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UGC NET Paper 2

English (030)

Complete revision notes — all 10 units

10 units | Tables & formulas | Key revision points

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02 Poetry

03 Fiction and Short Story

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05 Language: Concepts, Theories and Pedagogy

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07 Cultural Studies

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How to use these notes

- Read one unit at a time, then test yourself with its key revision points.
- Make your own short notes on topics you find difficult.
- Units follow the main areas of the official syllabus — the exact unit list can change between sessions.
- Always check the latest syllabus and notices on the official UGC NET portal: **ugcnet.nta.ac.in**.

UNIT 01

Drama

Major periods and dramatists from the Elizabethans to the modern stage.

English drama runs from medieval mystery plays to the Theatre of the Absurd.

Period	Dramatists and works
Medieval	Mystery, miracle and morality plays (*Everyman*)
Elizabethan / Jacobean	Marlowe (*Doctor Faustus*), Shakespeare, Ben Jonson (*Volpone*, comedy of humours), Webster (*The Duchess of Malfi*)
Restoration	Comedy of manners — Congreve (*The Way of the World*), Wycherley
18th century	Goldsmith (*She Stoops to Conquer*), Sheridan (*The School for Scandal*)
Modern	Shaw (*Pygmalion*), Wilde, Eliot (*Murder in the Cathedral*), Osborne (*Look Back in Anger*, 1956 — 'angry young men')
Absurd	Beckett (*Waiting for Godot*), Pinter (comedy of menace), Ionesco

Shakespeare at a glance

Tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth. **Comedies:** Twelfth Night, As You Like It, A Midsummer Night's Dream. **Romances:** The Tempest, The Winter's Tale. **Histories:** Henry IV, Richard II.

Key terms: **hamartia** (tragic flaw), **catharsis**, **soliloquy**, **dramatic irony**.

★ Key revision points

- Comedy of humours = Ben Jonson.
- Comedy of manners = Restoration (Congreve).
- *Look Back in Anger* (1956) = Osborne.
- *Waiting for Godot* = Beckett (Absurd).

UNIT 02

Poetry

Poets and movements from Chaucer to the moderns.

> English poetry is often studied by age and movement.

Age / movement	Poets and works
Age of Chaucer	*The Canterbury Tales* — 'father of English poetry'
Renaissance	Spenser (*The Faerie Queene*), Sidney
Metaphysical	John Donne, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert — conceits, wit
Puritan	Milton (*Paradise Lost*, 12 books)
Neoclassical	Dryden, Pope (*The Rape of the Lock*) — heroic couplet
Romantic	Wordsworth and Coleridge (*Lyrical Ballads*, 1798), Byron, Shelley, Keats
Victorian	Tennyson (*In Memoriam*), Browning (dramatic monologue), Arnold
Modern	Yeats, T. S. Eliot (*The Waste Land*, 1922), Auden

Forms: sonnet (Petrarchan and Shakespearean), ode, elegy, ballad, epic, dramatic monologue, free verse.

★ Key revision points

- *Lyrical Ballads* 1798 began English Romanticism.
- Metaphysical poets: Donne, Marvell, Herbert.
- Dramatic monologue = Browning.
- *The Waste Land*: 1922.

UNIT 03

Fiction and Short Story

The rise and development of the English novel and short story.

> The English novel rose in the 18th century and became the dominant form of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Phase	Novelists
Rise of the novel	Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*), Richardson (*Pamela*), Fielding (*Tom Jones*), Sterne
Romantic / Regency	Jane Austen, Walter Scott (historical novel)
Victorian	Dickens, the Brontës, George Eliot (*Middlemarch*), Thomas Hardy
Modernist	Joyce (*Ulysses*), Woolf (*Mrs Dalloway*) — stream of consciousness; Conrad, Lawrence
Postcolonial / contemporary	Achebe, Rushdie (*Midnight's Children*), Naipaul, Ishiguro

Indian English fiction: Mulk Raj Anand (*Untouchable*), R. K. Narayan (Malgudi), Raja Rao (*Kanthapura*), Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things*), Amitav Ghosh.

Short story: Poe, Chekhov, Maupassant, O. Henry, Katherine Mansfield.

★ Key revision points

- Stream of consciousness: Joyce, Woolf.
- Historical novel = Walter Scott.
- Malgudi = R. K. Narayan.
- *Kanthapura* = Raja Rao.

UNIT 04

Non-Fictional Prose

Essayists and prose writers from Bacon to the moderns.

Non-fiction prose includes essays, criticism, biography, letters and journalism.

Writer	Known for
Francis Bacon	*Essays* — 'father of the English essay'
Addison and Steele	*The Tatler* and *The Spectator* periodical essays
Samuel Johnson	*A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755); *Lives of the Poets*
James Boswell	*The Life of Samuel Johnson*
Charles Lamb	*Essays of Elia*
Hazlitt, De Quincey	Romantic essays; *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*
Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold	Victorian social and cultural criticism

★ **Key revision points**

- Bacon = father of the English essay.
- *The Spectator* = Addison and Steele.
- Johnson's Dictionary: 1755.
- *Essays of Elia* = Lamb.

UNIT 05

Language: Concepts, Theories and Pedagogy

Linguistics basics, theories of language acquisition and approaches to English language teaching.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language; pedagogy applies it to teaching.

- **Saussure:** langue / parole; signifier / signified. **Chomsky:** competence / performance; Universal Grammar; Language Acquisition Device.
- Levels: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics.
- **Krashen:** input hypothesis (i + 1), acquisition vs learning, affective filter.

Method / approach	Feature
Grammar-translation	Rules and translation; little speaking
Direct method	Target language only
Audio-lingual	Drills and habit formation (behaviourism)
Communicative language teaching	Meaningful communication; Hymes' communicative competence
Task-based learning	Learning through real tasks

★ **Key revision points**

- Langue/parole = Saussure.
- Competence/performance = Chomsky.
- i + 1 = Krashen.
- Communicative competence = Hymes.

UNIT 06

English in India

History, evolution and future of English in India.

English came with the East India Company and became a language of administration, education and opportunity.

- **Macaulay's Minute (1835)** favoured English education; **Wood's Despatch (1854)** extended it.
- The first Indian universities — Calcutta, Bombay and Madras — were founded in 1857.
- The Constitution made English an associate official language; the **three-language formula** came from the Kothari Commission era.
- Indian English has its own features in sounds, vocabulary and idiom; it is one of the 'World Englishes' (Kachru's outer circle).

★ Key revision points

- Macaulay's Minute: 1835.
- Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras: 1857.
- Kachru: inner, outer, expanding circles.
- India is in the outer circle.

UNIT 07

Cultural Studies

Origins, key thinkers and concepts of cultural studies.

> Cultural studies examines how culture produces meaning and power in everyday life.

Thinker	Idea
Raymond Williams	'Culture is ordinary'; structures of feeling
Richard Hoggart	Founded the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1964)
Stuart Hall	Encoding/decoding; representation
Antonio Gramsci	Hegemony
Roland Barthes	*Mythologies* — everyday signs

★ Key revision points

- Birmingham CCCS: 1964, Hoggart.
- Encoding/decoding = Stuart Hall.
- Hegemony = Gramsci.
- 'Culture is ordinary' = Williams.

UNIT 08

Literary Criticism

Major critics from the classical age to the New Critics.

Literary criticism judges and interprets literature; its key texts span over two thousand years.

Critic	Work / idea
Plato	Poetry as imitation of an imitation
Aristotle	*Poetics* — mimesis, catharsis, hamartia, three unities
Longinus	*On the Sublime*
Philip Sidney	*An Apology for Poetry*
Dryden	*An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*
Wordsworth	Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* — 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'
Coleridge	*Biographia Literaria* — fancy vs imagination; 'willing suspension of disbelief'
Matthew Arnold	'Touchstone method'; poetry as 'criticism of life'
T. S. Eliot	'Tradition and the Individual Talent'; objective correlative
I. A. Richards; New Critics	Close reading; intentional and affective fallacies (Wimsatt and Beardsley)

★ Key revision points

- Catharsis = Aristotle's *Poetics*.
- Objective correlative = Eliot.
- Touchstone method = Arnold.
- Fancy vs imagination = Coleridge.

UNIT 09

Literary Theory after World War II

Structuralism, post-structuralism, Marxism, feminism, postcolonialism and other modern theories.

> Literary theory asks how meaning is made and whose interests texts serve.

Theory	Key thinkers and ideas
Structuralism	Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, early Barthes
Post-structuralism / deconstruction	Derrida — *différance*; Barthes — 'The Death of the Author'
Marxist	Lukács, Althusser (ideological state apparatuses), Jameson
Feminist	Woolf (*A Room of One's Own*), Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*), Showalter (gynocriticism), Gilbert and Gubar
Postcolonial	Said (*Orientalism*, 1978), Spivak ('Can the Subaltern Speak?'), Bhabha (hybridity)
New Historicism	Stephen Greenblatt
Reader-response	Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish (interpretive communities)
Ecocriticism	Literature and the environment

★ Key revision points

- *Différance* = Derrida.
- *Orientalism* (1978) = Said.
- Hybridity = Bhabha; subaltern = Spivak.
- New Historicism = Greenblatt.

UNIT 10

Research Methods and Materials in English

Research process, documentation styles and academic writing.

> Literary research builds an argument from primary texts and secondary criticism.

- **Primary sources** are the literary texts; **secondary sources** are criticism and scholarship about them.
- Process: topic → literature review → research question/thesis statement → reading and note-taking → drafting → documentation.
- Documentation: the **MLA Handbook** is standard in literary studies; APA and Chicago are also used.
- Ethics: avoid plagiarism; quote accurately and cite every source.

★ Key revision points

- MLA is the standard style in literary studies.
- Primary = the text; secondary = criticism.
- Every quotation needs a citation.
- A thesis statement states your argument.

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