

DECEMBER 2026 CYCLE | SUBJECT CODE 30

UGC NET English Literature Syllabus

The official 10-unit Paper 2 syllabus, plus the part NTA does not publish: what each unit actually asks, how the marks were split in a real paper, and how many days each subject deserves.

By Nakul Grover

Founder, Limitless Literature. UGC NET qualified; teaching English literature for competitive exams since 2020.

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UGC NET English at a Glance

Quick answer: UGC NET English Literature is subject code 30 in the National Eligibility Test conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA). You write two papers in one 3-hour computer-based sitting: Paper 1 (50 questions, 100 marks) on teaching and research aptitude, and Paper 2 (100 questions, 200 marks) on English literature, set from a 10-unit syllabus. Every correct answer scores 2 marks and there is no negative marking.

Item	Detail
Conducted by	National Testing Agency (NTA), for the University Grants Commission
Subject and code	English, subject code 30
Mode	Computer-based test (CBT)
Paper 1	50 questions, 100 marks: teaching and research aptitude (common to all subjects)
Paper 2	100 questions, 200 marks: English literature, 10-unit syllabus
Total	150 questions, 300 marks, in 3 hours with no break between papers
Marking	+2 for each correct answer; no negative marking, so attempt every question
Held	Twice a year, in the June and December cycles

December 2026 Cycle: Dates and Fees

Event	Date
Online application	8 to 28 October 2026 (till 11:50 pm)
Late application (₹500 late fee)	29 to 31 October 2026
Correction window	2 to 4 November 2026
Exam city intimation slip	23 November 2026
Admit card	7 December 2026
Exam dates	14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 21 December 2026 (subject-wise schedule announced separately)
Shifts	9 am to 12 pm and 3 pm to 6 pm
Application fee	General ₹1,150; General-EWS and OBC-NCL ₹600; SC, ST, PwD and third gender ₹325

Source: NTA's revised UGC NET December 2026 information bulletin, 16 October 2026. Confirm on ugcnet.nta.nic.in before you apply.

Eligibility in Brief

Rule	Detail
Master's degree marks	At least 55% for General and General-EWS; at least 50% for OBC-NCL, SC, ST, PwD and third gender
Final-year students	Can apply; must complete the degree with the required marks as set out in the bulletin
JRF age limit	Not more than 30 years on 1 December 2026; up to 5 years' relaxation for OBC-NCL, SC, ST, PwD, third gender and women
Assistant Professor / PhD	No upper age limit

The 10 Units of Paper 2, and What NET Actually Asks

NTA publishes only the unit titles below. Everything in the second column comes from our analysis of the previous year papers since 2008: the authors, works and topics that keep returning. The third column names the free topic-wise previous year question sets on limitlessliterature.com, so you can see how each unit is tested before you study it.

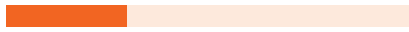
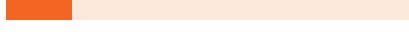
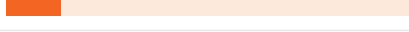
Unit	What NET asks under this unit	Practise free (topic PYQ pages on the site)
I. Drama	Greek, Elizabethan, Jacobean and modern drama. Shakespeare (the most-asked single author), Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Congreve, Shaw, Synge, Beckett, Pinter, Osborne, Brecht, Stoppard. Indian English drama: Girish Karnad, Mahesh Dattani, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar. Also tested through drama passages (critical reading).	Shakespeare; British drama; Marlowe; Ben Jonson; Congreve; Pinter; Beckett, Brecht and Osborne; Modern Indian theatre
II. Poetry	Chaucer to the present: Chaucer, Spenser, the metaphysicals, Milton, Dryden, Pope, the Romantics (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats), Victorian poets (Tennyson, Browning, Arnold), Yeats, Eliot, Auden, Larkin, Heaney, Hughes. Indian poets in English (Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Ramanujan, Mahapatra), American poets (Whitman, Dickinson, Frost). Also tested through poem passages.	Chaucer; Chaucer to Pope; Metaphysical poets; Milton; Romantics; Victorian poets; Modern poets; Post-modern poets; British poetry (mixed); Passages from poems
III. Fiction, short story	Rise of the novel and the short story. Defoe, Fielding, Austen, the Brontes, Dickens, George Eliot, Hardy, Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, Lawrence, Forster, Greene, Golding. Indian novels (Narayan, Anand, Rao, Rushdie, Desai, Ghosh, Roy). American fiction (Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Morrison). Also tested through prose-fiction passages.	Jane Austen; Dickens; George Eliot; Hardy; Brontes; Woolf; Indian novels; American literature
IV. Non-Fictional Prose	Essays, biography, autobiography, travel writing and life writing: Bacon, Addison and Steele, Johnson, Lamb, Hazlitt, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Orwell. Indian non-fiction: Nehru, Gandhi, Ambedkar, Tagore's essays. The unseen prose passage in every paper usually comes from this unit.	Non-fictional prose and passages; Indian non-fiction
V. Language: basic concepts, theories and pedagogy. English in Use	Phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics; Saussure, Chomsky, Halliday; varieties of English; theories of language acquisition and the main methods of English teaching (grammar-translation, direct, audio-lingual, communicative). Prosody and figures of speech are tested here and through poetry questions.	Language, linguistics and prosody
VI. English in India: history, evolution and futures	Macaulay's Minute (1835), the Wood's Despatch, the Hunter Commission, the orientalist-anglicist debate, Raja Rammohan Roy, the growth of Indian writing in English, the three-language formula and the National Education Policy. One of the most reliably asked units for its size.	English education in India; Indian literature

Unit	What NET asks under this unit	Practise free (topic PYQ pages on the site)
VII. Cultural Studies	Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, the Birmingham Centre; ideology, hegemony (Gramsci), discourse (Foucault), popular culture, media and film studies, subaltern studies, globalisation and identity (race, class, gender, caste). Terms and their authors are the usual question type.	Cultural studies
VIII. Literary Criticism	Plato, Aristotle (Poetics), Longinus, Horace; Sidney, Dryden, Johnson, Wordsworth's Preface, Coleridge's Biographia, Arnold, Pater; Eliot, Richards, Leavis, Empson, the New Critics. Indian aesthetics: rasa, dhvani, alankara, vakrokti, auchitya and their theorists (Bharata, Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta).	Literary criticism; 500+ criticism practice questions; Indian aesthetics
IX. Literary Theory post World War II	Structuralism (Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Barthes), post-structuralism and deconstruction (Derrida, de Man), psychoanalysis (Freud, Lacan), Marxism (Althusser, Eagleton, Jameson), feminism (Beauvoir, Showalter, Cixous, Butler), reader-response (Iser, Fish), new historicism (Greenblatt), postcolonialism (Said, Spivak, Bhabha), ecocriticism, queer theory, posthumanism. Together with Unit VIII this is the largest block in the paper.	Structuralism; New Criticism; Deconstruction; Marxism; Feminism; Psychoanalysis; Postcolonialism; Reader-response; New Historicism; Mixed theory questions
X. Research Methods and Materials in English	Types of research, the research proposal, MLA and APA citation, plagiarism and ethics, archives and digital resources, the structure of a thesis. Questions are factual and repeat across papers; a short, well-revised note covers this unit.	Research methodology

Units I to IV are also tested through unseen passages (critical reading and comprehension): roughly 10 questions in every paper. Unit titles are quoted from NTA's official syllabus for English, subject code 30.

Unit-wise Weightage: Where the 100 Questions Went

This is the part no syllabus PDF shows you. We tagged all 100 questions of the January 2025 UGC NET English paper by subject. The syllabus has 10 units, but the marks do not fall evenly across them.

Subject area	Questions	Share of the 100 questions
Literary theory and criticism (Units VIII and IX)	37	 37%
British literature (Units I to IV)	18	 18%
English studies in India (Unit VI)	11	 11%
Reading comprehension passages (Units I to IV)	10	 10%
Language and linguistics (Unit V)	10	 10%
Research methods (Unit X)	6	 6%
Indian literature (Units I to IV, VI)	5	 5%
World literature (Units I to IV)	2	 2%
American literature (Units I to IV)	1	 1%

Source: January 2025 UGC NET English paper (100 questions), tagged by Limitless Literature. One paper is one sample; the pattern (theory and criticism first, British literature second, then English in India and language) holds across the papers since 2019.

What the Numbers Tell You

Theory and criticism together carried 37 of 100 questions. Students who treat Units VIII and IX as 2 of 10 units give them a fifth of their time and lose a third of the paper. British literature is the second block, and it is also where the comprehension passages come from, so Units I to IV together are worth about 30 questions. Unit VI (English in India) is small in the syllabus and large in the paper: 11 questions from a unit that takes a week to prepare.

The Five Core Subjects: Days for the First Reading

Subject	First reading	Why
British Literature	About 15 days	Largest block by syllabus and the source of the passages
Literary Theory	About 15 days	With criticism, over a third of the paper
Indian Literature	About 10 days	Covers Units I to IV (Indian writers) and Unit VI
Literary Criticism	About 5 days	A fixed set of critics and texts that repeat
Language and Linguistics	About 5 days	10 questions a paper from a short, factual unit

Chaucer is a one-day author: read The Canterbury Tales properly and finish his other works in 15 to 20 minutes. If you give Chaucer two or three days, that is your mistake. Every writer needs a different amount of time.

How to Use This Syllabus: The 800-Hour Plan

The rule I give every student: to qualify UGC NET English Literature you need about 800 hours of study. That is 4 hours a day, about 120 hours a month, so 700 to 800 hours in six months. Spend the first 250 hours reading the five core subjects once, and the remaining 550 hours revising them and solving previous year questions.

Phase	Hours	What you do
Foundation	First 250 hours (about 2 months)	Read the five core subjects once, in chronological order. No previous year questions yet.
Revision and PYQs	Remaining 550 hours	Revise the same material again and again; work through the topic-wise previous year questions.
Total	About 800 hours	4 hours a day for about six months

Three Rules That Decide the Result

1. Revise, don't cover. UGC NET is not about covering the whole syllabus; it is about revising the same core again and again. That is why the plan gives only 250 hours to the first reading and 550 to revision.

2. Topics don't change, so don't chase new ones. Study the authors who have come five, eight, ten or twelve times, not the ones who came once. When Blue Humanities trended, students asked for classes on it; it came up once or twice and that question was dropped.

3. Previous year questions give you the boundary. Many students have read every history of literature and still can't crack NET, because they never analysed the previous year questions. Start them only after the foundation; before that they only discourage you.

"Stick to one resource or one teacher. Five, six or seven sources and eight YouTube teachers only create clutter in your mind."

Free Resources on Limitless Literature

What	Where
UGC NET English hub: syllabus, pattern, dates, plan, FAQ	limitlessliterature.com/ugc-net-english-literature/
4,000+ topic-wise previous year questions, free and interactive	limitlessliterature.com/subject-wise-english-literature-previous-year-questions/
Every year-wise paper with answers (June 2026 back to 2024)	limitlessliterature.com/previous-year-question-papers/
Cut-off marks, every cycle since 2021	limitlessliterature.com/ugc-net-english-cut-off/
Best books and notes, one per subject	limitlessliterature.com/best-books-for-ugc-net-english/
Authors A to Z: 100+ author guides and mind maps	limitlessliterature.com/english-literature-authors/
Free mock tests on the app	Classplus app, organisation code KUIJF

Preparing for December 2026?

The Crash Course UGC NET English Literature: Zero to Hero follows this plan exactly: cover the five core subjects once, then revise the topics that keep coming back until they stick. 150+ lectures, 100 bonus study files, mock tests included, 65 days of access. Details:

limitlessliterature.com/ugc-net-english-literature/

Questions? WhatsApp us on **7891410858**, or write to nakul@limitlessliterature.com.