

 CollegeBoard

**CLEP**<sup>®</sup>

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# CLEP Humanities

AT A GLANCE

## Description of the Examination

The Humanities examination tests general knowledge of literature, art, and music and the other performing arts. It is broad in its coverage, with questions on all periods and in many different fields: poetry, prose, philosophy, art, architecture, music, dance, theater, and film. The examination requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the humanities through recollection of specific information, comprehension and application of concepts, and analysis and interpretation of various works of art.

Because the exam is very broad in its coverage, it is unlikely that any one person will be well informed about all the fields it covers. The exam contains approximately 140 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored. Any time candidates spend on tutorials or providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time.

**Note:** This examination uses the chronological designations B.C.E. (before the common era) and C.E. (common era). These labels correspond to B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (anno Domini), which are used in some textbooks.

## Knowledge and Skills Required

Questions on the Humanities exam test the abilities listed below, in the approximate percentages indicated. Some questions may require more than one of the abilities.

- Knowledge of factual information (authors, works, etc.) (50% of the examination)
- Recognition of techniques such as rhyme scheme, medium, and matters of style, and the ability to identify them as characteristics of certain writers, artists, schools, or periods (30% of the examination)
- Understanding and interpretation of literary passages and art reproductions that are likely to be unfamiliar to most candidates (20% of the examination)

The subject matter of the Humanities examination is drawn from the following topics. The percentages next to the topics indicate the approximate percentages of exam questions on those topics.

## 50% LITERATURE

- 10% Drama
- 10%–15% Poetry
- 15%–20% Fiction
- 10% Nonfiction (including philosophy)

## 50% THE ARTS

- 20% Visual arts: painting, sculpture, etc.
- 5% Visual arts: architecture
- 15% Performing arts: music
- 10% Performing arts: film, dance, etc.

The exam questions, drawn from the entire history of art and culture, are divided fairly evenly among the following periods: Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance, 17th and 18th centuries, 19th century, and 20th and 21st centuries. At least 5%–10% of the questions draw on other cultures, such as African, Asian, and Latin American. Some questions cross disciplines and/or chronological periods, and a substantial number test knowledge of terminology, genre, and style.

**Note:** Although the image that accompanies one of the questions in this guide is printed in black and white, any works that are reproduced in the actual test will be in color.

## Study Resources

To do well on the Humanities exam, you should know something about each of the forms of literature and fine arts from the various periods and cultures listed above. It may also be helpful to refer to college textbooks, supplementary reading, and references for introductory courses in literature and fine arts at the college level. A recent survey conducted by CLEP® found that the following textbooks and online resource are among those used by college faculty who teach the equivalent course. You might find one or more of these online or at your local college bookstore. HINT: Look at the table of contents first to make sure it matches the knowledge and skills required for the CLEP exam.

Adams, <i>Exploring the Humanities</i> (Prentice Hall)
Benton and DiYanni, <i>Arts and Culture: An Introduction to the Humanities</i> (Prentice Hall)
Bishop, <i>Adventures in the Human Spirit</i> (Prentice Hall)
Cunningham, <i>Culture and Values: A Survey of the Humanities</i> (Wadsworth)
Fiero, <i>The Humanistic Tradition</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Martin, <i>Humanities Through the Arts</i> (McGraw-Hill)
Sayre, <i>The Humanities: Culture, Continuity, and Change</i> , Vols. I and II (Prentice Hall)
Witt et al., <i>The Humanities</i> (Houghton Mifflin)

## ONLINE RESOURCES:

Free online CLEP Humanities course by Modern States Education Alliance ([modernstates.org/course/humanities-2](http://modernstates.org/course/humanities-2))

[listeningtowords.com/index.php](http://listeningtowords.com/index.php) (Listening to Words: find, listen to, and discuss free lectures from around the web).

Although "Listening to Words" wasn't designed specifically for CLEP exams, you may find some of the information helpful as you prepare for your test.

Combined with reading, a lively interest in the arts (going to museums and concerts, attending plays, seeing motion pictures, watching public television programs such as *Great Performances* and *Masterpiece Theatre*, and listening to radio stations that play classical music and feature discussions of the arts) constitutes excellent preparation.

Visit [clep.collegeboard.org/earn-college-credit/practice](http://clep.collegeboard.org/earn-college-credit/practice) for additional resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *CLEP Official Study Guide*. In addition, many college faculty post their course materials on their schools' websites.

## Sample Questions

The following sample questions do not appear on an actual CLEP examination. They are intended to give potential test takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the examination and to provide content for practice and review. For more sample questions and information about the test, see the *CLEP Official Study Guide*.

- The musical term for gradually increasing loudness is
  - obligato
  - ritardando
  - allegretto
  - crescendo
  - riff
- In ancient Greek drama, the primary purpose of the chorus was to
  - comment on events
  - signal the start of the performance
  - provide comic relief
  - provide a contrast to the hero
  - function as prompters
- The American composer George Gershwin is noted for his score for which of the following works?
  - Oklahoma!*
  - West Side Story*
  - Porgy and Bess*
  - Show Boat*
  - South Pacific*

4. Surrealists were writers and artists whose work
- imitated logical thought processes
  - drew on the unconscious as a primary source of creativity
  - reimagined ornamental elements in decorative art
  - incorporated themes of acceptance and pacifism
  - adhered to realistic form and content
5. Which choice correctly pairs a writer with the genre with which she is primarily associated?
- Elizabeth Bishop . . . drama
  - Amy Tan . . . poetry
  - Sylvia Plath . . . essay
  - Gwendolyn Brooks . . . novel
  - Alice Munro . . . short story
6. The lute is most similar to the modern
- guitar
  - piano
  - violin
  - accordion
  - flute
7. Which of the following is a nineteenth-century artist who was influenced by Japanese prints and is known as both a painter and a printmaker?
- Salvador Dalí
  - Thomas Gainsborough
  - William Hogarth
  - Mary Cassatt
  - Georgia O'Keeffe
8. The rediscovery of classical texts and ideas, an emphasis on reason, and the development of linear perspective in art were characteristic of which of the following movements in Europe?
- The Inquisition
  - The Renaissance
  - Romanticism
  - Impressionism
  - Cubism

## Credit Recommendations

The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT) has recommended that colleges grant three credits for a score of 50, which is equivalent to a course grade of C, on the Humanities exam. Each college, however, is responsible for setting its own policy. For candidates with satisfactory scores on the Humanities examination, colleges may grant credit toward fulfillment of a distribution requirement, or for a particular course that matches the exam in content. Check with your school to find out the score it requires for granting credit, the number of credit hours granted, and the course that can be bypassed with a passing score.

### Answers to Sample Questions:

1-D; 2-A; 3-C; 4-B; 5-E; 6-A; 7-D; 8-B