

SYMPHONY OF VERSE

MODULE 1

SECTION A

1. What do you know about the woman addressed in Spenser's sonnet sequence?
2. What is meant by "made my paynes his pray"?
3. Why does the poet's beloved call him "vayne man"?
4. How does the poet intend to save his beloved from decay?
5. What impression of the beloved's physical appearance do you get from Sonnet 130?
6. How are the breath and voice of the beloved described in Sonnet 130?
7. Explain the line "As any she belied with false compare."
8. What is the effect of the concluding couplet in Sonnet 130?
9. How is the rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet different from the other two types?
10. Whom does the speaker address in the first line of the poem "The Canonization"?
11. How do the lovers give meaning to the phoenix riddle?
12. What are the 'pretty rooms' that the lovers will build?
13. How will the lovers be remembered in the poem "The Canonization"?
14. What is the prayer addressed to the lovers?
15. What is a metaphysical conceit?
16. What does the poet mean by "disturb your season due"?
17. Explain the line "that last infirmity of noble mind",
18. What does the expression "blind mouths" signify?
19. How are the clergy compared to bad shepherds? How does this bring form and theme together?
20. With what hope does the mourner end his words?
21. Comment on the line "tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new".
22. Comment on the expression "the diapason closing full in Man."
23. Why did Jubal's brethren fall on their faces?"
24. What is the miracle associated with St. Cecilia?
25. What is meant by "this crumbling pageant"?
26. Write a brief note on the second of Dryden's odes for St. Cecilia's day.

SECTION B

27. Write a note on the development of ideas in Spenser's sonnet.
28. What sort of immortality does the poet seek for his beloved in Spenser's sonnet?
29. Write a note on the conventional Elizabethan love lyric.
30. What do you know about Shakespeare's sonnet sequence?
31. Write a short note on the structure of Sonnet 130.
32. Examine the images that Shakespeare uses in Sonnet 130.
33. Comment on the first stanza of the poem "The Canonization".

34. Examine the lines in which the speaker refuses to use conventional hyperbole to describe his love.
35. What are the metaphors used to describe the lovers and their relationship in "The Canonization".?
36. How will the lovers attain sainthood?
37. What are the mourner's thoughts about fame?
38. What features of the traditional pastoral elegy are seen in poem?
39. Write a note on Samuel Johnson's criticism of Lycidas.
40. Comment on the mixing of Christian and pagan images in the poem.
41. How does Milton allegorise his friendship with King?
42. How is the act of creation visualised in the poem 'A Song for St. Cecilia's day'?
43. How does Dryden elaborate on the idea that music can both stir passions and calm them?
44. Write a note on the structure of the poem 'A Song for St. Cecilia's day'.
45. Elucidate the ancient concept of the music of the spheres.

SECTION C

46. Discuss Spenser's sonnet as a celebration of love's fulfillment.
47. Examine the idealisation of the beloved in Spenser's sonnet.
48. Examine Sonnet 130 as a love lyric.
49. Explain how Shakespeare uses irony as an instrument of both ridicule and praise in Sonnet 130.
50. Discuss the characteristic features of Metaphysical poetry with reference to "The Canonization."
51. In Donne's poetry erotic love is often given a spiritual dimension. How is this achieved in "The Canonization"?
52. The elegy is a conscious work of art, and not a spontaneous expression of sorrow. Substantiate with reference to "Lycidas".
53. How would you justify the digressions in "Lycidas"?
54. What characteristic features of the ode are seen in the poem 'A Song for St. Cecilia's day'?
55. How does Dryden blend classical learning and Christian faith in the poem?

MODULE 2

SECTION A

56. How did the poet know about Lucy?
57. How does the poet suggest that Lucy was happy in her solitude?
58. Why does Lucy have to go into the storm?
59. Why do Lucy's parents conclude that she is dead?
60. What do some say about Lucy's disappearance?
61. What is a ballad?

62. Why does Christabel go out into the woods at midnight?
63. What story does the strange lady tell about herself in 'Christabel'?
64. What are the first indications of Geraldine's evil nature?
65. How is Christabel's chamber described?
66. Which is the supernatural presence, that Geraldine, indicated in the poem?
67. How does Geraldine lay a spell upon Christabel and what will its effect be?
68. Why are the leaves compared to "pestilence-stricken multitudes"?
69. Explain the line "Driving sweet buds...air."
70. What does the 'sleep' of the Mediterranean signify?
71. What are the "tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean"?
72. How does the poet portray himself in the poem 'Ode to the West Wind'?
73. Comment on the last line of the poem 'Ode to the West Wind'.
74. What is the conspiracy that Keats describes?
75. Why do the bees think that warm days will never cease?
76. "Where are the songs...music too." Comment on these lines.
77. What are the songs of the autumn?
78. What are "stubble-plains"?
79. What does the poet mean by "full-grown lambs"?

SECTION B

80. How does Wordsworth sketch the character of Lucy Gray?
81. What picture of rustic life does the poem "Lucy Gray" present?
82. Comment on the diction of "Lucy Gray".
83. Write a brief note on Wordsworth's Lucy Poems.
84. How does Coleridge build up an atmosphere of vague horror in the poem?
85. What is Christabel's attitude towards her father?
86. Examine the stereotypes of the feminine in the poem 'Christabel'.
87. Does Christabel go through a loss of innocence?
88. How does the poet establish the image of the West Wind as Destroyer and Preserver?
89. Write a note on Shelley's imaginative description of the stormy sky?
90. Elucidate the symbolism of the West Wind's effect on the ocean.
91. Examine the profusion of imagery in the poem "Ode to the West Wind". What purpose does this serve?
92. Examine the structural features of the poem "To Autumn" .
93. In what sense is the first stanza a celebration of nature's plenty in the poem "To Autumn"?
94. How are human beings and their activities presented in the poem "To Autumn" ?
95. Examine the understated sense of loss in the third stanza in the poem "To Autumn".

SECTION C

96. Lucy Gray's death is seen as a return to nature. Discuss.
97. Examine the poem "Lucy Gray" as a literary ballad.

98. Narrate the story of Christabel's encounter with the strange lady bringing out the elements of medievalism.
99. Examine the psychological symbolism in the poem "Christabel".
100. How does the poem give us a glimpse into Shelley's temperament and philosophy?
101. What features of the ode are evident in "Ode to the West Wind"?
102. There is a sustained personification of autumn in the poem. How is this achieved and what is its effect?
103. The underlying theme of "To Autumn" is the transitory nature of life. Discuss.

MODULE 3

SECTION A

104. What attitude towards human relationships is seen in the first lines of Ulysses's speech?
105. How does Ulysses describe his early adventures?
106. "To follow knowledge...thought." Comment on the metaphor used.
107. What are the common duties described in the poem "Ulysses"?
108. How does Ulysses describe his mariners?
109. Comment on the last line of the poem "Ulysses".
110. What is the speaker's attitude to nature, as revealed in his monologue in "Porphyria's Lover."?
111. How does the speaker describe Porphyria's mental conflict?
112. Where did Porphyria come from and why did she come, according to the speaker?
113. "I found a thing to do." Comment on the understatement in this line.
114. Examine the speaker's description of Porphyria's death.
115. How does the speaker describe the night "Dover Beach"?
116. How does the tranquil mood at the beginning of the poem "Dover Beach" change to one of sadness?
117. What thought does the sound of the waves in "Dover Beach" bring to the speaker?
118. What does "the Sea of Faith" refer to?
119. What is the significance of 'night' and 'day' in the poem "A Hope Carol"?
120. Comment on the phrase "a rising falling tune".
121. What is the significance of the expression "my birds" in "A Hope Carol"?
122. What does the poet mean by "all voices that command or pray"?

SECTION B

123. What is the source of Ulysses's discontent?
124. What picture of himself does Ulysses project?

125. Is an ironic interpretation of "Ulysses" possible? Substantiate your answer.
126. Discuss Ulysses's attitude towards his wife and his son.
127. Write a note on the speaker's characterization of Porphyria.
128. Why is the speaker convinced that Porphyria loves him?
129. Comment on the last line of the poem "Porphyria's Lover."
130. Name another poem by Browning dealing with possessiveness leading to murder, and write a brief note on it.
131. What are the elements of romantic melancholy in the poem "Dover Beach".
132. Comment on the image of the sea in the poem "Dover Beach".
133. The thoughts that the sound of waves brings to Sophocles and to Arnold are different. How are they different?
134. Comment on the metaphor of the battle by night in "Dover Beach".
135. Who is the speaker probably talking to, and how is this suggested in "Dover Beach"?
136. Comment on the imagery of light, sound, space and time in the poem "A Hope Carol".
137. Elucidate the religious symbolism in the poem "A Hope Carol".
138. Is there a note of sadness in the poem "A Hope Carol".
139. What is the Pre-Raphaelite movement? Can its influence be seen in this poem "A Hope Carol"?

SECTION C

140. To the Victorian audience, Tennyson's Ulysses became a cultural icon. What could be the reason for this?
141. Bring out the melancholy mood that runs through the poem "Ulysses".
142. How has Browning utilized the dramatic monologue form to skillfully depict an abnormal state of mind?
143. Attempt a feminist interpretation of "Porphyria's Lover."
144. Discuss "Dover Beach" as a statement of Victorian agnosticism.
145. Examine the theme of romantic love in the poem "Dover Beach".
146. Discuss the note of mysticism in the poem "A Hope Carol".
147. Can the poem "A Hope Carol" be read as an expression of a woman's search for self-fulfillment?

MODULE 4

SECTION A

148. Whom did the poet meet "at the close of the day"?
149. What is meant by the term "polite meaningless words"?
150. Who is referred to as "that woman" in the poem "Easter 1916"?
151. What does the poet mean when he says "they dreamed and are dead"?
152. What is the "love" portrayed in the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"?
153. Who are referred to as "they" in the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"?

154. How did the poet show the libidinal fetishism of the narrator in the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"?
155. What is the meaning of the reference "patient etherized upon a table"?
156. What is unique about the day of Whitsun?
157. What is the special panoramic view seen during the train journey?
158. What is the first thing that strikes the speaker about the weddings?
159. What are the "whoops and skirls" in the poem?
160. Who is referred as Herr Enemy?
161. What is the "trash" that the poet refers to when she says "what a trash/ to annihilate each decade"?
162. What does the poet mean by "it" in the line "I have done it again"?
163. Why does the poet refer to Lucifer and God as Herr?

SECTION B

164. What is the "casual comedy" that Yeats refers to in the poem?
165. What is suggested by the refrain "a terrible beauty is born"?
166. Which is the historical context that led to the composition of "Easter 1916"?
167. Who are the revolutionaries recalled in the poem "Easter 1916"?
168. Comment on the use of symbols in the poem "Easter 1916".
169. How does the poet portray the change that happened to Constance Markievicz?
170. Bring out the Biblical imagery in the Poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock".
171. What are the images of decay that T. S. Eliot uses in the poem?
172. Find out the elements of symbolism in the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock".
173. Why is the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" referred to as anti-romantic?
174. Write a short essay on the juxtapositions in the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"?
175. Write a short note on the epigraph of the poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock".
176. What are the things that the poet notices during the train journey on Whitsun day?
177. What is common to the mothers of all the brides?
178. What happens as the train approaches London?
179. What is the change the poem celebrates as it closes in the poem "The Whitsun Weddings"?
180. How is the scepticism of the Movement Poetry evident in the poem "The Whitsun Weddings"?
181. Write a short note on the similes and metaphors used in the poem "Lady Lazarus".
182. Bring out the images of the Holocaust in the poem "Lady Lazarus".
183. Why does the poet always refer to death as "it" in the poem "Lady Lazarus"?

184. Consider the poem "Lady Lazarus" as a confessional poem.

SECTION C

185. Why does Yeats use an ambivalent tone in the poem "Easter 1916"?
186. What features of Modernist poetry can be found in the poem "Easter 1916"?
187. How does T. S. Eliot portray the fragmentary nature of modern man through the poem?
188. Consider "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" as a modern dramatic monologue.
189. What does the narrator experience on the day of Whitsun Weddings?
190. How does the poem take on a sense of magic as the weddings take place?
191. How far does Sylvia Plath succeed in portraying the hide and seek of life and death in the poem "Lady Lazarus"?
192. How does Sylvia Plath portray the decay of the twentieth century in the poem?

MODULE 5

SECTION A

193. Comment on the line "A woman beyond her change of life".
194. Why is Australia called a young country?
195. Why does the poet say "the womb is dry"?
196. Who are the "ultimate men"?
197. Who are "the second hand Europeans"?
198. How does the poet compare herself with the other pretty women in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
199. How does the poet describe her body in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
200. Who are compared to 'a hive of honey bees'?
201. Why do the men "stand or fall down on their knees"?
202. How does the poet use sound patterns in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
203. Why does the poet compare the pen to a gun?
204. What does the term 'turf' mean?
205. What do you think the speaker's father and grandfather taught him about strength and skill?
206. What does "the old man" mean?
207. Comment on the title of the poem "Digging"
208. Who is the speaker of the poem "Stealing"?
209. What is the most unnatural thing that the speaker of the poem "Stealing" stole?
210. What is the social context of the poem "Stealing"?
211. Who is addressed as 'you' in the last line of the poem "Stealing"?

SECTION B

212. How does the poet describe the geography of Australia in the poem?
213. How are the cities described in the poem "Australia"?

214. Do you think that the poet's perspective in the poem "Australia" is unique? Substantiate your view.
215. Why does the poet bring in the image of the prophet towards the end of the poem "Australia"?
216. Bring out the irony of the word 'civilization' in the poem "Australia" ?
217. Write a short note on the images used in the poem "Australia" ?
218. Why does the poet use the technique of repetition in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
219. What is the mystery that the poet talks of in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
220. Why do others think that the poet is telling lies in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
221. Bring out the irony in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
222. How does the poet prove that looks alone do not define beauty in "Phenomenal woman"?
223. Why does the speaker think it is so important to follow in the footsteps of his father and his grandfathere in the poem "Digging"?
224. Does the speaker have a close relationship with his family in the poem "Digging"?
225. How does Heaney use different senses (sight, smell, sound or touch) to describe the natural world in the poem?
226. Do you think that the speaker's work as a writer involves nature or excludes it in the poem "Digging"?
227. Heaney sees his father as a craftsman teaching the young poet-to-be that the artist express himself through his work. Substantiate.
228. Why does the poet say "Life's tough"?
229. How is the delinquent described in the poem "Stealing"?
230. Why did the ghost want to boot the man again and again?
231. Write a short note on the structure of the poem "Stealing".
232. How does the speaker of the poem feel the snow man?

SECTION C

233. Write an essay on the sarcastic tone of the poem "Australia".
234. Attempt a postcolonial reading of the poem "Australia".
235. How does the poet prove that she is a "phenomenal woman"?
236. How does the poet challenge the stereotypical notions of beauty and womanhood in the poem "Phenomenal woman"?
237. What does the speaker hope to dig for with his pen? Is the poem a search for the past or for truth?
238. How does the background of the poet's life affect the general tone of the poem "Digging"?
239. How far does Carol Ann Duffy succeed in breaking the traditions both literary and cultural through her poem?
240. Consider the poem "Stealing" as a critique of capitalism and social structure

