

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Shatter Borders: A Senior Lit World Literature Quiz

Beyond common canons—this assessment identifies fundamental shifts in storytelling across global stages, from Persian epics to modern Polish verse.

1. Which Persian epic poem, written by Ferdowsi, serves as a foundational pillar of Iranian identity and world history?

Answer: A) The Shahnameh

The Shahnameh, or 'Book of Kings,' is the national epic of Greater Iran and is essential for understanding Persian cultural heritage.

2. Wislawa Szymborska, a Nobel Prize winner, is primarily known for her contributions to world literature through her reflective and ironic Polish poetry.

Answer: A) True

Szymborska was a Polish poet awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1996 for verse that examined the human condition with philosophical wit.

3. The celebrated play 'Death and the King's Horseman' was written by the first African to win a Nobel Prize in Literature, _____.

Answer: A) Wole Soyinka

Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian playwright and poet who won the Nobel Prize in 1986; his work often explores the intersection of Western and Yoruba traditions.

4. Which Czech author is famous for the short story 'The Metamorphosis,' a staple of world literature that explores themes of alienation?

Answer: B) Franz Kafka

Franz Kafka, a German-speaking Czech author, wrote 'The Metamorphosis,' which tells the story of Gregor Samsa's physical and social isolation.

5. Isabel Allende, the Chilean-American author of 'The House of the Spirits,' often integrates magical elements into historical and political settings.

Answer: A) True

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Allende is a prominent voice in Latin American literature whose work blends personal experience with the socio-political history of Chile.

6. The Russian novel 'Crime and Punishment,' which explores the psychological struggle of its protagonist Raskolnikov, was written by _____.

Answer: C) Fyodor Dostoevsky

Dostoevsky is a master of the psychological novel, and 'Crime and Punishment' is his most famous exploration of morality and guilt.

7. What is the primary narrative focus of Lu Xun's 'A Madman's Diary' in the context of 20th-century Chinese literature?

Answer: B) A critique of traditional feudal values

Lu Xun used 'A Madman's Diary' to use cannibalism as a metaphor to criticize the oppressive nature of traditional Chinese social structures.

8. The 'Epic of Gilgamesh' is a modern 20th-century work written by an anonymous Iraqi author to mimic ancient styles.

Answer: B) False

The 'Epic of Gilgamesh' is actually one of the oldest known works of literature, originating from ancient Mesopotamia (Sumeria/Babylon).

9. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's famous work about life in a Soviet labor camp is titled 'One Day in the Life of _____'.

Answer: B) Ivan Denisovich

'One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich' exposed the reality of the gulag system to both Soviet and international readers.

10. Which French existentialist philosopher and author wrote the novel 'The Stranger,' focusing on the concept of the Absurd?

Answer: B) Albert Camus

Albert Camus, an Algerian-born French author, wrote 'The Stranger' to illustrate his philosophy of the absurdity of human existence.