

# **GRADE 10 ORAL EXAM STUDY GUIDE**

## **TENTH GRADE HUMANE LETTERS ORAL EXAM**

Prepare for your oral exam by reviewing and revisiting your studies in light of the following questions. These questions are designed to aid you and will be used as starting points for your exam.

Prepare at least one question from the history and political theory sections and 2 or 3 from the literature section by using concrete, specific, numerous examples from the texts and history we have studied.

### **History:**

1. You will be asked to explain the significance of 6 of the following dates: 1215, 1517, 1689, 1789, 1815, 1848, 1871, 1914, 1917, and 1939. It is not enough to identify the event concurrent with the date (i.e., “The Magna Carta was signed in 1215). You also need to explain why the event is significant.
2. What impact did the Reformation have on the social and political life of Europe? (i.e., on history?) The French Revolution? German and Italian Unification? The Industrial Revolution? The World Wars? Which one, in your opinion, represents the greatest break between what came before and what came after – or, to put the question differently, when did Modern Europe really begin?

### **Political Philosophy:**

1. How does the answer you give to the question, “What is man’s nature?” dictate the possible answers to the question, “How should we govern ourselves?” How do the texts we have read answer these questions?
2. Compare and contrast the British and Continental traditions regarding the nature and purpose of government. For the British Tradition, you may use Magna Carta, Model Parliaments, Bill of Rights (1689), Locke, Burke, and Churchill. For the Continental Tradition, use Hobbes, Rousseau, Robespierre, Fichte, Marx, Lenin, Hitler, and Mussolini.

### **Literature:**

1. Choose one longer poem (i.e., more than a page) or two shorter poems (e.g., two sonnets) and explain a) what the poem communicates and b) how the poem uses images, rhyme schemes, meter, allusions, etc., to communicate this.
2. Review the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of the literature we read this year. Then pick 2- 3 questions from the following pages and delve into them more substantially.

## Literature Questions:

### Crime and Punishment

- p. 516- “He posed the question in anguish, and failed to understand that even as he had looked down into the river he had perhaps sensed a profound lie within himself and in his convictions. He did not understand that this feeling might have been a token of the future break in his life, of his future resurrections, his future new view of life.” What is this question? Has he asked it before? If so, in what context? What is the lie within his convictions? Where do you see it playing itself out? How might it be the token for his future life?
- Why does Raskolnikov keep second guessing his acts of compassion? What is going on inside of him in these moments?
- What does Raskolnikov mean by “scoundrel”? What does Svidrigailov mean by scoundrel? Are they the same definition?

### A Man for All Seasons

- Why does More cry out “oh these plain and simple men!” while in jail? To whom is he referring and what is his frustration?
- Why does Norfolk take the oath? What is his perspective? Why does he give the advice he does to More? Is he on to something?
- What kind of statesman do Cromwell and Wolsey think More should be? What kind of statesman does More think he should be? Explain his reasoning. Do you find yourself persuaded by one or the other?
- How does More see man’s law and his responsibility? How is this view similar or different to Roper’s view or Rich’s view of law?

### A Tale of Two Cities

- Consider the title of this story. In what way is this book a story of two cities? Look at these cities in light of the following: their crowds? Poverty? Gentry? Peasants? Legal systems? Given all of this, what, if anything, is the Manette family to these two cities?
- In the beginning of Book 1, Chapter 3 ("The Night Shadows"), the narrator expounds upon the following: "[it is] A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other." By the end of the story, which characters have (Manette, Madame DeFarge, and Sydney Carton, to name a few) have kept profound secrets within themselves or have kept large parts of themselves hidden. How are they changed by the secrets of themselves and others, consider the following: Is this profoundly secret nature a blessing or a curse to the other characters in the story? How does this inwardness bring life or death, suffering or redemption?

### Pride and Prejudice

- Look at Mr. Collins's wedding proposal to Elizabeth and then look at Mr. Darcy's wedding proposal to Elizabeth. Why did she refuse them both? Are there any similarities in their proposals? Fundamental ways they are different? Does she refuse them for the same reasons? If so, explain. If not, explain.
- What is Elizabeth's vision of a true gentleman? What is she expecting? Why doesn't Darcy fit that definition? Does she see anyone else as fitting her view? Does her definition change, does Darcy change, or something else?
- In the same vein, what is Darcy's definition of a truly accomplished lady? Does he see anyone fitting his view? Does anyone else share his definition? If so, how, if at all, does it define how they relate to others?
- Elizabeth tells Jane, "there are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well. The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it; and every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters, and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of either merit or sense." (117) Paraphrase the view of the world Elizabeth propounds here. To what/whom is she referring? What does she want to see in the world? Does she act on this belief? Does she have some legitimate reason for this belief? What does Jane think of the world? Does Jane see the world more clearly? Why or why not?

### Animal Farm

- How does Squealer work on the animal's memory? What purpose does it serve?
- "All men are enemies. All animals are comrades." What is Old Major's reasoning for this? Is the principle the same at the end of the novel? How and why does it change?

### One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

- Detail the many slights and outright injustices perpetrated against the prisoners by those who administer the labor camp, ranging from petty inconveniences, to blind neglect, to the criminal. Why do these men do these things to those they guard? What is the "code" they all live by, prisoners and guards alike?
- Which events in Shukhov's day bear witness to his dignity as a human being and which represent the greatest infringements on his dignity?