effort is made to include questions that assess the most common and important topics and skills.

In addition to factual knowledge, the test evaluates students' abilities to analyze and solve problems, understand relationships and interpret material. Academic departments may add up to two subgroups and as many as 50 additional locally written questions to test areas of the discipline that may be unique to the department or institution.

## National Comparative Data

A *Comparative Data Guide*, published each year, contains tables of scaled scores and percentiles for individual student scores, departmental mean scores and any subscores or group assessment indicators that the test may support. The tables of data are drawn from senior-level test takers at a large number of diverse institutions. Nearly 1,500 colleges and universities employ one or more of the Major Field Tests for student achievement and curriculum evaluation each year.

### Who Develops the MFT in Literature in English?

Individuals who serve or recently have served on the Committee for the MFT in Literature in English are faculty members from the following institutions:

**Baylor University**  
**Dillard University**  
**Emory University**  
**Franklin College**  
**Rutgers University**  
**University of California, Los Angeles**  
**University of Iowa**  
**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

### For more information about the MFT in Literature in English:

Phone: **1-800-745-0269**  
Email: **higherred@ets.org**  
Visit: **www.ets.org/mft**

Educational Testing Service  
Rosedale Road  
Princeton, NJ 08541

# Test Content — Literature in English (4HMF)

The Major Field Test in Literature in English contains 150 multiple-choice questions on poetry, prose and drama. Some questions are based on short works printed in their entirety, while other questions focus on excerpts from longer works. Poetry selections include lyric verse, epic narrative and dramatic monologue. Prose selections draw on biography, the essay, the short story, the novel and literary criticism. The test covers British and American works of all periods; it also contains a few questions on works, including the Bible, translated from foreign languages. Throughout, the emphasis is on major authors, works, genres and movements. Programs can choose when and where to administer the test. It is designed to take two hours and may be split into two sessions. This test must be given by a proctor.

Some of the questions are factual, and some are analytical. The factual questions test knowledge of major writers and literary history, while analytical questions measure the ability to read a literary text perceptively. A factual question, for example, might ask students to assign a literary work to the period in which it was written based on its style. An analytical question, in contrast, might ask students to examine the theme or structure of a given text. The distribution of the content areas with some examples of the topics covered is as follows:

## The Test Outline

### Content Categories

- I. British Literature Pre-1660 (20–25%)
- II. British Literature 1660–1900 (20–25%)
- III. American Literature to 1900 (20–25%)
- IV. British and American Literature 1901–1945 (15–20%)
- V. Literature in English since 1945 (15–20%)<sup>1</sup>
- VI. Literary Sources and Influences (Classical, Biblical, Continental and Comparative) (5–10%)

### Skill Areas

1. Literary Analysis (55–70%)
  - a. Interpretation of Prose, Poetry and Drama
  - b. Recognition of Conventions and Genres, Allusions and References, Meaning and Tone, and Literary Techniques

2. Literary History (10–20%)
  - a. Knowledge of Chronology and Periodization
  - b. Knowledge of Literary Movements
  - c. Understanding of Cultural and Intellectual History
3. Identification (10–20%)
  - a. Recognition of Date, Author or Work Based on Style and/or Content
  - b. Recognition of the Details, Character(s), Plot or Setting of a Work
  - c. Recognition of an Author or Work Through Critical or Biographical Information
4. Literary Theory (10–15%)
  - a. Knowledge of the History of Literary Criticism
  - b. Knowledge of Contemporary Theoretical Approaches

### How scores for the Major Field Test in Literature in English are reported

**Total Score** – Reported for each student and summarized for the group

**Subscores** – Reported for each student and summarized for the group

– Literature 1900 and Earlier (90–114)  
*[Content Categories I, II, III and VI]*

– Literature 1901 and Later (46–60)  
*[Content Categories IV, V and VI]*

– Literary Analysis (80–105)  
*[Content Category VI, Skill Area 1]*

– Literary History and Identification (30–60)  
*[Content Category VI, Skill Areas 2–3]*

**Assessment Indicators** – Reported for the group\* only

– British Literature Pre-1660 (30–38)  
*[Content Category I]*

– British Literature 1660–1900 (30–38)  
*[Content Category II, Content Category VI]*

– American Literature to 1900 (30–38)  
*[Content Category III]*

– British and American Literature 1901–1945 (23–30)  
*[Content Category IV]*

– Literature in English Since 1945 (23–30)  
*[Content Category V, VI]*

– Literary History (15–30)  
*[Content Category VI, Skill Area 2]*

– Identification (15–30)  
*[Content Category VI, Skill Area 3]*

– Literary Theory (15–23)  
*[Content Category VI, Skill Area 4]*

Numbers in parentheses are the approximate number of questions in each category.

\* A minimum of five (5) students is required for assessment indicators to be reported.

<sup>1</sup> Includes works of literature from countries other than Britain and the United States.