2021级散文复习资料 (一)

1. 散文文学知识：

I．**Essay**：

1. **Definition**：The essay, a term originally taken from the French word “essai” (meaning “attempt”), is usually a literary composition of moderate length often in prose, though there are written in the form of verse and even with the length of a book.

One of the most flexible and adaptable of all literary terms, refers to a composition, in either prose or verse, of a few hundred words, or of book length, which formally or informally discusses a matter or a variety of matters, expresses a point of view, or persuades the reader to accept a thesis on whatever subject. F. Bacon observes in his Essays (1597) that “the word is late, but the thing is ancient.” As a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that Bacon established the form, modeled upon Essais (1580) in French by Montaigne.2. **Origin**：As quite a flexible literary genre, the essay “undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject whatever”, and reveal other emotional aspects of life. Much like sanwen, suibi or xiaopinwen in Chinese literature, the essay is “addressed to a general rather than a specialized audience”, avoiding technical didactics and employing such devices as anecdote, striking illustration, parallelism and humor to supplement its appeal.3. **Cannons**⑴ **Montainge** is generally considered to be the originator of the genre of essay.

⑵ In England, Sir Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Robert Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Laurance Sterne, Samuel Johnson and Abraham Cowley⑶ In France, Andre Gide and Jean Cocteau; in Spain, Jesuit Bltasar⑷ In America, Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell, Mark Twain, Henry James All of them made an effective use of this most fitting literary genre to cover a large range of problems.4. **Brief history of essaySeventeenth-century** ：

If the seventeenth-century England echoed Montainge’s influence with Bacon producing his classic essays on a great variety of subjects, the seventeenth- century Europe saw many essayists dealing with social manners, the cultivation of politeness, and the training of an accomplished gentleman. Such pursuits went far beyond such genres as maxims, portraits and sketches.**Eighteen-century** ：

With the advent of a keener political awareness in the age of Enlightenment, the eighteen-century England reached the high peak of essay creation with the maturing of “the classical essay” as the vehicle for a criticism of society and of religion. Addison and Steele thus established the “periodical essay”, which is “a kind of high journalism intended often to please rather than instruct”, but to instruct through pleasure. Addison’s creation of such a character as Sir Roger de Coverly formed a gracious and light style, “anticipating the characterization of the novelists a little later in the century”. Dr. Johnson in his essays and Oliver Goldsmith in The Citizen of the World (1762) perfected the graceful, witty manner which was later regarded ideal for essay. In England the eighteenth century is called **the golden age** of the English essay, and the nineteenth century the silver one. Essayists as Charles Lamb, William Hazzlitt, Leigh Hunt and De Quincy combined “social comment with a confessional, autobiographical element”, which characterized the time spirit of the nineteenth-century literature. Therefore, the so-called autobiographical essay went into proliferation, helping to establish the tradition for novelists as Walter Scott, Charles Dickens and the like. Among the most influential essayists, Matthew Arnold was an important practitioner who used the essay as a medium of literary or artistic criticism.**Twentieth century**In the twentieth century, the essay in the tradition of Addison, Hazzlitt and Lamb “dissolved into the morass of constantly increasing journalism”. Therefore, “laments on the decline of the essay…have been numerous since the 1940s, when articles in most journals tended to become shorter and to strive for more immediate effect”. But it is not untrue that many writers, critics and philosophers continued to use the essay for artistic and literary criticism, philosophical speculations, or social and cultural comment—to take a few for example: D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell, Aldoux Huxley, Henry James, Bertrand Russell, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, et al. 5. **Classification of essays**  
(1) Concerning the matter of **style,** the essay fits the category of non-fictional prose. It can be classified into two kinds:① **The formal essay**② **The informal essay** (2) In terms of **subjects and forms**, they can further be divided into five types:① **Classic Essay** 经典随笔② **Periodical Essay** 报刊杂文③ **Philosophical Essay** 哲理散文④ **Biographical Essay** 纪传散文⑤ **Literary Criticism and Comment** 文学批评与评论

**Classic Essay**  
(1) MeaningIn literary studies and criticism, the term “classic” is very broad and comprehensive in meaning. It may refer to:① The works of the highest rank in any nation, as every nation, big or small, has at least one period that sees greatest works;② Greek or Romgantan literature, or any work that follows the Greek and Roman tradition of writing;③ The works that conform to strict rules or elegant forms, produced from intellect rather than imagination, and avoiding obscurity or self-indulgence.(2)**Characteristics**① Classic literature is of clarity, splendor, sublimity, and philosophicality. And these properties are common in almost all classic essays, as those by Aristotle, Cicero, Confucius, Montaigne, Bacon, Emerson and the kind.② In Western literature there is always a lasting trait of Greek and Roman vigour which fosters a classic temperament in the literary minds of many generations. Classic essayists as Bacon and Pope directly or indirectly adopt much of Homer, Horace, Virgil, Ovid or Seneca in subjects, styles, and even language itself. Their compositions are therefore of typical classic beauty and strength.③ Great importance is placed upon strict rules, elegant forms, refined diction, confined syntax, and balanced texture, in all classic literature including the classic essay, which is more flexible, though. Yet some essayist, such as those of the Augustan England and so comparable to the Tongcheng School of China, comply so strictly with the classic standards that their works bear much affectation, elaboration, and non-naturalness. These linguistic features are so true to classic essayist in England.④ The classic essay is as comprehensive in subject matters and styles as in all classic literature. A. In subjects, the classic essay deal with a variety of themes: philosophy, literary criticism, arts, politics, history, social problems, travels, and other aspects of life.B. Its styles, however, varies with every individual essayist. For example, Cicero is gracefully eloquent; Bacon is weighty and highly sententious; Swift is deceptively plain and satirically forceful; Addison is “familiar but not coarse, elegant but not ostentatious”.C. In terms of literary history, the classic essay, much in the same way as the classic literature, include:**a.** The works of the individual essayists before classicism flourished as a literary climate, which might be termed as the pre-classic essay;**b.** The works mass-produced in the Classic Age when classicism was a conscious literary pursuit and a prevailing literary mode;**c.** The works created in the Neoclassic Age, which might be referred to as the neoclassic essay;**d.** The works of individual essayist who comply with the classic standards in the times after the Classic and Neoclassic Age when classicism declined.

**Periodical Essay**(1). **Definition**: The periodical essay usually refers to the types of essay that appeared in the journals, as in The Tatler and The Spectator, from which the periodical essay is generally thought to have been initiated.

(2). **Origin:**In the late 17th and early 18th centuries there appeared the London coffeehouse, of which the most famous were Button’s and Will’s. By that time the passion for coffee-drinking (amusingly satirized in J. S. Bach’s “The Coffee Cantata”咖啡清唱剧) had spread all over Europe. And coffeehouse (like hotel bars in the modern world) had become popular places for the exchange of news and opinions. It was in London coffeehouses that the most famous of early “periodical” were born, namely The Tatler（1709-1711）and The Spectator (1711-1712).

(3) **Origin and historyTryhe Tatler**, which first appeared in 1709, was produced by Sir Richard **Steele** and his friend **Joseph Addison**. ***The Tatler*** consisted of essays and articles on all sorts of subjects, many of them pretending to be written by an imaginary character known as Isaac Bickerstaff and his equally imaginary sister, Jenny Distaff, who gave the necessary “feminine interest”.The Spectator included some of the most famous of all English essays, namely, those concerned with the Spectator Club, which was a group of typical upper-class and middle-class people of the time.(In 1711 *The Tatler* was replaced by a new paper called *The Spectator* , published every weekday, and still chiefly written by Steele and Addison. )(4) ***The Spectator* & *The Tatler*** aims to establish principles of ideal behavior and genteel conduct, and propose standards of good taste for the general public, which finally contribute to elevate public taste.

**Philosophical Essay**

(1). **Definition**:

Philosophical essay is a term used in a broad sense. It is a classification not of form, but of subject matter. It covers a variety of subjects ranging from philosophy and politics to religion, morals and aesthetics, etc.Writers tried their hand on this genre from an early period, as Aristotle discoursed on Rhetoric and Metaphysics, Cicero on the pleasantness of old age and the art of “divination”, and Saint Augustine on theology. The Frenchman Montaigne perfected the form of essay and made it achieve better than possibly any other form of writing Montaigne in his essays pursued an ethical purpose, with no pompousness or rhetoric. (2). **Origin and History**① In the age that followed Montaigne’s, at the beginning of the 17th century, social manners, the cultivation of politeness, and the training of an accomplished gentleman became the theme of many essayists.② With the advent of a keener political awareness in the 18th century Enlightenment, the essay became all-important as vehicle for a criticism of society and of religion.③ The literary forms to which philosophical exposition was touched in the early modern period ranged from the scientific aphorisms of Bacon and the autobiographical meditations of Descartes to the systematic prose of Hobbes and the episodic propositional format of Leibniz.④ The modern essay tends to have been overburdened with serious speculations, especially in German and in French, where it is weighed with philosophy almost as pedantic as that of academic treatises, though not as rigorous.

(3) **Characteristics**

Writers are not content with imaginative creation alone:

They also define their method in prefaces, reflections, essays, self- portraits, and critical articles. **Biographical Essay**(1). **Definition**:

Biography, is a term of Greek origin and formed of bio (life) and graphy (writing), is written account of life, the history of life of an individual man, that is , in J. Dryden’s words, “the history of particular men’s lives”（Life Plutarch, 1712）. It is a form of nonfictional writing. And in general, the form is considered to include autobiography, inn which subject accounts his or her history.Biography can be seen either as a branch of history, or as a branch of literature. As a branch of history, it depends on a selective ordering and interpretation of materials, written or oral, established through research, and personal collection and recollection. As a branch of imaginative literature, it seeks to convey a sense of the individuality and significance of subject through creative sympathetic insight.(2). **Classification**Biography, much the same as history or news, falls theoretically into two types:① **Hard biography**: like hard history and hard news, presents the facts, that is the elements of life of the subjects, without any subjectivity of the accounter.② **Soft biography**: accounts the history of the subject, with materials selected and ordered by the accounter, and with the accounter’s interpretation of the materials and his or her presentation of significance of the subject.(3) **Content**

It seems that no biography can provide or stop at hard facts, and that no biography can fail to be soft biography. Soft biography, or biography, for its selection and interpretation of material, its demonstration of significance and its disposition of value is, in its nature and purpose, a category of essay, essay of biographical content, to be more exact and flexible, biographical essayBiographical essay, therefore, is to **include:**① the biography proper, ② the autobiography proper, ③ the hagiography, ④the diary or the journal, ⑤the memoir, ⑥ the character sketch, ⑦the anecdote, etc.(4) **Origin**

① The origin of biographical essay are remote. They are to be found in the early accounts of monarchs, courtiers and heroes, in all languages.② **Written Chinese biographical essay** is evidently contained in the historical writing that flourished as early as in the period of the Warring States beginning in 475 B.C. Sima Qian (145?-87B.C.), with his Records of History, brought the form to full maturity.③ **Examples in Western language** are found in Old Testament stories, in the Greek, Celtic and Scandinavian epic and sages. The sayings and teachings of wise and holy men, such as Plato and Xenophon provide many passages of biographical essay. And following Plato and Xenophon, the Roman historian Plutarch, in Parallel Lives (1st century A.D.), Tacitus, in Histories (c. 104-109), and Suetonius, in Lives of the Caesars, pioneered the form④**The writing of England biographical essay** began with the earliest making of Christian prose. Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum, or Ecclesiastical History of the English Race, by the Venerable Bede (672?-735?) presents in Chapter 24 of Book IV, the life and work of Caedmon, the first known English poet.

1. 作家评价和背景知识

**I．Francis Bacon** :

1. **Brief Comment**

Francis Bacon was an example of all-rounders, masters of different arts and fields of learning. Sir Francis Bacon was an English lawyer, statesman, essayist(散文家), historian, intellectual reformer, philosopher, and champion of modern science. Early in his career he claimed “all knowledge as his province”（以知识为其领域） and afterwards dedicated himself to a wholesale revaluation and re-structuring of traditional learning.

Widely considered the most influential and versatile English writer of the 17th century, Sir Francis Bacon addressed a broad range of topics in his works, including ethics, philosophy, science, law, and history. He also enjoyed a long political career.

If the imaginative powers of literary creation of English Renaissance found their expression in the poetry of Spenser 风格的and the drama of Shakespeare, the intellectual energy of this age showed itself in the achievement of Francis Bacon, English philosopher and statesman, one of the pioneers of modern scientific thought. 英国文艺复兴时期最重要的散作家、哲学家。他不但在文学、哲学上多有建树，在自然科学领域里，也取得了重大成就。培根是一位经历了诸多磨难的贵族子弟，复杂多变的生活经历丰富了他的阅历，随之而来的，他的思想成熟，言论深邃，富含哲理。他的整个世界观是现世的而不是宗教的（虽然他坚信上帝）。他是一位理性主义者而不是迷信的崇拜者，是一位经验论者而不是诡辩学者。在政治上，他是一位现实主义者而不是理论家。

1. Bacon’s Major Works:
2. (1). Bacon’s Major Works:

*Advancement of Learning* (1605) 《学术的推进》

*New Instrument* (1620) 《新工具论》*New Atlantis* (1626) 《新大西岛》 (1597) 《论说文集》(2). *Essays*

《论说随笔文集》or《随笔集》 Ten of these he published in 1597, and then they reissued and extended in 1612 and again in 1625 Many on the problems of statesmanship like that of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates. 《随笔集》的内容涉及到政治、经济、宗教、爱情、婚姻、友谊、艺术、教育和伦理等等，几乎触及了人类生活的方方面面。作为一名学识渊博且通晓人情世故的哲学家和思想家，培根对他谈及的问题均有发人深省的独到之见。  
Bacon is often credited with having invented the essay form in English literature.

(3). Characteristics of Bacon’s Essays:Bacon’s essays are famous for their brevity, compactness and powerfulness. The essays are well-arranged and enriched by Biblical allusions典故, metaphors比喻 and cadence韵律.

**II. Samuel Johnson**

1. **Brief Comment**

Samuel Jahnson, often referred to as Dr. Johnson, was an English poet, essayist, lexicographer, critic, journalist, conversationalist, regarded as one of the outstanding figures of 18th century.

1. **Samuel Johnson’s Major Works**

Published two series of periodical essays - *The Rambler* (1750-1752) and *The Adventurer* (1753-1754). **A Dictionary of the English Language** (1746-1755) *The Vanity of Human Wishesin* 1749 *Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia* in 1759 *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, (1779 – 81)

**III. Bertrand Russell****1 Brief Comment**

Bertrand Russell was a British philosopher, logician, essayist, and social critic, best known for his work in mathematical logic and analytic philosophy.He also did a lot of work in the areas of education, history, political theory and religious studies

1. **His Major Contributions**

Over the course of a long career, Russell also made significant contributions to a broad range of other subjects, including ethics, politics, eduction theory, the history of ideas, and religious studies.Generations of general readers have benefited from his many popular writings on a wide variety of topics in both the humanities and the natural sciences.

Russell was a prominent anti-war activist and was imprisoned in World War I for his irreconcilable pacifist, position. He remained a prominent public figure until his death at the age of 97.

1. **His Major Works***The Principles of Mathematics The Problems of Philosophy The History of Western Philosophy The Autobiography Of Bertrand Russell*

**IV . E. M. Foster**

1. **Brief Comment**

E . M . Forster was an English novelist, short story writer, essayist and librettist. After leaving university he traveled in continental Europe with his mother. He visited Egypt, Germany and India. By that time, Forster had written all but one of his novels. When the First World War broke out, he became a conscientious objector. He is known best for his ironic and well-plotted novels examining class difference and hypocrisy in early 20th-century British society.

1. **His Major Works**
2. *Where Angles Fear to Tread* (1905） 《天使不敢涉足的地方》*The Longest Journey*（1907）《最漫长的旅行》*A Room With a View*（1908）一间看得见风景的房间《莫里斯》（*Maurice*, 1914年完成，但是根据作者的要求，在他去世后的1971年才出版）、《霍华德别业》（*Howards End*,1910）、《印度之行》（*A Passage to India*，1924）等 。文学评论 ：《小说面面观》 (Aspects of the Novel, 1927)
3. **His Wrting Style**

He is known best for his ironic and well-plotted novels examining class difference and hypocrisy in early 20th-century British society.① In traditional English novel style② Freedom,equality, humanists and sexuality

③ focus on the Middle Class

④ by means of wit, irony and symbolism

**V. Helen Adams Keller**

1. **Brief Comment**

Helen Adams Keller (June 27, 1880 – June 1, 1968) was an American author, political activist and lecturer. She was the first deafblind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

1. **Her Teacher**

The story of how Keller's teacher, **Annie Sullivan,** broke through the isolation imposed by a near complete lack of language, allowing the girl to blossom as she learned to communicate, has become known worldwide through the dramatic depictions of the play and film *The Miracle Worker*.

1. **Her Social Achivements:**

A prolific author, Keller was well traveled and was outspoken in her opposition to war. She campaigned for women's suffrage, workers' rights, and socialism, as well as many other progressive causes.

1. **Her Major Works**

*Three Days to See*

*The Story Of My Life*

*My Religion*