

English 12A: British Literature and Composition
Fall 2008 Test Review
Evolution: Development of the English Language & British Literature

History of the English Language:

- Indo-European language families
especially Germanic, Italic, Celtic
- three forms of English language and their dates
Old (450-1100), Middle (1100-1500), Modern (1500-present)
- influence of cultural and military invasions
Celts, Romans, Angles & Saxons, Vikings & Danes, French Normans
- significance of historical events
Battle of Hastings, the Norman Conquest, the Crusades, the Black Death, Hundred Years' War, Renaissance, exploration, invention of printing press, British colonization
- social & economic class distinction evident in English vocabulary
basic concepts; animals and food; government, military, and legal terms
- cultural borrowing in Modern English

Etymology:

- the evolution of words
- reading and interpreting a dictionary entry

Literary Periods:

- names and dates of periods
- central thematic concepts
- major political and social influences
- literary works and authors

In-class writing prompt choices:

1. In what ways is Norman French culture revealed in the vocabulary introduced during the Middle English period?
2. What distinct types of vocabulary did the developments that began with the Renaissance movement contribute to Modern English?
3. How do the three forms of English reveal the adaptability of the language?
4. What do the types of words introduced during the Old English period reveal about the lives of the people of the time?
5. What do the words for animals and food, which derive from different forms of the English language, suggest about social class stratification in the Middle Ages?