

# Essay Questions

PS “London and the Rest” | WS 2007/08

1. London has many faces. Discuss using one or more of the set texts.
2. The depiction of the big city in literature is a mirror of society. Discuss.
3. It's not romantic, really. How did the city develop during industrialisation, and how did literature react?
4. Discuss features of the modern big city novel using examples from John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* and Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.
5. Trace typically Modernist features in one or more of the set texts.
6. Can *The Secret Agent* be called a Modern(ist) novel?
7. Discuss the relation of terrorism and the city in one or more of the set texts.
8. The city as exile. Discuss this topic using Alan Hollinghurst's *The Swimming Pool Library*.
9. The city is made of subcultures. Use Hollinghurst's text to support or refute this statement.
10. London is a place of technology and progress. Think about the relationship of technology, progress and humanity in the urban environment.
11. The country and the city. Is this contrast used in one of the set texts? Explain.
12. \*Compare the topography of London as depicted in T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" to the "Inferno" (the circles of hell) in Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia*.
13. It's up to you. Choose a topic closely related to any of our set texts, set authors or set topics. If you are unsure, talk to me.