

CPP Literary Studies MA Comprehensive Exam Essay Scoring Rubric

	4	3	2	1	0
<p><b>Context:</b> Knowledge of the major historical and literary periods or genres, and representative authors or works in British, American, or World literature</p>	The essay is 1) contextualized within historical period, aesthetic movement, theoretical tradition, or genre; 2) the context is supported by scholarship, and 3) appropriate to the essay's argument.	The essay is contextualized, but may lack <i>either</i> scholarly support <i>or</i> be inappropriate to the argument.	The essay is contextualized, but lacks <i>both</i> scholarly support <i>and</i> is not appropriate to the argument.	The essay is insufficiently contextualized (thin, vague, or ambiguous statements).	The essay lacks contextualization.
<p><b>Argumentation:</b> Ability to write a thesis-driven argument using clear, focused, persuasive prose.</p>	The essay 1) responds to the prompt, 2) presents a clear, arguable thesis statement, 3) is well structured with clear transitions and argument sign-posts, 4) addresses the significance of the thesis (usually in a well-thought out conclusion).	The essay 1) responds to the prompt and 2) presents a clear, arguable thesis, but may lack 3) strong structure or 4) attention to significance.	The essay 1) responds to the prompt and 2) presents a simple claim, but may lack 3) adequate structure overall or 4) attention to significance.	The essay either doesn't 1) respond to the prompt or doesn't 2) provide an adequate argumentative claim.	The essay neither responds to the prompt nor provides an adequate argumentative claim.
<p><b>Textual Analysis:</b> Ability to analyze literature and non-fiction showing clear engagement with the primary text(s) and in-depth textual analysis</p>	The essay 1) fully engages the required number of texts (1 for the common read essay, 8 for the breadth essay, 3 for the thematic essay), 2) produces compelling close-readings of the material, and 3) uses both direct quotation and paraphrasing of the texts.	The essay 1) fully engages the required number of texts (1 for the common read essay, 8 for the breadth essay, 3 for the thematic essay), 2) produces compelling close readings of the material, and 3) may cite specific textual details but relies on summary and description rather than attentiveness to the text's language.	The essay 1) engages the required number of texts (1 for the common read essay, 8 for the breadth essay, 3 for the thematic essay), though they may not be relevant to the argument, 2) presents close readings that may be compelling but are not fully formed or are reductive, 3) may cite texts, but does not explore them adequately.	The essay 1) engages the required number of texts (1 for the common read essay, 8 for the breadth essay, 3 for the thematic essay), but 2) may present simplistic, reductive or summative close readings, and 3) may cite texts, but does not explore them adequately.	The essay 1) insufficiently engages the required number of texts (1 for the common read essay, 8 for the breadth essay, 3 for the thematic essay) or engages fewer than required (N/A for the common read question), 2) presents simplistic close readings or summarizes rather than analyzes content.

<p><b>Research:</b> Ability to use appropriate theoretical, historical, and cultural apparatus showing clear engagement with secondary sources</p>	<p>The essay 1) includes multiple scholarly sources (4+) that is 2) relevant to the argument, 3) clearly explained, 4) well-written (integrated into the essay's style, mixes direct quotation and paraphrase), and 5) advances the argument.</p>	<p>The essay 1) includes multiple scholarly sources (4+), but only two of the four characteristics: relevance to argument, clarity of explanation, integration into writing, and advancement of argument.</p>	<p>The essay 1) includes scholarship, but only one of the four characteristics: relevance to argument, clarity of explanation, integration into writing, and advancement of argument.</p>	<p>The essay includes minimal sourcing that is only vaguely described or applied.</p>	<p>There is no demonstration of research.</p>
<p><b>Writing</b></p>	<p>Writing is excellent (clear, professional, and engaging), is nearly error free, and citations are mostly accurate. Essay meets minimum word count.</p>	<p>Writing is good (clear, appropriate), only possesses minor errors that don't impede meaning, and citations are consistent. Essay meets minimum word count.</p>	<p>Writing is adequate (understandable), possesses frequent errors, repetitive, vague, or unclear, and citations are consistent. Essay meets or approaches minimum word count.</p>	<p>Writing is weak, difficult to follow, possesses frequent errors that impede meaning, and citations are inconsistent or nonexistent. Word count may not be met.</p>	<p>Significant writing or structural errors that impede meaning. Word count may not be met.</p>