Classical Mythology - Sample Test

NB: The midterm will be somewhat longer than the present sample but the style of the questions will be the same. The final will be twice as long.

1. Answer either A or B in the form of a short essay. Make sure you explicitly refer to at least THREE of the ancient texts we have read.

   A. What role do the Muses play in the poetry of myth? And why are they female?

   B. Discuss the unusual births of Aphrodite and Athena. What are the paradoxes involved in the love goddess's birth from an act of mutilation and violence? How is Zeus able to give birth to Athena, and why does she issue from her father's head? In your opinion, which theories of myth are useful in interpreting these births?

2. Please identify TEN of the following by indicating for each:
   A. Who OR what each is;
   B. What function AND/OR sphere of activity is attached to each;
   C. Each of the ancient texts (MAX THREE) read so far in which each is mentioned (except Apollodorus):

   a. Apollo
   b. Leto
   c. Penheus
   d. Maia
   e. thyrsus
   f. Tiresias
   g. Mekone
   h. Perses
   i. Iapetos
   j. Styx
   k. Agave
   l. maenad
3. For **ONE of the passages**, please answer all the questions below **#1-4 in all of their parts**. For only **TWO more** passages, please answer only # 1 by giving author AND title.
   A. What is the **title** AND the **author** of the text from which the passage has been excerpted?
   B. Who is speaking?
   C. What comes before AND after this passage in the play?
   D. What function does the passage have in the plot and in the context in which it occurs? What is its general significance in relation to the whole play?

**A**

Pride breeds the tyrant
violent pride, gorging, crammed to bursting
   with all that is overripe and rich with ruin--
clawing up to the heights, headlong pride
   crashes down the abyss--sheer doom!
   No footing helps, all foothold lost and gone.
But the healthy strife that makes the city strong--
I pray that god will never end that wrestling:
god, my champion, I will never let you go.
But if any man comes striding, high and mighty
   in all he says and does,
no fear of justice, no reverence
for the temples of the gods--
   let a rough doom tear him down,
repay his pride, breakneck, ruinous pride!
If he cannot restrain himself from outrage--
   mad, laying hands on the holy things untouchable!

**B**

Of course you cannot know a man completely,
his character, his principles, sense of judgement,
not till he's shown his colors, ruling the people,
making laws. Experience, there's the test.
As I see it, whoever assumes the task,
the awesome task of setting the city's course,
and refuses to adopt the soundest policies
but fearing someone, keeps his lips locked tight,
he's utterly worthless. So I rate him now,
I always have. And whoever places a friend
above the good of his own country, he is nothing:
I have no use for him. Zeus my witness,
Zeus who sees all things, always--
I could never stand by silent watching destruction
match against our city, putting safety to rout,
nor could I ever make that man a friend of mine
who menaces our country. Remember this:
our country is safety.

**C**

Wisdom is by far the greatest part of joy,
and reverence toward the gods must be safeguarded.
The mighty words of the proud are paid in full
with mighty blows of fate, and at long last
those blows will teach us wisdom.

**D**

And speech and thought, quick as the wind
and the mood and mind for law that rules the city--
   all these he has taught himself
and shelter from the arrows of the frost
when there's rough lodging under the cold clear sky
and the shafts of lashing rain--
   ready, resourceful man!
   Never without resources
never an impasse as he marches on the future--
only Death, from Death alone he will find no rescue
but from desperate plagues he has plotted his escapes.