1. ‘Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but rather a medium. It is the medium of that which is experienced, just as the earth is the medium in which ancient cities lie buried.’ (Walter Benjamin, ‘Excavation and Memory’, 1932)—How does literature remember?

2. ‘The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way.’ (E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 1927)—Write about moments of surprise in any fiction of your choice.

3. ‘Entrances and exits mark key junctures in a play – the beginnings and ends of acts, the engagement and disengagement of characters, the changes in the combination of the participants which alter the whole tone and direction of the drama. The timing, manner, and direction of these comings and goings are fully in the control of the playwright, and his disposition of them may well signpost the way to our understanding of what he is about.’ (Oliver Taplin, Greek Tragedy in Action, 1978)—Write about the significance of entrances or exits in one or more play(s) of your choice.

4. ‘[Virginia Woolf] holds to minor, unimpressive, random events … [In the modern era,] many writers present minor happenings, which are insignificant as exterior factors in a person’s destiny, for their own sake or rather as points of departure for the development of motifs, for a penetration which opens up a new perspective into a milieu or a consciousness or the given historical setting. They have discarded presenting the story of their characters with any claim to exterior completeness, in chronological order, and with the emphasis on important exterior turning points of destiny.’ (Eric Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, 1946)—Discuss this claim in relation to any writer of your choice. Your answer need not be on Woolf.

5. What are poems made from?—Discuss making in the work of any poet of your choice.

6. ‘The realities of power and authority - as well as the resistances offered by men, women, and social movements to institutions, authorities, and orthodoxies – are the realities that make texts possible, that deliver them to readers, that solicit the attention of critics. I propose that these realities are what should be taken account of by criticism and the critical consciousness.’ (Edward Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic, 1983)—Do you consider literary criticism to be a political endeavour? If so, why? If not, why not?

7. ‘And all true poets laugh unquenchably/ like Shakespeare and the gods.’ (Elizabeth Barret Browning, ‘Critics’, in Aurora Leigh, 1856)—Discuss. Your answer need not be on Browning.