**According to Knox, a culture’s literature is “a written tradition, available to a large literate public, preserving a canon of great works” (23).**

1. What does this canon of great works do in relation to the civilization that produces it?
2. What does this canon of great works do in relation to later writers?
3. What three elements combine to form the “extremely complicated” Egyptian hieroglyphs? (24)
4. What did the different characters stand for in the cuneiform scripts of the ancient Middle East? (24)
5. In cuneiform writing, what is the difference between homophony and polyphony? How do homophony and polyphony complicate a writing system? (24)
6. How did the North Semitic scripts (including Hebrew and Phoenician) differ from “the pictographic style of Egyptian hieroglyphic, as well as from the syllabaries of the cuneiform tablets” of the Middle East? (25)
7. What was one potentially major source of confusion within the North Semitic scripts? (25)
8. How did the greater part of the Israelites lose the use of Hebrew in the sixth century BCE? (26)
9. Explain the great linguistic innovation of the Greeks sometime in or around the 8th century BCE. (26)
10. Which language system did the Greeks adapt and how did they adapt it? (26)
11. What is the difference between a bard and a rhapsode? (27,28)
12. Describe the [uncertain] relation between the new Greek writing system and the great epic poems of Homer. (28)
13. Which tradition ends with Homer? (28)
14. What do classical scholars mean when they refer to the great “Epic Cycle”? (29)
15. What proportion of archaic and classical Greek literature has been lost? Provide three examples that illustrate the magnitude of this loss. (29-30)
16. How does Knox describe/characterize the “fourth crusade” that destroyed Constantinople? (30)

**Knox describes the fragments preserved from seventh and sixth century works as giving us “unforgettable glimpses into a brilliant archaic world, a Greek civilization expanding mentally as well as economically, but threatened by the huge kingdoms of the East, and in danger too from its own fatal tendency to internecine strife… the world of the city-state” (30).**

1. Describe the seventh century city-state or *polis*. (30)
2. What topographical features did Greek colonists look for when searching for a suitable site on which to build a new *polis*? (31) (This could be coordinated with what Kingsley has to say about Phocaean settlements in *The Dark Places of Wisdom*.

**Knox writes that “[c]olonial ventures reduced the tensions in the home cities, but the relief was only temporary; the old economic and political pressure soon built up toward the explosion point once more” (31).**

1. What economic and political pressure is he referring to? (30) Explain, in very simple terms for an ordinary/lay reader, what these particular economic and political pressures involved (this part of the question is asking for your own common-sense interpretation of Knox’s description).
2. Explain, clearly and concisely, exactly what the Greeks meant when they referred to a *tyrannos*. (31-32)
3. Within the Greek polis of the archaic period, who would have suffered most and who would have benefited most when power was seized by a *tyrannos*? (this question is asking you for your own common-sense interpretation of the information related in response to the previous question)
4. Who was Solon? (32)
5. Who was Pisistratus? (32)
6. Who was Clisthenes? (32)
7. What is the significance of the date 509 BCE? Which age comes to an end and which age begins at this date? (32,33)
8. Describe the two Persian invasions that took place at the beginning of the fifth century BCE.

**After the Athenians pursued the Persians in their retreat across the Aegean and liberated many of the islands and cities that had been under Persian rule, the Delian league was formed to defend against Persia. This league, however, “soon became not an association of equals but an empire of subject cities under Athenian domination, paying tribute for the maintenance of a war fleet that was now no longer the fleet of the league, but the Athenian fleet” (33).**

1. Explain the profound irony of Athenian imperialism (your answer might take into consideration the type of problems that confronted the Greek city-states throughout the archaic period and the way in which Athenian democracy seemed to have resolved them).
2. Why might the citizens of Athens consider their polis superior to Sparta and other major centers of power and prosperity in the Hellenic speaking lands surrounding the Aegean? (this question is asking for your own reasoned conjectures and might take into consideration military, political, and cultural factors as well as citizens’ own sense of civic participation and civic identification. The significance of civic participation and civic identification, we might do well to recall would have been intertwined with the experience of anti-Athenian sentiment which might have been widespread and which must have been accompanied by quite different justifications at different periods).
3. Fifth century Athens—so what?
4. What do we know about the origin(s) of Athenian tragedy? (Knox gestures towards some partial sources, we can slowly work on supplementing these, recognizing that we will be dealing primarily in speculation)

Bibliography:

1. Who is Aeschylus and what were his contributions to ancient Greek tragedy?

Bibliography:

1. Who is Sophocles and what were his contributions to ancient Greek tragedy?

Bibliography:

1. Who is Euripides and what were his contributions to ancient Greek tragedy?

Bibliography:

1. What do we know about the origins of Athenian Comedy and what distinguishes the original Athenian comedies (“Old Comedy”) from later works (those comedies produced after 404 BCE)? (35, 36, 37, 38)
2. Who were the Sophists? (37) (We will need to supplement what Knox has to say here… at the outset we need to inject real caution when approaching Plato’s biographical accounts of other thinkers)

Bibliography:

1. What is the significance, for Athens, of the year 404 BCE? (37)
2. What was the rule of the Thirty Tyrants? (37)

**Knox writes, of the period following the decisive defeat of Greek forces by Philip of Macedon in 338 BCE, that “Athens was never a fully independent city again. The forms of democracy remained, yet the city was, in reality, governed from now on by an oligarchy subservient to a succession of Hellenistic kings and finally to the Senate and People of Rome” (37).**

1. Imagine that we are powerful North American industrialists and princes of capital, how might we take the rise and fall of Athenian democracy as a template upon which to plot the course of our own ascendancy as founders of a new international oligarchic caste?
2. How would you characterize the transition between fifth and fourth century comedy in ancient Athens? (35,36,37,38)
3. How might the intellectual atmosphere and developments within fourth century Athenian Comedy reflect the political atmosphere and developments in fourth century Athens itself? (37,38)
4. Who was Plato, what intellectual era was he a part of, which institutions does he appear to have founded or strongly influenced (judging from Knox’s brief description)? (38,39)

Bibliography:

1. Who was Aristotle and which institutions and intellectual practices does he appear to have founded or strongly influenced?

Bibliography:

1. Who was Alexander? What role did Alexander play in assuring Greek influence within the area we now refer to as the Middle East? (39,40)
2. Which countries does Knox include under the title “Middle East”? (40)
3. Describe the library and museum of Alexandria.
4. What was their relationship to ancient culture? How did they influence/form our modern understanding of the classical canon?
5. What is the major difference, singled out by Knox, between the works of poets of archaic and classical Greece and the works of poets in the Hellenistic period in the era of Alexander? (41)
6. How might you relate this difference to the transition between 5th and 4th century Athenian comedy?
7. Who was Plutarch? (we will need to supplement Knox here)

Bibliography:

**Excerpt from section IX of Louis MacNeice’s *Autumn Journal***

**And free speech shivered on the pikes of Macedonia**

**And later on the swords of Rome**

**And Athens became a mere university city**

**And the goddess born on the foam**

**Became the kept hetaera, heroine of Menander.**

**And the philosopher narrowed his focus, confined**

**His efforts to putting his own soul in order**

**And keeping a quiet mind.**

**And for a thousand years they went on talking,**

**Making such apt remarks,**

**A race no longer of heroes but of professors**

1. Explain this poem by Louis MacNeice