

English 10
Augustine's *Confessions*
Review for Test

Because you are writing extensively in response to *Confessions*, this test will be fairly straightforward.

What to expect:

Character matching

Passage work

Other short answer, relying on your knowledge of the opening lecture (know a few most important dates)

Outside texts:

Plato's Hierarchy of Knowledge (from your notes)

Plato's Allegory of the Cave (handout)

Virgil's *Aeneid* (basic relationship of Aeneas and Dido, Aeneas as founder of Rome, *Aeneid* as schoolboy text)

How to study:

1. Read through the study questions. Do you have enough knowledge to answer them?
2. Have a sense of the sequence of events. After you have reviewed a little, number a paper 1 through 10 with two or three lines for each number: See if you can identify from memory main events from each book. Include character names on the list to help yourself identify them later.

3. Be able to identify the most important characters.

Augustine

Monica

Patricius

Augustine's friend who dies

Faustus

Ambrose

Alypius

Simplicianus

Victorinus

Verecundus

Adeodatus

Nibridius

People not in the story but who are influential on Augustine

Aeneas

Dido

St. Paul

St. Antony of the Desert

The two young men who discover the text of St. Antony

4. Be able to talk about the most important themes.

friendship, encounters with other people (Cicero's book, Faustus, Ambrose, Alypius, Nebridius)

death (the friend in Book 4, Verecundus, Nebridius, Monica, Adeodatus)

imprisonment and freedom

addiction (Augustine, Alypius, Monica)

the written word (the epistles of Paul, the text of St. Antony, scripture)

the nature of evil

5. Major ideas

Manichaeism

Neo-Platonism

6. Symbols, Motifs

gardens

pear tree

fig tree

light/darkness

imprisonment/freedom

7. Genre

Autobiography

Memoir

Prayer

Some overarching questions:

1. How does Augustine's physical (geographical) journey echo his spiritual progress?

2. What does Augustine's changing idea of death tell us about his spiritual progress?

3. What two major ideas from St. Paul does Augustine find to be particularly relevant to his progress?

4. List Augustine's important friends; how does Augustine's changing idea of friendship affect his idea of the Church?

Look over the essay topics for other important ideas that span the text.

Example passages

1. I stole from my parents' larder too, and their table, either out of gluttony or to get something with which I could bribe other boys to let me join in their games, for they exacted a price even though they enjoyed our play as much as I did. In those games I would often seek to dominate by fraudulent means, because I was myself dominated by a vain urge to excel...

a. Later in the same episode, Augustine asks, "Is this boyhood innocence?" Then he answers his own question (an example of the literary device hypophora). Is it? Why or why not?

2. With regard to my theft, then: what did I love in it, and in what sense did I imitate my Lord, even if only with vicious perversity?... Was I, in truth, a prisoner, trying to simulate a crippled sort of freedom, attempting a shady parody of omnipotence by getting away with something forbidden?

a. What is "my theft"?

b. Describe the parallel of this episode to the biblical allusion hinted at in the passage (and clearly made by the whole of the episode).

c. What parallel to the Allegory of the Cave do you find in the language of the passage?

d. Similarly, what connections can you make to the themes of St. Paul?