History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 14)

Page 67 - Characteristics of Shakespeare's Works

Q1. How does Shakespeare's body of work rank in English literature?

A. As the most obscure

B. As the greatest single body of work contributed by any writer

C. As historically inaccurate

D. As purely derivative of French plays

Answer: B

Q2. What is described as perhaps the most salient feature of Shakespeare's plays?

A. Their astonishing variety and versatility

B. Their strict adherence to classical rules

C. Their consistent use of Latin dialogue

D. Their focus solely on comedy

Answer: A

Q3. How is Shakespeare's ability to digest thought into phraseology described?

A. He struggled to find the right words

B. He was not very original, but phrased things so memorably that he is the most often quoted writer

C. He only quoted other people

D. He wrote entirely in unrhymed prose

Answer: B

Q4. What is unparalleled about Shakespeare's characterization?

A. His characters are all completely flawless

B. He created so many men and women who feel absolutely and completely alive

C. His characters never speak

D. His characters are all gods and mythological beings

Answer: B

Q5. How large is Shakespeare's computed vocabulary?

A. 1,000 words

B. 5,000 words

C. 15,000 words

D. 50,000 words

Answer: C

Q6. How does Shakespeare's vocabulary size compare to Milton's?

A. It is exactly the same

B. Milton's is twice as large

C. Milton's contains scarcely more than half that number

D. Milton did not write in English

Answer: C

Q7. What is a noted limitation or defect of Shakespeare's writing?

A. He never wrote tragedies

B. He wrote hurriedly, often showing signs of hasty and ill-considered production

C. He only wrote for the King

D. He refused to use stage props

Answer: B

Q8. Why did Shakespeare sometimes sacrifice consistency of character and the finer demands of art?

A. To save ink and paper

B. To achieve a telling theatrical effect on the actual stage

C. Because he disliked his actors

D. Because the Queen ordered him to

Answer: B

Q9. What does the occasional coarseness in Shakespeare's plays reflect?

A. His aristocratic upbringing

B. The low taste of the 'groundlings' to whom he had to appeal

C. The influence of French theater

D. A complete lack of education

Answer: B

Q10. Despite faults like crude psychology in places or bombastic language, how do they compare to his

paramount qualities?

A. They completely ruin his work

B. They are small things in comparison to qualities that give him the first place among world dramatists

C. They make his plays unreadable today

D. They are his most celebrated features

Answer: B

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 14)

Page 68 - Ben Jonson (Part 1)

Q1. Who is considered the most important of Shakespeare's contemporaries in the annals of the stage?

A. Christopher Marlowe

B. Ben Jonson

C. John Webster

D. Francis Beaumont

Answer: B

Q2. Why were the aims and principles of Ben Jonson's work fundamentally different from Shakespeare's?

A. He only wrote tragedies

B. He took Latin comedy as his model and repudiated the lawlessness of romantic drama

C. He wrote entirely in French

D. He refused to write for the stage

Answer: B

Q3. Where was Ben Jonson educated, laying the foundation for his sound classical scholarship?

A. Oxford University

B. Cambridge University

C. Westminster Grammar School

D. Eton College

Answer: C

Q4. With what satiric comedy did Ben Jonson open his career as a dramatist in 1598?

A. Volpone

B. The Alchemist

C. Every Man in his Humour

D. Sejanus

Answer: C

Q5. What happened to Jonson's fortunes with the accession of Charles I?

A. He became the richest man in England

B. A decline set in; he suffered neglect, poverty, and ill-health

C. He was crowned King of Ireland

D. He moved to America

Answer: B

Q6. When did Ben Jonson die?

A. 1616

B. 1625

C. 1637

D. 1642

Answer: C

Q7. Which group of Jonson's plays are described as very learned, very laborious, and very dull?

A. His court masques

B. His historical tragedies (Sejanus and Catiline)

C. His comedies

D. His sonnets

Answer: B

Q8. Which of the following is considered part of the best and most significant of Jonson's production?

A. The Alchemist, Volpone, and Epicoene

B. Sejanus and Catiline

C. Hamlet and Macbeth

D. The Faerie Queene

Answer: A

Q9. Unlike the world of romance in Shakespeare's comedies, what world does Jonson depict as a realist?

A. Ancient Greece

B. Contemporary London life

C. Mythological forests

D. Feudal France

Answer: B

Q10. In addition to depicting to amuse, what is Jonson's aim regarding the moral functions of the stage?

A. To encourage rebellion

B. To correct and teach (didactic realism)

C. To promote paganism

D. To eliminate all religion

Answer: B

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 14)

Page 69 - Ben Jonson (Part 2) & Other Dramatists

Q1. On what idea is Jonson's characterization based?

A. That men are complex and unpredictable

B. That each man is possessed and governed by some one particular quality or 'master passion'

C. That everyone is entirely good or entirely evil

D. That characters must be based on real historical kings

Answer: B

Q2. What does Jonson call this 'master passion' that he builds a character out of?

A. A humor

B. A conceit

C. A tragedy

D. A virtue

Answer: A

Q3. Reverting to the old morality method, what does Jonson often do with his characters?

A. He makes them all animals

B. He labels them with names that indicate their special 'humours' (e.g., Sir Epicure Mammon)

C. He refuses to name them

D. He makes them all ghosts

Answer: B

Q4. Which of the following describes the nature of Jonson's comedies?

A. Full of spontaneous charm and magic

B. Products of learning, skill, and conscientious effort where intellect predominates

C. Written entirely in rhymed verse

D. Light, airy, and romantic

Answer: B

Q5. Historically, Ben Jonson is extremely important as the real founder of what?

A. The romantic drama

B. The Comedy of Manners

C. The historical chronicle play

D. The mystery play

Answer: B

Q6. Which lesser playwright was a dramatist of sombre cast of genius whose love of the violent often led to sensationalism?

A. John Fletcher

B. John Webster

C. Philip Massinger

D. James Shirley

Answer: B

Q7. Name two famous plays by John Webster containing scenes of tragic passion unrivalled outside Shakespeare.

A. The White Devil and Duchess of Malfi

B. Philaster and The Maid's Tragedy

C. The Broken Heart

D. A New Way to Pay Old Debts

Answer: A

Q8. Which playwright showed a similar tendency towards repulsive subjects but used pathos in works like 'The Broken Heart'?

A. John Ford

B. Francis Beaumont

C. John Fletcher

D. James Shirley

Answer: A

Q9. Which two playwrights are almost always associated because they did much work in collaboration?

A. Webster and Ford

B. Beaumont and Fletcher

C. Massinger and Shirley

D. Sackville and Norton

Answer: B

Q10. Which play by Philip Massinger reached a high level in comedy?

A. The Maid's Tragedy

B. A New Way to Pay Old Debts

C. The White Devil

D. Philaster

Answer: B

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 14)

Page 70 - End of the Drama & Playhouses (Part 1)

Q1. Who was referred to by Charles Lamb as 'the last of a great race' of dramatists, belonging to Charles I's reign?

A. John Ford

B. James Shirley

C. John Webster

D. Philip Massinger

Answer: B

Q2. What becomes apparent in the dramatists by the time we reach the end of this period?

A. The drama reaches its absolute pinnacle of perfection

B. The decline of the drama; old creative power is gone and the stage yields to immorality

C. Playwrights stop writing tragedies

D. All plays become strictly religious again

Answer: B

Q3. In the early years of the regular drama, where had plays typically been performed?

A. In massive stone amphitheaters

B. In inn yards and other open spaces

C. Exclusively inside churches

D. Only inside the King's palace

Answer: B

Q4. When were the first two permanent playhouses built in London?

A. 1500

B. 1564

C. 1576

D. 1616

Answer: C

Q5. What were the names of these first two permanent playhouses?

A. The Globe and The Swan

B. The Theatre and the Curtain

C. The Rose and The Hope

D. The Blackfriars and The Red Bull

Answer: B

Q6. Why were the playhouses not built within the boundaries of London proper?

A. There was no space left

B. The civic authorities would not permit their erection within their boundaries

C. They wanted to be closer to the King's palace

D. It was too expensive

Answer: B

Q7. By the end of Elizabeth's reign, at least how many playhouses were in existence?

A. Two

B. Five

C. Eleven

D. Twenty

Answer: C

Q8. With which two playhouses was Shakespeare very closely connected?

A. The Theatre and the Curtain

B. The Globe and the Blackfriars

C. The Swan and The Rose

D. The Hope and the Fortune

Answer: B

Q9. Why were actors forced to enroll themselves in companies as 'servants' of influential patrons?

A. To receive a royal salary

B. In order to avoid being treated as 'rogues and vagabonds'

C. Because they were legally slaves

D. To avoid paying taxes

Answer: B

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 14)

Q10. What company did Shakespeare belong to?

A. The Queen's Players

B. The Lord Admiral's Servants

C. Lord Leicester's Servants (afterwards the Lord Chamberlain's)

D. The Earl of Oxford's Men

Answer: C

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 14)

Page 71 - Playhouses (Part 2)

Q1. What was the shape and primary building material of these early playhouses?

A. Square and made of stone

B. Round or hexagonal, mainly of wood

C. Triangular and made of brick

D. Rectangular and made of glass

Answer: B

Q2. How much of the playhouse was roofed in with thatch?

A. The entire building

B. None of it

C. Only the stage and the boxes (the rest was open to the sky)

D. Only the 'yard' or pit

Answer: C

Q3. Who frequented the boxes or 'rooms'?

A. The 'groundlings'

B. The wealthier and more aristocratic play-goers

C. The actors

D. The musicians only

Answer: B

Q4. Where did the 'groundlings' watch the play?

A. In the boxes

B. On the stage

C. In the 'yard' or pit, where no seats were provided

D. Outside the theater

Answer: C

Q5. How much movable painted scenery was used on the Shakespearean stage?

A. None, it was practically nonexistent until after the Commonwealth

B. Extensive, highly detailed backdrops

C. Scenery was used but only for comedies

D. They used projected images

Answer: A

Q6. How did the audience know where a scene was supposed to be laid?

A. The actors handed out printed maps

B. Through descriptive passages in the dialogue and placards hung out (e.g., 'This is a wood')

C. By the color of the actors' costumes

D. A narrator read the scene locations before the play began

Answer: B

Q7. What was the small structure at the back of the stage (balcony and open space beneath) used for?

A. Serving food to the groundlings

B. The balcony stood for an elevated place (walls, upper house); space beneath for interior scenes

C. Storing the horses

D. Hiding the Queen

Answer: B

Q8. When did performances generally begin and how long did they last?

A. 9 AM, lasting all day

B. Midnight, lasting 4 hours

C. About three in the afternoon, lasting some two hours

D. Sunset, lasting until dawn

Answer: C

Q9. Who played women's parts on the Shakespearean stage?

A. Famous actresses from France

B. The playwrights themselves

C. Boys and young men specially trained for the purpose

D. Women, but only in comedies

Answer: C

Q10. Did everyone prefer women acting once they finally appeared on English boards after the Restoration?

History of English Literature - Important MCQs (Part 14)

A. Yes, everyone immediately loved it

B. No, some people like the diarist Pepys regretted the change from boy actresses

C. Women were banned again shortly after

D. No one noticed the change

Answer: B